

Alt Text Survey Results 2022



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Introduction

There is so much conflicting information about what Alt Text is, how to use it, how to write it and how long it should be. Some say you are confined to 10 words; others say it is 1250 words. Some say 70 characters, some say you can't use punctuation. There are no standards or guidelines for adding Alt text to graphics, especially complex graphics such as charts and diagrams, maps, or plans.

Additionally, there is no way to structure Alt Text or have multiple languages in an Alt text attribute.

This is the second iteration of the Alt text Survey intended to get feedback from those who depend on Alt Text to provide information on graphics in content.

This iteration has an additional question related to the use of either a screen reader or Text-to-Speech tool. Although some respondents indicated they didn't use any adaptive technology, I want to make sure that those who do leverage Alt text contribute to the conversation.

For this iteration of the research, there were a total of 20 respondents. The average time it took to complete the survey was 13:15. I have not corrected typos or spelling mistakes. This is the raw data.

I use the following adaptive technology .

Of the 20 respondents:

- 17 respondents use a screen reader.
- 8 respondents use a Text-to-Speech tool.
- 3 respondents don't use any adaptive technology.



Figure 1 Survey results visualized. Data is in accessible format just above this graphic.

Of the respondents who use adaptive technology, 8 use both a screen reader or Text-to-Speech tool to access digital content.

ID #	Adaptive Technology
1	No adaptive technology.;
2	No adaptive technology.;
3	Screen reader.; Text-to-Speech.;
4	Screen reader.; Text-to-Speech.;
5	Screen reader.;
6	Screen reader.;
7	Screen reader.; Text-to-Speech.;
8	Screen reader.;
9	Screen reader.; Text-to-Speech.;
10	Screen reader.;
11	No adaptive technology.;
12	Screen reader.;
13	Screen reader.; Text-to-Speech.;
14	Screen reader.;
15	Screen reader.;
16	Screen reader.; Text-to-Speech.;
17	Screen reader.; Text-to-Speech.;
18	Screen reader.; Text-to-Speech.;
19	Screen reader.;
20	Screen reader.;

What do you like about Alt Text you read on images?

What is good about Alt Text?

Text

ID #	Response
1	NA
2	I transcribe braille for students and Alt Text is helpful if it is an image that cannot be recreated as a tactile graphic. It can be useful if we need to create a description of the image.
3	It does give the individual a basic sense of what situation is going on in the picture.
4	<p>Its descriptive.</p> <p>I like well described text and what it means. Alt text is like audio discription on a movie. You notice it if its not there.</p>
5	That honestly depends on how the alt text is written and how its used. Good alt text should be short, clear and easy to read, and should convey the most important aspects of an image. Anything longer should be reserved for image descriptions.
6	I like descriptions of the images. Wile I know many screen-reader users want minimal alt text, I like the most description possible within a reasonable amount of space.
7	Alt text is very important for me because I am in school and there are images that are important for me to "see". Alt text needs to be descriptive and of good quality.
8	It provides information to those using assistive devices and also if images have been turned off or don't load for web pages.
9	,i l to h x4 ,gives "s "u/&+ (pictures4
10	As a person with limited sight, I find that when added, good alt text enables me to get an idea of what the author intends me to know from using an image.
11	I like alt text because you can make sure that everyone can access the information in the picture.
12	I like knowing what the object is that is being captured or the person and what they are doing or the setting they are in. Details are nice like color, expression, chioce of clothing, ethnicity/ skin tone, etc.
13	Images with alt text enables me to understand the content of the images. In social media, whenever I discover an account using alt text in images, I feel more included. Images with alt text makes me less dependent on sighted people to help me understand the content of the images.
14	It provides information I would otherwise not know about the picture or graph.

ID #	Response
15	Alt text is an identification for many of the graphics presented in today's websites, Emails and on social media. Without alt tags these graphics, images, and pictures aren't usable and sometimes that lack of usability renders the content useless.
16	NA
17	It allows me to know what my sighted peers and colleagues are seeing; it allows me to experience much of the world like I could when I was cited. It makes me feel included.
18	It includes blind and low vision users in the public conversation. It allows us access to content that sighted users are getting.
19	That it means I can be included in whatever information is being shared, especially if it's well-described. That meaning with as much detail as possible.
20	Short to the point. Like a tweet. Should not be mistaken for image description

What doesn't work for you when reading Alt Text? What are the limitations?

Text

ID #	Response
1	NA
2	Poorly constructed Alt Text that just say 'image.'
3	It is very subjective of what is described. Depending on the user who is providing the description, you can go from a basic image description to a very detailed depiction of the image.
4	<p>Well to be honest computer generated alt text while artificial intelligence tries its hardest and while yes you can get what you can from a sort of principal sort of thing, it can be a bit short, human text descriptions are a lot better though it depends on what it is.</p> <p>I had to do a test on a camera on the head to read things.</p> <p>Take a sheet of paper, or a flat box or a bottle that was square or flat and yeah it worked.</p> <p>Any package that was not firm it had trouble.</p> <p>So a package of liquid or something like flower or sugar or something that moved about it had trouble.</p> <p>Forget it completely if it was a circular bottle or can.</p>
5	Well written alt text doesn't have any limitations for me. However, if alt text is not well written or too vague, it doesn't offer a benefit.
6	My only limitation is when alt text exceeds a reasonable amount of space.
7	Some sites have very poor Alt text or no Alt text at all.
8	<p>People do not know how to write proper alt-text.</p> <p>Not all social media sites have the same accessible tools on them so it can be tricky to include alt-text in a way that it is read.</p> <p>The use of alt-text for graphs, charts or infographics are not readily available. It is not clear in resources that I have read how to physically include the information into a document so the screen reader flows from the regular copy, to an expanded alt-text of a graph back to the text in the document.</p>
9	AI when it says two people killing a dog when they are just hulding a leash loosely. That one from Siri.
10	Automatic options do not convey the meaning of the image or how it is useful within the context with which it is being used.
11	The limitation is the ability to reproduce the most important contents and details of the image, partly in a limited number of characters.
12	While I like detail, I know that sometimes it is challenging to find the balance between the text being too long or too short. Finding that balance between too much details and not enough is difficult. But overall, some description in the form of alt-text is better than not having any at all.

ID #	Response
13	Alt text is kind of limited when an image contains a long table with lots of data.
14	details are not provided, for example colors, where the picture is taken, what action is taking place, shapes, objects. For example if its a picture of a birthday cake, the information I am looking for is, what color is the icing? what color is the writing on the cake? what color are the candles? how big is the cake? is in a specific shape? what is the cake on? who is in the picture? is there a fancy border? are the candles lite? is a part of the cake gone? what flavor is the cake?
15	Mostly the alt texts lack the character or atmosphere that a graphic solution provides; often described by the sighted as a visual cue e.g the gleam of firelight in a homey kitchen. Descriptions in words can't really be expected to fulfill the entire purpose of images.
16	NA
17	The only thing I can think of that doesn't work for me is when people don't use it, or don't describe very much.
18	I prefer information, what does the viewer of the image see, rather than editorializing
19	If someone describes an image by saying something like: This is an image of a newspaper article. There needs to be more information than that, such as what the article is about. As far as limitations, I think that some things would be very hard to describe with alt text, such as a sunset.
20	The platforms that do not allow more than 300 characters (LinkedIn) When someone goes into to much detail

If you could change anything about how Alt Text is added or read to you, what would it be?

Thinking outside of the box is welcome!

Text

ID #	Response
1	NA
2	Well constructed with meaningful text. In educational material and resources, this is extremely important.
3	A more detailed description of the individual or the image in general.
4	<p>Not sure to be honest.</p> <p>I mean sure I'd like every bit of text to describe the picture as it appeared however having worked in the industry, your program is only as good as its configuration.</p> <p>So if your speech system or artificial inteligent system goes rogue on you it may not actually be its fault that its now a thinking killing machine. Maybe its database was never completely correct or missing something to begin with or maybe something else that was never intended just happened and it choaked.</p> <p>Now for alt text its getting better and close to perfect but not quite. That being said, enough human descriptions get fead into this thing then your ai systems like google, etc will be able to handle it and to be brootally honest those systems do actually handle stuff quite well though like predictive text and dictionaries things can go wrong and wrong quite a lot. If anything could be changed though it would be nice to have a way to make sure even if a lazy human didn't put alt text in that the computer at least tried to describe whatever it was and or even a requirement that you have to describe what the heck you were putting in.</p> <p>There isn't any law or anything or whatever that says a human needs to put alt text in its a nice to have but thats it.</p> <p>So a lot of stuff doesn't even nave it but a lot does.</p> <p>But it depends who is putting it in.</p>
5	For me, it's not so much about changing alt text but establishing a standard for writing it.
6	Nothing really at this time, other than stating that entering alt text is required whenever someone posts a graphic
7	Every site needs to have very good Alt text for every image. It needs to be descriptive, clear, and understandable.
8	NA
9	Some more detail would be nice. What are people doing? Are they both male or female or a couple?
10	I'd love to have more natural voices built into the screen reader. It would be fabulous if the screen reader ignored blanks etc.

ID #	Response
11	Do not necessarily write down everything that is visible in the picture, but concentrate on the key message.
12	Since there is not a general standard published about alt-text, it makes it challenging for individuals to figure out what should be included. My preference to know is Who or What is the main object in the image is, and where if it is pertinent to the context I need to be aware of.
13	The field to enter alt text should not be limited by the number of words/characters.
14	To be given similar to audio descriptions in movies and or tv shows.
15	unknown I simply wish more organizations and individuals would understand the need for them and use them more often.
16	NA
17	I would like social media platforms to automatically ask for the user to add it. I would like people who write alt text to be as detailed as possible, the more bits about a picture included, the better.
18	I wish the Twitter website put more of a priority on blind users, made alt text more obvious to screen reader users
19	For the most part, I am satisfied with it. I just wish it was easier to add for people and that there were more reminders for them, and also easier to access. Depending on what it is, sometimes there will be a separate link to access it, and I would prefer it if it was just right there.
20	Keep it like a tweet but it's not image description