Email Accessibility

What is Accessibility?

1. Extent to which a consumer or user can obtain a good or service at the time it is needed.
2. Ease with which a facility or location can be reached from other locations.

Accessibility refers to the ability for everyone, regardless of disability or special needs, to access, use, and benefit from everything within their environment. It is the degree to which a product, device, service, or environment is available to as many people as possible.

Why is Accessibility Important?

- First of all, accessibility is the right thing to do.
- It's an important step toward independence for people with disabilities.
- Accessibility allows users with disabilities to participate in the day-to-day activities many of us take for granted.
- Accessibility is the law.
- Also, accessibility can offer benefits for all users. As with many improvements intended for individuals with disabilities, the enhancements of accessible design offer benefits for all users. Accessible documents are often easier to read and navigate.

Accessibility is all about making something useable by everyone, including those with disabilities. For the purpose of this training, we will narrow our focus on print disabilities.

"A *print disability means*, with respect to an individual, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits the individual in seeing or reading." (AIMCommission@ed.gov)

In order to know how to create accessible documents, it helps to understand what makes a document difficult to access for a person with a print disability.

Designing Documents for People with Print Disabilities

10 Basic Guidelines
Source: www.lighthouse.org

1. Contrast

Text should be printed with the highest possible contrast. There is good evidence that for many readers who are older or partially sighted, light (white or light yellow) letters on a dark (black) background are more readable than dark letters on a light background.

Here is a great Color contrast tool:

http://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

2. Type Color

Effective

Not as effective

Very high contrasts are difficult to achieve with color combinations other than black and white. Printed material, generally, is most readable in black and white. Different colors may be important for aesthetic or other reasons, but it is better to use such combinations only for larger or highlighted text, such as headlines and titles.

3. Point Size

Type should be large, preferably at least 16 to 18 points, but keep in mind that the relationship between readability and point size differs somewhat among typefaces.

4. Leading

Leading, or spacing between lines of text, should be 25-30% of the point size. This is because many people with print disabilities have difficulty finding the beginning of the next line while reading.

Leading, or spacing between lines of text, should be at least 25 to 30 percent of the point size. This is because many people with partial sight have difficulty finding the beginning of the next line while reading.

Effective leading

Leading, or spacing between lines of text, should be at least 25 to 30 percent of the point size. This is because many people with partial sight have difficulty finding the beginning of the next line while reading.

Not effective leading

5. Font Family

Avoid complicated, decorative or cursive fonts and, when they must be used, reserve them for emphasis only. Standard serif or sans-serif fonts, with familiar, easily recognizable characters are best, e.g. Arial, Calibri, Verdana or Helvetica.

6. Font Style

Upper and lowercase type is effective.

Italic type is not as effective.

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While there is little reliable information on the comparative legibility of typefaces, there is some evidence that a roman typeface, using upper and lower cases, is more readable than italics, oblique or condensed.

APHont™

The style used here is APHont, specifically developed for readers with low vision/print disabilities. It is offered free-of-charge and is available for both Mac and PC users.

http://www.aph.org/products/aphont/download.html

This is a sample of APHont Regular (nonbold):

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Punctuation . , ; : " " ' ' ? ! @ # * &

Underslung "j" - adjust
Underslung "q" - aqueduct
"ill" combination - willow

7. Letter Spacing

This letter spacing is effective.

This letter spacing is not as effective.

This letter spacing is effective.

This letter spacing is not as effective.

Text with close letter spacing often presents difficulties for readers who are partially sighted, especially those with central visual field defects. Where possible, spacing should be wide. Monospaced fonts rather than proportionally spaced fonts seem to be more legible for these readers.

8. Margins

Extra-wide binding margins are especially helpful in bound material because it makes it easier to hold the volume flat. Spiral binding can be helpful as well. Many visual devices, such as stand- and video-magnifiers, are easiest to use on a flat surface.

Effective

1"

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Many visual devices, such as stand- and video-magnifiers, are easiest to use on a flat surface.

.5"

Not as effective
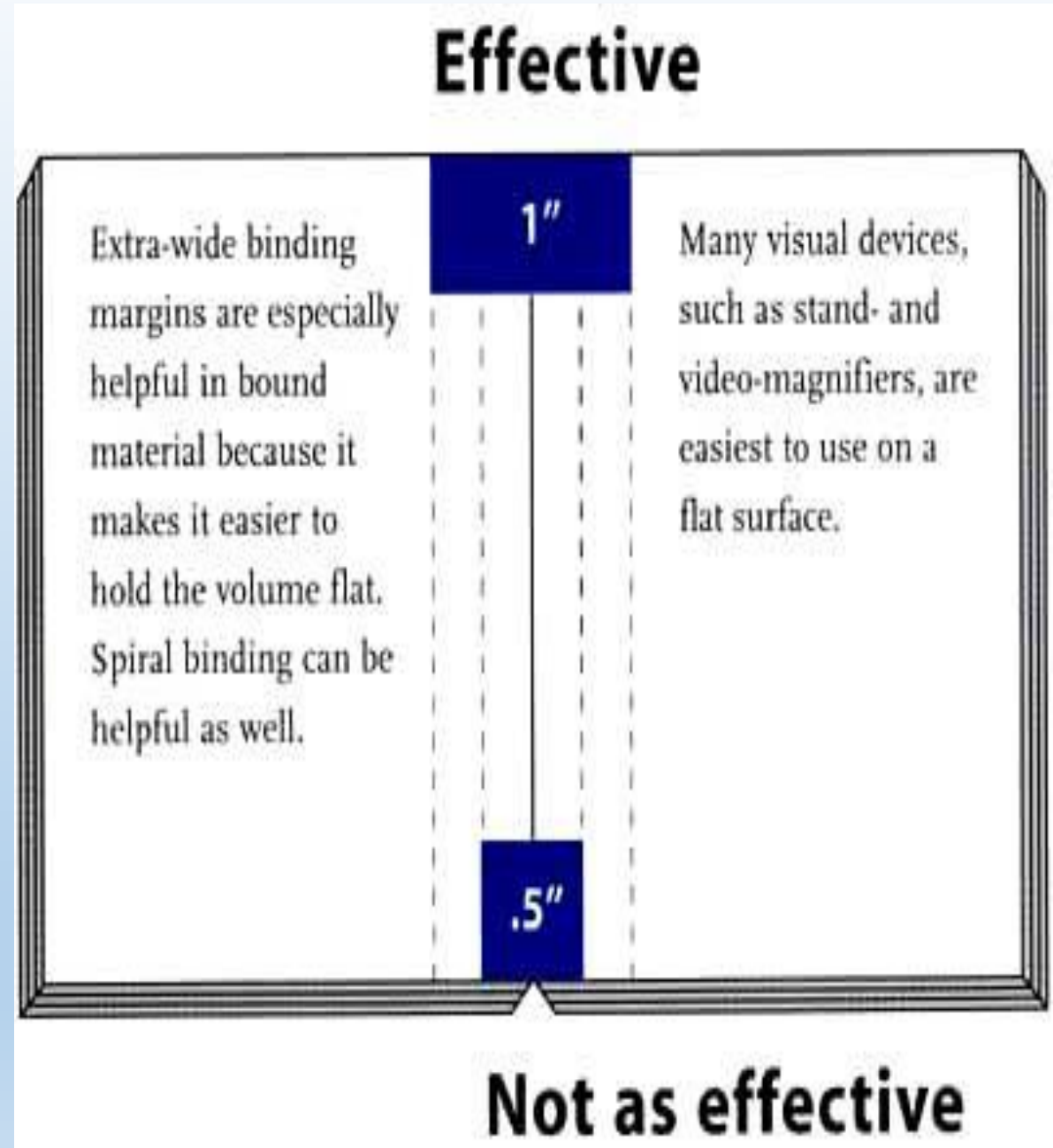
9. Paper Finish

Paper with a glossy finish can lessen legibility because many people who are older or who have partial sight also have problems with glare.

Choose a dull-finished paper that's heavy enough to prevent show-through.

10. Distinctiveness

Print impairments often make it difficult to find a book or other document that is buried among similar publications, especially for sets with volumes that differ only in title or number. Use of distinctive colors, sizes and formats on the covers can be especially helpful to older individuals and those who are partially sighted.

Email Accessibility

Computers are a big part of our world today, so the documents we create with our computers need to be accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities.

As we all know, we communicate at Berea College and elsewhere a lot through email.

Campus email messages announce events and sometimes critical information:

> Safety alerts
> Construction announcements
> Department events
> Convocations
> Club gatherings
> Celebrations
> Changes in Food Service location

What if you couldn't read this information because it doesn't work with your assistive technology?

The Importance of our Inbox

Many of our email messages are really "images" or pictures.

The Importance of our Inbox

Image

These images are not compatible with AT software which students with print disabilities use to access text.

How can we make this information accessible to all?

- Attach a Word or text document with the same information

- Prior to the image, add the line: "Please see attachment for accessible text"

"Please see attachment for accessible text"

- Preferably, attachment should include the same information that is provided in the graphic image.
- As a minimum, use the Five Ws and H Rule: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How
- Describe the image, if the image is important to the message

AT Software
E.g. Claro, a text-to-speech software:

| Play | Stop | Font | Spacing | H'phones | Check | Save | Extras | Settings | Help | Close |

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*Tienda Mi pueblo

*Mujeres Unidas

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*Tienda Hidalgo