Blue Trunk Foundation

Social Media Accessibility Guide

Prepared October 2021

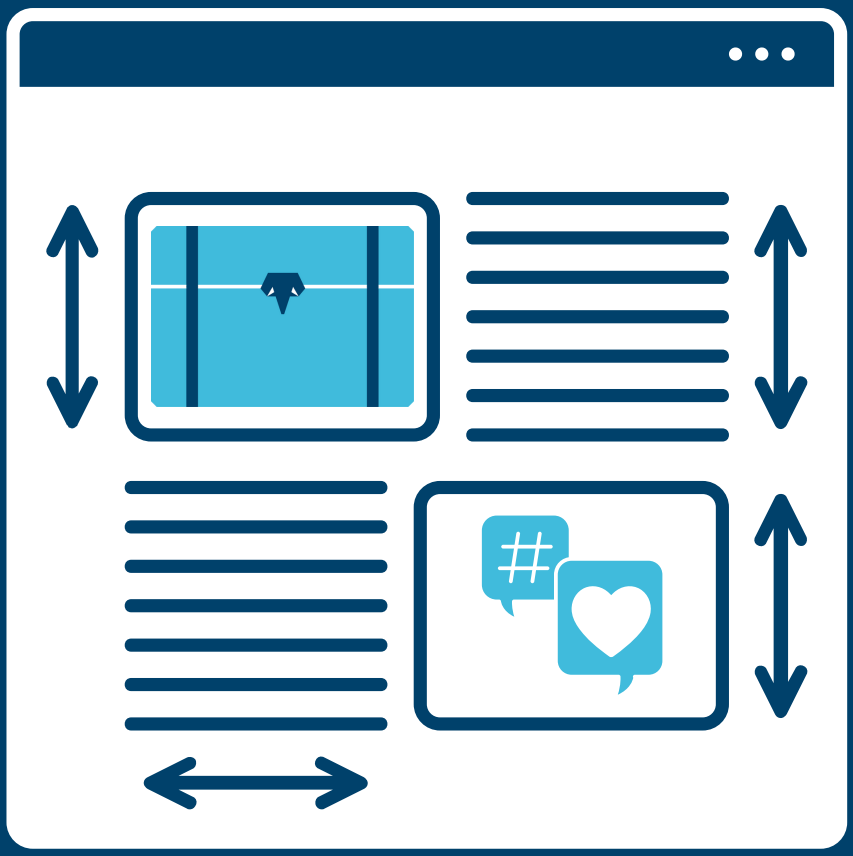


Table of Contents

Introduction.....01

General Guidelines.....02

Image Guidelines.....05

Video Guidelines.....08

Platform Specific Guidelines.....11

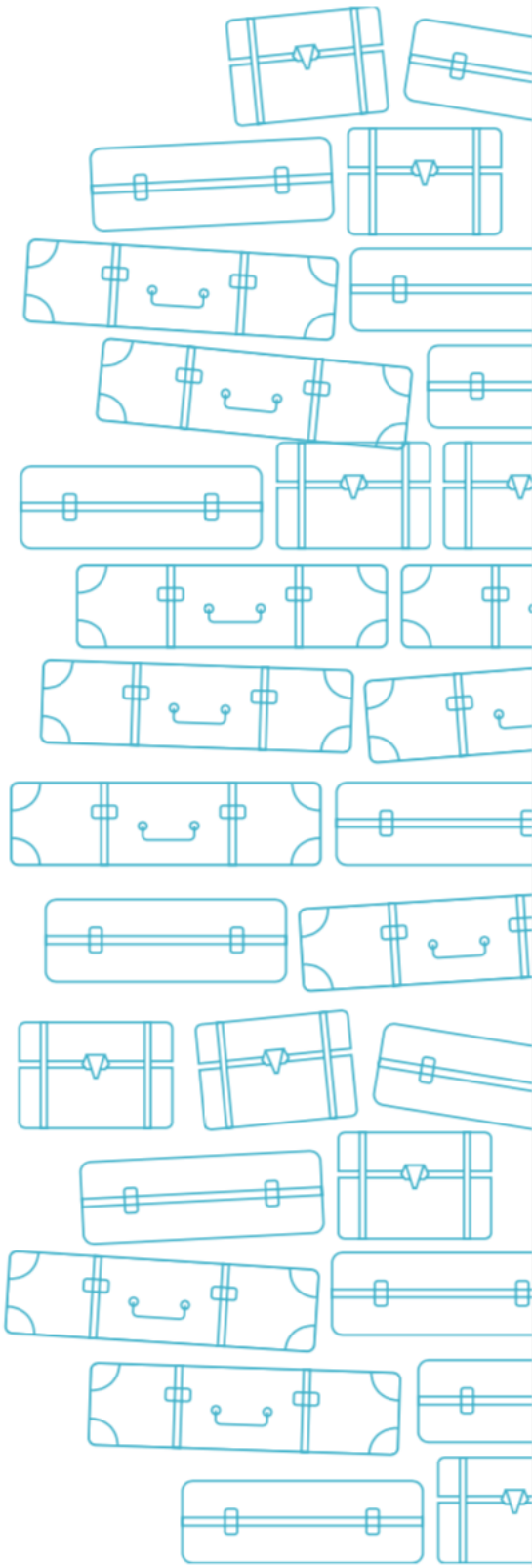
Contact Information.....16



Introduction

Accessibility is important in all the ways a customer engages with your business, including online. We have put this guide together to help you make your social media content more accessible. Please note that although we will do our best to keep this guide current, social media platforms are constantly updating their features. If you would like to make any suggestions or additions please contact us at info@BlueTrunk.Org

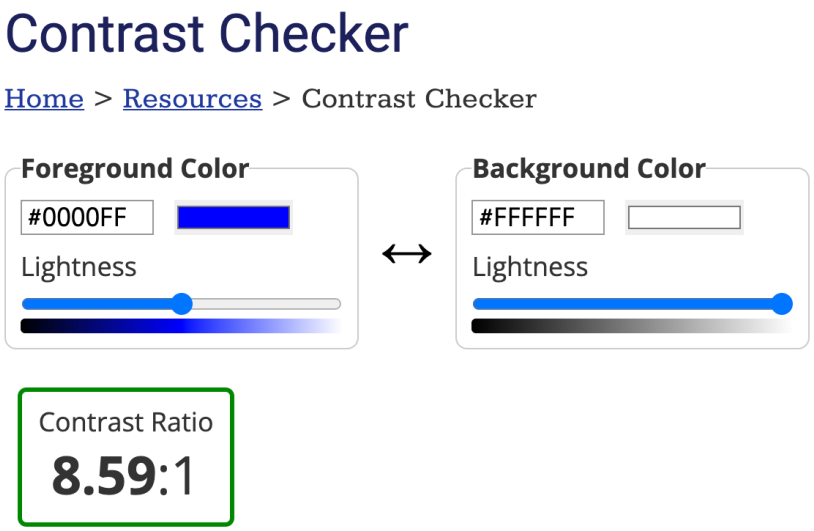
This guide focuses specifically on social media, for web development and coding guidance we recommend talking to your developers about WCAG guidelines.



General Guidelines

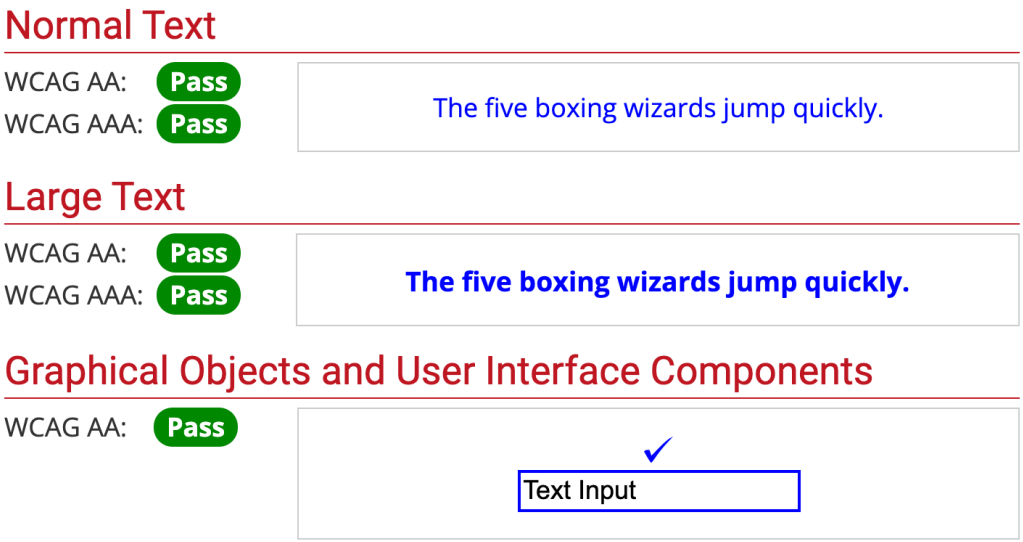
Contrast

When making designs for your social media it is important to keep contrast in mind. We recommend using an online contrast checker tool, such as this tool from WebAim or this tool from Monsido. To use these tools you will need to know your color codes.



You should be able to find the color code in the software you use to make the graphic by using the color selection tool. The commonly used color codes are Hex codes (# followed by 6 characters) or RGB codes (a number value for each R, G, and B). If you have a pre-designed image and aren't sure of the colors you can use a color picker/color checker tool online such as Image Color Picker. With this tool you can upload an image and then identify the colors.

For the contrast tool, check to see if your tool differentiates between regular and large text, as the contrast minimums are different depending on text size. Checking contrast is particularly important for text over images or colorful backgrounds, including text and captions on stories and videos.



Hashtags

Hashtags are a widely used feature across social media platforms. To improve readability you should use CamelCase hashtags. This means you should capitalize the first letter of each word. For example: #ThisIsEasierToRead #thisishardertoread

This improves readability both for individuals without assistive technology and for users with screen readers. Capitalizing each word makes it easier for screen readers to differentiate complete words.

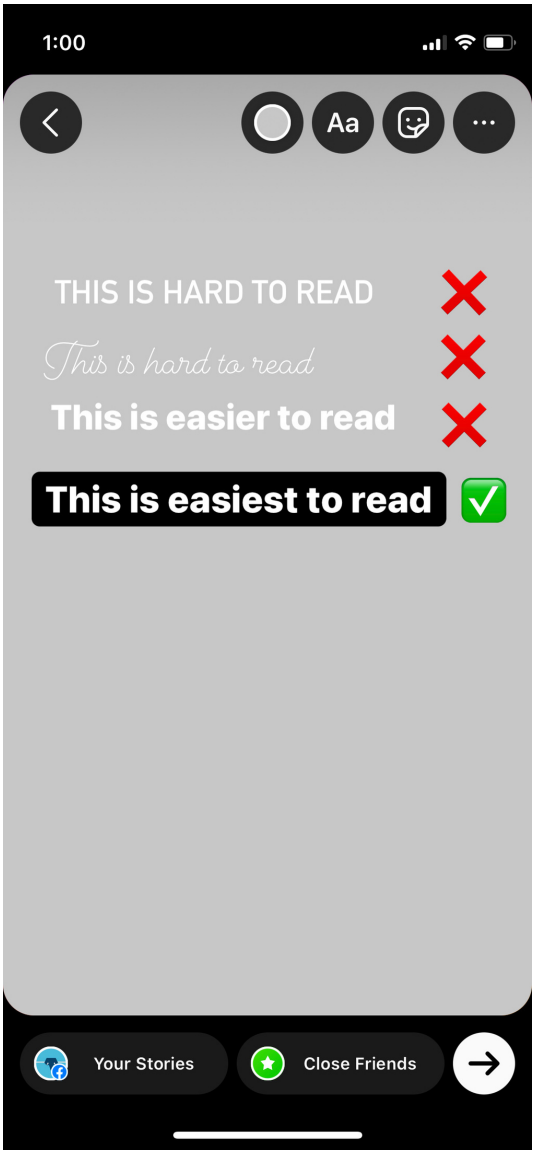
Text

Stories and other features have introduced many font options to our social media. When selecting a font keep readability in mind.

The following texts are harder to read:

- All capital
- Cursive
- Lightweight/thin letters

This is especially important for stories when you don't have the ability to add alt text and image descriptions. You should also keep the background behind the text in mind. If the text color is similar to the background you should either change the color of the text or add a background just behind the text.



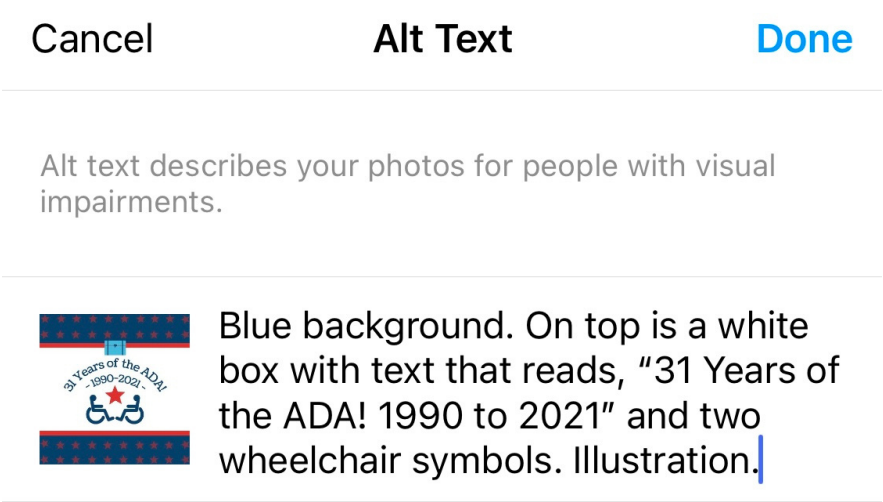
If you are using text on an image that is posted to your grid/wall, font selection can be a bit more flexible, but you should include the text in the image description.

Image Guidelines

A large part of social media is centered around images. There are several easy ways to make your images more accessible so that everyone can enjoy your content! Below is an overview of alt text and image descriptions. For a more extensive guide on these topics we recommend the American Anthropological Association's Guidelines for Creating Image Descriptions.

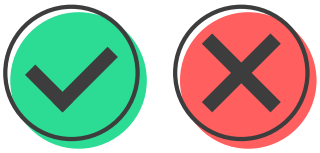
Alt Text

Alt text is text used to describe an image to someone who cannot see it. Alt text is embedded in an image and is not seen by users who aren't using screen readers. Although many people use alt text for search engine optimization (SEO) purposes this is not what it is meant for and should not be done.



Someone using a screen reader will hear the alt text read out in place of the image, so you don't want to cram a lot of keywords in for SEO. This will be confusing and create a bad user experience.

Some Quick Do’s and Don’ts for Alt Text



Do:

- Be specific: for example instead of just saying “girl” you can write “young girl in a yellow dress looking at the camera smiling.”
- Keep it short: even though you are being specific, most alt text will cut off around 125-140 characters.
- Write out any relevant text that appears in the image. If your image includes text make sure to include it, such as an image of a restaurant sign.
- If the image is not a photo you can end the description with something like illustration, graphic, or chart. For example: “A group of people of different ages with various disabilities on the beach. Illustration.”

Don't:

- Use alt text for SEO.
- Start it with phrases such as “picture of” because the screen reader will already say this.
- Use the file name as the text.
- Make assumptions about the image, just describe what you see.

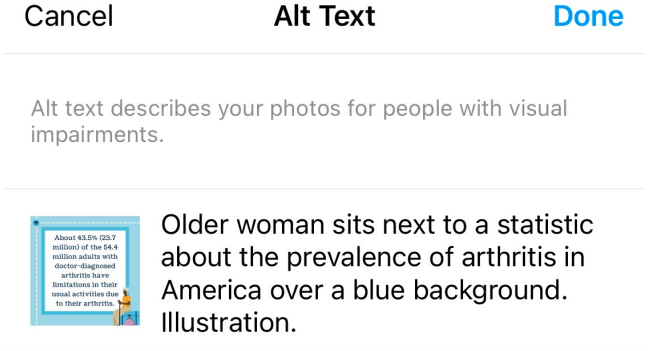
Image Description

Image descriptions are descriptions placed in captions of photos. These are a great way to provide more detail than alt text allows. Image descriptions are also helpful for people who don't use screen readers but may not be able to see the image in detail. Lastly, image descriptions are useful because captions on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook can be translated, whereas alt text will stay in the language in which it was written. Follow similar guidelines to alt text, but you can be more detailed here.

Image description example

VS

Alt text example





According to the CDC, arthritis is incredibly prevalent in Americans today, thereby limiting their day-to-day activities. Arthritis attacks individuals' joints, making them susceptible to aches and pains. Raising awareness for arthritis is integral to changing the way that we approach travel and transportation, hopefully leading to greater mobility accommodations in places such as airports, buses, metros, and more.

[Image Description: On a blue background, an older woman sits on the Blue Trunk logo in the right corner of the image. Text on her left reads, "About 43.5% (23.7 million) of the 54.4 million adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis have limitations in their usual activities due to their arthritis." On the top left, the Blue Trunk elephant sits on top two dotted white lines. Illustration.]

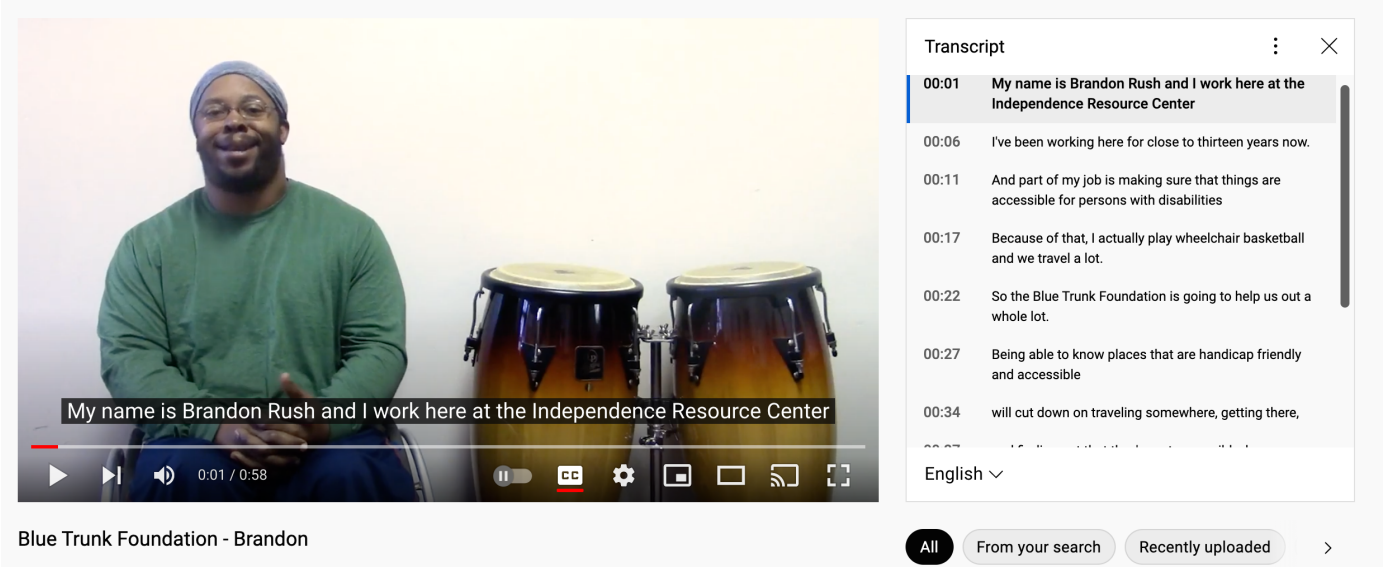
Video Guidelines

Videos are becoming more popular across social media platforms. This has created new accessibility challenges. The guidelines below will help you make your videos accessible to a wider audience.

Captions

Captions are an easy way to make video content more accessible. How to add captions varies by platform, which is detailed in the following sections of this guide. Some general tips for captions include:

- If captions are auto-generated you should review and edit to make sure they are accurate.
- Captions should be in an easy-to-read font (for example not cursive) and should have contrast with the background.
- If your account doesn’t have access to captions yet you can download a separate app for captioning. There are some apps available for this, and most offer a certain number of videos/minutes to be captioned for free, two of the apps with the most reviews are MixCaptions and Captions: Speak to the Camera. There are also paid web services such as Rev Captioning and 3Play Media.
- Note for live videos: although live captioning is becoming more popular for web conferencing services it has not yet made its way to social media. For live videos you should save the video and upload it once the live is over with captions added.



Transcripts

You should provide transcripts for video content and transcripts should be easily found near the video. Transcripts should convey what is being said, who is talking if it is more than one person, and other important details of the audio, such as if there is music playing, if there are other sounds (e.g. dogs barking or doorbell ringing). These can also be timestamped and linked to the video. For detailed information about formatting transcripts check out the WCAG guidelines on transcripts.

Audio Description

Audio description (AD) tracks are audio tracks that include not only the dialogue, but also verbal descriptions of what is happening on screen. AD tracks are great for longer format videos like those that would be uploaded to YouTube (or another player) and shared on Facebook.To create an AD track you should use a professional service.



Although YouTube does not allow you to toggle this track on, you can upload a secondary video as the AD version and link to it on the original version. If you were to share this on a platform such as Facebook you would need to share two videos. Furthermore, some AD services will also provide you with links to the AD version of the video that you can embed on your website.

Platform Specific Guidelines

Instagram

Below are some tips on how to use accessibility features on Instagram. You can also check out Instagram's Help Center page focused on accessibility.

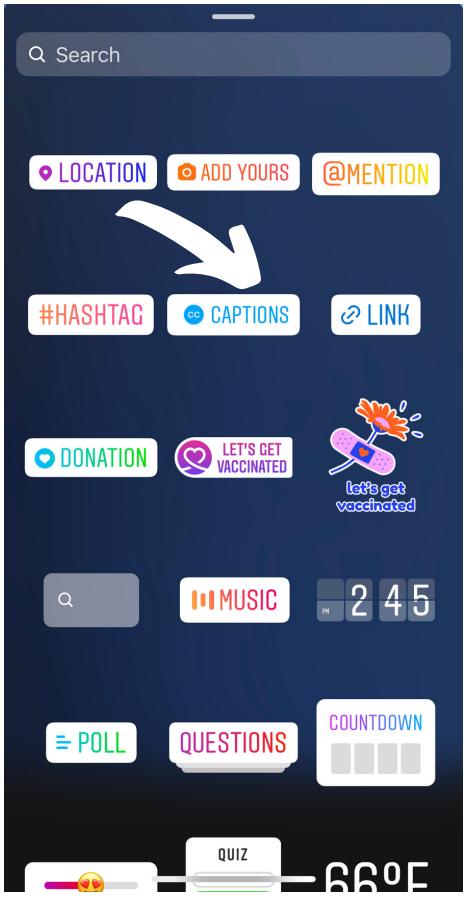
Alt Text

- When posting a new picture as a grid post look for "Advanced Settings >" at the bottom and tap it. On the next screen look for the header "Accessibility" at the bottom of the screen and tap on "Write Alt Text >"
- To edit a previously posted grid post image, tap on the three dots at the top right next to your account name and select "Edit" Then on the post on the bottom right corner you will see a black circle with "Aa" and next to it "Edit Alt Text" Tap and edit.
- Note: As of the creation of this guide, alt text is only available for grid posts, not for stories.

Captions

Instagram has been rolling out captions for videos, but not all accounts have this feature turned on. If you do have it you will see it under the stickers options.

- Tap on the sticker icon and select captions.
- Once you add captions you have the ability to edit the text by tapping on the word you want to change.
- You can also change the format including font, color, and background. If your video background makes it hard to read we recommend adding a background to the text.



Where to add captions under the stickers menu



Editing font color and background



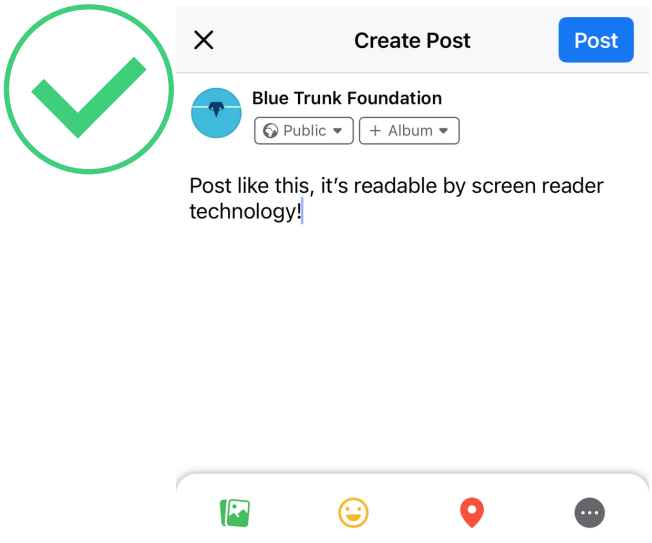
Editing text of autocaptions

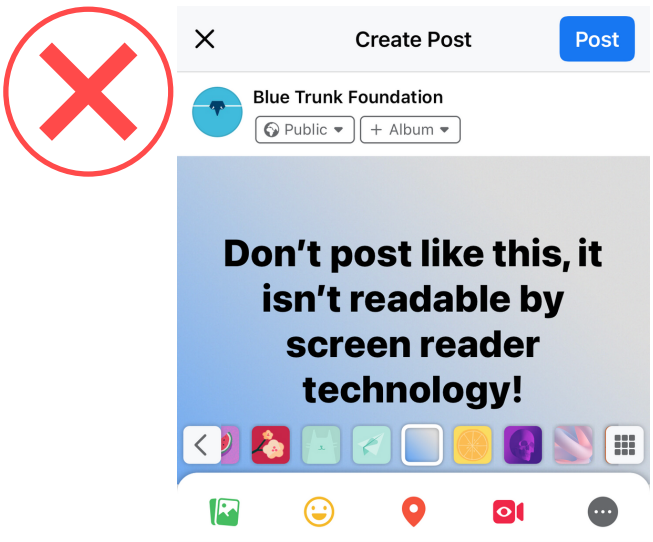
Facebook

Below are some tips on how to use accessibility features on Facebook. You can also check out Facebook's Help Center page focused on accessibility.

Alt Text

- When posting a new picture as a wall post look for the three dots next to the X. Tap the dots and select "Edit Alt Text" from the bottom of the list. Add your alt text and select "Done" to add it.
- To edit a previously posted image on your wall, tap on/open the image, and then select the three dots in the upper right corner, next to the tag and location icons. From the drop down menu select "Edit Alt Text" from the bottom. Select "Done" when finished editing.
- Note: If you use the background feature on a text wall post it will convert that post to an image, and the text will be unreadable by a screen reader.

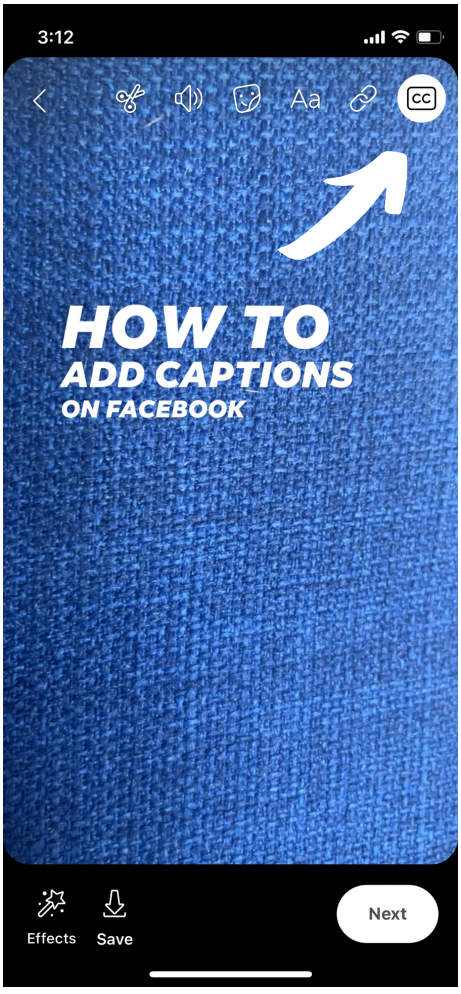




Captions

Similar to Instagram this is a feature that not all accounts have access to yet. If you have this feature for stories it will appear on the right hand side menu towards the bottom and for wall posts it will appear at the top right.

- Select “Caption” and Facebook will automatically generate captions.
- You can edit by tapping the text and then selecting the word you wish to edit.
- You cannot add background at this time, so make sure to position the captions over a part of the video where they are easy to read.



Wall post



Story post

Twitter

Alt Text

- To add alt text to an image in a tweet tap the “+ALT” button on the bottom right of the image. When you are done press “Done” to save.

TikTok

Below are some tips on how to add captions to TikTok videos. You can also check out TikTok’s Support page focused on accessibility.

Captions

- TikTok has an automatic captions feature without the ability to change the formatting of the captions, such as the font or color. This feature is not yet available on all accounts.
- To add automatic captions to a TikTok, click the square icon titled captions underneath the voiceover icon.
- Agree to the use of automatic captions, and TikTok can then process through your audio to create captions.
- If there are any errors with the captions, click on the captions icon again and scroll through each line of the caption dialogue. Once you find the error, click on the line and correct it.
- Save your changes by clicking on the “save” button in the upper right corner.

Contact Us

Blue Trunk Foundation
PO Box 5041
Charlottesville, VA 22905
434-218-2296
www.BlueTrunk.Org
info@BlueTrunk.Org

Find us on Facebook www.Facebook.Com/BlueTrunkFoundation

Instagram @BlueTrunkTravel

