

Email Accessibility Best Practices

Overview

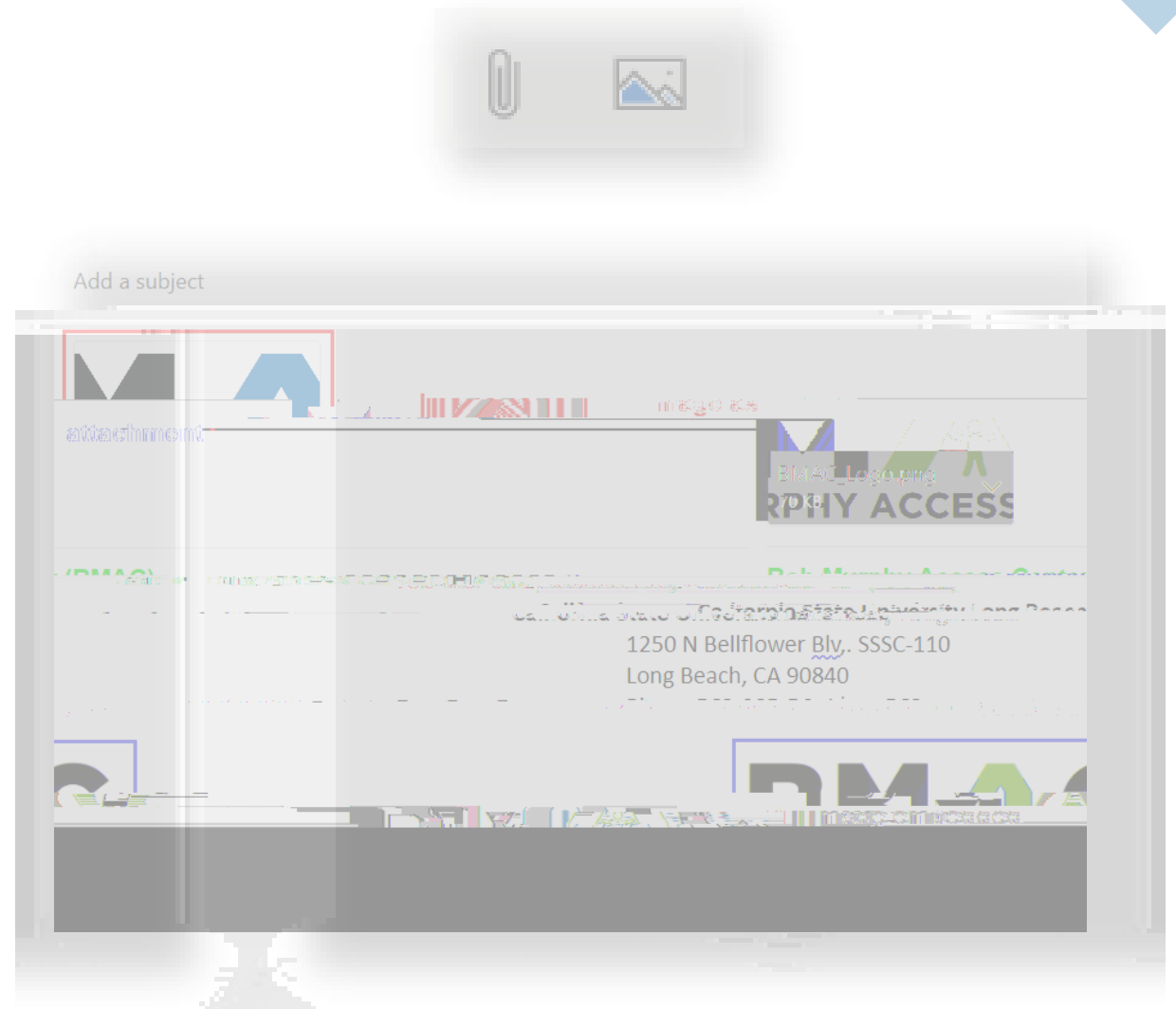
- Alternative Text
- Descriptive Links
- Color and Font
- Layout
- Email Marketing Applications
- Accessible Attachments
- Checking for Accessibility
- Resources

Alternative Text (Alt Text)

- Alt text is a brief description (140 characters max) of what the image is conveying.
 - Alt text is interpreted by assistive technology to let the nonvisual users know the image's purpose.
- All images must have alternative text, including images on email signatures.
- Avoid using images of text or “screenshots”
 - They are not screen reader accessible
 - Alt text may not be sufficient to describe the image
 - Create an accessible alternative (e.g., PDF, embedding text within the body)

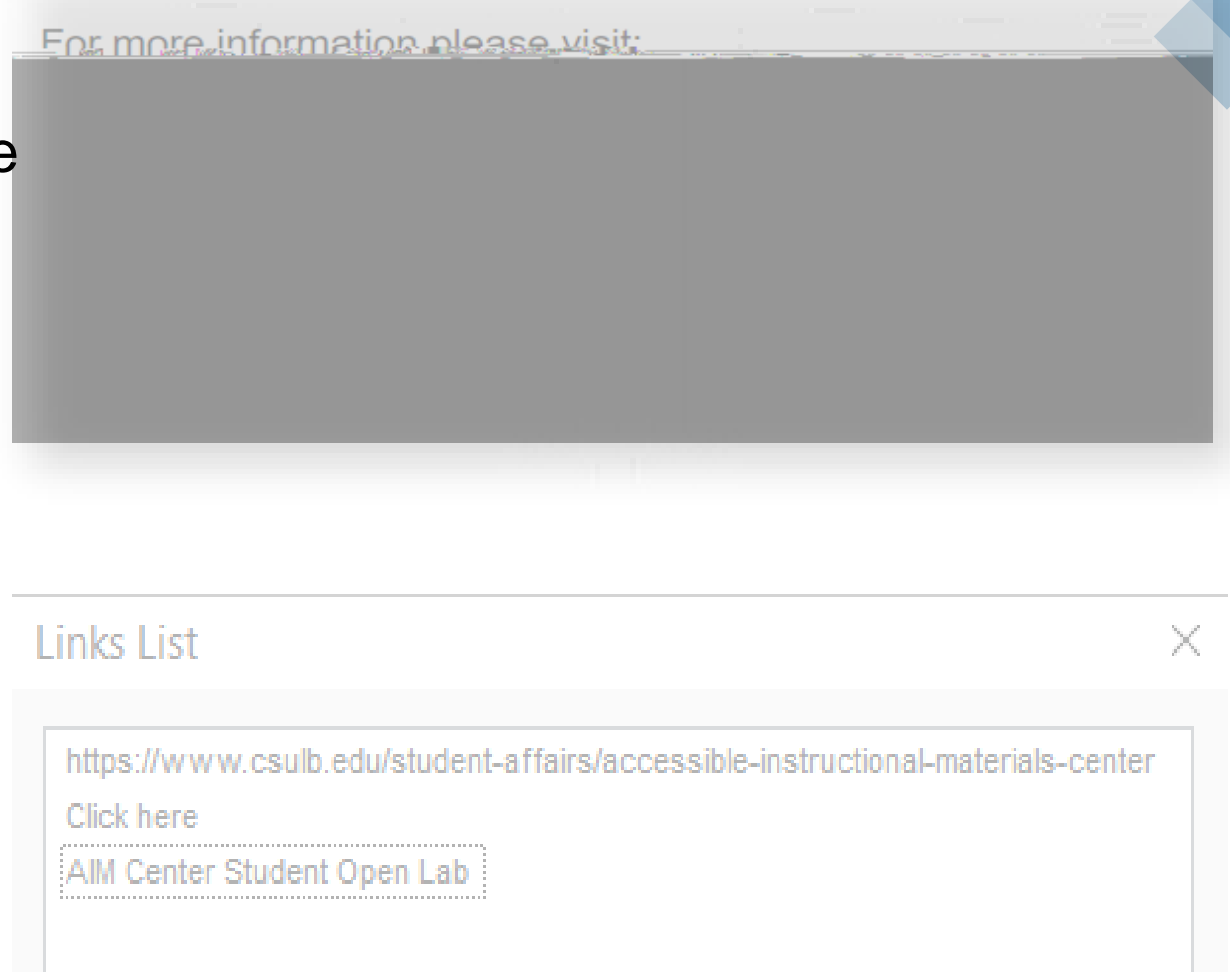
Alternative Text (Cont.)

- Only inline images (embedded/inserted) on emails have alternative text feature.
 - Images sent as attachments don't have alt text capabilities, therefore are inaccessible to assistive technology users.
 - Assign logical names to image files
 - "IMG481890"
 - "BMAC_logo"



Descriptive Links

- Link text must be unique and describe the intent or function of the link.
- Assistive technology users often navigate or search through links. Therefore, links must be descriptive and meaningful out of context.
- Avoid:
 - “Click here”
 - “Read more”
 - Displaying URLs
 - Long link text sentences
- Tip Regularly check email signature links are not broken.



Color and Font

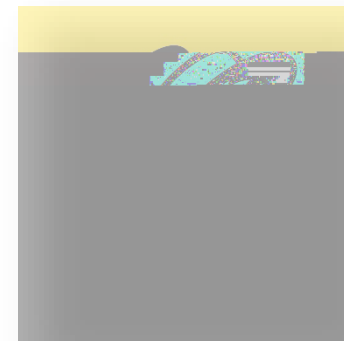
- Use bold, italicized, and large font styles to emphasize content and provide visual structure.
 - Reserve underlines for links.
- Don't rely on color alone to convey meaning.
 - Time Sensitive
 - ~~Time Sensitive~~
- Ensure there is high color contrast between background and foreground colors.
- Recommend using sans serif fonts:
 - Arial
 - Calibri
 - Segoe UI

Layout

- It may be difficult to achieve complex email layouts using Outlook alone.
 - Use the “align” settings to align text left, right, or centered, rather than using “tab.”
 - Email marketing platforms (Constant Contact Mail Chimp, etc) offer templates and customized layouts.
 - Avoid using tables for layout only.
- Create plenty of white space in emails for better readability.
- Use descriptive subject lines.
- Ensure that your emails have a logical reading structure.
- For longer emails, use headings.

Email Marketing Applications

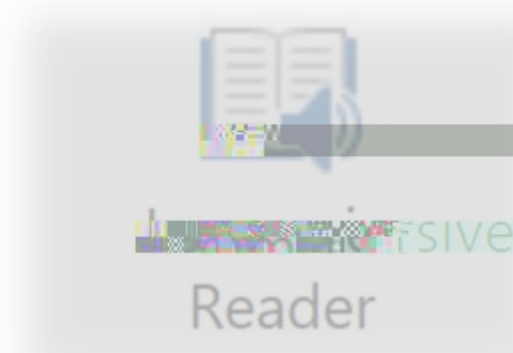
- Mail Chimp, Campaign Monitor, and Constant Contact.
- More creative freedom and personalization.
- Mailing list management
- Majority of email marketing applications are subscription based.
 - Ideal for departments and programs with listservs.



Attaching Accessible Files

Check for Accessibility

- ~~AtCh~~
 - Outlook has built-in accessibility checker.
 - Before sending email, run the accessibility checker to ensure accessibility errors are not present.
- ~~IRa~~
 - Built-in text to speech tool
 - Read the email with the Immersive Tool to ensure the content is read correctly.



Resources

- [AIM Center: Accessibility Resources](#)
- [AIM Center BeachBoard ATI Accessibility Courses Enrollment](#)
- [Outlook: Make your Outlook email accessible to people with disabilities](#)
- [Outlook: Improve email accessibility](#)
- [University of Alabama: Creating Accessible Emails \(Webinar\)](#)
- [Campaign Monitor: Accessibility and Email Campaign](#)
- [Constant Contact: Creating accessible emails](#)
- [MailChimp: Accessibility in Email Marketing](#)



AIM CENTER

ACCESSIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS CENTER

Contact

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