Section 508 Compliance: Quick Start Guide

508 Compliance for Alaska Sea Grant submissions

All publications must be Section 508 Compliant upon submission to Alaska Sea Grant. Non-compliant documents will be returned for corrections.

Peer-reviewed journal articles will be accepted in their final published form. No Section 508 remediation work needs to be performed on these documents.

To create a PDF that complies with 508 accessibility standards for web use, follow these steps:

1. **Ensure Tagged Content:** Utilize tagged PDFs to provide structural information. Auto-tagging features are acceptable, but ensure accuracy. Tags enable screen readers to navigate content effectively. (List of Standard PDF tags from Adobe.)
2. **Include Bookmarks:** Add bookmarks to documents exceeding **20 pages** to outline the document's structure. If a Table of Contents exists, ensure bookmarks reflect its layout. Bookmarks enhance navigation for users with disabilities.
3. **Provide Alternative Text:** Add descriptive alternative text (alt text) to all visual elements such as images, charts, and graphs. Alt text enables users with visual impairments to understand visual content through screen reader software.
4. **Maintain Logical Reading Order:** Arrange content in a logical reading order that follows the flow of the document. Logical reading order ensures that screen readers present content in a meaningful sequence, enhancing comprehension.
5. **Complete Document Properties:** Fill in document properties such as title and language. Document properties improve searchability and provide essential information about the PDF.
6. **Run accessibility check tool** in Adobe Acrobat or Foxit. This will provide step-by-step instructions for resolving accessibility errors.

By following these guidelines, you can ensure that your PDFs meet 508 compliance standards, making them accessible to all users, including those with disabilities.

Tools and Resources to Get Started

- Basic PDF Editing: A How-To Manual: This tutorial provides an introduction to basic PDF editing for accessibility including how to fix common errors such as:
  - adding bookmarks,
  - fixing element tags,
  - document properties,
  - alternative text, and
  - fixing tab and reading order.
- Section 508 Accessibility Check: see how the NCL staff checks IR submissions for Section 508 compliance.
- Library AMA: Section 508: starting at 14:30 thru 26:00 there is a review of Section 508 requirements and quick fixes for common problems.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dawn Montano, Alaska Sea Grant publications specialist at dawn.montano@alaska.edu or 907-474-6707.