

Using Accessibility Essentials 2 – writing accessible documents with Microsoft Word

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Introduction

I am experimenting with making Word documents more accessible in a way that I hope will mean that I will always produce more accessible document. This is an informal record of what I did, which is also giving me n opportunity to test out all of the tips.

Trying out the tips in Accessibility Essentials 2

I am using Office 2007 so am having to use the new online/CD Rom version of Accessibility Essentials (alongside the paper version for Office 2003) to figure out anything I can't work out for myself!

What I have done

I have changed the defaults of my Word document based on the AE guidelines. The changes I have made to the defaults are:

Font style:	Arial
Font size:	12pt
Character spacing:	Expanded by 2pt
Line Spacing:	1.5
Font colour:	Dark Blue (RGB (0,0,102))
Heading 1:	Arial, 16, Dark Blue, Bold
Heading 2:	Arial, 14, Dark Blue, Bold
Heading 3:	Arial, 12, Dark Blue, Bold

I have also had a go at creating a text box with contrasting font and background colour.

**Inserting a text box
and changing
background and font
contrast**

A note about using structure (heading styles) to make a Word Document (which can then be saved as a pdf) more accessible/easier to navigate.

This works well if you want the document to be viewed as a Word document. Once you have finished choose to view the Document Map and you will see the hierarchical structure of the document and be able to jump to the appropriate sections at the click of a button. However, when saving this Word doc as a pdf you will need to go into the 'Options' and choose to use the headings as bookmarks in order for them to be displayed as a pdf ... this wasn't obvious and I missed it first time round ... but am happy to have found it now!

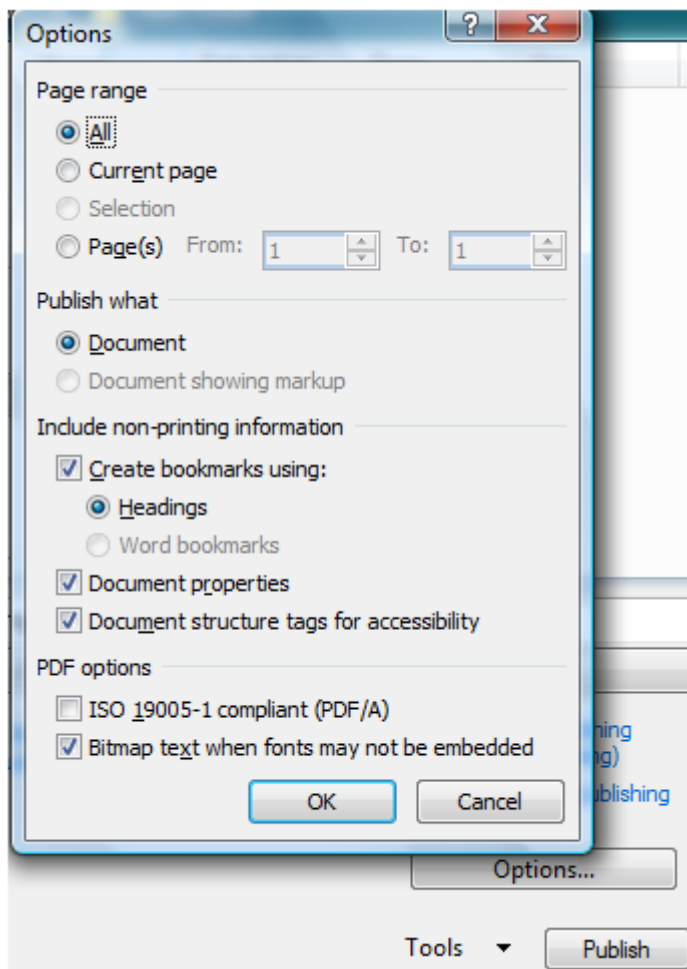


Figure 1: When saving as a pdf remember to click 'Options' and create bookmarks using headings

Inserting images

The images above and below hopefully provide more meaning to these notes, as all images should. The images have alt tags in case they are to be displayed online and captions and screen tips added too to provide more information for the reader, whether they need to use a screen reader or not.

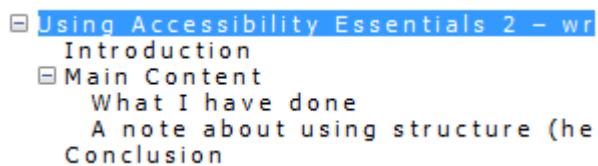


Figure 2: Document map for Word 2007

Hyperlinks

If text is the hyperlink rather than a URL it is essential that the text is meaningful, rather than just 'click here', for the benefit of screen readers. Screen tips can always be added but to be of most use these should to provide additional information

Example: [TechDis website](#)

Conclusion

Now that I have set up the defaults in this version of Word and have tried out the range of tips for making Word documents more accessible several times I am sure this will become common practise for me. I intend to try to keep this up ... and to see if this can also be applied to OneNote, my preferred tool 😊