Making Accessible Resumes

Making resumes accessible is very important for a number of reasons. For many people, the reason you want to make sure your resume is accessible is because you do not know who will be reading it. If they can't read it, you can't get hired. We should also recognize that different individuals have different needs and keep these tips in mind when creating resumes. Many of these you probably have already done but please review your resume to make sure it is accessible.

Colour, Tables, and Images

- Limit your colour usage when possible, otherwise ensure that the colours provide high contrast.
- Colour should not be the sole way to convey information on your resume.
    - For example using different colours and line styles on a line graph makes it more accessible.
- When using images, make sure to fill in the alt text.
    - This is what the computer will read the image as when screen readers are reading through a document.
    - Do not say "image of" since screen readers already do so.
    - Do indicate if it is a screenshot or photograph.
- Always wrap in line with text.
- Keep tables as simple as possible to make it easier for people and technology to read.

Format

- Keep a consistent font size.
    - Between 10-12pt font.
    - For headings, increase font size.
- Use a professional font such as Arial or Times New Roman.
- Use bold, italics, and underlining to break up text and make it easier to read.
    - Use text in conjunction with these formatting tools, not all screen readers will distinguish between them and regular text.
- Use bullet points to increase readability.
- Use section headers and headings for clarity.
    - Do it through your software's style settings.
    - Try to name sections of your resume the general standard instead of unique names.
    - Do not skip heading sizes.
- If there are links in your resume, describe what they are.
    - Name the hyperlink what it is, do not just say "click here".
- Try viewing your resume on your phone.
- Paginate your resume.
- If creating columns, use the column feature. Never use space or tab.

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Resumes

- Use the "add space before paragraph tool instead of hitting return/enter multiple times.
- Text boxes, quick parts, word art, and drop caps should be avoided.

Checking your work

- Use word's accessibility checker.
- When saving PDFs, you should check to make sure text was maintained as text. If it was converted to an image some screen readers cannot read it.
- Adobe Acrobat Pro (a PDF reader) has an accessibility feature, use it to check for accessibility issues.
- Tagging PDFs are also important
  - Some software, including word, does this automatically.
  - Some do not, including google docs.
  - Use the reading order tool.
- Do not "Print to PDF" as that will not retain the structure and links.
- PDFs are best for printing, Word is best for downloading, HTML is best otherwise
- If scanning your resume, ensure you tag the content; scanned resumes might still not be readable.
- You can try to use Adobe's "read out loud" feature to get an idea but it is not a screen reader and will not be a perfect representation of your document's accessibility.