

A Guide to Social Media

Guidance from UKAAF



Why format quality matters

"When organisations send me information in formats that I can read myself it allows me to be independent, feel informed and appreciated - just like every other customer."

End-user

"Producing consistently high quality accessible formats helps us to maintain our reputation, to gain new customers and to retain existing ones."

Transcription agency

"We are committed to ensuring that our customers with print disabilities receive the same information, of the same quality, as everyone else."

Service provider

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1 Introduction

It is estimated that four billion people use social media. As the landscape evolves on a regular basis, this guide should be regarded as an overview, rather than a document which seeks to address most if not all possible uses on the wide range of platforms.

2 About UKAAF

The UK Association for Accessible Formats (UKAAF) is the industry association whose mission is to set standards for accessible formats that meet end-user needs through:

- development, delivery and promotion of codes, standards, and best practice for the production and provision of accessible formats
- consultation and collaboration with transcribers, service providers and users of accessible formats.

Members of UKAAF include organisations and individuals with an interest in the provision of quality accessible formats, such as service providers, transcribers, educators, researchers, print services, publishers, and end-users.

Through its leadership and representation, standards-setting, and by fostering a spirit of cooperation between members, UKAAF ensures that the needs and requirements of end-users are understood by service providers and transcribers to help improve the quality of accessible formats.

Please see the section on "Where to get further help" ([Page 13](#)) at the end of this document for more information about the benefits of being a member of UKAAF.

3 What is social media?

This is not a straightforward question as it can have many different but valid interpretations. A broad definition is: Sharing and receiving information using web-based communication tools.

Working from the definition given above, some common social media features will include:

- Personal user accounts
- Profile pages
- Personalisation
- Friends, followers, groups, hashtags
- Newsfeeds
- Notifications
- Information updating, saving or posting
- Like buttons and comment sections
- Review, rating or voting systems
- Blogs

Below is a list of some social media platforms which is not intended to be exhaustive.

1. Facebook: www.facebook.com
2. YouTube: www.youtube.com
3. WhatsApp: www.whatsapp.com
4. Instagram: www.instagram.com
5. Tumblr: www.tumblr.com
6. Twitter: www.twitter.com While there is TW-Blue, you can do more things on the actual Twitter website. Standard Twitter app works on an iPhone.
7. LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com
8. Snapchat: www.snapchat.com
9. Pinterest: www.pinterest.co.uk

While social media offer many positive aspects, it would be less than helpful to ignore some of the known issues. As providers are working to resolve these, many remain.

- Spam
- Cyberbullying/Cyberstalking
- Self-image manipulation
- Information overload
- Fake news
- Privacy/Security
- Cloned accounts

The two related but different approaches to using social media need to be considered.

1. Ensuring content is accessible,
2. How people with disabilities can use and access the content.

Much time and effort is spent on raising awareness concerning production of accessible content. It is equally important that information is available to those who wish to interact with this material, how the various platforms can be accessed and the technology to accomplish the task.

4 Making social media content accessible and usable

Below are some key features to take into account when preparing content:

Add image descriptions

Describing photos, or putting alternative text (alt text), for people who are blind or partially sighted is extremely important, as it

allows them to build up a mental picture of what someone who is sighted is seeing automatically.

If your graphic is very text oriented, include a link to your website in the post-copy where people can access all of the text on the image.

Don't think everything has to be described, pick out some key features

5 How to add image descriptions on different social media platforms

Facebook - for Facebook, you need to include a description in the text of your post. Write your post first and then tag the alt text onto the end of the post. Putting your image description in brackets, separating it from the rest of the post is something you may wish to consider. Once your photo is published, you can click on the photo, click "Options", then click "Change alt text".

Instagram - when adding a caption to your image, click on "Advanced settings" and then select "Accessibility". You will then have the option to "Write alt text".

Twitter - Like Instagram, you can add a separate image description to an image on; this saves you crucial time and characters. You need to activate the "Image Descriptions" feature, which you can find in "Twitter Settings", under the "Accessibility" tab.

You will then be prompted each time you upload an image to "describe this image".

6 Hashtags

When you are using hashtags, always capitalise the first letter of every word.

7 Don't go emoji-over-the-top

Text-to-speech software reads out a description for every single emoji which is used, so be careful with the number of emojis you include. For example, if someone puts four Star emojis, the software will read out: "star star star star".

8 Videos: when to audio-describe

Videos don't need to be audio-described, as long as they are audio-led. This means that the audio must be as important as what's on screen. The video should send the same message, both audibly and visually. If it doesn't, try to add a description of what happens in the video either as a follow-up tweet, or as part of the caption.

9 Subtitles

To make them fully accessible, videos should have subtitles where possible. There are many free available apps which make adding subtitles to your videos reasonably straightforward.

Appendix A

A Guide to Facebook Shortcut keys:

C - Comment on the selected story.

enter/return - See more of the selected story.

J and K - Scroll between News Feed stories.

L - Like or unlike the selected story.

O - Open an attachment from the selected story.

P - Post a new status.

Q - Search chat contacts.

S - Share the selected story.

/ - Search.

? - Open a list of these keyboard shortcuts while in News Feed.

Key Combinations for Web Browsers

Chrome for PC: Alt + #.

Firefox for PC: Shift + Alt + #.

Internet Explorer for PC: Alt + #, then Enter.

Chrome for Mac: control + option + #.

Firefox for Mac: control + option + #.

Safari for Mac: control + option + #.

Navigation Shortcuts

0 - Help.

1 - Home.

2 - Timeline.

3 - Friends.

5 – Notifications.

6 – Settings.

7 - Activity Log.

8 - About.

9 - Terms.

Using Keyboard Shortcuts with Screen Readers

Most common screen readers (example: VoiceOver, JAWS) support Facebook's keyboard shortcuts automatically.

If you're using JAWS 16.0.2136 or higher, you first need to turn on Allow Web Application Reserved Keystrokes in the JAWS Settings Center or Quick Settings.

To turn on shortcuts for JAWS:

Use Insert + F2.

Select Run Settings Center.

Search for "web app."

Check the box next to Allow Web Applications Reserved Keystrokes. Make sure that you edit the default file.

Appendix B

A Guide to Twitter Shortcut Keys using the Twitter website

If you ensure that nothing on the page is in focus, the keystrokes work.

Navigation

Shortcut help

? Next Tweet

J Previous Tweet

K Page down

Space Load new Tweets

Home

G+H

Explore

G+E

Notifications

G+N

Mentions

G+R

Profile

G+P

Likes

G+L

Lists

G+I

Direct Messages

G+M

Settings

G+S

Bookmarks

G+B

Go to user...

G+U

Display settings

G+D

Actions

N New Tweet

Cmd+Enter Send Tweet

M New Direct Message

/ Search

L Like

R Reply

T Retweet

S Share Tweet

B Bookmark

U Mute account

X Block account

Enter Open Tweet details

O Expand photo

I Open/Close Messages dock

Appendix C

Further information

Nattiq Technologies: nattiq.com has an application which works with the BrailleSense Polaris braille display.

10 Where to get further help

UKAAF assists businesses and organisations by advising how to meet the needs of customers and clients with print disabilities; providing guidance on how to source and provide quality accessible formats like large print, audio, braille, electronic file formats and Easy Read; and helping you to understand your responsibilities as a service provider.

Through our website and magazine, members will also gain access to:

- findings from public consultations and end-user research
- research and innovation in accessible formats
- information on suppliers of transcription services
- guidance and advice on standards for accessible formats
- opportunities to review and help to develop standards and guidance.

In addition to supporting service providers and transcribers, UKAAF also represents people with print disabilities. We believe that because format quality matters, end-users should have genuine input into the development of standards for accessible information. By collecting and sharing users' views with service providers and transcribers we can help them to deliver a quality service which meets users' needs.

There are many benefits of being a member of UKAAF, not least to demonstrate your commitment to quality accessible formats. For more information visit us at www.ukaaf.org.

11 Your feedback is welcome

We would welcome your views on this guidance, any suggestions for additions, or case studies of how this guidance has helped you. You might like to share your experience in an article in our magazine 'Format Matters'.

You can phone, email or write to us - our details are at the back, or use the feedback form on our website www.ukaaf.org. If you find UKAAF's guidance valuable, please encourage others to join by visiting our website.

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