

University of Memphis

University of Memphis Digital Commons

Between the Stacks

University Libraries

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Between the Stacks, 02-2022

Anna Swearngen

Ashley Roach-Frieman

Michelle Dry

Accessibility Committee

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Between the Stacks

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Sandbox Starter: Intro to Krita** - Get started with this graphic software - Feb. 14, 2:30pm, *the sandbox*.
- **Reconnecting on Campus: Developing Students' Connections with the UofM Academic Experience** - Feb. 18, 11am-Noon, via Zoom - [Learn more>](#)
- **Maker Monday: DIY T-Shirt!** - Learn how to use a vinyl cutter and heat press to create a unique t-shirt design - Feb. 21, 2:30-3:30pm, *the sandbox*.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to Our New Employees

- **George Flagg** joined Admin as the new Mail Clerk in December 2020. Welcome!
- **Britt Burns** joined Cataloging as the new Metadata & Catalog Librarian in January 2022. Welcome!
- **Benjamin Ferkin** joined ILL as the new LAII in January 2022. Welcome!
- **Shea Stoddard** joined Circ as the new Reserves Room Manager in January 2022. Welcome!
- **Michelle Dry** joined Admin as the new Community Relations Coordinator in January 2022. Welcome!

Employee Changes

- Congratulations to **Paula Phillips** who is now a Library Assistant III in Interlibrary Loan.
- Best wishes to **Michael Harris**, who is leaving us on February 4.

Libraries Magazine

A digital Libraries magazine is in the works, featuring new employees, changes since 2019, and more. We hope to send the first edition out before the end of the Spring semester.

We're looking for articles for future editions, as well as a fun & creative title, so if you have ideas or suggestions or are interested in writing, please let Michelle Dry or Anna know.

Professional headshots are available at no charge for current faculty & staff to be used in connection with the UofM only. If you are a new employee or need an updated one, you can [schedule a headshot here](#) for February 15, March 29, or March 30.

ACCESSIBILITY

Text Alternatives for Images

- Ashley Roach-Freiman

One of the easiest ways to make web-based materials more accessible is to add alt-text to any images you include in your content. When a screen reader scans a website, it reads the text, but not the images. Using alt-text allows your image to be accessible by communicating information about the text via screen reader and providing a description when images won't load.

ACCESSIBILITY (CONT.)

Think about it this way: why did you include images? Do the images add information, or are they simply decorative? If they convey important information, wouldn't you want all of your visitors to get the message?

Fortunately, most content-creation software now prompts you to add alt-text when you upload an image, so the *how* of doing it is much more streamlined. However, figuring out what to write can be challenging.

As you make decisions about including images in your content, you might ask yourself whether the image is actually necessary. Would your content be just as powerful without it?

If your image is a must, you should convey the information in one of two ways:

1. Use alt-text to convey brief but important information, such as for photographs, illustrations, etc.
2. Use descriptive text in the body of the content to relay complex information in the image (ideal for a flowchart or other information-based image).

Catherine McNally describes writing alt-text usefully in "[No More Excuses: The Definitive Guide to the Alt-Text Field](#)." She recommends thinking of alt text like writing a tweet, meaning keep it simple and succinct. McNally also gives good advice on rendering the conceptual content as well as the visual content, suggesting that you keep the audience and purpose in mind.

This can be hard to understand without the context of the web environment and some narration. Sometimes it is easier to understand if you get a sense of what **not** to do. I really like Stefany Newman's video at the [Web Accessibility Education channel on YouTube](#) demonstrating [Bad Alt Text Examples](#). She points out issues with alt-text on Amazon and describes why these errors make the content less accessible. For more detailed techniques and strategies for writing alt-text, consider checking the Harvard Digital Accessibility guide to [Writing Good Alt-Text](#) or consult the resources listed below.

Resources

- [Add default alternate text to an image in the Springshare Image Manager](#) (will need to log in to LibApps to view)
- [WebAIM: Alternative Text](#)

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