Word 2013 & 2016: How to Make an Old Document Accessible

Contents

Four Easy Steps

Your boss just told you to make an old document accessible. What are you going to do? If you follow these four simple steps, you will have an accessible document in no time!

Step 1: Planning

This step is essential. The more time you invest in planning, the less time you'll have to spend fixing the document later. Here are some important questions to keep in mind:

1. How will the new accessible version look?

2. Does your manager want it to look as close to the original as possible, or should you update its appearance?

3. Is it already structured and organized correctly? If not, how will you make the necessary changes?

When you've made your planning decisions, make sure your template will give the look you want and meet the accessibility requirements. And remember, you can always modify an existing template, or just create a new one.

A helpful guide is the Accessibility Checker, located at the left side of the Productivity Tab, in the File Tools group. It informs of accessibility problems within the document, as well as how to fix it. For more information, see the Accessibility Checker module of this training.

Step 2: Save the File with a New Name

To create a working copy of the original file, in the **File Tools** group of the Productivity tab click **Save As**. Give this working copy a new, descriptive name so that you will be able to distinguish it from the original. You might just add "-working-copy" to the end of the original filename.

Step 3: Eliminate All Previous Formatting

In the working file, follow these steps:

1. Select all of the contents of your file. To do this with a keystroke, press **Ctrl+A**.

2. In the **File Tools** group of the Productivity tab, click **Clear All**. This will clear all the formatting from your document.

3. Save the file.

Step 4: Style Your Document

In this step, apply styles to the now-unformatted working copy to give it the look you want and the structure it needs to be accessible. Because the new, plain text document lacks formatting, refer to the original file as a guide for determining structure and choosing styles.

Here's a shortcut you may want to consider as you format your new version: Start by selecting all the text and applying the style that will be used most often. Usually that style would be either Normal or Body Text. Then go back and add headings and other styles where they are needed.

And don't forget, you can never hit 'save' too many times!

Conclusion

This concludes our module on how to make an old document accessible.