To: Faculty & Staff
From: OIT & Accessible Technology Initiative
Date: March 27, 2017
RE: Email for Everyone: Creating Accessible Email Messages

Why Create Accessible Email?

We send email because we have a message that needs to be delivered, but not everyone can access information using vision alone. Email messages need to be readable for individuals with vision impairment/blindness, and anyone who relies on a screen reader to access the information.

What Are the Common Issues?

A common issue is sending messages that are designed as a flyer and pasted into the email message as an image. Screen readers cannot read the text in an image. If your message is designed and saved as an image, provide alternative text beneath the image that may be read by Outlook's screen reader feature.

Steps for Creating Accessible Email Messages

1. Choose HTML format rather than plain text or Rich Text.

2. Choose easy to read fonts such as Arial or Verdana, and a point-size with a 10-point minimum (12 is best).

3. Use good color contrast such as black on white and do not convey information using color alone. Avoid background images.

4. Images must have Alt Text and text wrapping should be In Line With Text.

5. If the message is an image, such as a picture of a flyer, add alternative text that conveys the same information.

6. Always provide contact information with each message.

7. Use meaningful hyperlink text that briefly describes the link destination.

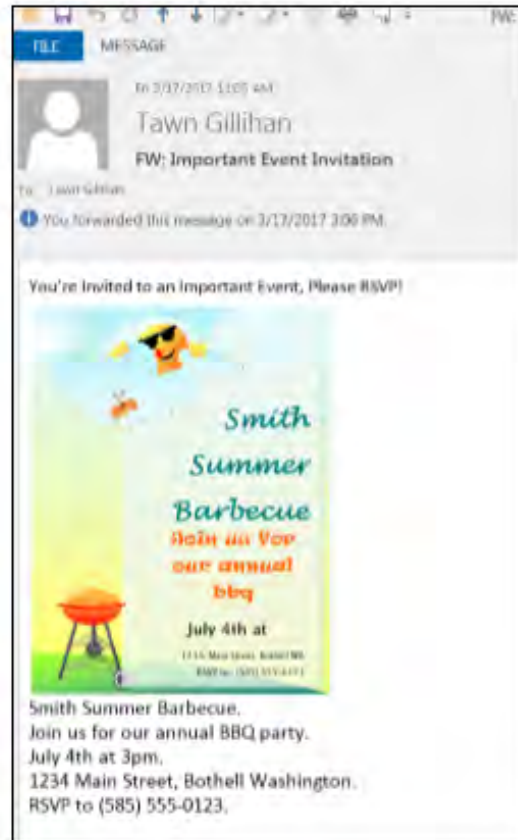8. All attachments should be accessible.

Examples of Inaccessible and Accessible Email Messages

This email message is an image only and cannot be read by a screen reader.
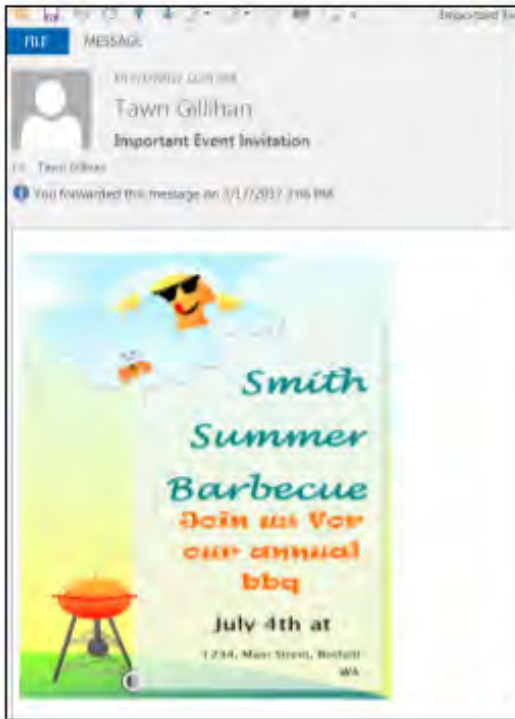
This email message includes alternative text beneath the image. This message can be read by a screen reader.

When sending email messages for distribution to the campus, please be sure to include readable text in the body of the message.

It is important that we design our messages with our audience in mind, including those who cannot rely on vision alone to access your message.

For more information, or for assistance with creating accessible email, please contact Tawn Gillihan at (209) 667-34170 or tgillihan@csustan.edu.

- Stanislaus State Accessibility Site
- Infographic on Creating Accessible Emails
- Video Tutorial for Creating Accessible Email