





Accessible Web Updates: Best Practices and Common Mistakes

Headings

 Dos	 Don'ts
Start the webpage with a Heading 2 for new pages and blog posts. Use Heading 3 for Job Postings. <i>(Note: Sitefinity automatically generates Heading 1 and Heading 2 based on page title and template.)</i>	Do not begin a page or blog post with Heading 1 . Do not start Job Posting with Heading 1 or 2 .
Always follow a proper heading hierarchy : <i>Heading 2 → Heading 3 → Heading 4</i> . Choose a heading level based on structure and content, not appearance.	Do not skip heading levels or use headings just to change font size or color. Headings are for structure, not design.
Ensure that content follows each heading : either a sentence or a subheading at the next level. This helps screen readers understand the page structure.	Do not leave a heading without any content below it. Empty headings or back-to-back headings without body text create confusion for users of screen readers.

Text Formatting

 Dos	 Don'ts
Use UPPERCASE only for abbreviations or acronyms (e.g., CEC, DOE, SHSAT).	Do not write full words, names, or sentences in ALL CAPS. It can be hard to read and sounds like shouting to screen readers.
Avoid underlined text. Only hyperlinks use underlines online.	Do not underline regular text. Users often mistake underlined text for hyperlinks.
Use bold and italic formatting only to highlight keywords or short phrases, not full sentences.	Do not bold or italicize entire blocks of text. It reduces readability and defeats the purpose of emphasizing key points.

Use a single line break (press Enter once) between paragraphs. For visual spacing between text and elements like images, use one empty paragraph, no more.	Do not press Enter multiple times to add space between elements. This can create unnecessary empty paragraphs that clutter the layout.
Make sure that blank lines are formatted as <i>Paragraph</i> , not <i>Heading</i> . This avoids false heading structure and screen reader confusion.	Do not use a heading for spacing. Headings must be used only for actual section titles.
Make sure your list looks like one complete list with no gaps or spacing. If it looks broken or scattered, fix it before publishing. Clean it up so it looks like one full list.	Do not ignore unusual gaps in your lists in random places. This can be a sign of a bigger issue. It will confuse screen readers and look unprofessional. <div data-bbox="951 615 1380 997" data-label="Complex-Block"> <p>General Duties and Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the supervision of the principal or of a teacher, relieves teachers of certain professional skills • Relieves teachers such as yard, hall, lavatory, study hall and other • Handles, stores, and distributes textbooks, instructional supplies • Assists with clerical work of a routine nature. • Assists in maintaining order in the lunchroom and facilitates lunch • Maintains school inventories. • Assists with school clerical work of a routine nature. • Checks reports, notes, library lists, etc. • Handles the arrival and departure of children transported to school • Receives the children in the lunchroom, directs them in washing, • Additional duties as requested by teacher or principals. • Facilitates the service of lunch to young children. Assists older children with utensils and the disposal of refuse. • Supervise and lead children in all daily activities, including entry, </div>

Images




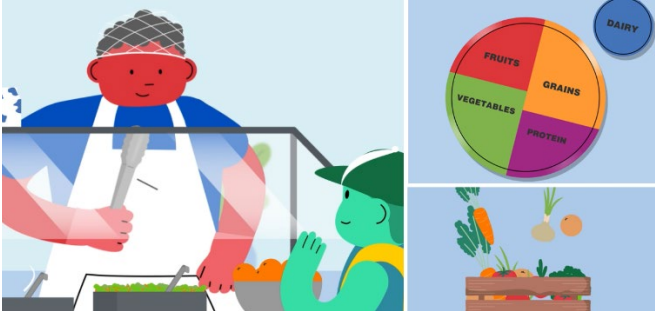




 Dos	 Don'ts
Add alt text to all images that describe what is in the image in 150 characters or less.	Do not leave images without alt text. This excludes users who rely on screen readers.
Write alt text that conveys the purpose or message of the image for someone who cannot see it. Think about what someone using a screen reader needs to know. Example: 	Do not write vague descriptions like “image” or “photo” in alt text. be specific and meaningful . Example:  Current alt text: Students eating lunch.



Illustration of fruits, veggies, and milk with text: 'Welcome to the Office of Food & Nutrition Services. Eat in school!'	Improved alt text for clarity: Illustration of a cafeteria worker serving food, a food group chart, and a crate of fresh vegetables.
<p>If the image includes text, captions, or labels, alt text should describe what that text says. Use single quotation marks around quoted content to avoid HTML code conflicts (e.g., <i>banner with text 'School Pride'</i> instead of <i>banner with text "School Pride"</i>).</p> <p>Example:</p>  <p>Alt text: Clipart-like graphic of a nurse/medical professional saying, 'Get vaccinated,' while administering a vaccine to an older person.</p>	Do not use double quotation marks (" ") inside alt text. They can break the HTML and cause display issues.
Write alt text for images like charts or tables that describes the key message or takeaway. What someone looking at the image would understand?	Do not skip writing meaningful alt text for visuals just because the data is shown in a chart or graph. Screen reader users need to know what it says too.

Hyperlinks

 Dos	 Don'ts
Write understandable link text that clearly communicates the purpose or action of the link. A good link should make sense even when read out of context, like by a screen reader or in a list of links.	Do not use vague or generic phrases like "click here," "read more," or "learn more." They offer no context for screen reader users.
Avoid generic links like "click here" or "Learn more." Instead, describe what the visitor will	Do not hyperlink full paragraphs or large blocks of text. keep links concise and focused.

<p>find or do (e.g., “Download the application form” or “Read about kindergarten enrollment”).</p>	
<p>Email addresses should be formatted as clickable links (e.g., email@example.com becomes email@example.com).</p> <p>In Sitefinity highlight the email address, click on <i>Create a Link</i> from toolbar. Then, copy email to <i>Link to...</i> field, and press <i>Insert link</i> button.</p> 	<p>Do not leave email addresses as plain text. Users cannot click to email and must copy and paste manually.</p>
<p>Always link directly to the page URL. Do not use Safe Links or redirect URLs. This helps with clarity, accessibility, and trust.</p> <p>Copy text from email to Sitefinity editor and hover over every URL. If in the popup you see “Original URL: https://...” then this is a Safe Link URL. Use Safe Link Decoder to find the original URL and use it in your web update instead.</p>	<p>Do not paste Safe Link URLs in the link field. They can appear suspicious or hard to understand to users. Microsoft Safe Links (from Defender for Office 365) are for internal email protection and should never be used in live website links.</p> <p>If copying text into your webpage from an email (or that may have been added to your source content document from an email), hover over the linked text to confirm that the hyperlink is the direct link, and that you do not see Safelink text. If in doubt, open the link and paste in the URL that you arrive at from your browser window.</p>
<p>Make each hyperlink unique by using informative link text that clearly identifies its destination or purpose.</p> <p>Even if multiple links lead to the same website (e.g., Pexels, Wikipedia), differentiate them by including context like the photographer’s name, image description, or specific page title (e.g., Photo by Max Fischer on Pexels)</p>	<p>Do not use identical link text for different URLs in the same section or page.</p> <p>This creates confusion for screen reader users and violates accessibility best practices, since identical link text should always lead to the same page.</p>

Review Before Publishing

 Dos	 Don'ts
Always preview the page before publishing to make sure formatting, layout, and structure are visually and functionally correct.	Do not skip the preview step. What looks fine in the editor might display incorrectly on the live site.
Use the WAVE Evaluation Tool to check for accessibility issues. Open the Details tab in the WAVE report and review any flagged errors before publishing.	Do not ignore accessibility tools like WAVE. These tools can catch common issues you might miss.
Test all hyperlinks on the page to confirm they are working and point to the correct page, no broken links.	Do not publish without clicking through all links. broken or misdirected links damage user trust and experience.
Review the page for clarity and consistency. If something looks confusing or seems visually out of place, it may also present an accessibility issue.	Do not assume visual oddities are harmless. If something looks awkward, it may confuse both sighted users and assistive tech.
Only publish after a full review. Editors are responsible for ensuring any website content updates they execute are complete and error-free.	Do not rush to publish without double-checking content accuracy, link functionality, and overall accessibility.