



Selecting Type for Print and Web Publishing

Introduction

Accessibility, as it applies to print and Web publishing, is the degree to which materials on the Web and in print are usable by the greatest number of people possible. The Center on Disability Studies (CDS) Media Center (<http://www.media.cds.hawaii.edu/>) provides resources and information regarding print and Web accessibility.

This Tip Sheet, provided by the Media Center, is intended as a brief introduction to these topics. Where appropriate, this document includes links to additional resources (such as the WCAG 2.0). The Tip Sheet begins with a Glossary of Terms, and is followed by an introduction to Print and Web Accessibility, and tips for making accessible print and Web documents. We hope that this Tip Sheet will provide a brief guide to accessible print and Web publishing.

Glossary of Terms

Point Size: the overall size of a font in points (1/72 in)

X-height: the height of the lower-case “x” in a particular font

Serifs: typographic structures at the end points of letter forms (such as in Times, Georgia, etc). Fonts which include serifs are called “Serif Fonts” while those that do not are referred to as “Sans-Serif Fonts”.

EM Units: a unit of measure for Web fonts which equals the current font size. A font size of 1.5em equals 1.5 times the users’ current default font size. Learn more about using EM units here: <http://www.w3.org/WAI/GL/css2em.htm> .

Cascading Style Sheets: cascading style sheets or CSS is a formatting language used to control the presentation of HTML and XHTML documents. Learn more about CSS here: <http://www.w3.org/Style/CSS/> .

Print Publishing

The readability of type for print materials is dependent on a number of factors including: point size, x-height, the presence of serifs, and more.





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Tips for Print Publishing

1. Choose a font size readable for the font family you've chosen. The examples provided below are included as a guide:

Sans-Serif Fonts	Serif Fonts
Arial: 11.5pt	Times: 12pt
Verdana: 10.5pt	Georgia: 11pt
Tahoma: 11pt	

2. Run a test print to determine if print is large enough to insure adequate readability. If you have to strain to read the test print, the type is probably too small.
3. Provide print materials in alternate formats such as large print (14pt or larger), Braille, CD-ROM, etc.

Web Publishing

The readability of type on the Web is a function of screen resolution, monitor size, and the typographic features discussed above. One advantage of Web publishing is fonts can be sized using relative units such as percentage and EM units—so users can adjust font size in the Web browser. Learn more about using UM units here: <http://www.w3.org/WAI/GL/css2em.htm>.

Tips for Web Publishing

1. Use system fonts or specify a default font-family for all font styles.
2. Use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) to control the presentation of information: i.e. font size, leading, font color, etc. For specific guidelines and instructions, please refer to the World Wide Web Consortium's CSS information page: <http://www.w3.org/Style/CSS/>, and the document titled "CSS Techniques for WCAG 2.0" available here: <http://www.w3.org/WAI/GL/WCAG20-TECHS/css.html>.
3. Use relative units for ALL font sizes (% or EM units) so users can adjust the size of fonts using readily-accessible browser controls.
4. Publish documents in PDF format to ensure that all fonts appear as intended.

For more information about Web accessibility, please refer to the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) available here: <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/>. Also, the Center on Disability Studies publishes a guide to accessibility titled "A Model for Accessibility" available here: <http://www.cds.hawaii.edu/products/model-accessibility>.

