

# Hints for Creating Accessible Emails and Forms

The following tips are designed to assist you with creating emails and forms for people with disabilities and that are compatible with assistive technology, such as Windows Narrator and Apple VoiceOver screen readers.

1. **Use colors with a high degree of contrast against background colors for text and other elements and avoid using color alone to convey meaning.**

When communicating with color, please include a secondary element (e.g., shape or style differences).

2. **Add descriptive text for images.**

When you include an image that is relevant to understanding the text, enter a description in the 'alt text' box of the image. The descriptor should clearly identify the content of the image for people using screen reading software. If the image is for decorative purposes only, you may leave the text box blank.



Align ≡ + ≡

[Change image](#)

**Alt text** Independence Hall in Philadelphia

ACTION

Image link Open web page ▾

Url

[Link file](#)

### 3. Include meaningful descriptions for web links

When you use a web link (URL) in a paragraph, table, list or with an image, the URL also appears in the 'Text to Display' box. Replace the URL with a description of the web link that provides context for people using screen reading software.

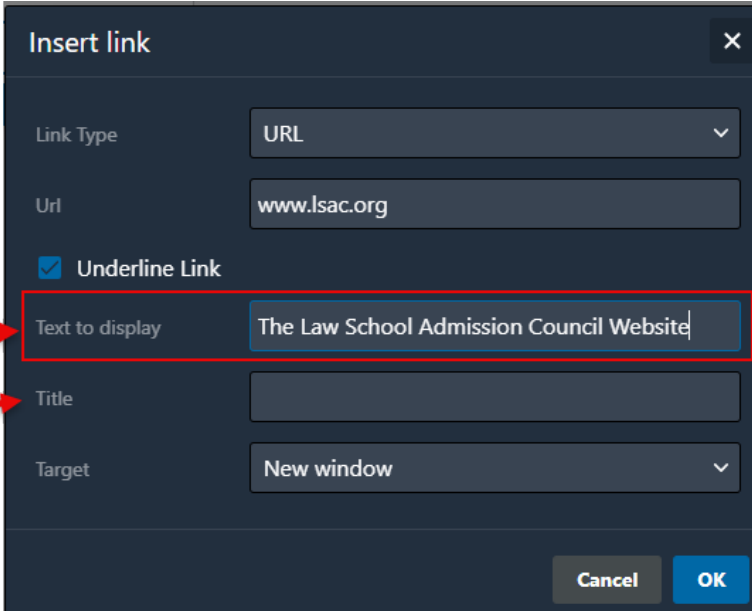
#### Not Recommended:

- To learn more about the Law School Admission Council, visit [www.lsac.org](http://www.lsac.org)

#### Recommended:

- To learn more about the Law School Admission Council, visit [the Law School Admission Council website.](http://www.lsac.org)

**Tip:** The 'Title' field is intended for mouseover hover text, but the mouseover hover text functionality is inadequate to satisfy the needs of individuals using assistive technology.



The image shows a dark-themed 'Insert link' dialog box. It contains the following fields and options:

- Link Type: URL
- Url: www.lsac.org
- Underline Link
- Text to display: The Law School Admission Council Website
- Title: (empty)
- Target: New window
- Buttons: Cancel, OK

Two red arrows point to the 'Text to display' and 'Title' fields with the following annotations:

- Use meaningful display text (pointing to 'Text to display')
- Leave the 'Title' field blank (pointing to 'Title')

#### 4. Add structure to your content using headings

Structure your content using headings to ensure that assistive technology correctly conveys the information hierarchy. When you add a title block, the default setting is 'H1', which denotes heading level 1, should be the main topic of your content. Limit use of the 'H1' heading to a single instance in each email or form. Use subsequent title blocks in the same email or form for subheadings and use heading levels 'H2' and 'H3' to accurately convey the content hierarchy.

The screenshot shows the header of an email from Newtown University. At the top is the university logo. Below it is the main heading 'Title H1 Visit Agenda'. This is followed by two subheadings: 'Title H2 Morning Activities' and 'Title H2 Afternoon Activities'. Under 'Morning Activities', there are two items: 'Welcome Session' and 'Campus Tour', both enclosed in a red box with the label 'Paragraph block (or Title H3)'. Similarly, under 'Afternoon Activities', there are two items: 'Meet the Professors' and 'Classroom Participation', also enclosed in a red box with the label 'Paragraph block (or Title H3)'.

#### 5. Describe Video Links in Emails

When you add a video link to an email, please provide text directly above the video conveying that there is a video link. The video link to the email should also include the title of the video, to ensure that the information is properly conveyed to the user.

The screenshot shows an email body. It starts with a personalized greeting 'Dear [First Name],'. Below this is the text 'Thank you for your interest in Newtown Law School!'. A red arrow points from this text to a red-bordered box containing the text: 'To help you in your application process, we have included the following video link titled *'Introduction to Law Hub'*.' Below this text is a video player thumbnail. The thumbnail features several circular portraits of diverse individuals surrounding a central play button icon. The text 'Powered by LSAC' is visible at the bottom of the thumbnail.

## 6. Use Rows and Columns Thoughtfully

When designing emails and forms, always plan related content such that it is communicated in the proper order for people who use assistive technology. The 'Rows' option allows you to format multiple rows containing one column to a maximum of four columns in forms and six columns in emails. If your email or form design has multiple rows and columns, please include each header with its corresponding content in the same 'container' so that assistive technology functionality is enabled (e.g., screen reading software functionality will be able to read your information in the correct order).

### Proper use of rows and columns:

Include the first set of related information (title, content and images) in the first container on the left, the second set of related information in the second container, and so on for each subsequent container.

Title, Image and Paragraph in one container.

Title, Image and Paragraph in one container.

**Newtown Law School**



Located in scenic Bucks County

**Take a trip to Philadelphia**



Visit historic sites such as Independence Hall in nearby Philadelphia.

### Improper use of rows and columns:

In this example, the titles are in the first row and their corresponding content is in the second row. Assistive technology such as screen readers for visually impaired users will read the following information out of order as: Column 1 Title, Column 2 Title... Column 6 Title, then go to Column 1 content, Column 2 content... Column 6 content.

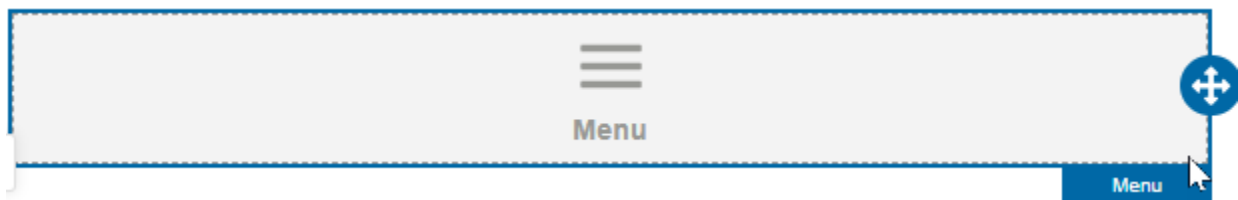
Each element is in its own container.  
This is not recommended for accessibility.

Column 1 Title	Column 2 Title	Column 3 Title	Column 4 Title	Column 5 Title	Column 6 Title
Column 1 content	Column 2 content	Column 3 content	Column 4 content	Column 5 content	Column 6 content

**Tip:** If your content consists of tabular data, use a Table. Tables are formatted such that row and column relationships, including their associated headers, are conveyed to assistive technologies.

### 7. Avoid the Mobile Menu Button in Emails and Forms

The mobile menu button (sometimes known as a hamburger menu) that adds navigation links within an email or form is not accessible for people who cannot use a mouse and rely on an alternative input device (e.g., keyboard navigation), including users that utilize a screen reader. For this reason, please do not use the menu button.



### 8. Test your results.

Review your outcomes, including your use of color, image alt text, heading structure, and descriptive link text, and use a screen reader such as Windows Narrator or Apple VoiceOver to review your emails and forms before they are sent.