Microsoft Office 2013 Accessibility Checker

Microsoft Office now includes an easy-to-use Accessibility Checker tool to help with making sure your Word, PowerPoint, and Excel 2013 documents are Section 508 compliant, i.e., accessible to people with disabilities.
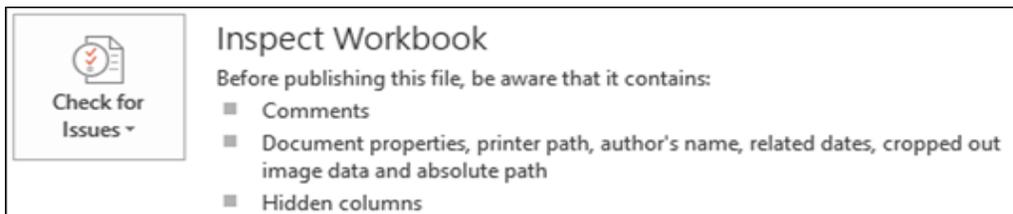
Accessibility Checker

Like the spell checker that helps to identify possible spelling errors, the Accessibility Checker in Word, PowerPoint, and Excel helps you create accessible content by:

- Identifying issues that might cause problems for people with disabilities in reading or using the content; and
- Providing a task pane that enables you to view and fix these issues before the content is finalized.

Please note that the Accessibility Checker is **not** a substitute for using the HHS 508-compliance checklists. However, it is a great supplemental tool for easily finding and fixing accessibility issues that you might overlook when using the checklists. The Accessibility Checker not only finds accessibility problems, but also explains why the problem needs to be fixed and how to fix it in easy steps.

Using the Accessibility Checker

1. Click "File" then "Info" in your Word, PowerPoint, or Excel file.
2. Click on the "Check for Issues" button, and then select the "Check Accessibility" option from the menu.

3. Your document reappears, and the Accessibility Checker task pane appears along the right side of your screen, showing the Inspection Results.
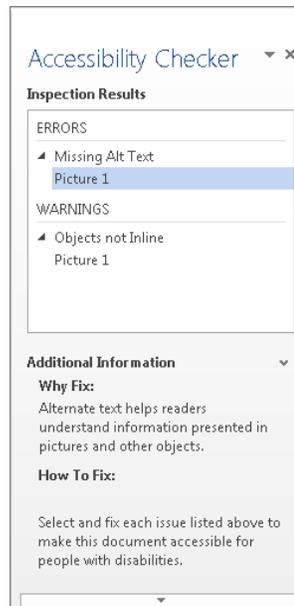
4. Click on a specific issue to see Additional Information and steps you can take to change the content. There are three categories of issues that people with disabilities might experience with your document when using assistive technology, such as screen readers.

   - **Error** – Content that makes the document difficult or impossible to read and understand.
   - **Warning** – Content that in most, but not all, cases makes the document difficult to understand.
   - **Tip** – Content that people with disabilities can understand, but could be presented in a different way to improve the user's experience.

Microsoft Office 2013 Accessibility Checker

Accessibility Checker Errors, Warnings, and Tips

The following table gives a brief description of each accessibility rule that the Accessibility Checker looks for, grouped by category of issue.

Accessibility Rule	Category	Program	Accessibility Checker checks that:
Add alternative text ("alt text") to all objects, such as images, graphics, grouped images, tables, and non-text elements that convey information.	Error	Word PowerPoint Excel	All objects use alt text. Alt text doesn't contain an image or file extension.
Specify column header rows in tables.	Error	Word PowerPoint Excel	The top row of table is set to "Repeat Header Rows" in the Table Tools Layout tab or in Table Properties (Word).
			The Header Row box is selected in the Table Tools Design tab for each table in a slide deck (PowerPoint).
			The Header Row box is selected in the Table Tools Design tab for each block of cells marked as a table (Excel).
All slides must have titles.	Error	PowerPoint	Each slide in a deck has a title.
Use heading and paragraph styles, as well as tables of contents, in long documents to provide structure.	Error	Word	Headings, a Table of Contents, or both are used in the document to help organize the content.
Use hyperlink text that provides a meaningful description of the link destination (i.e., a name or phrase), instead of only the URL.	Warning	Word PowerPoint Excel	Link text includes a ScreenTip (text similar to alt text that appears when you point your cursor over the link) **and** matches the link destination.
Use a simple structure (design) for tables to make them easy to navigate.	Warning	Word PowerPoint Excel	There are no issues that cause tables to be non-rectangular, such as split cells, merged cells, or nested tables.
Do not use blank cells, rows, or columns to format tables.	Warning	Word PowerPoint Excel	There are no entirely blank rows or columns in a table.
Rename the default names in sheet tabs, using unique names.	Warning	Excel	All sheets with content in a workbook have a name other than "Sheet 1," "Sheet 2," etc.
Do not use repeated "blanks" in a document.	Warning	Word	There are no runs of blank spaces, tabs, or carriage returns.
Use short titles in headings—generally no more than 20 words or one line.	Warning	Word	Headings aren't too long.
Set text wrapping around objects to "In Line with Text" or "Top and Bottom."	Warning	Word	Objects have text wrapping set to "In Line with Text" or "Top and Bottom."
Include closed captions if you use audio or video in a document.	Tip	Word PowerPoint Excel	All audio and video clips in the document have closed captioning.
Ensure that the reading order of each slide in a deck is logical.	Tip	PowerPoint	Text, objects, and content in each slide appear to be in a logical reading order.
Ensure that each slide in a deck has a unique title.	Tip	PowerPoint	Each slide in a deck (excluding any blank slides) has a unique title.
Use a logical structure (i.e., reading order) for tables to make them easy to navigate.	Tip	Word	The reading order of each table is logical for the language (for English, left to right, top to bottom), and the tab order is not circular.
Do not use image watermarks.	Tip	Word	No watermarks are used in the document.
Ensure that all heading styles are in a logical order; for example, Heading 4 is a child of Heading 3, not Heading 2.	Tip	Word	All headings follow a logical order, from Heading 1 to Heading 2, from Heading 2 to Heading 3, and so on.