Certifying External links and Accessibility to Publish

When you publish a news release in Web CMS, you will be asked to **certify** that the news release (it's a web page, remember) meets requirements for:

- **external links**
- **accessibility**

NOTE: Web CMS records that you certified these.

CAVEAT

- This document was created as a quick overview for EPA press officers.

- This deliberately does NOT cover everything EPA staff need to know about external linking or accessibility, **and should not be used as a general training.**

- Please go to the last page of this document for links to complete information.

External Links

External Links

- In general, EPA cannot guarantee the quality and integrity of linked sites.

- **However we have a duty to judge the quality of an external site before linking.**

- "We" means you.

External Sites

- **Links to other EPA pages or other U.S. federal web sites are OK.** usfederalagency.gov/whatever is fine.

- US federal sites follow the same basic rules about content, ethics, and so on. So they are "family."

- Also OK:
  - Supreme Court, nonpartisan Congress sites.
  - Accounts on social media *that EPA manages* (e.g., twitter.com/epa, facebook.com/epa)

External Sites

- Yes, you **CAN** link to non-US-federal external sites **BUT** you need to consider the page you are linking to.

- Non-US-federal sites are:
    - foreign governments
    - State or local government
    - tribes
    - companies
    - "partner", MOA/Us, grantees
    - organizations
    - social media
    - schools
    - contests
    - *anything else*

- Non-federal sites don't necessarily follow the same basic rules as we do. So they aren't "family."

What do you do?

- Have a clear reason why you are linking to the site, <u>in the context of your news release.</u>

- <u>Link directly to a content page</u>. Avoid linking to the home page,* then expect your readers go find what you mean. *But also... (next page).*

*this includes linking internally to EPA sites as well. For example, link to a content page, not just energystar.gov

DON'T LINK TO SITES THAT...

- Advocate a specific political party position.

- Contradict EPA emergency directives or an Agency policy or decision.

- Charge a fee, or require a password.

- Require special technology or software to read content.

- Contain unvetted EPA content (e.g., epaosc.org)

TRY NOT TO LINK TO SITES THAT...

- Solicit membership in an organization.

- Have solicitations to buy products or services.

- Make requests for contributions.

- Advise people to contact an elected representative.

When in doubt:

- **Be alert!**

- If you are asked in a news release to link to an external site that seems doubtful, <u>confirm with press office management.</u>

- **Do not risk a mistake.**

- There are many other external link considerations. Please see the list under **1.b.** on page
https://www.epa.gov/home/procedure-external-site-links#required

Accessibility

ACCESSIBILITY

- Accessibility basically means **no one is left out of understanding our content.**

- Required by law under "Section 508" of the Rehabilitation Act.

- Also required by EPA web policy.

Accessibility

- There are many requirements!

- But … **probably only two situations in a news release** where you should know what to do:

  - **Add alternate or "alt text" for photos.**
  - **Add text transcripts for audio files.**

- *It won't be hard, but you need to do it.*

ALT TEXT FOR PHOTOS

- Good alternative or "alt text" is a brief but adequate description of <u>what the photo shows, depending how you use the photo.</u>

- Alt text is not a second "title" -- that really doesn't describe what you see IN the photo.

ALT TEXT FOR PHOTOS

- Pretend you are looking over the shoulder of a blind person, and you are telling them about <u>what the photo shows</u>. That's what alt text does.

EXAMPLE:

GOOD ALT TEXT: "Administrator Gina McCarthy at the NASEO podium speaking before an audience."

BAD ALT TEXT: "Gina McCarthy"
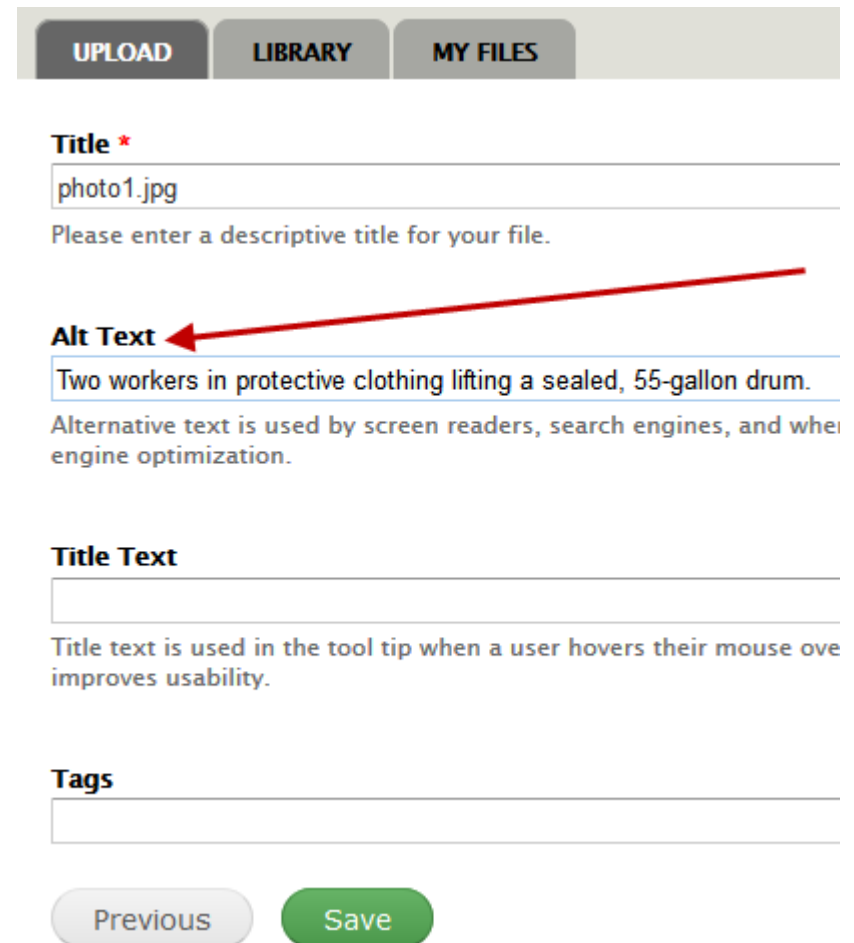
ALT TEXT -- TWO MORE

- But if it's just someone's face, use their name and maybe title. You don't need to add *Photo of.* EXAMPLE: "Administrator Gina McCarthy."

- If the photo shows COMPLEX information, such as a chart, graph, or map, avoid using alt text to document all the data points or visuals.

- Instead, make it so there's a link in the news release body TO THE INFORMATION.

ADDING ALT TEXT for IMAGES

- Add alt text for each photo as you upload it.

- There is a special field where you **type or paste in the alt text**. Web CMS will do the rest.

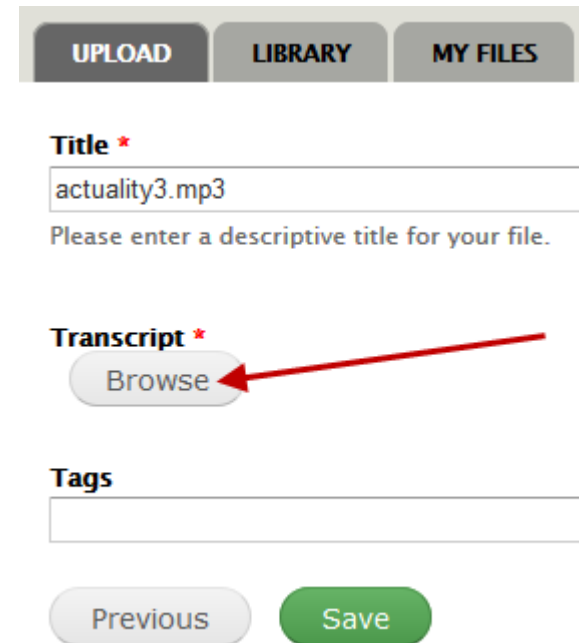- **See the main training for complete info on how to add photos.**

TEXT TRANSCRIPTS FOR AUDIO

- This is just a written-out version of what you hear on the audio file.

- This includes:
    - **spoken words** (e.g, a speech)
    - *important* **background sounds** for example "sounds of the bottling machinery"

- Pretend you are describing to a deaf person what you hear on the audio file. That's approximately what the transcript does.

ADDING A TEXT TRANSCRIPT

There are TWO STEPS:

- <u>STEP ONE.</u> Prepare the transcript file. You'll need <u>a separate transcript file for each audio file</u>. You can't just paste the transcript text like you do with alt text.

- <u>STEP TWO.</u> Upload the transcript file as you upload its audio file. Web CMS will do the rest.

- **See the main training for complete info on how to add audio files (actualities).**

UPLOAD	LIBRARY	MY FILES

Title *
actuality3.mp3
Please enter a descriptive title for your file.

Transcript *
Browse

Tags

Previous   Save

When in doubt:

- Here's a link to ALL the federal Section 508 / accessibility requirements:

  Subpart B — Technical Standards, §1194.22 (a-p)   Web-based intranet and internet information and applications. https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/communications-and-it/about-the-section-508-standards/section-508-standards#subpart_b

- You can also contact us - see the next page.

MORE INFO

- This outline covered <u>just the basics</u>. Get complete info:

- **External linking**
  https://www.epa.gov/home/procedure-external-site-links

- **Accessibility**
  http://intranet.epa.gov/accessibility/checklist.html

- Other trainings for news releases & how to contact us.
  http://intranet.epa.gov/newsreleases