A Guide to Accessible Social Media Posts

Social media can be an effective way to disseminate research findings and provide training opportunities, seek or post job opportunities, build your researcher professional identity and network. By incorporating accessibility measures, posts can be made inclusive for all users. This guide, developed in collaboration with accessibility consultants All Able, focuses on making posts on LinkedIn and Twitter -- the most used platforms by Faraday Institution researchers -- accessible.

Content Creation

Images

When incorporating images in social media posts, it is important to consider accessibility by:

- Adding alt text. Alt text, also known as alternative text, provides a brief description of the image's appearance or purpose. It is read aloud by assistive technologies such as screen readers making the content accessible to visually impaired users. The description should be concise, yet informative enough to understand the context of the image.
- When using graphics, including images, text and/or branding in social posts, it is recommended to:
    - Use a colour contrast checker whenever text is present to ensure it can be easily read against the background colour.
    - Avoid overlapping images with text. When using images as background behind text, make sure the image is transparent enough for the text to still be easily readable. A colour contrast checker can also be used to ensure this.
    - Use easily readable fonts such as Arial or Calibri. Avoid cursive fonts that can be difficult to read for some people with dyslexia.

Videos

When posting a video, ensure viewers have the option to access closed captions or subtitles by:

- Using resources such as YouTube, but keep in mind that YouTube generated captions may not always be accurate. An alternative is to embed closed captions into the video to ensure the captions are correct. However, if the video will likely be watched in different languages, providing optional closed captions is a good option to avoid overlapping captions causing accessibility issues.
    - When posting videos on LinkedIn, upload them via YouTube to enable optional subtitles.
- If you choose to use music as well as a voiceover, choose a piece that is not too distracting and keep the volume low to avoid sensory overload or detracting from the key messages of the video.

When creating stories, reels or shorts (short videos, sometimes no longer than ten seconds) consider the following accessibility measures:

- Position your subtitles correctly by avoiding placement over other information and not placing them too close to the edges to prevent cropping.
- Use a solid colour background for the text.
- Use a colour contrast for text and background.
- Use legible text fonts.
- Use stickers for links, locations, or hashtags.

o Avoid placing them on the edge of the screen where people are likely to tap to the next story, or at the bottom of the screen where someone can message you – there is a higher chance of clicking the wrong thing.

Posts

To write accessible social media posts:

- Use clear and inclusive language. Avoid idioms or abbreviations that may not be understood by non-native speakers.
- Hashtags: keep them short and use #CamelCase to improve readability for those using screen readers. When using a hashtag containing multiple words, capitalise the first letter of each word in the hashtag, e.g. #CamelCase not #camelcase.
- Use emojis in a thoughtful manner. Try to stick to one or two emojis that cannot be misinterpreted. Placing emojis at the beginning or end of a post (instead of in the middle) is less disruptive for those using screen readers to read posts.
- When using links on Twitter or LinkedIn posts it is best practice to create short links with meaningful, concise wording, e.g., www.URL/accessibility rather than www.URL/accessibility-of-twitter-and-linkedin-and-instagram-and-pinterest-and-youtube'