

MS Excel: Accessibility Best Practices

Tables: Use Tables Titles and Avoid Blank Rows and Columns

1. One very common mistake is leaving column A blank (because it makes it look like a margin).
2. Place table titles in the first column (A) so screen readers can find them easily.
3. If the table does not display the full text, merge cells and center them by selecting the **Home** tab, then clicking on **Merge & Center**. Be sure to keep the original text in the first column.
4. **It's OK to have merged cells in titles, but do not merge cells in the data part of the table.**
5. Resize your rows and columns to provide spacing that makes the table readable (rather than using blanks to create your spacing).
6. If you have two or more tables on the same worksheet, leave a single blank row between each table. You can resize the blank row to create a space that is visually appealing.
7. Add an "End of Table" message in the row after the last row of a data table row. The text can be in white against a white background.

Table Cell Range and Header Cells: Define the Regions

1. You can use the **Names** feature to name a range of cells so that screen readers voice the names of header cells along with the value of each cell.
2. Select the top-left cell in your table. Don't count the titles, but do count all row and column headers as part of your table.
3. Go to the Formulas tab in the Ribbon, and choose **Name Manager** in the **Defined Names** group. Choose **New** in the top left corner.
4. A new dialog box opens. In the **Name** field, type **TitleRegion** then put a 1 if this is the first table on your worksheet, then a period, then the range of cells in your table from top left to bottom right (with a period in between), then another period, then the worksheet number. For example, your Title code might look like this:
TitleRegion1.a2.g7.2
5. Click OK and Close.

Images: Use Alt Text for Informative Images

1. Insert the image, then right-click and choose **Size and Properties**.
2. In the **Size and Properties** dialog box, choose the **Alt Text** tab. Type in a brief description with enough detail to explain the picture, then **Close** the dialog box.

Charts: Use Alt Text Descriptions

1. Right-click on the chart, select Format Chart, then Alt Text.
2. Complete the **Description** field (not the Title field).

Resources

http://go.illinois.edu/excel_resources

