

Dyslexia Style Guide

General style-guidelines for dyslexics

Colors

- Use dark colored text on a light (not white) background.
- Avoid white backgrounds. White can appear too dazzling. Use cream or a soft pastel color.
- Avoid green and red/pink as these provide problems for color-blind individuals.
- Make sure that it is possible for users to set their own choice of font style and size, background and print colors → Color preferences vary and some dyslexic people will have their own color preference

Font

- Font size should be 12-14 point. Some dyslexic readers may request a larger font, so it should also be resizable
- Try to use clear and evenly spaced fonts which are also commonly available (i.e.: Arial, Comic Sans, Verdana, Tahoma or Trebuchet)
- AVOID TEXT IN BLOCK CAPITALS: this is much harder to read.
- Avoid underlining and italics: these tend to make the text appear to run together. Use bold instead.
- For Headings, use larger font size in bold, lower case.
- Lines should not be too long: 60 to 70 characters.

Layout

- Boxes and borders can be used for effective emphasis.
- Use left-justified with ragged right edge.
- Avoid narrow columns (as used in newspapers).
- Avoid cramping material and using long, dense paragraphs: space it out.
- Line spacing of 1.5 is preferable.

- Use bullet points and numbering rather than continuous prose → Use numbered lists instead of bullet-points if there are more than 3 points. The Numbers provide a frame of reference for the reader.
- For long documents include a contents page at the beginning and an index at end.

Pictures and graphics

- No graphics behind text
- Use graphics and pictures to explain procedures or complicated information → Pictograms and graphics can also help to locate information.
- Use graphics, images, and pictures to break up text, while bearing in mind that graphics and tables may take a long time to download and very large graphics can make pages harder to read.

Other media

- Never use flashing text. Do not use animated or moving graphics unless the animation is necessary to illustrate important information, such as an animation demonstrating how a machine works. Even so, it is best to place the animation on a different page, or to set it up to start only when clicked.
- Moving text irritates the focus of the user, creates problems for people with visual difficulties and text reading software is unable to read it.
- Do not set up background music to play, unless the site gives the user a choice whether to turn it on.
- Where possible design web pages which can be downloaded and read off-line in a text reader friendly style.
- Websites should provide an option to print the page for reading

Writing style

- Text should be kept short and simple (see [BDA-Style Guide](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about-dyslexia/further-information/dyslexia-style-guide.html) [http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about-dyslexia/further-information/dyslexia-style-guide.html] and [Plain English Guide](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/howto.pdf) [http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/howto.pdf])
- Use short, simple sentences in a direct style.
- Avoid starting a sentence at the end of a line.
- Give instructions clearly. Avoid long sentences of explanation.
- Use active rather than passive voice.
- Avoid double negatives.
- Be concise.

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- Lists of 'do's and 'don'ts' are more useful than continuous text to highlight aspects of good practice.
 - Avoid abbreviations if possible or provide a glossary of abbreviations and jargon.
 - All contents should be accessible with a Screen reader

Navigation

- Navigation should be easy, logical and consistent.
- Contents links should show which pages have been accessed.
- Encourage the use of hyperlinks at the end of sentences.
- A site map is helpful.

Additionally to this Style-Guidelines it is recommended to follow the WCAG Guidelines to create accessible websites: <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/>

Sources and further information:

- <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about-dyslexia/further-information/dyslexia-style-guide.html>
- <http://webaim.org/simulations/dyslexia-sim.html>
- <http://www.dyslexic.com/downloads/Dyslexia-Disability-Friendly-Web-Sites.pdf>
- <http://www.dyslexia.com/library/webdesign.htm#Q981109>
- <http://accessites.org/site/2006/10/designing-for-dyslexics-part-1-of-3/>
- <http://www.dyslexia-parent.com/mag35.html>
- <http://uxmovement.com/content/6-surprising-bad-practices-that-hurt-dyslexic-users/>
- <http://www.angelfire.com/tn3/writing/DesignUsersReadDis.pdf>
- http://www.thepickards.co.uk/Articles/Designing_for_Dyslexia.cfm
- <http://www.ebility.com/articles/dyslexia.php>