



# DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY BY WECO ALTERNATIVE TEXT TAG BASICS

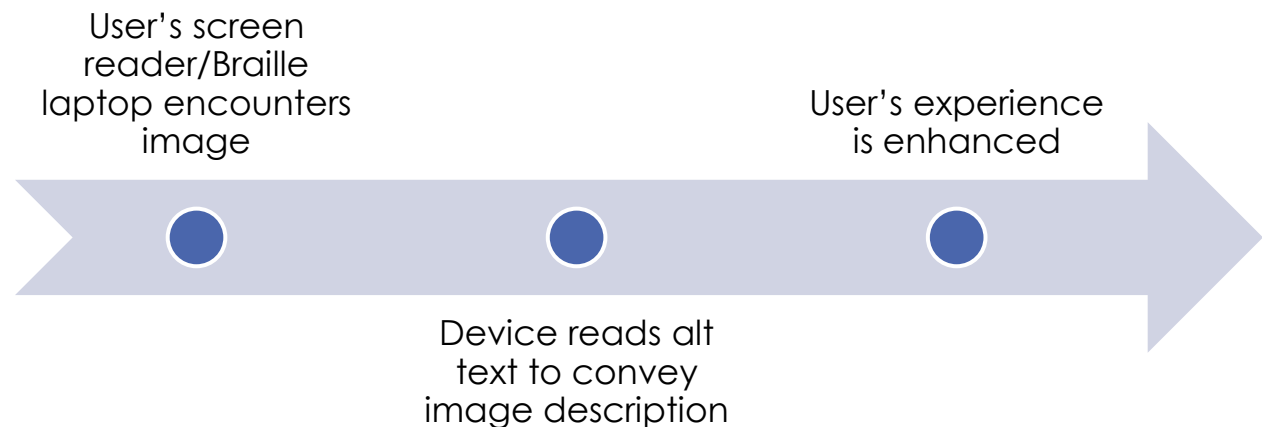
## WeCo Accessibility Learning Takeaway

### What is an alternative text tag and who uses them?

Alternative text tags, or “alt text” for short, make digital objects and images that are visual, available to nonvisual users. But alternative text also assists some users who **can see graphics or images visually** but **may have difficulty understanding what they are or what they represent**. This includes people living with some types of cognitive disabilities.

Alt text are classified as a “text alternative” according to the WCAG text alternatives are ways in which users who cannot perceive visual content, can receive visual information in different ways. This includes alternative text and other reading formats such as Braille.

### How alt text tags works:



## Basic tips for good alt text tags:

1. Convey the content and purpose of the image
2. Describe in clear, easy to understand language
3. Consider why the image is present and what the user needs to know



## Images that don't require alt text tags

1. If the image is part of a design, such as a page divider.
2. If the image is part of a link.
3. If adjacent text explains the image.
4. If the image is used for ambience alone.

## Using "null" tags

"Null" tags allow assistive technology to ignore images that do not convey meaning to the user. "Null" images are not the same as having no alternative text. Null designations direct assistive technology to skip over the image.

**IMPORTANT:** If there is no alternative text present for an image, and no "null" designation, assistive technology will still detect the image. Screen readers will read the image as "image" or "graphic." If a file name is present on the image or graphic, it may read out the file name through the screen reader, such as the file name for the graphic at right: "flowers000zcxt9H1Q.png"



## Short and long alt text tags

### Short

- Most web pages
- Most basic documents
- When the graphic is simple

### Long

- Graphics that “do” more
- Charts, graphs, tables
- When the graphic is more complex:
  - Lots of detail
  - An action or movement implied

## Automated Alt Text: the process still needs us

AI can be helpful in identifying images familiar to an algorithm, but it can totally miss the mark regarding context. Look at AI as an attempt to lighten your workload by trying to write my alternative text for you. Never assume it's going to get it correct.

**Always review autogenerated alt text before completing a web page, presentation, or document.**

## Your personal lens and writing alt text tags

How alternative text is written depends upon many things. The most important of all is your lens, or your view of the subject you're writing about. This is important to understand, because it will influence the choices you make about how you describe your subject.

Will your tags be long or short? Should they include a description of colors? Explain the scene pictured by focusing on the objects only, or talk about the action being shown? What about the emotion they convey?

In a world that is becoming more socially aware, it's important to consider how we describe our fellow human beings.

Example: What do we need to describe people in an alt tag to convey meaning? Are we making assumptions about them without really understanding how they might wish to be represented? What are the advantages and disadvantages of applying alt text in situations where we're not sure?