USC Libraries

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https://bit.ly/AltTextCCLI

Alternative Text Guidelines

- All images need alt text.

- Alt text should refer to relevant content provided by the image, rather than simply describing how the image looks.

- Alt text should not contain any extra or unnecessary information, and should not repeat information that is already provided in the text of the document or website.

- Do not start with "image of" or "picture of".

- Avoid images with text, but if necessary only include words in the image in the alt text.

- Be concise, 125-150 characters or under is ideal.

- Use proper capitalization and punctuation. End alt text with appropriate punctuation.

- For decorative images use null alt text attribute (alt=" ") by hitting the spacebar once, or check the "decorative image" option in rich content editors if available.

- For complex images provide a short description in the alt text and separately link to a long description in a detailed accessible text document or accessible data table.

- Alt text must be in the same language as the main content.

- Do not stuff alt text with keywords to promote search engine optimization (SEO).

Adapted from:

General Services Administration. (2025, January). *Authoring meaningful alternative text*. Section 508. https://www.section508.gov/create/alternative-text/