

# How to Implement Alt Text



## What Is Alt Text?

Alt text (alternative text), also known as "alt attributes", "descriptions", or "tags," are used within the HTML code of your website to describe a visual element, like a photo. Alt text is usually not provided for images that are purely decorative (like a logo).

### How to Add Alt Text to Your Images:

Most content management systems (CMSs) have functions that assist users to create and change their image's alt text. You can also update your alt text manually from your webpage's HTML code by switching over to HTML view. Free resources such as varvy.com can be used to review the current alt text applied to images on your website, and see which are not descriptive, or which are missing.

## Best Practices for Alt Text:

- **Be Specific** - Describe the image as clearly as possible using the image's subject and context to guide you.
- **Keep it Short** - Keep your alt text fewer than 125 characters as screen reading tools typically stop reading alt text at this length.
- **Avoid Keyword Stuffing** - Although alt text presents another opportunity to include your target keyword on a page, it is advisable to use them naturally. Your objective should be to have alt text that describes the image and (if possible) includes your target keywords.
- **Avoid Using "Picture Of..." Or "Image Of..."** - You don't need to say it is an image, as Google already knows that.

## Two uses of alt text:

1. **Accessibility** - Its original purpose is to make web pages accessible to both the visually impaired who use assistive devices such as screen readers, as well as users that use browsers that block images. This means that including alt text for your images ensures that all the content on your website is viewable to a broader audience.
2. **Your Google Ranking** - Using alt text can also help you improve your rankings in search results. While search engine image recognition technology has vastly improved, Google and other search engines still can't 'see' the images on a webpage and in most instances require alt text to provide more information. Without alt text, it's possible you could miss out on some keyword rankings.

- **Include For Buttons Too** - Image buttons should have an alt text that describes the function of the button like, "search", "apply now", "sign up," etc.
- **Decorative Images** - Alt text should not be used on images meant purely for decorative purposes and provide no useful information in helping users understand the content of the web page.

Michigan SBDC consultants are here to help assist you implementing alt text!

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