CALS Communicators Meeting: **Digital and Event Accessibility**

Marketing Team
Nicole Lederich, Jori Skalitzky, Emma Zuidema

Web Team
Mark Millard, Nate Barlow, Molly Keebler

November 4, 2026

Presenters

Marketing Team

- Nicole Lederich
- Jori Skalitzky
- Emma Zuidema

Web Team

- Mark Millard
- Nate Barlow

➢ If you have questions during the presentation, please type them in the chat

Accessibility at UW–Madison

- University-wide priority
- All digital tools and electronic resources used in university programs, services, and activities
- Ensuring equal access to programs and events is our shared responsibility and benefits everyone

Accessibility at UW–Madison

- In 2024, the Department of Justice (DOJ) passed a new digital accessibility rule for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requiring public universities' digital tools to be accessible starting **April 26, 2027**
- Launched UW-Madison Digital Accessibility Initiative (UDAI) implement recommendations
- USDA Civil Rights Compliance

Today's Agenda

- Digital Accessibility
  - Printed pieces, social media, flyers, email newsletters, website
- Event Accessibility
  - Event promotions and communications
- Website Accessibility
  - Friendly reminders
- Web Hosting Migration Timeline

- Examples included ☺

Digital Accessibility

Accessibility Do’s (and Don’ts)

- Branding
- Text, alt text
- Color contrast
- Links, buttons, QR codes
- Video captions
- Where should my information go?

➢ How to incorporate the do’s and don’ts

Accessibility Do's (and Don'ts) Branding

- Colors, fonts, and other elements created to work well together
  - Easier to make your content accessible
- Font: Red Hat Display, Red Hat Text



Badger Red
#C5050C



White
#FFFFFF



Dark Red
#9B0000

Light Gray
#E1E5E7



Black
#121212

brand.wisc.edu

Accessibility Do's (and Don'ts)
Text

- UW's official type faces prioritize readability while preserving personality
  - Red Hat Display → large sizes, headings
  - Red Hat Text → small sizes, body copy
- Avoid highly decorative, cursive, or thin fonts

- Bigger font size = easier readability ✅
- Small font sizes = hard to read ❌



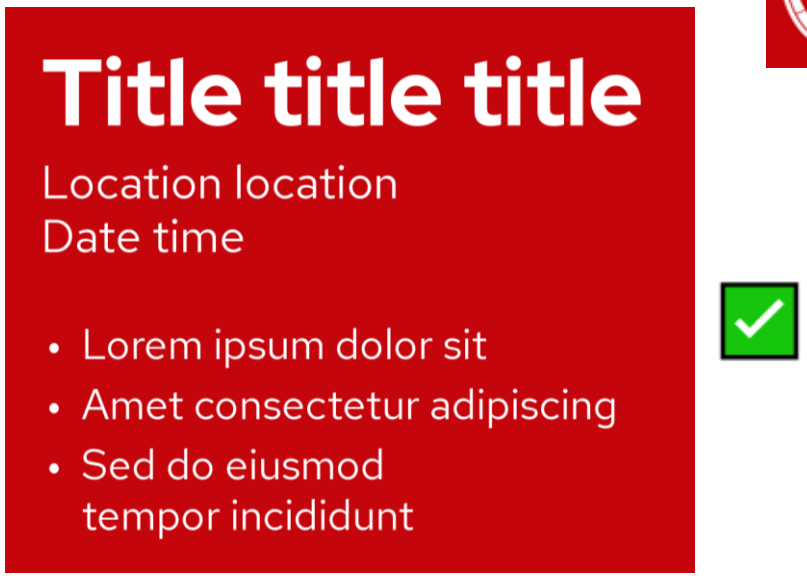
Easy to read

Hard to read

Accessibility Do's (and Don'ts): Text

- Utilize a text hierarchy
  - Clear title/main point followed by the most important relevant information
- Bullet points and lists improve readability

- Less text is more ✅
- Large wall of text = hard to read ❌



✅



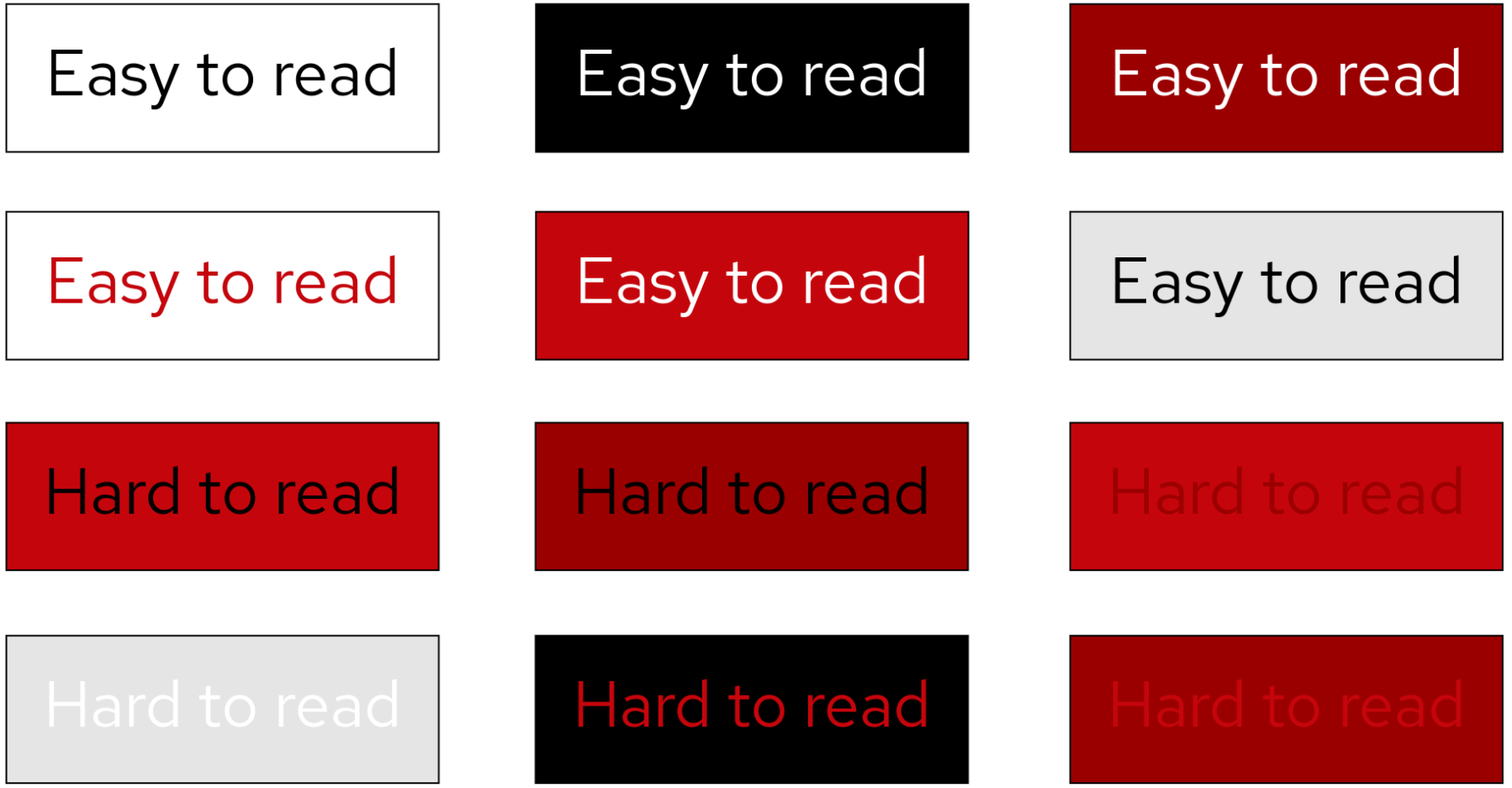
❌

Accessibility Do's (and Don'ts)
Alt text

- Alt text communicates the "what" and the "why" of an image
  - Used by assistive technology, such as screen readers
- Brief, descriptive, and consider the context
  - 150 characters or fewer is key ✅

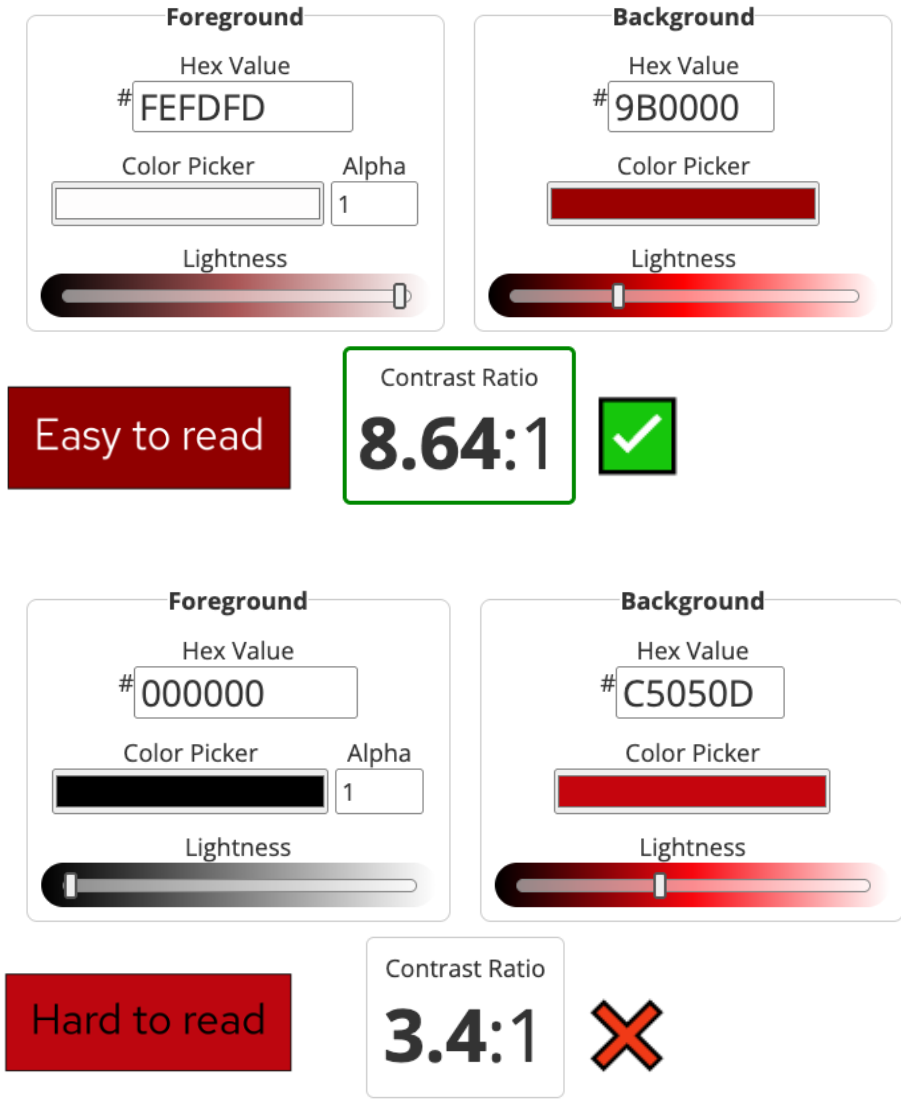
- Guidance on how to write alt text
  - UW–Madison Alternative Text Guide

Accessibility Do's (and Don'ts): Color contrast



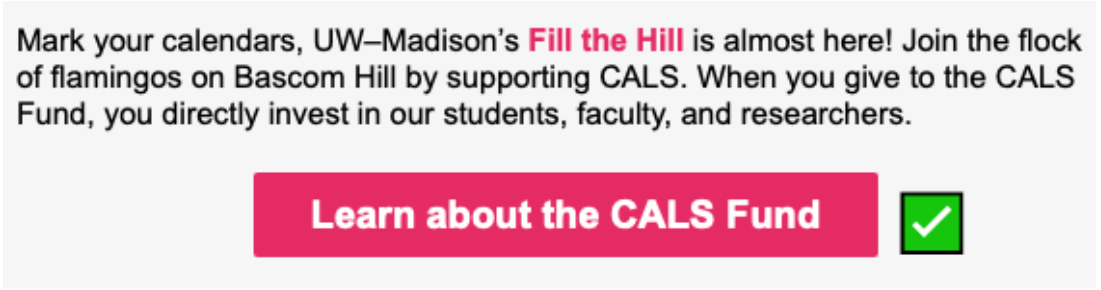
Accessibility Do's (and Don'ts): Color contrast

- Digital text color combinations must meet a contrast ratio of at least **4.5:1** to comply with UW's Digital Accessibility Policy
- You can use a contrast checker tool to check your own work
  - WebAIM Contrast Checker



Accessibility Do's (and Don'ts)
Links, Buttons & QR Codes

- Link text should tell users where to go
  - "Check out the photo gallery" ✅
  - "Click here" ❌
- Button text should describe the action
  - "Submit application" ✅
  - "Click here to submit" ❌
- Use QR codes appropriately
  - Digital screen advertisement ✅
  - Social media graphic ❌





Accessibility Do's (and Don'ts)
Video captions

- Captions are essential for some users to access video content
  - Allows deeper understanding of material for all users
- Captions should be:
  - Accurate
  - Use correct punctuation
  - Introduce a new speaker in brackets
  - Indicate relevant ambient sounds or music

- Guidance on captioning tools and best practices
  - UW–Madison Multimedia Accessibility Guide

Accessibility Do's (and Don'ts)
Where should my information go?

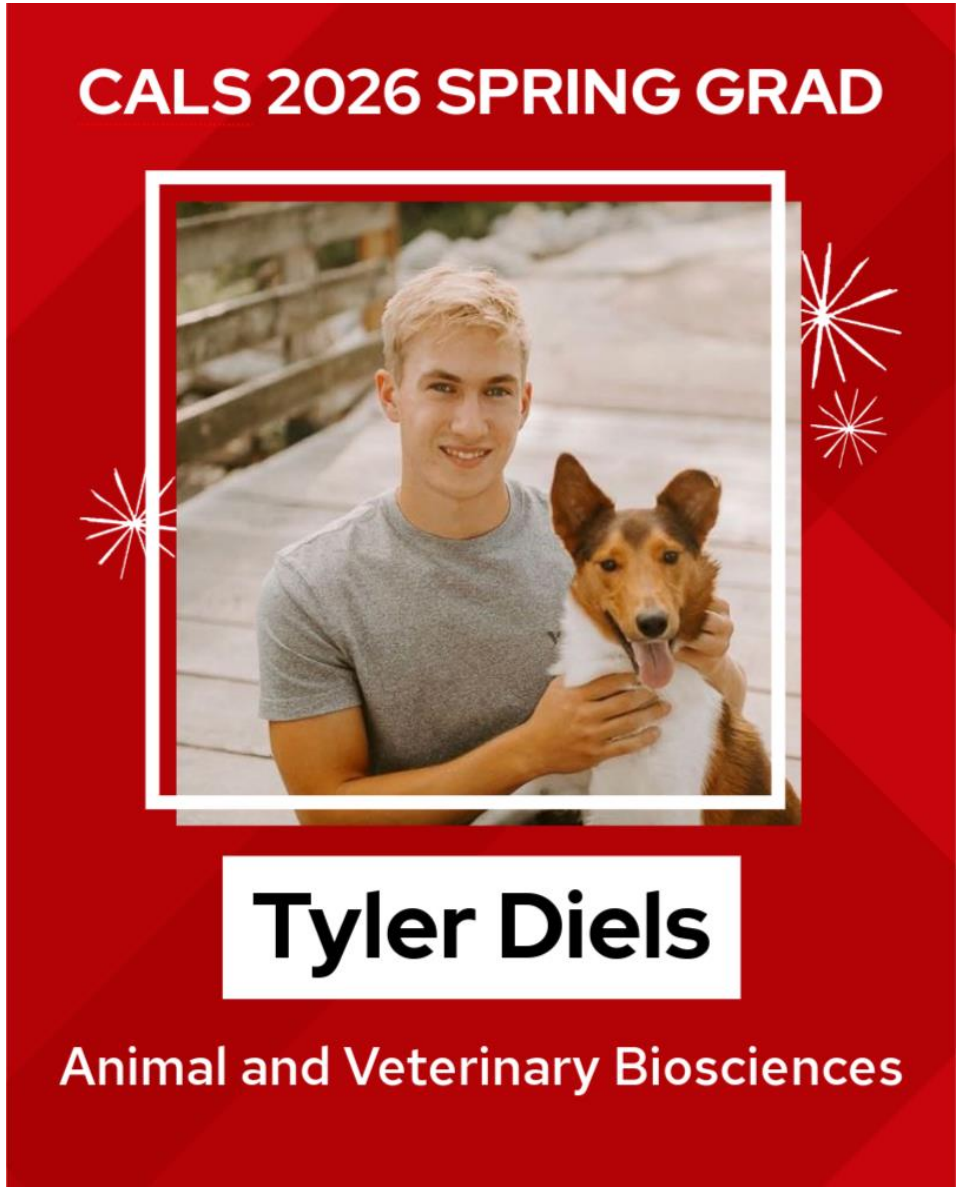
- Materials you create should not be the sole place for information to live
  - Point to a main source of information → website, social media caption

- Do not overload social graphics, flyers, PDFs, etc. with information ❌

How do I incorporate accessibility into...

How do I incorporate accessibility into… Social Media

- Graphics
  - Branded → colors, fonts
  - Appropriate color contrast
  - Not too much text, font size
  - Clear hierarchy
  - No QR code
  - Includes alt text, captions if video
- Post copy
  - Descriptive link text
  - Includes additional information not found on the graphic



- Branded → colors, fonts ✅
- Appropriate color contrast ✅
- Not too much text, font size ✅
- No QR code ✅
- Link to read more elsewhere ✅

uwmadisoncals Meet Tyler Diels! He's passionate about veterinary medicine, which led him to the animal and veterinary biosciences major. He's also been heavily involved with the Pre-Veterinary Association and served as the club president this academic year. His dream is to become a veterinarian — "After graduation, I am attending vet school right here at UW," Tyler says. "I plan to become a small animal veterinarian and move back to my hometown to operate a veterinary clinic."

Swipe to hear more from Tyler or the click link in our bio.

#UWGrad @tyler_diels @uwanimaldairyscience

13w



- Branded → colors, fonts ✅
- Appropriate color contrast ✅
- Not too much text, font size ✅
- No QR code ✅
- Link to read more elsewhere ✅

uwmadisoncals Hey, @uwmadison students! We're looking to hire three student positions in our Office of External Relations — a marketing assistant, a communications assistant, and a photography and video specialist.

📱 Marketing Assistant: Assist with managing social media channels, creating engaging digital and print content, and helping execute key events and programs
👩‍💻 Communications Assistant: Assist with managing the production and distribution of the college's print and online alumni/science magazine and other communications
📸 Photography and Video Specialist: Help tell the CALS story through photo and video work

Click the link in our bio to find the positions on the UW Student Jobs board. Applications are due by Sunday, April 12 at 11:59pm CST.

31w



STUDY ABROAD

featuring Kelsey Hardy

Where did you study abroad, and what program are you in?

The School of Agriculture & Food Science at University College Dublin in Dublin, Ireland.

What has been your favorite experience or place traveled so far?

Experience - Working the night shifts for lambing season at UCD Lyons farm. This is a very advanced research farm that is outside of Dublin, they have dairy, beef, chickens, goats, and equine. They consistently have one of the most impressive dairy herds in Ireland. They also had a herd of 300 ewes lambing in early March which I was able to assist in the lambing & aftercare process as well as tour the farm.

Place - Although I have had some beautiful trips outside of my host country, the city Killarney and all of County Kerry in Ireland by far been my favorite place in all my travels. A few specific places in the county I enjoy is the town of Dingle and the Inch Beach. There are stunning ocean views, cliffs, and rolling hills of pasture. Killarney itself is home to a national park with beautiful mountain views and a lake. The Kerry region is made up of small agriculture and fishing towns that line the ocean.

- Too much text ✗
- Text size is too small ✗
- Lack of color contrast ✗

Why did you choose to come to UW-Madison?

I chose to attend the UW–Madison because I aspire to become a large animal veterinarian. UW–Madison provides students with exceptional preparation for this path. The FAVeMedS program offers a unique opportunity for early enrollment into veterinary school, allowing students to take the proper steps toward their career goals on an accelerated track. Additionally, UW–Madison offers a variety of student organizations and incredible opportunities to combine interests and goals through involvement in activities within the field of agriculture.

What has been your favorite part of UW-Madison so far?

My favorite part of the UW–Madison so far has been the relationships and friendships I have built. These connections have truly enriched my college experience and helped me grow both personally and professionally beyond the classroom. The people I have met have challenged, supported, and encouraged me, making my time here meaningful in ways I did not expect.



How do I incorporate accessibility into… Graphics

- Branded → colors, fonts
- Appropriate color contrast
- Not too much text, font size
- QR codes when appropriate
- Alt text if shared online



- Branded → colors, fonts ✅
- Appropriate color contrast ✅
- Not too much text, large font size ✅
- Appropriate QR code ✅

Digital screen advertisement





- Branded → colors, fonts ✅
- Appropriate color contrast ✅
- Not too much text, large font size ✅

How do I incorporate accessibility into… Email newsletters

- Appropriate color contrast
- At least 12 pt font size
  - We recommend 16 pt
- Descriptive link text and buttons
- Split your content into “chunks” with headings
- Utilize lists
- Majority of email text not contained in graphics
  - Text in graphics becomes “trapped”
- Graphics, images have alt text

What makes a university AI-ready?

Help shape the future of AI at UW–Madison. At the next AI in Academia Coffee Hour, offer your feedback on the principles and guidelines being developed by the AI Readiness and Competency Working Group. Join us at 11 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 5 at Steenbock Library to share your thoughts — and grab some food and coffee.

Battiato named interim University Staff secretary

Drawing on her extensive experience in public policy, government relations, workforce development and organizational leadership, Kate Battiato will serve as interim University Staff secretary. Her predecessor, John Lease, retires Oct. 30.

Native November 2026: 'Rooted in Reciprocity'

Organized by the Indigenous Student Center Coalition, Native November returns to UW–Madison with cultural events, workshops, shared meals and community gatherings that invite students to learn about Indigenous cultures, build connections, and reflect on the importance of caring for one another and the world around us.



Gourd vibes only

When it comes to pumpkin decorating, it was "squash goals" for the Hoofers Scuba Club at its annual underwater pumpkin carving dive in Lake Mendota. By lake or by land, check out the photo gallery to see how Badgers across campus creatively spruced up their squashes, just in time for Halloween.



Out of left field

While the 2026 Brew Crew made their historic run to win the franchise's first-ever World Series, a long-ago era of Milwaukee baseball history was unearthed at UW–Madison Libraries with the discovery of a rare artifact: a disc bearing an audio recording of a Milwaukee Brewers minor league baseball game from 1938.

- Chunks of text, headings ✅
- Descriptive links ✅
- Body text not in graphics ✅

Snippets from the InsideUW e-newsletter



- Branded ✅
- Chunks of text, headings ✅
- Newsletter is one image ❌

From Bucky's Varsity Meats e-newsletter

How do I incorporate accessibility into… Flyers

- Branded → colors, fonts
- Appropriate color contrast
- Use QR codes
- More text is okay, but avoid walls of text
  - Utilize lists



- Branded → colors, fonts ✅
- Appropriate color contrast ✅
- Not too much text, large font size ✅
- Uses lists ✅
- QR code ✅

How do I incorporate accessibility into… PDFs

- We recommend not linking to PDFs to share information
- Take the content of the PDF and put it on your website, e-newsletter, etc., instead
- If you are uploading PDFs to your website, they need to be made accessible by tagging them
  - UW–Madison Document Accessibility Guide

Digital accessibility resources

- UW-Madison Make it Accessible
  - https://digitalaccessibility.wisc.edu/make-it-accessible/
- Digital Accessibility Fundamentals
  - https://digitalaccessibility.wisc.edu/make-it-accessible/fundamentals/
- UW-Madison Digital Accessibility Hub
  - https://digitalaccessibility.wisc.edu/
- University Digital Accessibility Initiative (UDAI)
  - https://it.wisc.edu/university-digital-accessibility-initiative/
- Document Accessibility
  - https://digitalaccessibility.wisc.edu/make-it-accessible/#document-accessibility

Event Accessibility

Events, programs, courses, etc.,

Where do I promote my events?

- You should have **one main page** where all event/program details are kept
  - Website
  - UW Event Calendar
- Social media posts, Facebook events, print out flyers, and newsletters are encouraged to promote your event/program
- *Keeping in mind digital accessibility

Event Website Example

Commercial Growers of Wisconsin Field Day

This field day will feature sessions on plant diseases, insect updates for the 2026 season, and the station's field trials.

Thursday, August 6 » **9:00 am – 3:00 pm** **Free** **West Madison Ag Research Station**

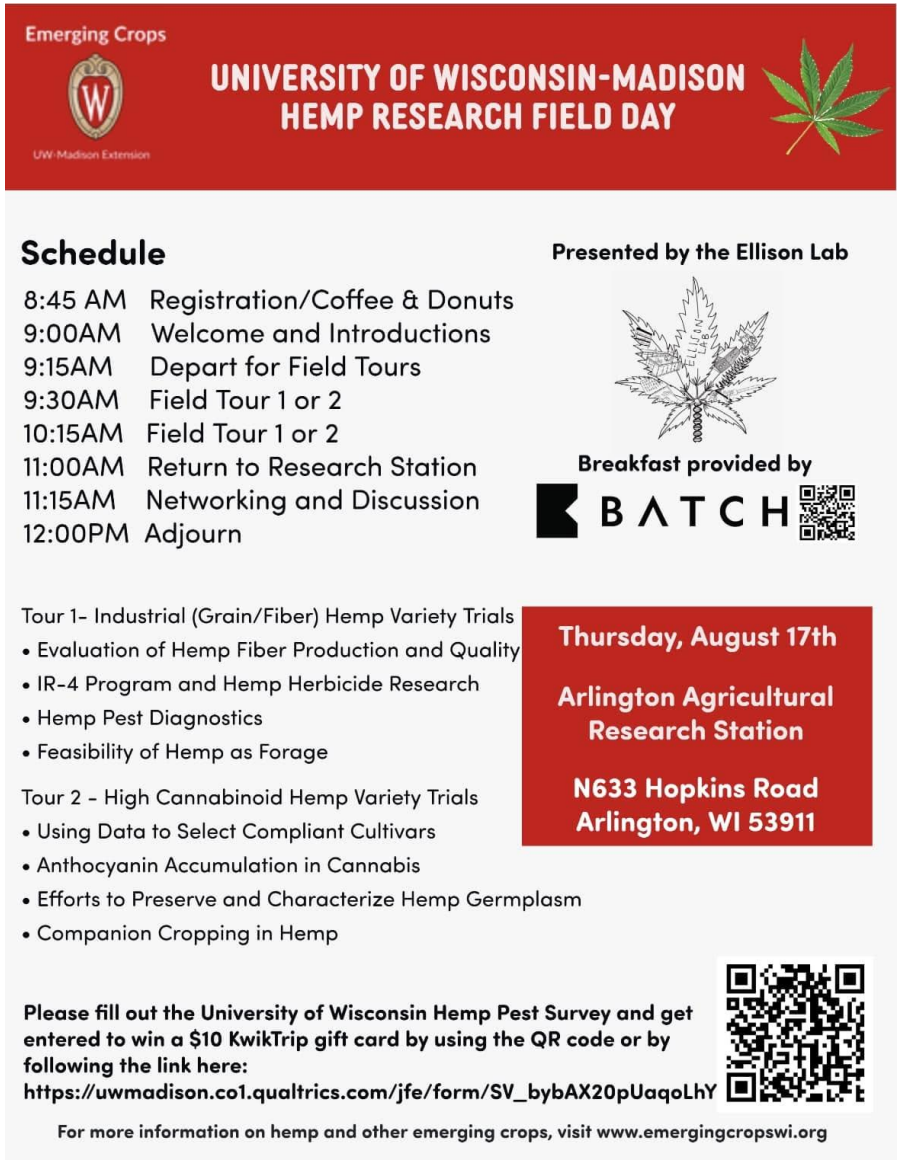
The Commercial Growers of Wisconsin Field Day is a partnership event with the West Madison Agricultural Research Station and the Commercial Growers of Wisconsin. Learn about the annual plant varieties, plant insects and diseases, field trials, and more.

Address:
West Madison Agricultural Research Station
8592 Mineral Point Road
Verona, WI 53593

This event is open to all. We value inclusion and access for all participants. Please call 608-829-1162 (*voice only*) or email ars_accommodation@cals.wisc.edu. to make an accommodation request. Requests should be made by Thursday, July 23, 2026. Reasonable effort will be made to support your request.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences provides equal opportunities in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal law.

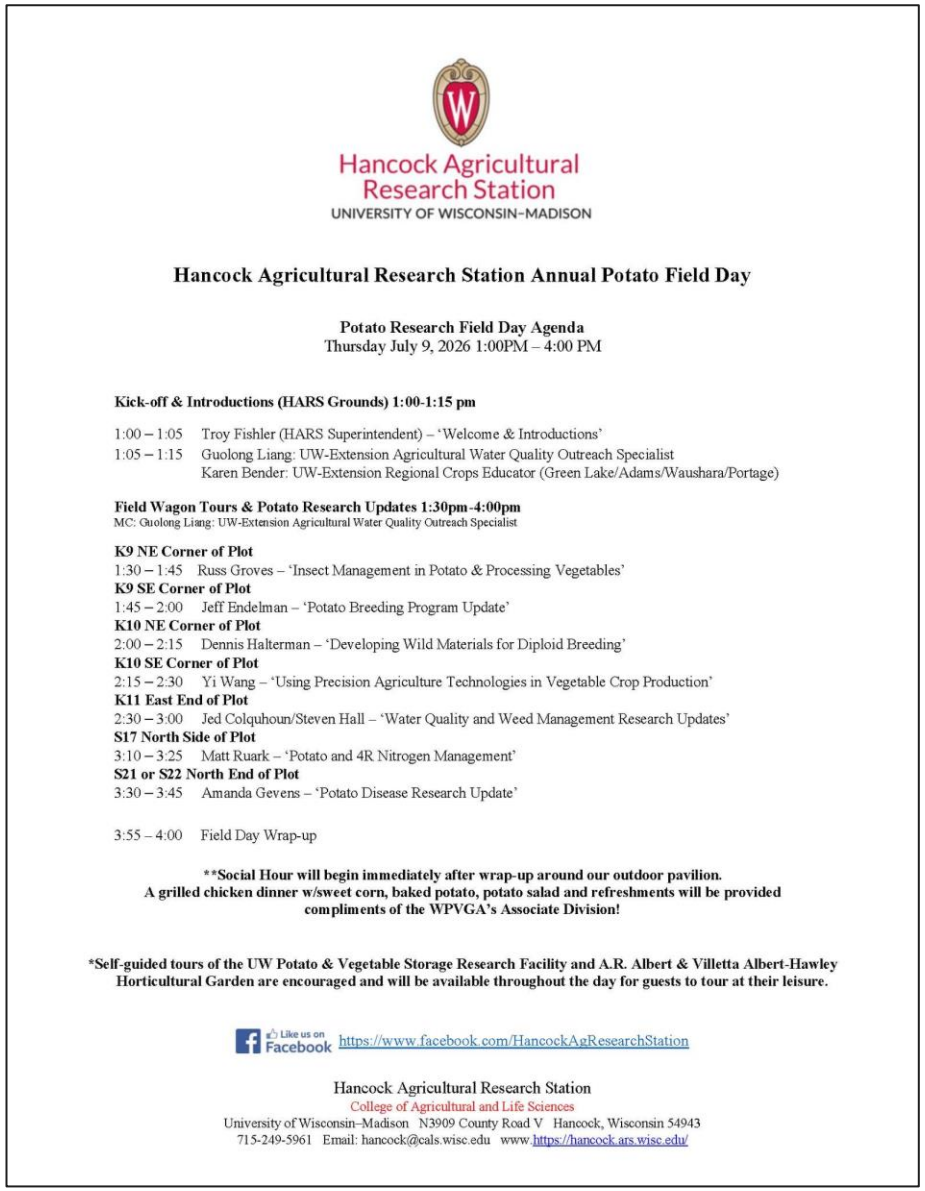
Event Promotion



- Printed as a handout ✅
- Posted on social media ❌
- Posted on website ❌

- UW branded ✅
- Color contrast ✅
- Link to place to read more ✅
- Text size is good for a print-out, no for social or web

Event Promotion



Hancock Agricultural Research Station
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Hancock Agricultural Research Station Annual Potato Field Day

Potato Research Field Day Agenda
Thursday July 9, 2026 1:00PM – 4:00 PM

Kick-off & Introductions (HARS Grounds) 1:00-1:15 pm

1:00 – 1:05 Troy Fishler (HARS Superintendent) – 'Welcome & Introductions'
1:05 – 1:15 Guolong Liang: UW-Extension Agricultural Water Quality Outreach Specialist
Karen Bender: UW-Extension Regional Crops Educator (Green Lake/Adams/Waushara/Portage)

Field Wagon Tours & Potato Research Updates 1:30pm-4:00pm
MC: Guolong Liang: UW-Extension Agricultural Water Quality Outreach Specialist

K9 NE Corner of Plot
1:30 – 1:45 Russ Groves – 'Insect Management in Potato & Processing Vegetables'
K9 SE Corner of Plot
1:45 – 2:00 Jeff Endelman – 'Potato Breeding Program Update'
K10 NE Corner of Plot
2:00 – 2:15 Dennis Halterman – 'Developing Wild Materials for Diploid Breeding'
K10 SE Corner of Plot
2:15 – 2:30 Yi Wang – 'Using Precision Agriculture Technologies in Vegetable Crop Production'
K11 East End of Plot
2:30 – 3:00 Jed Colquhoun/Steven Hall – 'Water Quality and Weed Management Research Updates'
S17 North Side of Plot
3:10 – 3:25 Matt Ruark – 'Potato and 4R Nitrogen Management'
S21 or S22 North End of Plot
3:30 – 3:45 Amanda Gevens – 'Potato Disease Research Update'

3:55 – 4:00 Field Day Wrap-up

****Social Hour will begin immediately after wrap-up around our outdoor pavilion.
A grilled chicken dinner w/sweet corn, baked potato, potato salad and refreshments will be provided compliments of the WPVGA's Associate Division!**

***Self-guided tours of the UW Potato & Vegetable Storage Research Facility and A.R. Albert & Villetta Albert-Hawley Horticultural Garden are encouraged and will be available throughout the day for guests to tour at their leisure.**

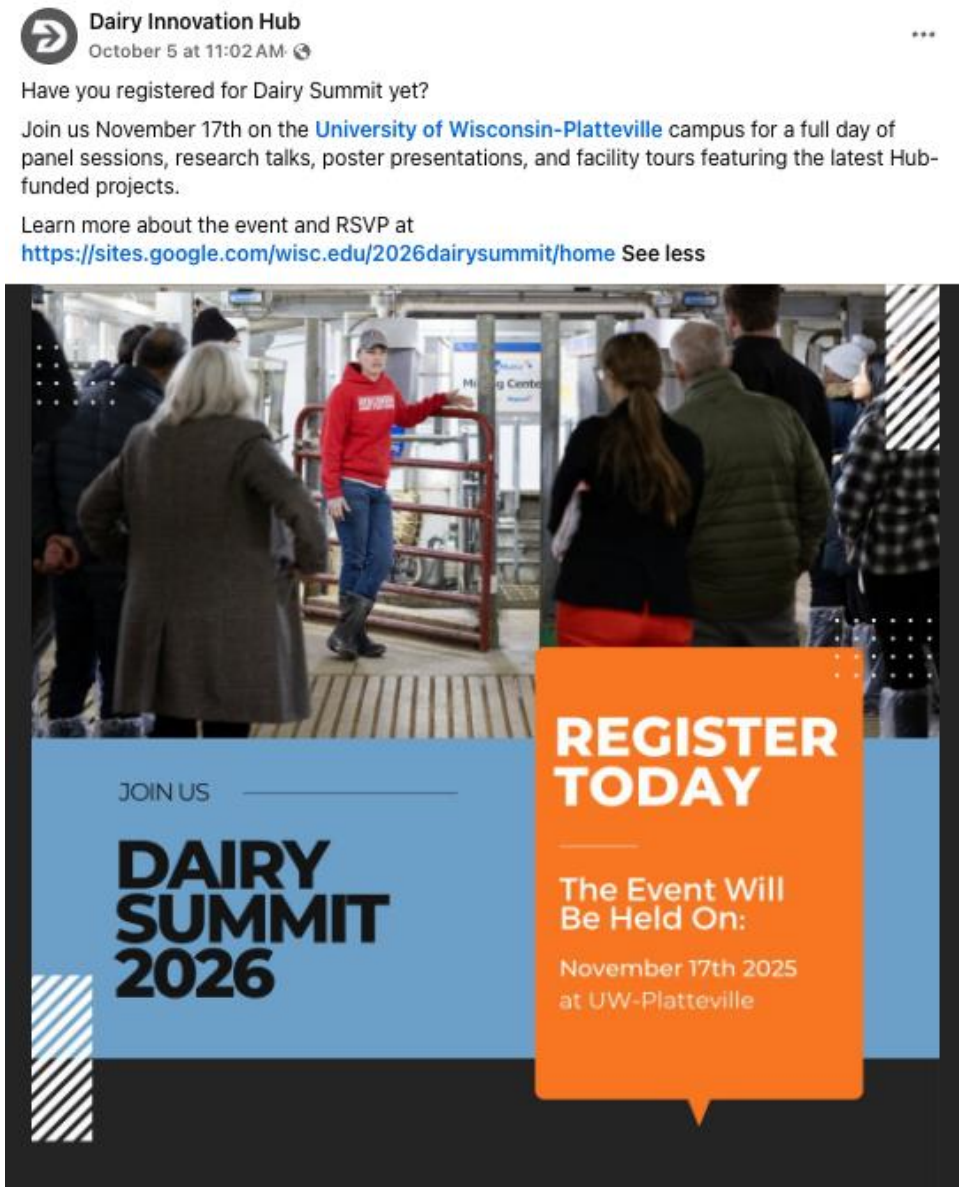
Like us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/HancockAgResearchStation

Hancock Agricultural Research Station
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
University of Wisconsin–Madison N3909 County Road V Hancock, Wisconsin 54943
715-249-5961 Email: hancock@cals.wisc.edu www.https://hancock.ars.wisc.edu/

- Printed as a handout ⚠
- Posted on social media ❌
- Posted on website ❌

- UW Branded ✅
- Color contrast ✅
- Link to place to read more ✅
- Text size is small, could be hard to read for printed – too small for digital communications

Event Promotion – on social



- Posted on social media ✅
- Color contrast & large text ✅
- Link to place to read more ✅
- Learn more & rsvp sentence with link to webpage ✅

Events & Programs Accessibility Requirements

- Three specific requirements that need to be on your main page:
  1. **Open to all**
     - This *event/course/program* is open to all.
  2. **Accommodation Statement**
     - This event is open to all. We value inclusion and access for all participants. Please email or call [insert email or phone number here] two weeks before the event to make an accommodation request. Reasonable effort will be made to support your request.
  3. **Footer**
     - The University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences provides equal opportunities in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal law.

1. Open to all

- Events/programs/course are open to all
- **Watch out fors** ⚠️
  - Listing your audience: describe what the event/program/course entails or what a participant might learn instead of saying WHO the course is for

Instead of saying this ❌	**Say this** ✅
This course is for beginning beekeepers.	UW Beekeeping Short Course is a multi-day course designed for those interested in beekeeping where you'll learn how to build and grow a beekeeping business.
The workshop is for local farmers and growers who want to learn growing techniques.	This workshop will cover topics such as farming and growing techniques and best practices for crops.
This event is for undergraduate students.	Regardless of major, degree level or College, all are welcome to attend and take advantage of the opportunities presented at the Fair.

2. Accommodation Statement

- Statement must include contact information (email or phone number or even better….both!)

"This event is open to all. We value inclusion and access for all participants. Please email or call [insert email or phone number here] two weeks before the event to make an accommodation request. Reasonable effort will be made to support your request."

Accommodations vs. Lodging

- **Watch out fors** 
  - Lodging v. Accommodations
    - If your event has an overnight or folks traveling from out of town and may need a hotel – use the word "**Lodging**" rather than "Accommodations"

  - **Lodging** = hotels and places of stay
  - **Accommodations** = specific needs for the event or program
    - Example: ramp for a stage, end seat reserved, translator, etc.

3. Footer

- CALS and extension have worked together on this language to remain consistent
- This footer language can be at the bottom of the page

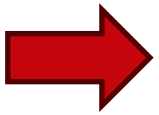
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Event Website Example

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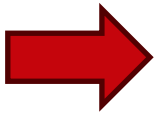
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1. Open to all

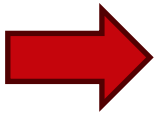
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2. Accommodation Statement

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3. Footer

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Examples of Main Pages

- FISC Beekeeping Course
- CALS Honorary Recognition
- CALS Field Days
  - Main Field Day page has the accommodation statement and footer language at the top and each specific Field Day page has them towards the bottom

Event & Program Checklist for Information

- ❑ Title of Event or Program
- ❑ Image for event/program
- ❑ Description of event/program
  - ❑ Date, time, location, **audience (open to all)**
- ❑ Price
- ❑ Lodging
- ❑ Schedule - can include times of talks, who is presenting, mealtimes, etc.
- ❑ Parking
- ❑ Partnerships
- ❑ Register button or link to registration form
- ❑ **Accommodation statement and contact**
- ❑ **Footer language**

Event Planning is key

- Presentation accessibility
  - Slides, video, closed captions, sound, etc
- Event planning
  - Parking, easy to navigate, directional signage, invitations
- Physical space and environment
  - Dietary restrictions, path of travel, restrooms

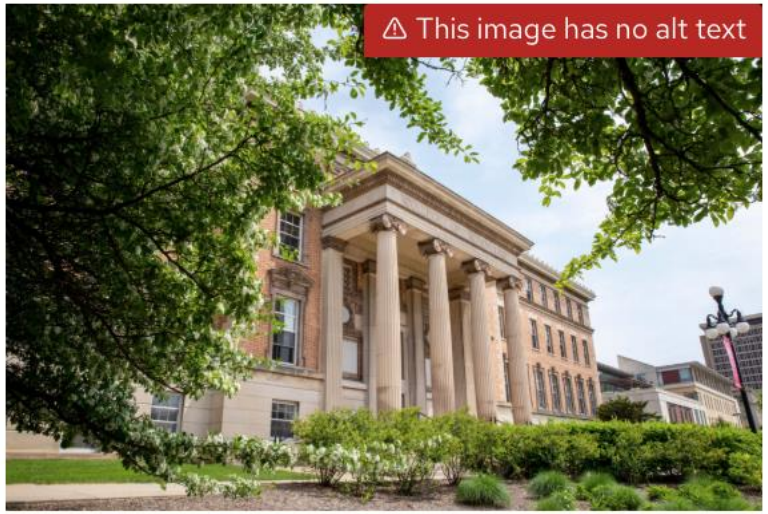
- Resource: https://digitalaccessibility.wisc.edu/make-it-accessible/accessible-events/

Web Accessibility Updates

Web Content Accessibility

- Color contrast
- Descriptive link text
- Headings
  - Hierarchical from H1-H6 (no skipping levels)
  - Should accurately label a section of content
- Image alt text
  - Used to describe an image for screen reader users
  - Required for all non-decorative images
- Attached PDFs and videos must also be accessible

If you are editing a page and spot any accessibility issues, **you** should take responsibility for fixing them while updating the page.



Recording Available (Web Accessibility in WordPress): webhosting.cals.wisc.edu

Accessibility Deadline

- Deadline: April 26, 2027
- All websites and web pages must be archived or accessible by this deadline
- Some exceptions for PDFs and old social media posts
- Prioritize **frequently accessed resources** and/or **resources that are critical for access**
  - e.g. home pages, program pages, applications, sign up forms

ADA Rule Fact Sheet: www.ada.gov/resources/2024-03-08-web-rule/

UW-Madison Web Hosting Updates

Campus web hosting service changes & migrations

- **DoIT WiscWeb Service (Migration Deadline: December 30, 2026)**
  - All WiscWeb sites must migrate to their new server infrastructure and to their new UW Theme 2.0
  - Site owners are responsible for migrating their own websites
  - Any CALS sites already on WiscWeb should stay on WiscWeb and follow their migration process
    - https://wiscweb.wisc.edu
    - WiscWeb site list & migration status
- **CALS Web Service (Migration Deadline: June 2027)**
  1. Migrating College, Department, Academic Program, Center & Station sites to our new CALS Web Service 2.0 (self-hosted on campus servers)
  2. Migrating all other CALS sites (lab and project) to WiscWeb 2.0
     - CALS site list & migration status

CALS Web Service migration – What to expect

- **Phase 1 –** Contact Site Owner/Manager
  - Send email with proposed migration & content freeze window of approx. 2-3 weeks.
- **Phase 2 –** Active Site Migration
  - An export/clone of the site is moved to the new hosting server at a temporary URL and upgraded to new theme (as needed).
  - Content freeze in place on live site while our web team is working on the staging site.
- **Phase 3 –** Site Review
  - Site owner/manager has opportunity to review & edit the staging site before the go live date.
  - Because of impending server shutdown deadline, we will move forward in cases when we do not hear back.
- **Phase 4 –** Go Live
  - Domain cutover: new website goes live at a scheduled time (staging site becomes the new live site).
  - Old site is archived for removal, and no longer accessible to site owner or public view.
  - There is no downtime during the entire process.

https://webhosting.cals.wisc.edu/service-changes/migration-timeline/

CALS Web Service migration information

- As an FYI, CALS web team contacts dept leadership 2-3 weeks before we start contacting site owners.
- A note about digital accessibility
  - We are doing some accessibility remediation during migration, but not image alt tags, pdfs, or other linked documents. That will remain the responsibility of the site owner/content manager to remediate.
- CALS Migration Landing Page
  - https://webhosting.cals.wisc.edu/service-changes/
- Find out where a website is hosted
  - https://webhosting.cals.wisc.edu/service-changes/#faq--cals-or-wiscweb
- CALS migration progress sheet

Questions? Contact websupport@cals.wisc.edu

Questions and discussion


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