Link Text at Texas State

Ensuring our email, web content, and digital documents are barrier free for all users.

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Glossary of Terms

- ❖ Link Text – text that replaces or masks raw uniform resource locators(URL) embedded in digital content.
- ❖ Raw URL – the address of a website or webpage that does not have a label.
- ❖ Alternative Text – a technique that allows individuals with no vision to understand the content of an image.
- ❖ Linked Images – image content that has an embedded link that allows users to navigate to a different page of content.
- ❖ Ambiguous Link Text – link text that does not provide sufficient context for the link destination.
- ❖ Redundant Link Text – a situation that occurs when content editors put the same link text on a single page of content multiple times.
  - – Applies to alternative text for linked images as well.
- ❖ Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) – international standard that assists developers when attempting to make digital content accessible.
  - – Referenced in Section 508 and the Texas Administrative Codes 206 and 213, subchapter C.

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Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

❖ State Agencies and Institutions of Higher Education in Texas are required to meet the 2.0 AA level of these guidelines.
- AA level includes the level A guidelines, but not the AAA guidelines.

❖ Success Criterion 2.4.4: Link Purpose (In Context) – Level A
- The purpose of each link can be determined from the link text alone or from the link text together with its surrounding content.
- This success criteria is designed to ensure individuals with a disability are not at a disadvantage when browsing digital content, and that they have as much context as possible to ensure a good user experience.

❖ Referenced by Federal Law
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

❖ Referenced by State Accessibility Rules
- Texas Administrative Code 206 (TAC 206.70)
- Texas Administrative Code 213 (TAC 213.38)

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How Screen Readers Navigate Web Pages

- ❖ Screen readers use HTML code to identify page content.
- ❖ URL are identified as links by assistive technology.
- ❖ Users can press the tab key on their keyboard to navigate digital content.
- ❖ URL are one of many objects that the tab key can find.
- ❖ Text *is not* found by the tab key and requires more thorough inspection of the page to discover.
- ❖ Screen reader technology can also create a list of all links in a single webpage so that a user can quickly find and activate a link.
  - – If the link text populated in these windows is not clear, then the user must investigate the linked webpage to determine the purpose of the link.
  - – This puts the blind user at a disadvantage compared to sighted users who can more quickly ascertain the purpose of the ambiguous link and its context.

Importance for the University

❖ Accessible link text is foundational to our public posture regarding compliance with the web content accessibility guidelines (see page 3 of this document).

❖ Link text is easy to find and assess for compliance.

❖ Email, web pages, and documents all follow the same guidelines regarding link text.

❖ All websites published in Gato are reviewed for accessible link text.

❖ Email communications sent to faculty, staff, and students are a source of internal complaints from individuals with disabilities.

- These complaints stem from link text, alt text, and images of text.
- These individuals feel they are at a disadvantage compared to their colleagues without disabilities.

❖ Application of Universal Design principles help the Texas State brand identify as a modern institution of higher education.

❖ Our successes with digital accessibility have put us ahead of the curve compared to similar institutions in the United States.

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Link Text

❖ Text that masks raw URL in digital content.

❖ Link text provides context for the destination of a link.

❖ Link text should be descriptive of the content it describes.

❖ Link text should not be ambiguous.

- Examples of ambiguous link text: 'click here', 'read more', or 'go here'.

❖ Where possible, redundant link text should be avoided.

- Multiple copies of the same link/link text appear on the same page of content.

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Ambiguous Link Text

❖ Link text that does not convey the purpose of the URL

❖ Example of clear link text:

   – [The Texas State Bookstore](#) has new t-shirts and notebook materials on sale!

❖ Example of ambiguous link text:

   – [Click here](#) for more information about new t-shirt and notebook materials!

❖ In the clear example, the user knows they will navigate to the Texas State Bookstore if they activate the link, but in the ambiguous example, they will have to navigate to the new web page to understand the purpose of the link destination.

Redundant Link Text

❖ Multiple copies of the same link/link text appear on the same page of content.

❖ Example of redundant link text:

- [The Texas State Bookstore](#) has new t-shirts, and notebook materials for students! Visit [the Texas State Bookstore](#) today to find your spring textbooks. At [the Texas State Bookstore](#), you can find all the supplies you need to succeed during your studies.

❖ Example that avoids redundancy:

- [The Texas State Bookstore](#) has everything you need to succeed during the Spring Semester including textbooks, study materials, and even Texas State t-shirts and accessories that help you show your Bobcat Pride!

❖ Redundancy not only affects accessibility, but also makes your search engine optimization(SEO) worse when people search for web content related to your website.

Linked Images

❖ Images can be associated with URL to create links.

❖ These images require alternative text to be accessible.

❖ In these cases, the alternative text *is* the link text.

❖ Avoid describing the decorative aspect of linked images. The purpose of the linked image is more important than the decorative content within the image itself. The link *is* the purpose.

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Additional Link Text Examples (1)

❖ Bad example:
  – Additional information can be obtained by visiting [this website](#).

❖ Better version:
  – Additional information can be obtained by visiting the [ITAC Resources](#) website.

❖ Bad example:
  – [Recent studies](#) show that high calorie diets can cause weight gain.

❖ Better version:
  – [Dr. Smith's dietary research](#) shows that high calorie diets can cause weight gain.

❖ Bad example:
  – [Read more](#) about stock trading at Rick Carlson's Mighty Trader website.

❖ Better version:
  – Rick Carlson provides expert trading advice on his [Mighty Trader stock resources](#) web page.

Additional Link Text Examples (2)

❖ Bad example:
  – [GIS](#) resources help aspiring students learn how to use technology to excel in their profession.

❖ Better example:
  – [Geographic Information System Mapping (GIS) resources](#) help aspiring students learn how to use technology to excel in their profession.

❖ Bad example:
  – The Philosophy Lecture Series has many interesting articles about the Transcendental movement. Please visit https://philosophy.txstate.edu/lecture to learn more.

❖ Better Example:
  – [The Philosophy Lecture Series](#) has many interesting articles about the Transcendental movement.