

Readability and Usability for Electronic and Print Materials

This document provides general suggestions regarding readability and the ease of use of print and electronic materials.

Font and text

- **Style**

Use sans serif fonts such as Arial, Calibri, Corbel, or Tahoma. Limit use of ornate, script, or decorate fonts. Times New Roman and other serif fonts (words with curls or tails) are more difficult for some users to read.

- **Size**

12 point type or larger for print materials. **14 point** type or larger is more ideal for ease of use. For projection, **32 point** type or larger is suggested (minimum). Keep in mind, not all font sizes are the same. For example, a 12 point type in one font may be smaller or larger in another style.

- **Non-standard type**

Use bold or italics only for word emphasis or headers. Avoid use of bold or italics for full sentences or paragraphs. Avoid using all caps in headings and paragraph text. Underlining text in electronic materials suggest the presence of a hyperlink.

- **Background images**

If using a background image, be sure it does not obscure text. Use enough contrast between background and text. Use dark text on a light background and light text on a dark background. Keep in mind some predesigned templates have decreased readability when projected or printed.

- **Text and color**

Color use alone should not be used to distinguish emphasized text or hyperlinks.

- **Don't rely on an image alone for sharing information.** For example, inserting an image of a flyer that describes an event in an e-mail may not be readable for some users. In this example, it would be helpful to include pertinent information in the message of the email and include the image (or preferably the file attachment).

Hyperlinking

Minimize embedding long website addresses in emails or print materials. In most cases, the primary site should be provided to the user. For example don't use:

<http://phoenixmed.arizona.edu/partners/clinical/phoenix-children%E2%80%99s-hospital>

Increased readability in print materials:

To learn more about our partnership with Phoenix Children's Hospital, go to <http://phoenixmed.arizona.edu> and click on **About Us**, then click on **Fast Facts**.

Increased readability in electronic materials:

[Learn more about our partnership with Phoenix Children's Hospital now >>](#)

or copy the following link into your browser: <http://www.phoenixchildrens.org/>

PDFs

If a hyperlink opens a PDF, you should let the user know in advance. For example:

[Explore more tips for studying in medical school now \(opens PDF\) >>](#)

*Keep in mind, some PDFs may be inaccessible for some users.

Paragraph

Justification/alignment

Use left alignment or limited alternate justifications. Block justification may decrease readability and ease of use for some users.

Hyphenation

Minimize hyphenations and use when needed in text. Some programs have a default hyphenation setting. Hyphenation is preferred in phone numbers.

Leading

Give sufficient spacing between lines so not to overcrowd text. Open space is valuable between paragraphs, sections, concepts, etc.