



Communications Manual for Performing Arts Events

Created in collaboration
with UrbanApa & Pragma Helsinki



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Foreword



The Communications Manual for Art Events is a guide that was born out of a need for clear communications guidelines and checklists within the performing arts field.

Initiated by UrbanApa and written by Pragma Helsinki, this communications manual addresses both the basic communication needs as well as the more in-depth accessibility features that one might come across when organising art events.

The manual itself is divided into four parts that address, in order: communication before the event; communication during the event; accessible events and communication; and safer space guidelines. This is by no means a comprehensive guide, and it can always be modified, updated, edited, and added to. It is also written in the Finnish context and certain parts might not apply in other countries and cultures.

The manual is written with cultural workers in mind, particularly those who work in the independent performing arts field and who organise art events, either as individuals, groups, or organisations. The manual goes partly back to basics, as its original intent was to be a help to those who do not have much experience or training in event-based communications. However, artists, producers, and communication officers can all make use of this as needed.

Most importantly, however, this manual is meant to be shared. Our hope is that such guides and manuals will be made more freely available to everyone who needs them – the performing arts field in Finland is a fairly small one, and often our resources are even smaller, so let's strive to make things more accessible and easily understood, and to help each other out as best we can, when we can.

Essi Brunberg
Helsinki, December 2022

1 Communications before the event

In this section are listed the most important steps to take before your event. In short, this includes the following steps:

1. Gathering information on the artist(s) and their work
2. Publishing information on the event/work in various channels and formats
3. Sending out press releases to relevant media
4. Planning and coordinating possible marketing campaigns
5. Coordinating group sales, if needed
6. Hiring a photographer
7. Planning and coordinating the event's visibility at the venue

Not all of the above steps are necessary, and the extent to which you do them depends on several factors, such as your work resources, budget, and the size of your event. All of the above steps, however, serve to promote and market the event.

1.1 Gathering information on the artist(s) and their work

When you're about to promote a work, it's important to know as much about it as possible. This next section details what kind of information you might need from the working group or artist(s), but keep in mind that not everything will be applicable to everyone. Sometimes the work synopsis might also require translating or slight modifications, so remember to reserve time for that if you think it will be needed. Ask permission to edit the artists' texts (you can even include this in their contracts), but if the changes are significant, you should do them in collaboration with the artist(s).

This section is written with event organisers in mind, but parts of it could prove useful even to artists and working groups when they promote their own works.

Basic information on the artist or working group

Contact person	Pronouns (please indicate if they can be used publicly)	Email	Phone number

Working group members	Pronouns (please indicate if they can be used publicly)	Role in the group	Email	Phone number

Possible websites, social media handles, and hashtags

--

Possible support and partner credits

For example this work is supported by Kone Foundation and Arts Promotion Centre Finland.

--

Short introduction of the group/artists (in all applicable languages, if possible)

--

Basic information on the work

Title of work and its phrasing

For example Artist: Work title / Artist, Artist & Artist: Work title / Working group name: Work title...

NB. Is there or will there be a translation of the title for multilingual marketing?
If so, write the translation as well if it already exists.

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Duration (with intermission?)	Language	Content notes (if applicable) For example violence, nudity, flashing lights...	Age recommendation

Accessibility of the work

Is the work accessible? If not, in what ways?

Does the performance include surtitles, sign language interpretation, or audio description?

Is the performance participatory? If yes, in what ways?

--

Performance synopsis

(in all applicable languages, if possible)

--

Any other material on the work, working group, and/or artist(s)?

For example things that can be shared with the audience, such as trailers, interviews, playbills, and behind the scenes photos and footage.

Is there something that should be highlighted when communicating about the work?

For example specifics about the ticket sales, the performance, audience arrival etc..

Press and media

Which members of the working group can be interviewed?

In what language(s) can the working group be interviewed?

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Photography

Some events include photography. If you're planning on photographing the work(s), include the below questions.

Is there something the photographer should know about the work in advance?

Do you want the photographer to take photos of your work during the actual performance, the dress rehearsal, or another rehearsal?

Promotional photos

In addition to the above, you will also most likely need some kind of promotional images of the work in order to market it, even if it's just on social media and the event's website.

Make sure the artist or working group has rights to the photo(s). It is also common courtesy (and often a requirement) to use credits when you use any images associated with a work. You will need:

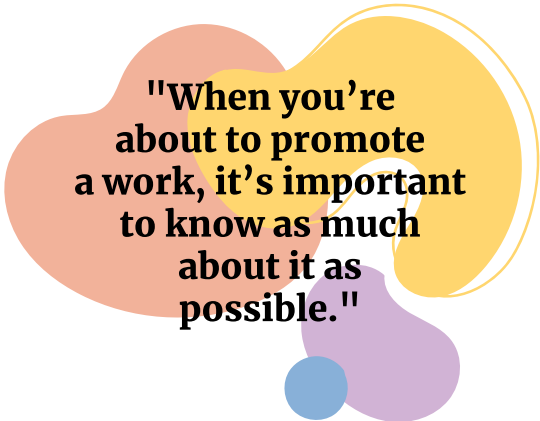
1. Promotional material (the more the merrier!)
2. Credits for the material
3. Alternative texts for the material

Alternative texts (or alt-texts, alt texts) are an accessibility feature. They are descriptions of images and are used by those who utilise screen readers. It's best if the alt text comes from the artists themselves because they know their work best, although they might want help in constructing a sentence. Not everyone knows how to write an alt text, so feel free to give them the following guide:

1. Write concisely and be specific. An alt text should be a maximum of 125 characters.
2. An alt text should be neutral. Don't add unnecessary adjectives that describe for example feelings the image might evoke.
3. Don't start with "image of..." or "picture of...". Screen readers are able to identify it as an image. If necessary for context, you can add the type of image, for example "Orange kitten, illustration."
4. Always end an alt text with a full stop. The screen reader pauses for a moment at full stops, which makes the alt text stand out clearer from the rest of the text.

Additional information

In addition to the above, it's also good to let the working group know of any requirements or requests you have in terms of communication, such as asking them to use a certain hashtag or to tag you on social media when they post material about their work – sharing is caring!



"When you're about to promote a work, it's important to know as much about it as possible."

1.2 Publishing information on the event

Now that you have information on the artist(s) and the work itself, it's time to spread the word. Think about your intended audience: Who do you want to reach? Who do you want to see in the audience and at the event? Is it meant for a particular group of people, and if so, who and why?

For example, #StopHatredNow is aimed at individual artists, cultural influencers, and institutions of art and culture, and those are who the working group tries to reach in their daily communication. On the other hand, when it comes to UrbanApa's art festival, the intended audience is much broader and not just those working in the art field.

1.2.1 On your website

Publish all relevant information on the work on your website if you have one. Such information usually includes:

- Work title and synopsis
- Working group (list of roles, any possible support credits, and introduction if it's not the group's own website)
- Duration of work
- Language of work
- Content notes, if applicable
- Age recommendation, if applicable
- Performance location, dates, and times
- Link to ticket sales, if applicable
- Promotional image(s) with credits

As an example, here is the information UrbanApa had on its website for Onerva Hannula's performance *Ofelia*, which was performed during the UrbanApa x Ateneum 2021 festival.



Onerva Hannula: Ofelia

Ofelia is a one-person solo work on gender, power, and cultural narratives, and it is based on the world-renowned and tragic female victim Ophelia from Shakespeare's Hamlet. Ophelia – a mythical character in her own right – becomes the canvas for this piece, which combines rap, spoken word, and the performing arts from a feminist perspective.

The work aims to give Ophelia back her own independent voice by placing her at the centre of events. It reflects on the canon of art and its cultural imageries where female figures are constantly met with senseless violence. Ofelia asks who Ophelia actually is and how she would tell her own story.

Content warning: revealing clothing, sexual gestures, references to gendered violence

Duration: 15 min.

Language: Finnish

Tickets: admission fee to Ateneum

Performances: 30 October 2022 at 12pm, Ihmiset-sali

Performers: Onerva Hannula

Sound designer: Aleksi Taipale

Onerva Hannula is a Finnish playwright, director, and dramatist. She graduated from the dramaturgy and playwriting programme at Uniarts Helsinki's Theatre Academy in the summer of 2021. Her most well-known works include OVER HER DEAD BODY (2021) and Leipäkorin muotoinen tyttö (2018). Hannula creates rap music with the stage name OFELIA.

Aleksi Taipale is a Finnish musician and sound designer. He creates experimental pop music with the stage name Tau and with a band called Teini-ikä. His work also includes sound installations for the New Children's Hospital.

The way such information is displayed can vary, and it's completely up to both you and the way your website is built what the page will look like.

1.2.2 On social media

Posting about your event on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook allows for a wider audience reach than simply posting on your website. Make sure to use good-quality images, remember to add alt texts, and to keep your text accessible. For more information on accessibility in social media, see below (3.1 Accessible communication). And remember, you don't have to add every bit of information in your social media posts – that's what your website and Facebook events are for.

How to add alt texts...

...on Instagram

When posting, click Advanced settings and scroll down to Accessibility. Alternatively, to add an alt-text to an already published post, click the three dots above your post, click Edit, and on your photo, click Edit Alt Text.

...on Facebook

When you add a photo to a Facebook post, click Edit and Alternative text. Alternatively, to add an alt text to an already published post, click the three dots in the upper right corner and Edit post. After that, follow the same steps as above.

When it comes to festivals and other such events with multiple works, it is recommended that you make at least one post per work on your social media channels. It is also recommended that you encourage the working group to tag you so that you can share any relevant stories and posts they make.

Facebook events are also useful because they allow you to invite people to the event, notify visitors of possible changes, and so on. It's also a great idea to share your event in relevant Facebook Groups. Here's a step-by-step guide to creating events on Facebook:

1. Events can be created by both personal profiles and Pages. Head to facebook.com/events (or, alternatively, head to your Feed and click Events in the left menu) and click + Create New Event in the left menu.
2. Choose Online or In person.
3. Add the event details and choose a suitable category.
 - 3.1. The **event name** can include the name of the working group and the name, or alternatively the event as a whole. It can also include the nature of the event. Some examples:

Onerva Hannula: Ofelia
UrbanApa x Ateneum 2021
Performance: Ofelia

- 3.2. Add the event's **Date and time**. For multiple dates and times, click Recurring Event and then Customise, and add the relevant dates and times. Note that only Pages can create recurring events.
- 3.3 If you are creating the event with your personal profile, remember to change the **Privacy** to the correct setting. Events created by Pages are automatically Public and can't be changed.
- 3.4. Add your event's **Description**. For specific performances, this information usually includes the synopsis; a list of the working group and their roles; other information such as language, duration, and content notes; basic information on ticket prices, including a link; and where to find more information (such as a link to your website). You can add other language versions as well, but make sure the text field doesn't get too long and heavy to read.
- 3.5. Choose a suitable **Category**.
4. Click Next, and choose the event's Location.
5. Click Next, and add the event's Cover photo. This can be the work's promotional image or some other suitable photo.
6. Click Admission to add a ticket link, if applicable.
7. In Event settings, you can invite Co-hosts and determine who can post in the event. If you organise your event in collaboration with another organisation, it's recommended that you invite them as your co-hosts.
8. Click Publish Event. You can then start inviting people to your event in order to spread the word.

1.2.3 On event calendars

Once you've published your event on your own channels, it's time to head to other sites. Event calendars are a good way to get visibility to your event free of charge, and all you need is the very same information you've just posted on your website and social media. Some event calendars require accounts, which are generally very easy to create.

Some event calendars in Finland:

- [Circus & Dance Info Finland](#) (circus & dance productions)
- [Kulturforum.fi](#) (available only in Swedish)
- [Menoinfo.fi](#) (available only in Finnish)
- [Menokone.fi](#) (available only in Finnish)
- [MyHelsinki.fi](#) (events in Helsinki)
- [Stadissa.fi](#) (events in Helsinki, available only in Finnish)
- [Tapahtumainfo.fi](#) (available only in Finnish)

1.2.4 On printed materials

You may want to utilise flyers and posters to promote your work. For this, you need a graphic designer or someone with similar skills. Flyers and posters are generally image-heavy with only the most necessary text – they're meant to catch the eye, and most information should be gleaned from a quick glance.

Information that is usually added to posters and flyers:

- A promotional photo or image (make sure the image is of high enough quality!)
- Working group or artist and the work title
- Performance date(s)
- Performance venue
- Ticket information such as prices and a link
- Any relevant logos
- A positive press quote, if applicable

Posters and flyers can be distributed to public places like libraries, cultural centres, cafés, and grocery stores – but be sure to ask permission first!

1.2.5 In newsletters

Newsletters are another great way to inform your audience and followers about upcoming events. They're usually more formally written than social media posts, but that's by no means a must and can be written however you feel best suits your event or group. Newsletters are also fairly easy to format in various ways and can include things like images, videos, button links, specially formatted text boxes, and so on. There are various free and paid newsletter platforms (for example MailChimp, Gruppoo) you can choose from.

It's important to note that newsletters should comply with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) if you work within the EU. To read more about GDPR, [see GDPR.EU](https://gdpr.eu). The most important thing to remember is that you need potential recipients' consent in order to send them newsletters, and you must let them know how they can unsubscribe if they so wish. Unless your recipients have consented to it, you cannot share your contact lists with other organisations and groups, and vice versa. The easiest way to gain subscribers is to have a sign-up form on your website (some newsletter platforms can provide a form you can link to) and share it on social media and elsewhere.



**"Familiarise
yourself with
GDPR!"**

Newsletters are convenient in that they're a good way to keep not only your audience informed but also financiers, programmers, presenters, and other cultural workers who might be interested in your work but might not follow you actively on social media.

In most newsletter services, you can see how many of the recipients opened the newsletter or clicked a link contained within it. Generally speaking, 22% and over is a good open rate. Links can be harder, and depend entirely on what kind of links you provide and how interested the recipients are in what you're linking to. For example, you could link to your ticket sales, which would then provide good information on how many of your newsletter recipients clicked their way to seeing more information on the tickets. You might also follow ticket sales in general to see if there's an uptick in sales after you've published a newsletter in order to see how much of an impact it had.

You can also make use of other organisations' newsletters. Some organisations, like TINFO – Theatre Info Finland and Circus and Dance Info Finland, publish newsletters and news that include information about relevant works and events. This is usually done by sending them information directly, for example through press releases, but each organisation does this a little differently, so it pays to check out their websites and ask for more information.

1.2.6 In press releases

Press releases are a good way to let the news media know about your event. Many journalists have their schedules filled a long time in advance, so act early. Send out your press release ideally at least a month in advance, or whenever you publish your program or event. You can also send out an embargoed press release, which simply states that the information should not be published until a certain date or time.

First, send out your press release widely to any relevant parties, then contact choice journalists personally to politely ask if they would be interested in interviewing the working group, critiquing the performance, or otherwise writing a news article about your event. Be sure to invite them to your performance!

A press release should have at least the following information:

- A good, eye-catching, and informative heading
- The basic information you wish to convey (for example a synopsis of the performance, whether or not it's a premiere, performance dates and venue...)
- A quote by someone relevant (for example artistic director, artist...) is always a good addition
- The contact information of someone the journalist can get in touch with should they wish to schedule interviews or ask for more information
- A good-quality image with credits

Write your press release in the third-person, as this allows the journalists to use the text as is. When writing press releases, think about it from the journalist's point of view – what would you find interesting enough to report? Try to think of a compelling angle to your news.

You can send your press release as an email, but don't send it only as a PDF attachment. It's more accessible – not to mention more practical for busy journalists – to include the text in your email's text field as well.

Who, then, should you send your press releases to? It can be hard to gather a comprehensive list of journalists and media contacts if you're starting from scratch. If you have acquaintances in already established festivals, groups, and events, don't be afraid to ask for some tips and names; most are happy to help a fellow cultural worker out. You can also look at various newspapers and magazines: Which journalists have written reviews lately? Who writes about culture and cultural events? Is there a name that always pops up in articles concerning your particular niche in the art field? Many of these journalists might have company emails, and their contact information might be visible on their news sites. When adding contacts to your email, remember to add them as blind carbon copies, with yourself as the receiver.


1.3 Marketing

1.3.1 Ad campaigns

If you have the funds, consider creating some paid marketing campaigns when you want some added visibility for your event or if you're worried about the turnout.

Paid marketing campaigns could include:

- Outdoor advertising (OOH) and digital outdoor advertising (DOOH)
- Ads on news sites and in magazines and newspapers, either digital or print
- Ads on TV or radio
- Facebook campaigns



"Think of a compelling angle to your news."

OOH and DOOH are generally more expensive than the other options, customarily going from a few thousand euros upwards, although they can in some circumstances guarantee more visibility because they're not contingent on algorithms and ad blockers. This kind of advertising includes billboards, wallscapes, and transit media (for example in trams and buses). In Finland, companies such as Clear Channel and JCDecaux offer such services.

TV and radio ads can also be fairly expensive because they include video and/or audio production. Radio ads usually cost €1,000 at a minimum. Consider your target audience and choose the media accordingly; is your intended audience more likely to listen to Radio Helsinki, Yle X3M, or Iskelmä? There are several options to choose from, so it pays to get in touch with the stations directly to ask for quotes.

News sites, magazines, and newspapers are a traditional form of advertising in the cultural field. With digital ads, you can include links to your website or ticket sales, but they're also subject to ad blockers, whereas print media is contingent on your intended audience having physical copies. Again, consider your target audience – what sites are they likely to visit? What magazines or newspapers are they likely to read? As with TV and radio, there are several options to choose from, so it's a good idea to contact several places, as this allows you to compare the various offers and choose the ones that suit you best. Such advertisements usually go from a few hundred euros up to several thousands, depending on the size and placement of your advertisement.

Social media campaigns are the easiest to manage, because it's as simple as making a post and boosting it with some monetary value. It's also the least expensive option of those listed above, since it's up to you to decide how much money you would like to spend – you could even start with one euro per day. Keep in mind, however, that the less money, the less visibility and coverage. Facebook campaigns can also run on Instagram, but as with digital ads mentioned above, are subject to ad blocks and algorithms.

1.3.2 Group sales and pricing

If you want to increase your ticket sales, you might consider group sales. In effect, this means that you contact various groups that might be interested in your event or work and offer reduced group prices. Such groups can include schools, associations, interest groups, and so on. Think about your event and intended audience. For instance, if your work includes themes like feminism and anti-racism, feminist and anti-racist associations might be interested in seeing it.

Keep in mind that group sales tend to take effort and time, so apportion time and resources appropriately.

To reach more audiences, you can also have a flexible pricing system for your event, which improves its financial accessibility. For instance, you could offer various discounts and pay-what-you-can tickets. Discounted prices are customarily offered to children, students, pensioners, unemployed, conscripts, and non-military conscripts.

1.4 Hiring a photographer

Many bigger events like festivals hire a professional photographer to take photographs during the event, both of the general goings on as well as the performances themselves. In the section about artist information, a question on photography was included; work with the artist(s) to come up with a schedule that suits both you and them. Some works might not be suited for photography, however, so keep that in mind.

Since event photography is also a matter of copyright, and includes a fairly fast work pace, it's a good idea to go into detail with your photographer when it comes to your contract. For instance, do you want your artists to be able to use the photos for promotional purposes as well, or do you want the photographs to be used solely in connection to the event? For how many hours will the photographer be available? How fast can they get the finished photographs to you?

It's generally a good idea to get at least some photos by the following morning, especially if your event has had some media presence – they usually write their articles quite quickly and want to use professionally taken event photos, if at all possible.

Remember to hire a photographer well in advance, since many photographers have busy schedules!

1.5 Visibility at the venue

If you worked with a graphic designer to make posters or flyers, consider keeping some for your event venue. If you have the owner's permission, put up some posters on the doors and walls of the venue outside the actual performance space.

Alternatively, some venues have digital screens you can use. Gifs and videos in particular catch the eye in a way that still images don't, but remember to keep them accessible as well. You can get the exact dimensions and required formats from the people working at the venue.

2 Communications during the event

This manual has now detailed what you might need to do before the event in order to promote it both externally and in your own channels. Let's now take a look at what to do during the event itself.

2.1 Photography

If you've hired a photographer, make sure they know the schedules and exact locations, and that they have the necessary credentials to get in if the event is a closed affair. Some photographers prefer to have a short chat with the artists before the shoot, so make introductions if needed.

Event photos can be uploaded to sites like Flickr, Dropbox, Google Drive, or Google Photos. It's easiest if you give your photographer access to whatever platform you use; this way they can upload photos there directly. If your event includes several performances, make sure the files are named correctly (for example Artist / Work title / Photographer's name).

Once you've received finished photos, update your website's media page (or any other suitable page) with the link. This way members of the press can find the photos easily without having to contact you first.

2.2 Social media

Most of what you'll end up doing during the event is very heavy on social media, but it's ultimately up to you to decide how much you want to post; there's no right formula. Generally speaking, people like seeing behind the scenes footage and peeks behind the curtains, so that's a good place to start. If you've had photos taken by a professional photographer, it's also a good idea to share those on social media.

It's up to you to decide how much you want to engage with your social media audience when it comes to sharing their stories, liking posts, commenting on them, and so on. You don't have to share every single story they tag you in, but do keep in mind that audience interaction is a good way to keep people engaged.

3 Accessibility

Many events strive for both online and onsite accessibility. There are several ways to improve your event's accessibility, both in terms of accessible communication and communicating about your event's accessibility, and while it might seem daunting at first, it can be easy once you get the hang of it. The actions you can take to improve accessibility don't have to be expensive, so it's mostly just a matter of familiarising yourself with the issues and taking the time, effort, and resources to implement them as much as you can.

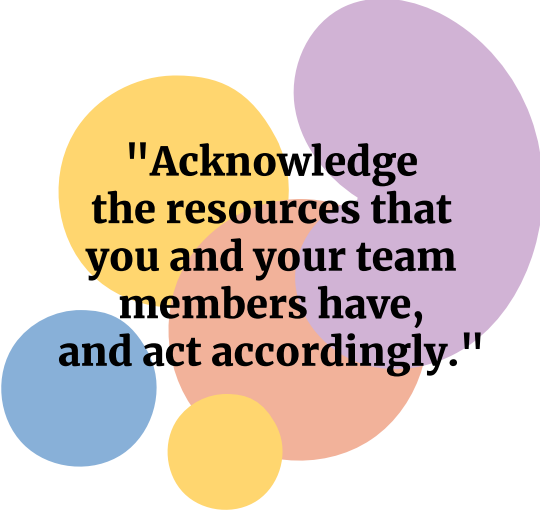
This section offers some basic guidelines and checklists as well as links to other, more thorough guidelines that others in the community have created. Please note that these lists and guides are by no means exhaustive, and can always be added to.

The lists can be long, so remember to acknowledge the resources that you and your team members have, and act accordingly. We can only strive to do our best and to improve as we go along; none of us are perfect. For instance, you can strive to add one new accessibility feature for each event you have – you don't have to do it all at once.

You can also ask for advice and assistance from other organisations that can support you with issues regarding accessibility and diversity.

3.1 Accessible communication

This section covers both the communication aimed at audience members – on social media, websites, programme leaflets, posters, and so on – and the internal communication amongst the team, artists, collaborators, and so on.



"Acknowledge the resources that you and your team members have, and act accordingly."

3.1.1 Language and communication

- Do you provide information in more than one language?
- Do you provide information in more than one format (for example audio, textual, visual; social media, email lists, websites)?
- Do you provide subtitles/surtitles or descriptions for audiovisual content?
- Is the language you use gender-neutral, inclusive, and non-discriminatory?
- Is the language you use easy to understand?

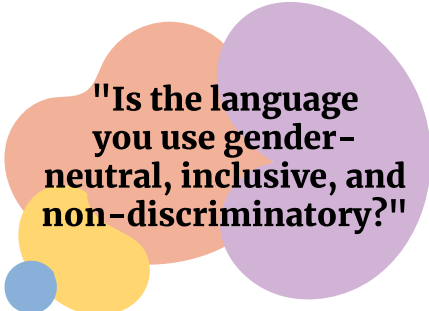
3.1.2 Some quick tips on accessibility on social media

- Avoid excessive use of emojis. Emojis and emoticons are read out loud by screen readers, which might disrupt the flow of the text.
- Capitalise the first letter of each word (#CapitaliseTheFirstLetter) in a multi-word hashtag to make them easier to read, both visually and for screen readers.
- Provide alternative texts or descriptive image captions that allow your followers to visualise the images you use when they can't see them. Many social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook have specific fields for you to add an alt text. Note that while some platforms add alt texts automatically, these are prone to errors, so it's better to write your own alt text.
- Include video captions whenever possible. Many social media platforms have auto-generated captions available.

3.1.3 Accessible websites

How accessible is your website? Many accessible websites follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1. The guide includes notes on both technical accessibility aspects, such as the use of assistive technologies, and textual and visual aspects, such as colour contrasts and text sizes. For more information on WCAG 2.1, [see the w3.org website](https://www.w3.org/).

For a long but incredibly useful guide on creating accessible digital content, [see Guide for creating accessible digital content \(in PDF format\)](#).



"Is the language you use gender-neutral, inclusive, and non-discriminatory?"

3.1.4 Accessible texts

Here are some examples of how to make your texts – both on your website and in your PDF and Word files – more accessible:

- Align the text's paragraphs only on the left
- Write clear headings that help your readers navigate the text. Use appropriate heading levels (i.e. H1 only once, then H2, and so on)
- Use lowercase letters even in the heading, not all caps
- Make sure the font size is big enough
- Underline links, nothing more
- Emphasise only short snippets with italics or bold

3.1.5 Accessible graphic design

It is equally important to make sure your graphic design is accessible. If you design your own graphics, familiarise yourself with the recommendations and guidelines of WCAG 2.1 (link above), and if you hire a graphic designer, make sure they're familiar with general accessibility guidelines.

The most important thing to remember is to use a readable font and a good contrast ratio between the text and the background. [You can check contrast ratios at WebAIM's Contrast Checker.](#) The A11y Project is another good resource both for graphic design and digital accessibility in general. For more information, [see the A11y Project website.](#)

3.2 Accessible events

There are many things to take into account when considering the accessibility of an event. The first is, of course, to budget for accessibility if at all possible. Accessible websites and digital content go a long way, but the former in particular can be costly if it requires changing your website from the ground up.

Audience feedback is your friend even when it comes to accessibility. If you have a feedback form, you can specifically ask people to comment on your event's accessibility, both in terms of communication and the actual event itself.



"Communicate any shortcomings in advance; if you know something is lacking, let your audience know."

Let your audience know what kind of accessibility features there are at your event or venue. Such features might include the following information:

- Does the venue have accessible toilets?
- Does the venue have gender neutral toilets?
- Does the venue offer information on practicalities (such as its accessibility and location) in language that is gender-neutral and easy to understand?
- Is the venue otherwise accessible (for example lifts, ramps, handrails, parking, level passageways, comfortable rest places, wheel chair places in the audience seating, chairs available if there is no seating...)?
- Does the venue have an induction loop?
- Does the venue allow service dogs?
- Does the venue have services for the visually impaired, such as braille?
- Does the venue have a quiet space?
- Does your event have captioning or subtitles, if applicable?
- Is there a possibility of interpretation (sign language, audio descriptions etc.)?
- Do you offer scent-free performances?
- Are your entrance fees reasonable?
- Do you offer discounts or free entrance to personal assistants?

It's also important to communicate any shortcomings in advance; if you know something is lacking, let your audience know. Many events have an accessibility page on their website where they list their venue's various accessibility features. The most common things to mention are, at the very least, whether there are accessible restrooms, thresholds, or stairs, and, if there are, whether there are ramps or lifts. Be also sure to mention who to contact for feedback and more information, including phone numbers and email addresses.

During the event itself, consider if the venue would benefit from signs that indicate where to find toilets, the info desk, ticket sales, and so on. The Culture for All Service has a handy symbol bank from which you can download or print accessibility symbols, all of which can be used freely for non-commercial purposes. [See the accessibility symbols from Culture for All's symbol bank.](#)

And remember that while some changes can be made, others can't due to resources, time, or the location itself — just make sure to communicate clearly what is accessible and what is not.

4 Safer space guidelines

There are many ways to indicate that an event is a safe space, but one very clear one is to have safer space guidelines that you might post on your website and social media or even have as posters decorating the venue.

There are also several ways to write the guidelines, and the one below is just one of many. Don't be afraid to tweak the text to make it your own! It's also good to discuss each particular section with your team members so you're all on the same page. In addition to the guidelines themselves, let people know who to reach out to should they need assistance, either during or after the event.

1. Let's not assume consent. Let's ask for it!
2. Let's respect the physical, mental, and emotional boundaries of others as well as our own.
3. Let's not assume the identity, sexuality, gender, health, and background of others.
4. Let's respect the opinions, beliefs, and experiences of others even when they differ from ours.
5. Let's be aware of our prejudices, privileges, behaviour, and the space we occupy.
6. Let's strive to act with positive intent and take care of each other.
7. No harassment or discrimination is allowed. This includes homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, fatphobia etc.

It's recommended that you keep the safer space guidelines visible throughout the event, such as on posters placed at the location. It is also recommended that you have safety hosts at your event, people who the audience members can reach out to should they experience any difficulties.

5 Resources

In English

The A11y Project

<https://www.a11yproject.com/>

Bridging the Gap: Inclusive and accessible communication guidelines (PDF)

https://bridgingthegap-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/BtG_Inclusive-and-accessible-Communication-Guidelines.pdf

Culture for All: Accessibility Checklists

https://www.kulttuuriakaikille.fi/accessibility_checklists

Culture for All: Accessible Communication

https://www.kulttuuriakaikille.fi/accessibility_what_is_accessibility_accessible_communication

Culture for All: Symbol bank

https://www.kulttuuriakaikille.fi/accessibility_symbols_for_communication_culture_for_all_symbol_bank

GDPR.EU

<https://gdpr.eu/what-is-gdpr/>

Guide for Creating Accessible Digital Content (PDF)

http://www.esvial.org/wp-content/files/ESVIAL_LibroDigital_ingles_2015.pdf

Selkokulttuuri

<https://en.selkokulttuuri.fi/>

Shape Arts: Making Events Accessible

<https://www.shapearts.org.uk/news/accessible-events>

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1

<https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/>

WebAIM: Contrast Checker

<https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>

In Finnish

Invalidiliitto: Esteettömyys

<https://www.invalidiliitto.fi/esteettomyys>

Kulttuuria kaikille: Tarkistuslistat arvioinnin tueksi

https://www.kulttuuriakaikille.fi/saavutettavuus_tarkistuslistat_arvioinnin_tueksi

Kulttuuria kaikille: Tietopaketit ja oppaat

https://www.kulttuuriakaikille.fi/saavutettavuus_tietopaketit_ja_oppaat

Kulttuuria kaikille: Viestintä

https://www.kulttuuriakaikille.fi/saavutettavuus_tietopaketit_ja_oppaat_viestinta

Papunet: Selkeää ja saavutettavaa viestintää

<https://papunet.net/>

Saavutettavasti.fi: Ohjeita ja vinkkejä verkkosisältöjen saavutettavuuteen

<https://www.saavutettavasti.fi/>

Saavutettavuusvaatimukset:

Digitaaliset palvelut saavutettaviksi

<https://www.saavutettavuusvaatimukset.fi/>

Selkeästi meille:

Saavutettavaa viestintää kaikille

<https://www.selkeastimeille.fi/>

Selkokeskus.fi

<https://selkokeskus.fi/>

Syrjimätön kieli:

Opas inklusiiviseen kielenkäyttöön ja viestintään

<https://www.ksl.fi/julkaisut/syrjimaton-kieli/>