Accessibility in Word

Headings

Headings in a document are an important organizing strategy for all users as they help to break up large sections of text into smaller chunks. For those using screen readers, headings serve a very important navigation purpose. Screen readers can scan the document and generate a list of headings that contains the text of the headings and the heading level. This allows screen reader users to easily navigate to any heading section in a document. As a navigation tool, it is extremely important that the heading text be short and as descriptive as possible so they are useful.

Applying a heading

1. Select the text to use for the heading.
2. While on the **Home** tab, the ribbon will show a group of **Styles**. Click on the style you want to apply to the selected text, for example, **Heading 1** or **Heading 2**. The selected text will change to match the appearance of style chosen.

Modifying a Heading Style

Heading styles contain both organization level information as well as visual look and feel styling. Often when dealing with accessibility in pre-existing documents, the documents contain pseudo-headings consisting of text that may have been bolded or have other visual modifications applied to it. However, if it hasn't had an actual **Heading** applied to it then it is not accessible. If it is necessary to maintain the look and feel of the existing document, then you will have to modify the **Heading** style.

To modify an existing style:

1. Select the text of the pseudo-heading.
2. Right-click the **Heading** style you want to modify to match the selected text's styling.
3. From the dropdown, click **Update Heading (#) to Match Selection.**
4. The **Heading** style for the current document has now be modified with the selected text's styling.