

# WATTLE

## Tips for Improving Course Content Accessibility

**Author:**

Lachlan McGill, Senior Business Analyst, ITS

Minh Tam Nguyen, Senior Learning Systems Officer, ANU Online

Sherry Lo, Learning Management Technology Specialist, ANU Online

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## 1. Introduction

This guide was developed to help make Wattle accessible for staff and students. The information here can help those creating Wattle sites improve their courses to make their courses more inclusive for a wide variety of audiences.

We encourage all members of the ANU community who might require assistance with the use of Wattle to contact the Access and Inclusion Office for information on assistive technologies, support, and arrangement of adjustments for workplace and study.

There are a number of simple ways to start improving the accessibility of your Wattle course, especially during the creation and development stages.

## 2. Labels, Activity Descriptions and Other Text

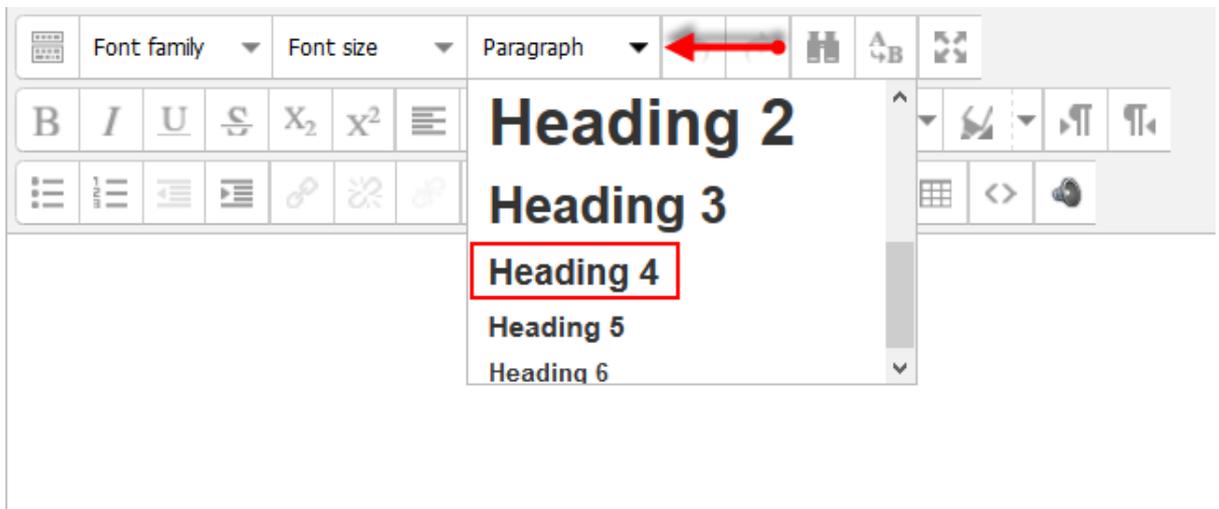
Labels are commonly used to display text and images on the main page of a Wattle course. When creating a label, or adding any other static text in your Wattle course, try the below steps to make the content more accessible to users.

### 2.1. Content Structure

- Content should have a logical structure and be easily scannable so as to make it easy for users to read and navigate to the information they need.

### 2.2. Headings

- Headings are used to help users identify the most important information first prior to content.
- Headings should be marked up using the text editor (see next dot point) or with HTML (<h1>) heading tags rather than using text formatting or styles only, such as bold.
- All headings should be logical and representative of the page's hierarchical structure. Headings can have a hierarchical value assigned to them using the paragraph drop down box in the text editor.
- Ideally pages should start with Heading Level 1. In Wattle, the course title is automatically set to Heading Level 1, the main content section is placed under a Heading Level 2 and each week or topic title is set as Heading Level 3 meaning that most often, using Heading Level 4 for your heading is appropriate (see screenshot below):

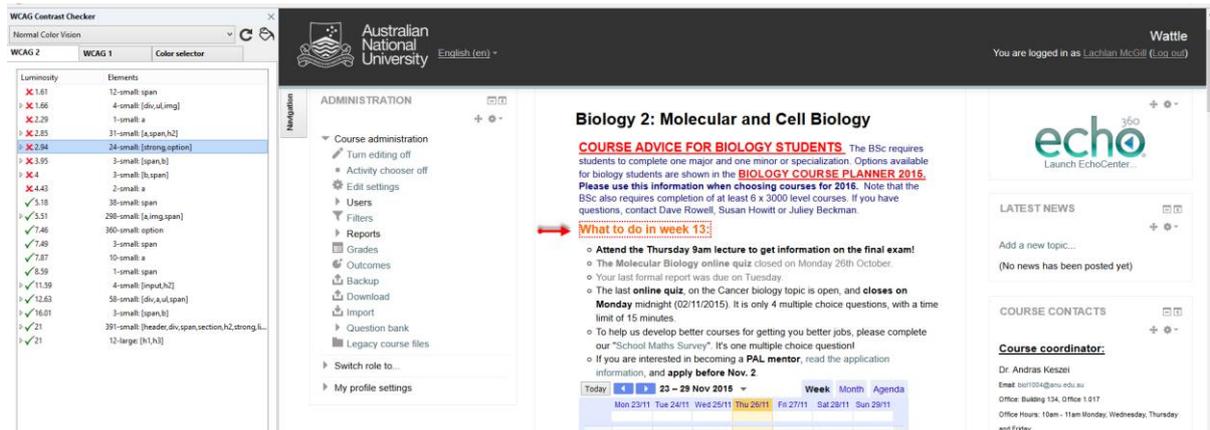


1 Selecting heading level using the paragraph drop down button in the text editor

- Headings should be descriptive but still concise and representative of the information that is below them.
- Avoid the use of all caps.

### 2.3. Colour Contrast

- Ensure there is sufficient difference between foreground (text) colour and background colour, especially when using coloured text on a background, considering people with low vision or colour blindness could have difficulty reading the text if the colour contrast is poor.
- There are tools and plugins to check colour contrast for WCAG compliance you can download and use to check your courses. Link - [Contrast checker for Firefox](#)



2 Effect of Colour Contrast Checker when applied to a Wattle Course page

### 2.4. Link Text

- It is best to avoid automatically opening links in a new window as users prefer to control this behaviour and it may disorientate users with assistive technology. We recommend setting links in Wattle to open in the same window. Link text should still make sense out of context - the purpose of each link should be determined from the link text alone.

- Ambiguous links such as 'click here' or linking on a URL should also be avoided. It is best practice to use descriptive link text rather than linking on 'here' or the URL as this helps users scanning the page, and also helps with search engine traffic. This is especially useful for those with assistive technology, such as screen readers, who will have the URL read out (h-t-t-p-double-u-a-t-t-l-e-c-o-u-r-s-e...). Additionally, we recommend leaving the underline in place so that users are able to see there is a link to a URL present as has been done in the links in this document.
- When linking to uploaded files in text, the file type and size should be included in links to non-webpages. (When using the File Resource, Wattle will automatically show the type and size)

 [Assignment 3 -log file](#) 12.8KB PDF document

Available until end of **23 July 2015** (hidden otherwise)

### 3 File size and type

- Ensure that links are not broken up. In some courses the course contact email has been split into two.

## COURSE CONTACTS

**Course coordinator:**

Dr. Jane Smith

Email: [jmaith@anu.edu.au](mailto:jmaith@anu.edu.au)

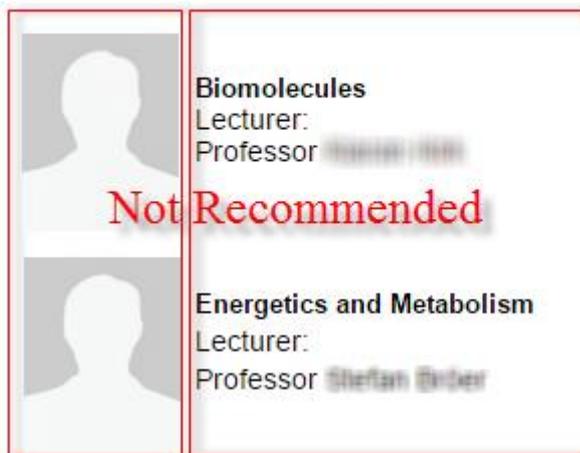
Office: Building 404, Office 101

Office Hours: 10am - 11am Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

### 4 Broken link/email address

## 2.5. Tables

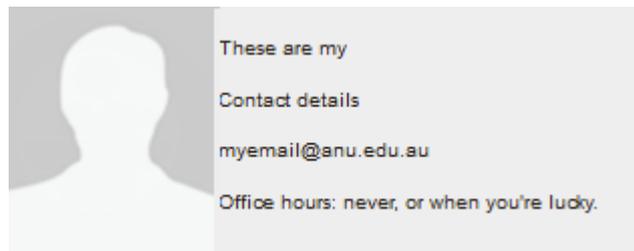
- Should be used for tabular data only - not laying out blocks of text or images. For example don't use tables to display text next to images as in the below lecturer information image



5 Not Recommended: Use of tables to create images left of text

Instead add an image with left alignment as in the contact details in the image below.

### Recommended



6 Recommended: Use inserted images with aligned to the left of text

- Must have row or column headings marked up with header (<th>) HTML tags.
- Should contain captions to provide a short description of the table content. When adding a table using the Wattle text editor, you can specify a table caption.
- The scope attribute should also be used for complex data tables.

## 2.6. Files

- When creating files, such as Word documents, PowerPoint slides and PDFs, to be shared with students, try to follow the same guidelines as for Labels above.

- Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, on Windows, have a tool called the Accessibility Checker that can be used to highlight parts of the document that might be difficult to use for persons with disabilities. See Link to [Microsoft Accessible Word Documents Guide](#)
- Wattle will display the file type and file size next to the name of the uploaded file when using the file resource.
- Try to avoid uploading or using files and images of handwritten notes and equations as these can be unreadable by students that use assistive technology such as screen readers to access content. We suggest using LaTeX for machine readable equations and document cameras to record equations and notes made in class sessions instead of using whiteboards and overhead projectors.

### 3. Multimedia content

#### 3.1 Alternative (alt) attributes for images

- Every image must have an alt attribute. This text is displayed or read out by a screen reader used by a person with low vision for the image if necessary. The ACCY1001 Course in Wattle has [instructions on how to add alt text to images in Moodle](#).
- For decorative images remove any alt text and leave the alt text attributes empty (alt="").
- Descriptive images should have descriptive alt attributes, or have the content and function of the image represented in the surrounding content text.
- Linked images must include a descriptive alt attribute which clearly describes the link location.
- For complex images such as graphs try to keep the description to under 100 words.
- If you are using complex images but the actual content of the image is rather simple don't worry about providing the full long description containing all possible data points in an attempt to address accessibility. Simply providing a brief summary of the data in alternative text will likely be sufficient. For example when showing a sales bar chart showing a steadily yearly increase if you don't think the user will need to know the exact sales figure in any given year then don't bother providing this in text, instead say sales improved steadily from X amount in 2008 to Y amount in 2014.
- [5 Golden Rules for writing Alt text](#)
- [ANU Web Style Guide Image accessibility](#)

#### 3.2 Video

- When creating videos, be aware that some users may not be able to see the video, while other users may not be able to hear the audio.
- Videos should be captioned and transcriptions provided for people with no access to audio. Captioning can be expensive, but there are a number of free captioning software options available that can help to keep costs down. Click here for more information on free captioning.
- Captions should be synchronised with the audio.

- Transcripts should contain additional descriptions, explanations, or comments that may be beneficial, such as indications of laughter or an explosion.
- Read more about video accessibility at WebAIM

### 3.3. Audio – information on transcripts

- As with Videos, audio files, podcasts can be inaccessible to some students. Transcripts should be provided for any audio files used.

## 4. Timed Assessments

Some students using assistive technologies or with learning disabilities may have difficulties with timed assessments in quizzes. Please consult with Access and Inclusion if you have students who have identified as having special accessibility requirements for courses using timed assessments.

## 5. Accessibility for Internet Access

ANU students come from all across the ACT, Australia and internationally and may not have access to broadband internet, particularly users in rural and remote areas. When creating courses we recommend:

- Including streaming and downloadable versions of audio and video files;
- Including lower quality, smaller versions of large files especially for video, audio and large documents.

## 6. For More Information

For more information on improving accessibility when creating course content and conditions that affect accessibility you can self-enrol in the [Accessibility Course ACCY1001](#) in Wattle.

For other questions relating to reasonable adjustments, assistive technologies, and support for staff and students with disabilities, contact the Access and Inclusion Office

Contact info:

Access and Inclusion

Email: [disability.advisor@anu.edu.au](mailto:disability.advisor@anu.edu.au)

Phone: +61 2 6125 5036

Website: <http://disability.anu.edu.au/about-access-and-inclusion>

Service Desk:

Email: [itservicedesk@anu.edu.au](mailto:itservicedesk@anu.edu.au)

Phone: +61 2 6125 4321

Website: <https://servicedesk.anu.edu.au/>