Make Your Emails Work for Everyone

Natasha Brand, MSc, GradCert Ed.

NEO A & M College

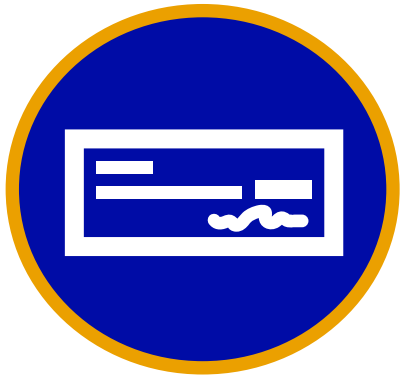
Co-chair COLE Accessibility Subcommittee

Oklahoma AbleTech Advisory Council Member

Session Objectives

IDENTIFY COMMON ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES IN EMAILS

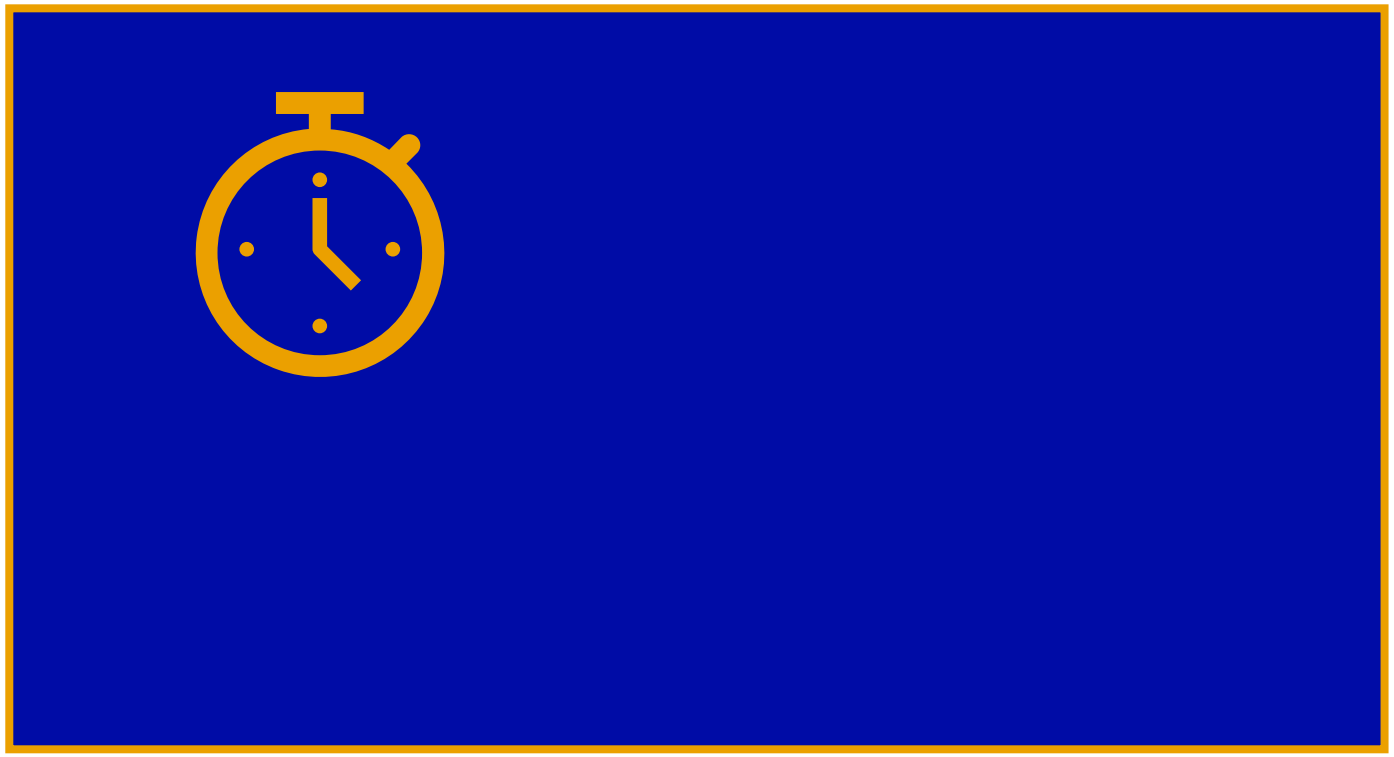
APPLY PRACTICAL FIXES USING 6 CORE STRATEGIES



CREATE ACCESSIBLE EMAILS & SIGNATURES

LEAVE WITH TOOLS AND RESOURCES

What's Wrong with This Email?



Upcoming Workshop

Message Insert Format text Draw Options

Arial 12

Cc

Upcoming Workshop Draft saved at 1:54 PM

Staff & Faculty,

We would love you to attend our upcoming workshop!

Click Here to register

DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY WORKSHOP

MAY 22, 2:00 PM–3:30 PM

SMITH HALL, ROOM 205

Learn how to create accessible digital content.

CLICK HERE TO RSVP

Natasha Brand MSc, GradCert Ed.

Student Success Specialist – Title III

natasha.brand@neo.edu

200 I Street NE, Miami, OK 743544

(918) 540-6251

What did you find?

Image only flyer – no email body

Low-contrast or poor font choice

Unclear subject line

“Click here” link

Signature as an image

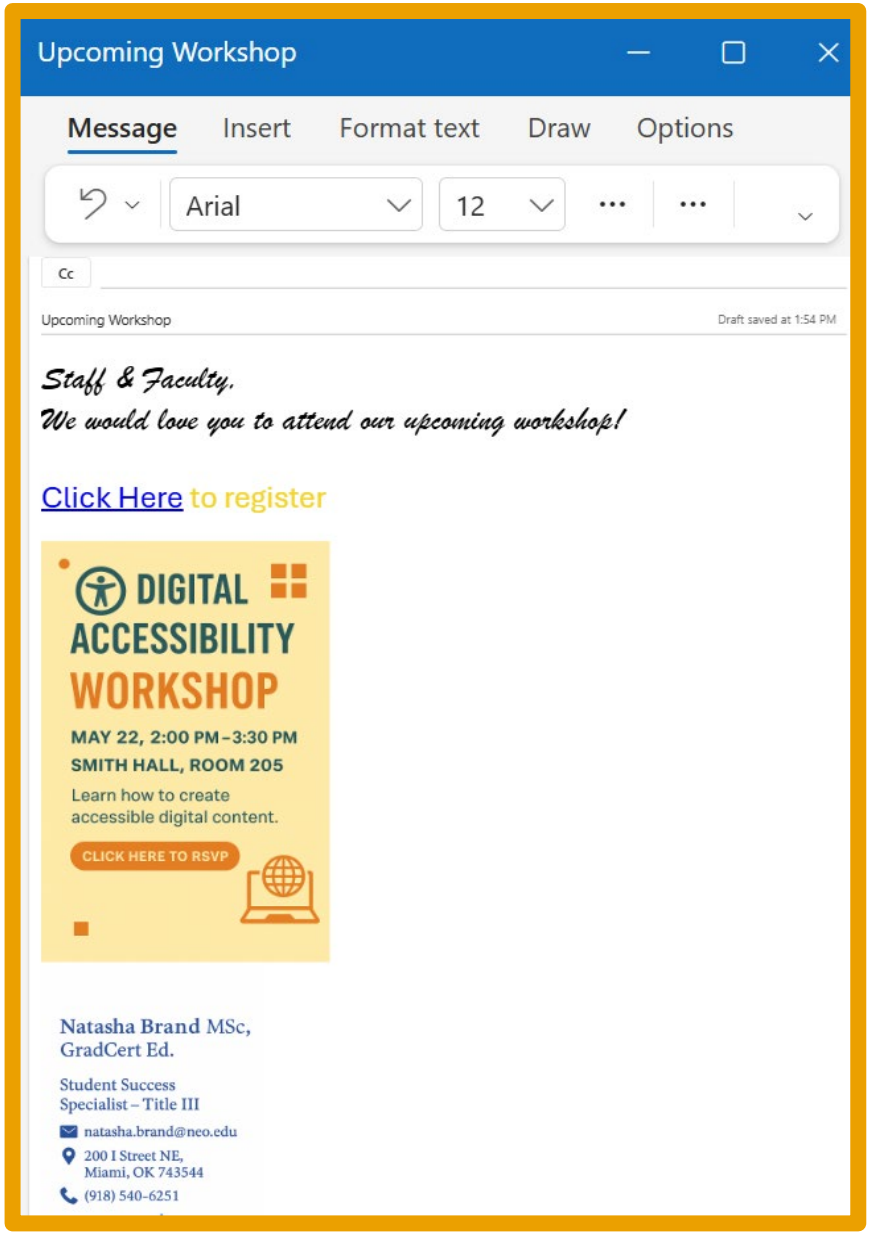
What to Fix & Why It Matters

Top 6 Email Accessibility Mistakes

Mistake	Why It Matters
❌ Flyer-only emails	Content not readable by screen readers
❌ No alt text on images	Visually impaired users miss the message
❌ Poor contrast or cursive fonts	Hard to read for many users
❌ Unclear link text (“Click here”)	Confusing with assistive tech
❌ Image-only signatures	Name/title/contact info can’t be read or copied
❌ No subject line or poor heading structure	Disrupts navigation for screen readers

Live Demo:

Make This Email Accessible



Make This Email Accessible: Step-by-Step Fix

Step	Action	Why
1.	Add a descriptive subject line	Helps screen reader users navigate
2.	Copy flyer content into the email body	Ensures everyone gets the message
3.	Add alt text to any remaining images	Gives meaning to non-sighted users
4.	Use accessible fonts and high-contrast colors	Improves readability
5.	Use clear, descriptive link text	Helps users know where links go
6.	Create a text-based signature with typed name, title, and contact	Ensures info is searchable, selectable, and screen reader-friendly

Accessible Signature Example

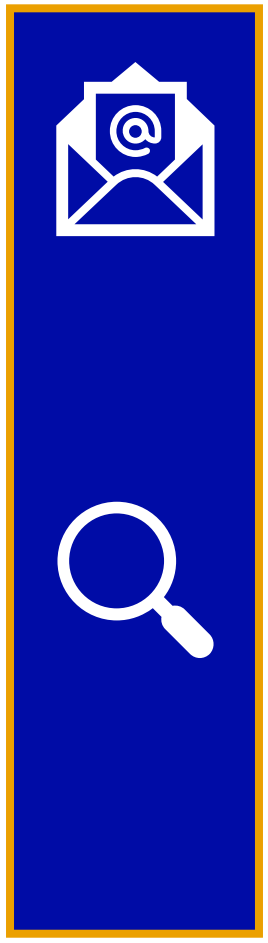
Jane Smith, Ed.D.

Associate Professor of Biology

Northeast OK State College

jane.smith@nosc.edu | 918-555-1234

Email Signature Check!



Step 1: Open Your Email Signature

- Open your email, select a New Mail or your email signature

Step 2: Review for Accessibility

- Is my signature text-based (not just an image)?
- Does it include clear, plain text contact info?
- If I use a logo or photo, does it have alt text?
- Is the font easy to read and high contrast?
- Are icons Unicode text (📧, 📞) rather than decorative images?

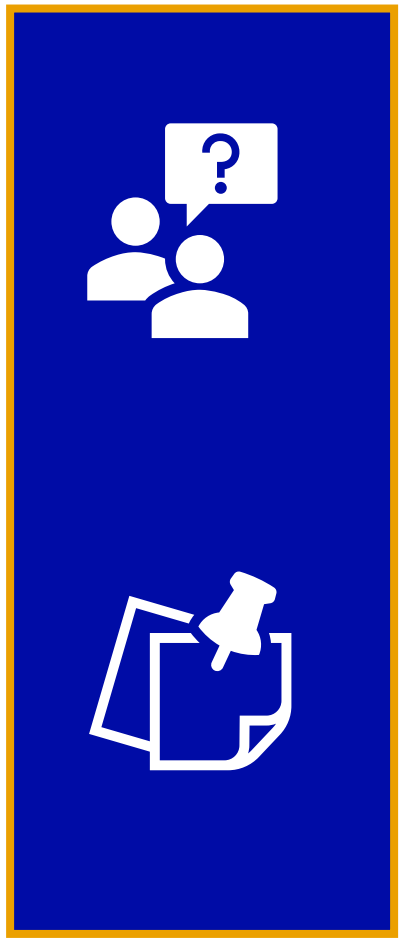
Group Discussion

Identify one thing you would change in your own signature to improve accessibility.

Share with the group:

- What's one small adjustment you can make today?

Wrap-Up & Takeaway Resources



Questions?

Resources

- OKLIS Accessible Email Checklist
- Creating Accessible Emails - Harvard University

NEO INNOVATION CENTER