Microsoft Excel Document Accessibility

State of Iowa

August 2025

MSF&W

Accessibility Techniques

Use the same techniques as Word when available:

- Use Excel for tabular data
- Add alternate text for images
- Use colors that provide sufficient contrast between foreground text and the background
- Use link text that clearly indicate the link's destination or function

Modifying an Existing Excel Document

- Start content in cell A1
- Remove empty rows and columns
- Ensure that cell content is fully contained in the cell (rather than spread across multiple rows or columns)

Converting Content to a Table

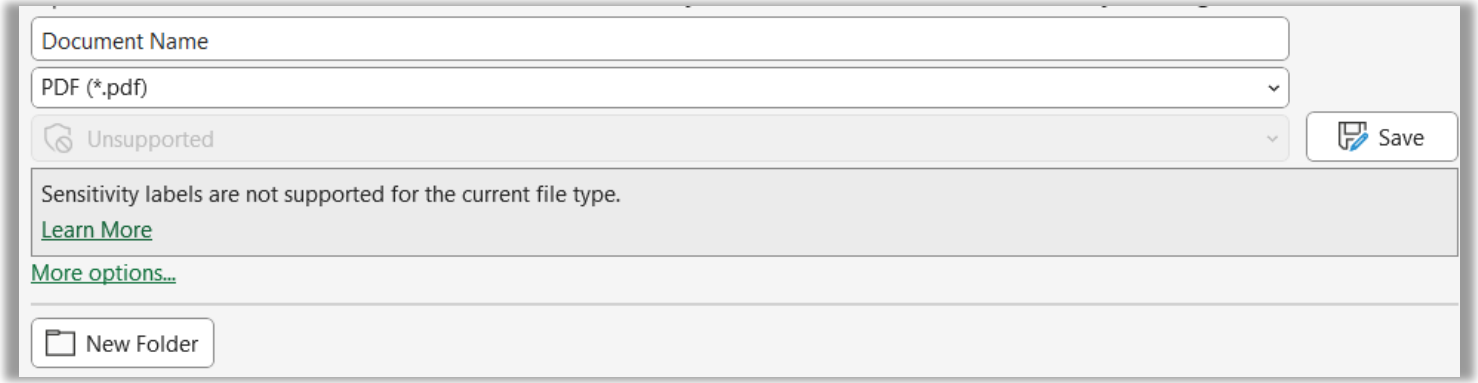
- Select data table → Home tab → Styles → Format as Table
- Table Design → Table Style Options
  - Check Header Row (if not already checked)
  - Uncheck Filter Button, if desired
- Table Design → Properties → Table Name

Note: Excel tables cannot contain merged cells. The table must be simplified.

Convert to PDF

File tab → Save a Copy → Change file type to .pdf





Remediate in Acrobat Pro

- Pull the non-tabular content (headings, paragraphs, etc.) out of the table and delete the empty table containers.
- Use the Reading Order Tool to mark up headings, background decorative images, etc.
- Add row headers to the table
- Arrow through the Accessibility Tags pane to check document reading order
- Run Accessibility Check

Summary

- Start content in cell A1
- Remove empty rows and columns
- Ensure that cell content is fully contained in the cell (rather than spread across multiple rows or columns)
- Convert content to table
- Save a Copy, change file type to PDF (for now, at least)
- Remediate in Acrobat

Q&A

Questions?

accessibility@msfw.com