

EXAMPLE ON HOW TO CREATE AN INCLUSIVE SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

In the following example we will talk about how to reach visually impaired people. It is obvious that pictures are a very important way to catch someone's eye and with that their interest in what you have to offer. If you work with pictures a lot, please consider making their content accessible for everyone. That way you not only honour everyone's right to access information (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), but you also show people (potential clients) that you take their needs into consideration.



How does it work?

Nearly all smart phones have screen readers which allow visually impaired people to "read" (via text-to-speech) digital information: text in any form, websites, links, menus, pictures and graphs with alt text, emoji, keyboards. They are also useful for making phone calls, interacting with apps and other smartphone functions.

What are alt texts and what are image descriptions?

Alt texts, which are often generated automatically by an AI, offer very profound information, e.g. "people, kneeling, nighttime, lights".

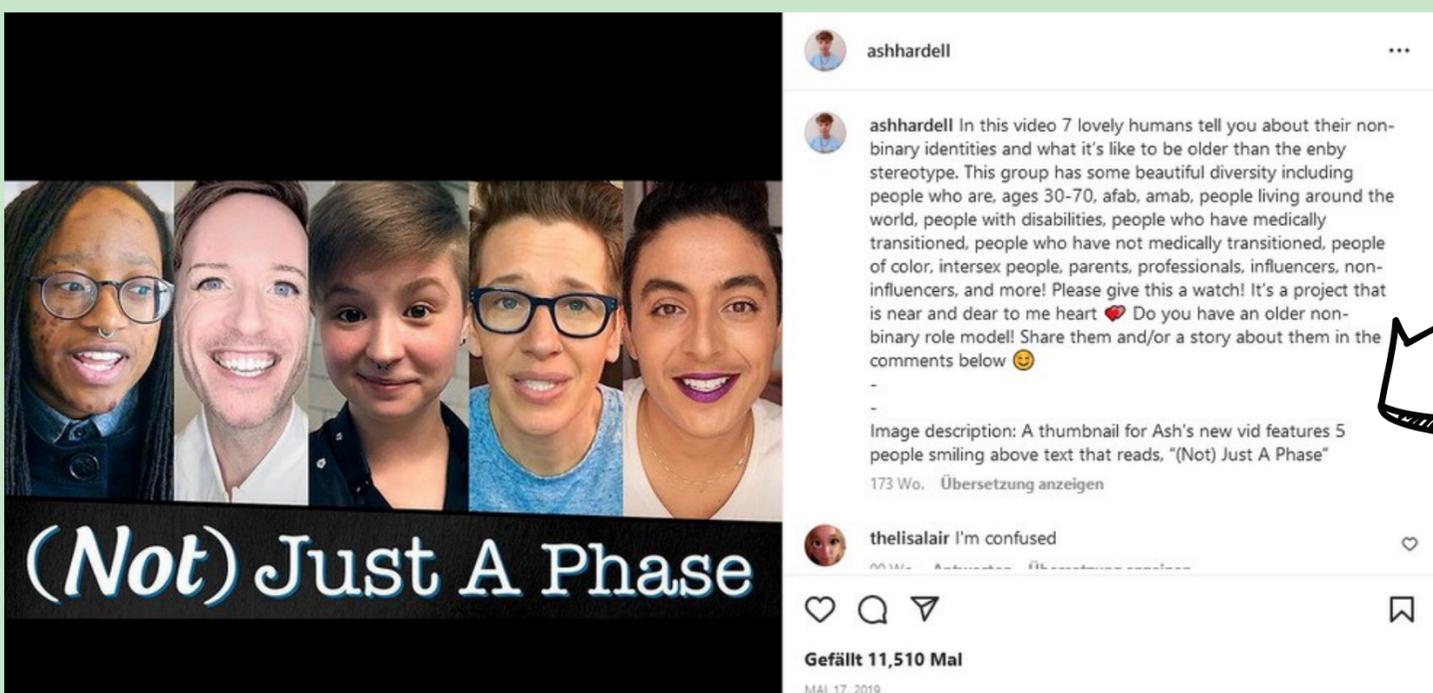
The "man-made" image descriptions offer far more insight by telling us that "Kim is kneeling in front of Ty, who is standing. Kim is holding a ring. Both are smiling. They wear fancy evening clothing in front of a fountain. They are surrounded by a few people who are watching. Everybody laughs and claps."

This is the context you need to understand that it is a post about an engagement.



Examples

Our examples come from Molly Burkes' and Ash Hardells' Instagram accounts. Both are activists and authors from the USA who make their content accessible through image descriptions.



Good to know: Alt texts and image descriptions can (and should!) be used wherever there are pictures: Homepages, Instagram, blogs, ...

That way you make your content accessible and it also helps people to find your institution on Google and other search engines - alt text plays an important role in Search Engine Optimisation. Use it to your advantage!

We admit, creating image descriptions takes some practice. But if you keep the following tips in mind, you should be a pro in no time:

1

Start with one sentence with the most necessary

information. What would you tell a person over the phone if you are in a hurry?

2

Continue with an explanation: add a more detailed

description with important details. How would you describe the picture if you want someone to see it in their mind's eye?

3

How much information is enough depends on your consideration and your target group. When asked, most

people opted for "core content first, further description below that". That way people can decide if they want to continue reading/listening or scroll past the picture. Always ask yourself: What is essential here?

If you talk about about a botched haircut, you might want to describe the hair of the person featured in the picture.

4

Use a clear and "easy to understand" language. Try to

avoid foreign words and give as many people as possible a chance to grasp the meaning of what you are saying.

5

Keep your opinion out of the description.

Blind and partially sighted people depend on descriptions in many contexts. They appreciate being able to form their own opinion about what is described. You might find the purple jumper with pink clouds on ugly. But not everyone agrees. So please, be neutral.