

Image Attribute Guidelines

Effective web images have 3 textual attributes:

- [Titles](#)
- [Captions](#) (or Descriptions)
- [Alternate Text](#)

Knowing what to use for each can be frustrating, however, so some basic guidelines follow, plus [Examples](#) and a note about [Usage Rights](#).

Titles

In our CMS, the title is sometimes visible (Gallery Images) and other times not (Slideshow Images). In either case, however, titles should be kept as brief as possible.

Captions

Captions should not be literal descriptions of the image. Instead, they should connect the image to the page or site it resides on, by providing context to the site's goals, events or other desired information. A key exception to this is in instances where specific descriptions may enhance the message.

Captions are not always available (Gallery Images), but areas for description are present and can serve much the same purpose.

Alternate Text

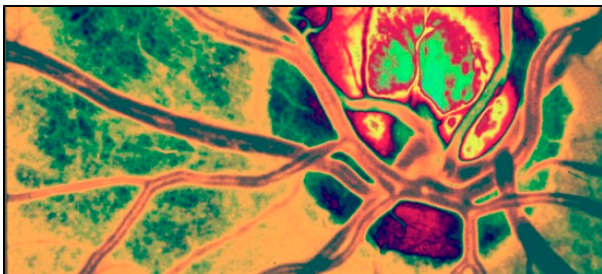
The Alternate Text (or 'alt text') attribute is used by screen readers, search engines and when the image cannot be loaded. Alt text is intended to represent the image for non-visual situations, so it should be a literal (but brief) description of the image.

The alt text attribute is sometimes only visible AFTER a file has been uploaded.

Examples (back to top)



	More effective	Less Effective	Reason
Title	USM Nursing Students	Nursing Program	Too vague
Caption	Graduates of USM's Certificate of Advance Study in Nursing have a 98% job placement rate. Click for more info.	Nursing students smiling	Literal description adds nothing to message
Alt Text	USM Nursing students in the classroom	USM Nursing students are prepared for the work place	Does not actually describe the image



	More effective	Less Effective	Reason
Title	Thermal Image of Retina	ThermalRetina.jpg	Filenames should be avoided
Caption	Biology majors at USM have access to the latest research technology, like the FLIR SC7900 VL thermal imaging camera used to capture this image of the human eye.	Thermal camera image of human eye	Lacks engaging, impactful detail
Alt Text	Thermal image of human eye taken at USM with FLIR SC7900 VL camera	Eye under microscope	Too vague

Usage Rights (back to top)

Always remember to use only images that you have permission to use.

Image Library

Marketing has created a [collection of already approved images](#) which are pre-sized for Slideshow Images.

When in doubt, ask.