

Future Ready

Module 3 File-format Guide

Accessible files, headings, alt text, readable structure and avoiding image-only documents

Purpose

Use this guide to make digital files easier to read, navigate, understand and reuse. It supports Future Ready Module 3: Digital Tools.

Quick principles

- Use real text, not image-only content.
- Use headings so people can navigate the file.
- Use meaningful link text that explains where the link goes.
- Add alt text to meaningful images.
- Provide captions and transcripts for video or audio content.
- Keep layout clear, readable and not crowded.
- Offer another format when people need it.

Core idea

A file is not accessible just because it can be downloaded. People need to be able to read it, navigate it, understand it and use it with their preferred tools.

File-format checklist

Check	What to do
Headings	Use built-in heading styles. Do not just make text bigger or bold.
Reading order	Check that the file reads in a logical order from start to finish.
Plain language	Use clear words, short sections and direct next steps.
Links	Use meaningful link text such as "Download the worksheet" instead of "click here".
Images	Add alt text for meaningful images. Mark decorative images as decorative where the platform allows it.
Tables	Keep tables simple. Use header rows and avoid merged cells where possible.
PDFs	Avoid image-only PDFs. Provide a DOCX or HTML version where possible.
Video and audio	Provide captions, transcripts or another equivalent format.

Forms	Use clear labels, instructions and error messages. Allow enough time and support options.
Another format	Include a way to ask for another format: founder@edulinked.com.au.

Better file options

Instead of this	Use this where possible
Image-only PDF	Tagged PDF, DOCX, HTML page or plain text version.
Long unstructured document	Document with headings, short sections and a summary.
Scanned form	Accessible online form or editable document with clear labels.
Video without captions	Video with captions and a transcript.
Complex brochure only	Brochure plus Easy Read, plain language or HTML version.

Access and alternate formats

You can ask for this resource in another format. Contact: founder@edulinked.com.au