Knowledge Network Quick Guides

Titles, Captions, ALT tags

What makes a good title?

- Space is limited: every character counts.
- Don't use the same words more than once.
- For a News title: Make sure it tells the main news in most exciting way (it must make reader want to read story below).
- Use the active voice (not passive).
- Use present tense and avoid past tense where possible.
- Use 'headline speak' – avoid superfluous words (and, the, a, an, at, that etc.).
- Avoid acronyms if you can (unless widely known).
- Avoid unnecessary punctuation.
- If it's a Story title: these draw reader into story rather than to announce some key bit of news.
- Keep Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) in mind. Use the type of words that reader will use in a Google search, this increases the chances of new readers finding your story through web searches.

Captions and ALT tags: what's the difference?

A **caption** is the text that is visible below the photo or image. It relates to the story and adds something extra.

Don't just duplicate the words of the story. Write a caption that adds some context and uses the photo as illustration of your words.

Don't simply describe the picture (we can see that people are shaking hands).

An example might be:

- × 'Training Project Y'
- ✓ 'Field training complements traditional classroom training by giving an experience that is as close to the real-life situation as possible.'

Alternative text (ALT tags? are for accessibility.

Here we **do** describe the image (a responder in orange protective clothing walks across the rubble of a destroyed apartment building).

Alternative text (ALT tags) are a requirement of the [EU Web Accessibility Directive](#), part of the [European Accessibility Act](#).

Alt tags are a short description of the image. It is used by screen readers to read the information about an image for a visually impaired website user. It also appears onscreen if an image fails to load.

An example of an ALT tag is: "A firefighter in yellow protective clothing uses a high-pressure hose to put out a wildfire."

A note on copyright

Always check the copyright carefully and ensure that the copyright is yours/EU. No confirmed copyright or re-use permission = do not upload the image!