Expanded Practice: Enhanced Usage of Alt Text in Digital Collections

Courtney Tkacz, Archivist
IMPLEMENTATION

- Accessibility checkers
- Screen readers
- User feedback
- Transcriptions / descriptions
- Alt text
April 14, 1934

Mrs. John L. Pratt
Chatham
Fredericksburg, Virginia

My dear Mrs. Pratt,

Please forgive me for the delay in answering your kind letter of the 12th, but I was trying to trace the cause of wrong delivery, as I note that the envelope was properly addressed by you. The Mr. Schaeffer in the building should have indeed had the courtesy to forward it to me.

I have received your note and also the book, and am sorry that you have had this unpleasantness.

I hope that my letter finds you in the best of health, and remain, with best wishes, and kindest personal regards, in which Mrs.

https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/
Siteimprove (Chrome Extension)

https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/siteimprove-accessibility/
Screen Reader – Search Results

**Screen Reader – Item Record**

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**Pratt to R. Schaffer**

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<td>Citation:</td>
<td>Lillian Thomas Pratt Personal Papers (SC-07). VMFA Archives, Richmond, Virginia.</td>
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https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/17173/
## A. Schaffer to Pratt

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<td><strong>Citation</strong></td>
<td>Lillian Thomas Pratt Personal Papers (SC-07). VMFA Archives, Richmond, Virginia.</td>
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| **Note**          | Schaffer Collection, Russian Imperial Treasures, Rockefeller Center Digitization of the Lillian Thomas Pratt Archives has been made possible by the National Endowment
Mrs. John L. Pratt  
Box 118  
Fredericksburg, Virginia

Dear Mrs. Pratt,

Thank you for your kind letter and check on account.

I was most sorry to hear that you were ill, and I am glad to know that you are up and around again. Please do take care of yourself. Remember, we need your help for Paul's wedding.

It is remarkable how time flies! He is growing every day and you will find that he is not the little baby you have seen. Of course, we still think he's very sweet and loveable.

We are on the beach and would enjoy it very much except that there's a plague of mosquitoes which is not very pleasant, but we hope that they'll disappear soon.

With kindest regards and love from the family,

Sincerely,

Alexandra Schaffer

ASS:RS
Mrs. John L. Pratt
Box 118
Fredericksburg, Virginia

#1326 Imperial Easter egg $16,500.00
Word Clouds

https://www.wordclouds.com
Alt text must consider CONTEXT

CURRENT:  alt=“Napoleon: Power and Splendor”

BETTER:  alt=“Detail of a 19th century glass mosaic of Napoleon on view in the exhibition about the Emperor at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.”

https://webaim.org/techniques/alttext/
alt="Children looking at Fabergé imperial eggs"

alt="Richmond area children looking at Fabergé imperial eggs. In the 1950s and 1960s, the museum regularly set up publicity shots with children that allowed them to take a closer look at (and often touch!) the eggs."

PHOTOGRAPHS
CURRENT: alt=“Battle Fields of Virginia 1861 to 1865”

BETTER: alt=“Map of postal routes in Virginia and West Virginia with Civil War battlefields denoted”
Automated alt text can be MISLEADING

AUTOMATED:

alt="Untitled (Noisy Panthers Disrupt Trial), Louis Draper, 1966-72"

BETTER:

alt="Black and white silver gelatin print of an elderly couple seated on the subway. The man holds a newspaper with a headline on the cover that says “Noisy Panthers Disrupt Trial.” Taken in New York City between 1966 and 1972 by Louis Draper.”
RESOURCE LINKS

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0
https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/

Web Accessibility in Mind – Alt Text
https://webaim.org/techniques/alttext/

Web Accessibility in Mind - WAVE Tool
http://wave.webaim.org/

SiteImprove – Chrome Extension
https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/siteimprove-accessibility/

Macintosh OS VoiceOver

Windows OS Narrator
https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/17173/
Title: Amen Corner Sisters, Harlem, NY (Primary Title)

Object Number: 2016.243

Creator: Ming Smith (Artist)

Date: printed ca. 1976

Collection: Modern and Contemporary Art

Medium: Gelatin silver print

Category: Works On Paper, Photographs
Title: Birds and Berries
(Primary Title)

Object Number: 2008.31

Creator: Georges de Feure, French, 1868 - 1943
(Designer); Lauthet CieScheurer, French, 1872 - 1935 (Printer)

Date: 1900-1901

Collection: Decorative Arts

Medium: Cotton

Category: Textiles
Title: Vessel (Primary Title)

Object Number: 2014.5

Creator: Radcliffe Bailey, American, born 1968 (Artist)

Date: 2012

Collection: Modern and Contemporary Art

Medium: Tarp, thread, iron, vintage model ship, African sculpture, wicker basket, glass

Category: Sculpture