

Smart Frames UI

Power BI Alt Text Creation Checklist



1. Understand the Context (Before Opening Power BI)

- Identify the target audience
- Confirm if any users rely on screen readers or non-visual access
- Define the purpose of each visual (decision, comparison, or insight)
- Check if the report falls under EAA or EU accessibility requirements
- Consider user empathy, what must be understood without seeing the visual

2. Define the Insight (Not the Picture)

- Determine the main message of the visual
- Identify what users should understand within 3–5 seconds
- Highlight key relationships or trends
- Exclude unnecessary details
- Reassess the visual design if the insight cannot be clearly summarised

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3. Write the Core Alt Text (Static Draft)

- Focus on insight, not aesthetics
- Avoid listing every data point or category
- Use plain, direct language
- State the trend, comparison, or key takeaway
- Mention anomalies or important context
- Avoid jargon unless essential for the audience

4. Convert to Dynamic Alt Text (Using DAX)

- Create a DAX measure that summarises the insight dynamically
- Bind the measure to the visual's alt text using conditional formatting
- Ensure the measure updates with filters and handles blanks
- Keep sentences concise and meaningful
- Include fallback text (“No data available for the current selection.”)

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DAX prompts to consider:

- Selected category
- Highest/lowest values
- Trend direction
- Percentage change
- Time period selected

5. Validate the Experience (Screen Reader Testing)

- Test with a screen reader (e.g., Narrator on Windows 11)
- Confirm the alt text reads naturally
- Verify it matches the current filter state
- Check for clarity and brevity
- Ensure it conveys insight without visual reference
- Avoid repeating titles or describing colours/shapes unnecessarily
- Gather feedback from assistive technology users

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6. Maintain and Review Regularly

- Revisit alt text after data refreshes
- Update when new filters or slicers are added
- Revise after visual redesigns
- Adjust for audience changes
- Review if the report becomes customer-facing or regulated

Review questions:

- Does the alt text still reflect the insight?
- Would a non-visual user understand the same story as a sighted user?

7. Final Empathy Check

- Would this description help someone understand the meaning without seeing the visual?
- Does it respect the user's time and cognitive load?
- Does it communicate insight, not decoration?
- Does it reflect the visual's intended message?