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Tables

When tables are not structured accessibly, the data they contain can quickly become a meaningless sea of numbers, facts and figures to someone moving through them a cell at a time. Readers who cannot see the table cannot use visual cheats like checking the alignment and scanning back to the top headings to orient themselves as they go. Equivalent information needs to be encoded into the table to facilitate comprehension.

Tables are meant to be used for tabular information (data). Tables should never be used to lay out documents. When editing a book, recreate charts and tables using the default functionality of the software (i.e. the Insert Table tool).

Tables have a logical reading order from left to right and top to bottom. Screenreader users can easily navigate to and examine data in tables. There are specific keyboard controls for reading tables that differ to the controls for reading regular text. When non-tabular text is rendered with tables, the reading controls are incorrect. This can make it confusing and difficult to read the document with a screenreader.

Do not present non-tabular information in a table format even if it presented as such in a book (i.e. a grocery list with two columns). Present such information as a list in two columns (see [Formatting Columns](#)).



Columns are rarely used when reformatting a book, since they are often just for aesthetics. If this is the case the information is probably best formatted as a [list](#) or normal depending on the context. If you are unsure please contact the Production Coordinator.

How to insert a table

[Insert a table in Word](#)

Keep your tables simple without any extra modifications.

Descriptions, Titles and Captions for Tables

Captions come with the table (they're provided by the publisher.) Descriptions, or Alt-text, is usually not provided by the publisher, and that's what we add in. Just like with images, you will need to reinsert the captions. See below for more details.



If the table has a title, add it to the Title field in table priorities. See below for details.



If the table **does not** have a title, add one to the Title field in table priorities. See below for details.

Descriptions (Alt-Text)

A description should always be included to give context to a table. Never rely on the surrounding text to explain the presence of a table, especially when the table is offset from the content.

Descriptions should answer the question: "What is the table's purpose and how is it organized?"

Example:

"A sample order form with separate columns for the item name, price and quantity."

Remember to keep the description short and direct. A good guideline is to keep it around 140 words. See the [Alt-Text page](#) for more information.



Tables never come with Alt-Text description, so you will have to always include it. Some tables will come with captions, but these tables will still need the additional Alt-Text description along with the caption. Remember to always include a title in Table Properties. See below for details.

Create a description for your table:

- Right click on the table and choose **Table Properties**.
- Under the Alt text tab, insert your description in the **Description** area.
- Insert title into the **Title** field.

Captions

Captions are provided by the publisher, and are treated the same way as we would a caption for an image with one small difference—the caption goes above the table as opposed to below it.

Add a caption to your table:

- Select the entire table or right click near the edge of the chart, graph or table, and choose **Insert Caption**.
- In the Caption dialog box, type in a short description.
- For tables, the caption should be **above** the table.

For more information on Captions in general go to [Captions](#) page.

Table Headers

Table cells should be marked as table headers or header rows when they serve as labels to help interpret the other cells in the table. Correctly identified headers provide metadata that the reader can call up as needed as they navigate the data points.

Identify a "Header Row" (usually entire first row)

- Click anywhere in the table.
- Go to the Table Tools Design tab at the top of the page. Check the Header Row check box.
- Type (or retype) your column headings.
- Press the Enter key.

Ensure "Repeat Header Rows" is enabled

This ensures the header row is repeated across pages. Do this even if the table does not go over multiple pages:

- Place the cursor anywhere in the first row of the table. Right click and select Table Properties from the pop-up menu.
- Select the Row tab in the Properties dialog box.
- Check Repeat as header row at the top of each page



If you have done the above, and it is not working try the following steps.

Identify a "Header Row"

- Click anywhere in the table.
- Go to the Table Tools Design tab at the top of the page. Check the Header Row check box.
- Type (or retype) your column headings.
- Press the Enter key.

Apply "Repeat Header Row"

This ensures the header row is repeated across pages. Do this even if the table does not go over multiple pages so the screen reader can identify the header row from the rest of the table:

- Click anywhere in the table
- Go to the Table Tools Layout tab at the top of the page
- select the Repeat Header Row button (it should be located to the far left of the ribbon menu)
- Note: If the Header Row does not automatically repeat on each page, then do the next step.

Ensure "Repeat Header Rows" is enabled

- Place the cursor anywhere in the first row of the table. Right click and select Table Properties from the pop-up menu.
- Select the Row tab in the Properties dialog box.
- Check Repeat as header row at the top of each page

Ensure "Allow row to break across pages" is unchecked

- Do not use split or merged cells in a Table. Screenreaders can't handle it.
- In Table Properties, under the Row tab, ensure Allow row to break across pages is unchecked (make sure to uncheck this for each row by clicking on Next Row then unchecking, etc.).

Avoid blank cells

- Do not use blank rows or columns in a table for formatting. Blank cells, rows, or columns could mislead someone using a screenreader into thinking that there is nothing more in the table. You can fix this by:
 - removing unnecessary blank cells, rows, or columns.
 - adding some text indicating the cell is intentionally blank, i.e. N/A, "No data" or a hyphen.

Further Help

[Accessible Word Document Design: Tables and Columns](#)

Other tips

Formatting Tip

- Use Word tools to create desired format, i.e. borders, line spacing, and other cell styles.
 - You can add more spacing by going to Table properties > Table > Options > Set the Top, Bottom, Left and Right margins to add more spaces around the text
- If you have multiple tables, you can create a Table style and apply this style to all new tables.
- [Handout on creating accessible tables in Word from Karlen Communications](#)

How to Convert a Table to Normal Text

- Sometimes you will need to convert a table to normal text:
 - First you highlight the table
 - This will create the 'Table Tools' section in the ribbon menu
 - Select the 'Layout' tab
 - On this menu select the 'Convert to Text' button
 - This will open a pop up, you then choose the paragraph break option to separate the text and hit okay

Tips for Fitting Large Tables Within Page Margins

- If the table is very large, or has a lot of information, there are a few steps you can take to ensure that it fits within the page margins.
 - You can use landscape layout instead of portrait for the pages that the table falls on. In order to enable this, you must first put a section break before and after the table, then select the table (and accompanying headings and/or captions), and choose Landscape orientation.
 - If the table still does not fit within the margins, you can also change the size of the pages (i.e. from US Letter to US Legal) by selecting the table and accompanying info, and choosing a different page size. If you want to try this without switching to Landscape orientation, you will still need to add section breaks before and after.
 - If you have done both of these, and the table still does not fit, you can try decreasing the font size.
 - Still having issues? Time to ask for assistance!

Q&A Archive

Q: Unsure if the tables were formatted correctly in Appendix A at the end of the book 101 ways to meeting angels by Karen Paolino.

From the Tables section of the wiki: "A caption or description should always be included to give context to a table"

I am interpreting the 'or' in 'caption or description' to mean to include one of the two (either caption or description). But given our past conversation on inclusion of alt text, perhaps i should be including both? Caption and Description? But when I followed the wiki's instructions to add a description, it was greyed out and I was unable to edit it, so only captions are present for the tables.

A: I will fix the wording in the wiki, but every table should have Alt-Text. When it comes to not being able to access the Alt-Text in the table priorities, it looks like this is an issue with they way the document was saved. Just resave and replace the document using the 'Save As' option and double check to ensure it is saving as a .docx file. It will prompt you to replace the file, just accept and replace the file. It should now work!

I creates a short video to illustrate what I mean: <https://screencast-o-matic.com/watch/cYn6q2wTtP>

Word is a finicky beast!

Q: Follow up question regarding the song title tables in Four Boys and a Guitar: When I'm making a separate table for each song, I have been putting the song title in the spot labeled "Title" under Table Properties - Alt Text. However, when you look at the tables on the page, there is no visible indication of the song title for each table. I'm wondering if it would improve usability for sighted users to add a level H2 header in front of each table with the song title for that table?

A: Yes, adding the heading and the title in the alt-text priorities works.

Q: I have come to the appendixes at the end of this book and there is a very long and complex table in Appendix D (starts on page 195 of the PDF, titled Mills Brothers Discography-by song title) that I could use some direction on. It's going to take a lot of time and I just want to make sure I'm tackling it the best way before I start. The issue I'm having is the subheadings for each song title. Here's a screenshot of one way I thought of to deal with them. But I'm also wondering if it would be better to create a separate table for each song. What do you think?

Mills Brothers Discography - By Song Title									
Song Title	Release Date	Session Number	Master Number	Album Title	Matrix Number	Notes			
Acro-ss The Alley From The Moon	04/15/47	Decca 23863-B	03/03/47	73811	---	---	---	---	---
Acro-ss The Alley From The Moon	08/15/55	Decca 1-8148	03/03/47	73811	Source MG4154 in Album	---	---	---	---
Acro-ss The Alley From The Moon	03/13/61	Decca 1-4084 (DL 74084)	03/03/47	73811	Our Golden Favorites	MG-7813	A2	---	---
Acro-ss The Alley From The Moon	08/01/68	Decca KXB-103	03/03/47	73811	The Best	MG-10406	A3	---	---

A: In this case you should create separate tables for each song title.

Set the heading of the section as 'Mills Brothers Discography-By Song Title

Set each table tile as simply the song title.

Q: There is a table in "The Canadian Prairies" that I am struggling with. The table is extensive and is split into two pages, and the header column is only visible on the first page - should I combine them

Appendix										Appendix																									
TABLE 7 Prairie and Canadian population, urban and rural (farm and non-farm) 1871-1981																																			
		1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921																												
		'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%																		
Manitoba																																			
Rural																																			
Farm																																			
Non-farm																																			
Total		24 96		52 94	111 73	185 72	264 57	348 57																											
Urban		1 4		30 18	40 27	70 26	200 43	252 43																											
Total		25		62	153	255	461	601																											
Saskatchewan																																			
Rural																																			
Farm																																			
Non-farm																																			
Total						361 73	539 75																												
Urban						151 27	219 29																												
Total						492	758																												
Alberta																																			
Rural																																			
Farm																																			
Non-farm																																			
Total						237 45	366 62																												
Urban						138 37	223 36																												
Total						379	588																												
Prairie region																																			
Rural																																			
Farm																																			
Non-farm																																			
Total						898 88	1,293 84																												
Urban						468 35	763 36																												
Total						1,328	1,956																												
Canada																																			
Rural																																			
Farm																																			
Non-farm																																			
Total		2,967 80	3,215 74	3,296 68	3,357 62	3,934 89	4,436 80																												
Urban		722 20	1,119 26	1,837 32	2,614 36	3,279 40	4,352 50																												
Total		3,689	4,335	4,433	5,371	7,213	8,788																												
Sources: 1981 Census, Vol. 1, Table 5 "Population, rural and urban, Canada, 1881-1981"; 1981 Census, c88-0010, 1981 Vol. 1, Page "Cen's Characteristics, Tables 14 and 15, 1981 Census, c88-010, 1981 Vol. 1, Pt. 1, Table 13, 1981 Census, c88-009, 1981 Vol. 1, Pt. 1, Table; 1981 Census, c88-001, 1981 "Pop. Age, Sex and Marital Status, Table 7"																																			
		1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981																												
		'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%																		
Manitoba																																			
Rural																																			
Farm																																			
Non-farm																																			
Total		214 28	175 39	136 13	96 9																														
Urban		125 34	162 38	271 17	249 19																														
Total		340 55	408 56	378 52	357 52																														
Urban		214 45	322 44	368 49	440 57	589 64	686 79	731 75																											
Total		708	738	738	757	922	988	1,036																											
Saskatchewan																																			
Rural																																			
Farm																																			
Non-farm																																			
Total						368 49	380 35	233 25	190 19																										
Urban						145 23	222 28	302 33	225 23																										
Total						480 55	582 56	535 58	429 42																										
Urban						290 32	295 35	392 35	365 36																										
Total						622	696	896	652																										
Alberta																																			
Rural																																			
Farm																																			
Non-farm																																			
Total						430 68	481 47	763 79	579 50																										
Urban						290 32	295 35	392 35	365 36																										
Total						622	696	896	652																										
Prairie region																																			
Rural																																			
Farm																																			
Non-farm																																			
Total						580 36	286 22	236 13	191 9																										
Urban						190 36	203 33	396 12	219 14																										
Total						490 62	489 57	432 27	310 23																										
Urban						430 44	603 65	1,096 74	1,758 77																										
Total						752	796	1,532	1,628																										
Canada																																			
Rural																																			
Farm																																			
Non-farm																																			
Total		1,406 42	1,496 42	1,496 42	1,496 42	1,496 42	1,496 42	1,496 42	1,496 42																										
Urban		2,084	2,422	2,422	2,422	2,422	2,422	2,422	2,422																										
Total		3,490	3,918	3,918	3,918	3,918	3,918	3,918	3,918																										
Sources: 1981 Census, Vol. 1, Table 5 "Population, rural and urban, Canada, 1881-1981"; 1981 Census, c88-0010, 1981 Vol. 1, Page "Cen's Characteristics, Tables 14 and 15, 1981 Census, c88-010, 1981 Vol. 1, Pt. 1, Table 13, 1981 Census, c88-009, 1981 Vol. 1, Pt. 1, Table; 1981 Census, c88-001, 1981 "Pop. Age, Sex and Marital Status, Table 7"																																			
		4,809 46	4,254 46	3,034 44																															
		9,372 54	6,252 54	6,383 57																															
		3,382 39	8,538 80	8,108 24	8,957 24																														
		8,628 62	12,758 70	26,161 76	38,436 76																														
		30,377	11,387	11,387	14,009	16,238	20,548	24,435																											

will be fine: https://bclc.wiki.libraries.coop/doku.php?id=public:nels:etext:tables#table_headers

Q: I am editing a book that has very long tables that are images. I obviously need to convert them to readable tables in Word, but my question is should I create on very large table, or should I cut it down into smaller tables?

Diagnosis	Deaf Patients n = 94		Hearing Patients n = 180	
	n	%	n	%
<i>Eating Disorders</i>				
Anorexia Nervosa	0	0	3	1.7
Eating Disorder NOS	0	0	2	1.1
Total Eating Disorders	0	0	5	2.8
<i>Adjustment Disorder</i>				
Adjustment Disorder	5	5.3	0	0
<i>Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders</i>				
Exhibitionism	0	0	1	0.6
Pedophilia	1	1.1	4	2.2
Total Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders	1	1.1	5	2.8
<i>Substance Use Disorders</i>				
Alcohol Abuse	8	8.5	13	7.2
Alcohol Dependence	2	2.1	30	16.7
Cocaine Abuse	0	0	3	1.7
Cocaine Dependence	0	0	3	1.7
Drug Abuse (unspecified)	0	0	8	4.4
Drug Dependence NOS	0	0	2	1.1
Marijuana Abuse	2	2.1	5	2.8
Marijuana Dependence	1	1.1	1	0.6
Polysubstance Abuse	7	7.4	8	4.4
Polysubstance Dependence	4	4.3	2	1.1
Total Substance Abuse Disorders	24	25.5	75	41.7
Axis II				
<i>Disorders First Diagnosed in Infancy, Childhood or Adolescence</i>				
Aspergers	1	1.1	0	0
Borderline Intellection Functioning	7	7.4	0	0
Mental Retardation	18	19.1	8	4.4
Pervasive Developmental Disorder	6	6.4	4	2.2
Total Developmental Disorders	32	34.0	12	6.6
<i>Personality Disorders</i>				
Antisocial Personality Disorder	3	3.2	5	2.8
Antisocial Traits	3	3.2	0	0
Borderline Personality Disorder	11	11.7	12	6.6
Borderline Traits	4	4.3	0	0

Diagnosis	Deaf Patients n = 94		Hearing Patients n = 180	
	n	%	n	%
Axis I				
<i>Mood Disorders</i>				
Bipolar Disorder	8	8.5	17	9.4
Depression NOS	1	1.1	0	0
Depression (Secondary to Substance Abuse)	1	1.1	0	0
Major Depressive Disorder	17	18.1	15	8.3
Major Depression With Psychosis	3	3.2	0	0
Mood Disorder NOS	0	0	6	3.3
Total Mood Disorders	30	32.0	38	21.0
<i>Anxiety Disorders</i>				
Anxiety Disorder	2	2.1	3	1.7
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder	6	6.4	1	0.6
Posttraumatic Stress Disorder	20	21.3	12	6.6
Total Anxiety Disorders	28	29.8	16	8.9
<i>Somatoform Disorder</i>				
Somatization Disorder	2	2.1	0	0
<i>Psychotic Disorders</i>				
Delusional Disorder	3	3.2	3	1.7
Psychotic Disorder	8	8.5	3	1.7
Schizoaffective	14	14.9	68	37.8
Schizophrenia	6	6.4	86	47.7
Total Psychotic Disorders	31	33.0	160	88.9
<i>Dementia and Executive Functioning Disorders</i>				
Dementia	0	0	14	7.7
Frontal Lobe Syndrome	0	0	1	0.6
Total Dementia and Executive Functioning Disorders	0	0	15	8.3
<i>Impulse Control Disorders</i>				
ADHD	1	1.1	2	1.1
Conduct Disorder	1	1.1	0	0
Hyperkinetic Syndrome NOS	0	0	1	0.6
Impulse Control Disorder	2	2.1	2	1.1
Intermittent Explosive Disorder	3	3.2	0	0
Total Impulse Control Disorders	7	7.5	5	2.8

Diagnosis	Deaf Patients n = 94		Hearing Patients n = 180	
	n	%	n	%
Dependent Personality Disorder	1	1.1	1	0.6
Dependent Personality Traits	2	2.1	0	0
Histrionic Personality Disorder	1	1.1	1	0.6
Narcissistic Personality Disorder	1	1.1	0	0
Narcissistic Personality Traits	1	1.1	0	0
Obsessive-Compulsive Traits	1	1.1	0	0
Paranoid Traits	1	1.1	0	0
Personality Disorder NOS	4	4.3	19	10.5
Schizoid Personality Disorder	1	1.1	1	0.6
Total Personality Disorders	34	36.5	39	21.7
No Diagnosis	2	2.1	0	0

Note: As some participants have multiple diagnoses, total *n* and percentage equal more than 100.

A: In this case you can break the sub-sections down into their own tables with each disorder its own table. You can caption each table with the name of the disorder.

Q: In Theomatics, instead of creating tables the author has used images. Should I put a producers note in for each 'table'?

Let us more closely examine the implications related to clustering. Here are the results from all the features presented in Chapter 3 to do with fishes and fishing. Listed below are the results for all the features in that chapter.⁴

Chapter 3: The 153 Fishes	Actual Results	Expected Results
Direct Hits: 62	34.80%	20%
+1 or -1: 74	41.60%	40%
+2 or -2: 42	23.60%	40%
Total Hits: 178		

A: Images of tables need to be presented as tables, just as images of text should be presented as text. You can see how to make accessible tables here: [Tables](#). If you have questions about creating tables, let us know! We may need to add in a short alt description if the table is not sufficiently described in the surrounding text.

Q: Theomatics uses tables-A LOT-but it seems like they are not necessary. It appears that tables are used for formatting spacing, as opposed to actually creating a table. For example; the Chapter headings are in tables (which I remove.) But what should I do with the other 'tables'? There are instances in the book where similar information is presented as a list, and not a table. Should I just remove the tables and have the information formatted as 'Normal' with paragraph breaks between each line? I have included a screen shout of a page from the .doc file and the .epub file as examples. UPDATE: I have been thinking more about this as I move through editing other parts of the book. These sections could work as bulleted lists. If you need more examples I can give you other page numbers, or just open the epub yourself. There are oh so many.

And Ephesians 2:10 speaks of man being created by God, but with different words: "For of Him we are a product created in Christ Jesus unto good works..."⁴

For of Him 425 x 3

But 2:11 says: "We are"

The second time the word image occurs in reference to Christ, is in 1: Corinthians 11:7. Here is how the words transpose in Greek: "For a man ought to be covered the head the image and glory of God being. For the women is the glory of man."⁴

To Be Covered The Head The Image And Glory 425 x 8

I Do 11:7 x 425 x 8

And from [Bible](#) passage, comes the following: "The word 'image' links directly to the word 'God'."⁴

The image of God being... 425 x 8

Other 800 x 425 x 8

The pattern for the above words "The image of God being" have been interwoven in the text in such a manner that the words "and glory" are not present in the phrase. But what is interesting is that the word glory by itself, in reference to "the image and glory of God", equals 425 throughout the New Testament. Christ is both the image (425) and the glory (425) of God.⁴

The image... 425 = The glory... 425 x 3

Rom 8:29... 425 x 3

For God so loved the world, so as the son the only begotten he gave...

SO AS THE SON THE ONLY BEGOTTEN 425 x 6

Job 3:18... 425 x 6

THE SON THE ONLY BEGOTTEN HE GAVE 425 x 6

I could give a whole list of references to Jesus being the only begotten Son—all multiples of 425. Before moving on to the next reference to image, I want to show two outstanding features that tie into the idea of man being created in the image of God. You will see the obvious relationship. "We know that anyone begotten of God does not sin, but He who has been begotten (born) of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him."

BORN OF GOD 425 x 2

1 Job 5:18... 425 x 2

And Ephesians 2:10 speaks of man being created by God, but with different words: "For of Him we are a product created in Christ Jesus unto good works..."

FOR OF HIM 425 x 3

A: You've got that right - none of the tables in this book should be there (as far as I can tell). As you say, they've been used for formatting purposes, a big no-no. All the tables should be converted to text within the narrative flow. I don't think these are true lists (a list of items); I would format these as normal paragraph text.

WCAG 2.0 — H39: [Using caption elements to associate data table captions with data tables](#)

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