Digital Accessibility Guide for Adobe Acrobat Pro

Case Western Reserve University is committed to equal access to information, programs, and activities for everyone. Accessibility—ensuring people of all abilities are provided with substantially similar functionality, experiences and information—is an institution-wide responsibility.

Beginning Spring 2023, electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) submitted for graduation requirements should meet the School of Graduate Studies' Minimum Digital Accessibility Standards (MDAS). Established based on CWRU guidelines and the new OhioLINK recommendations on digital accessibility, the MDAS are as follows:

1. PDF file includes full text
2. PDF accessibility permission flag is checked
3. Text language of the PDF is specified
4. PDF includes a title and headings for major sections of the document
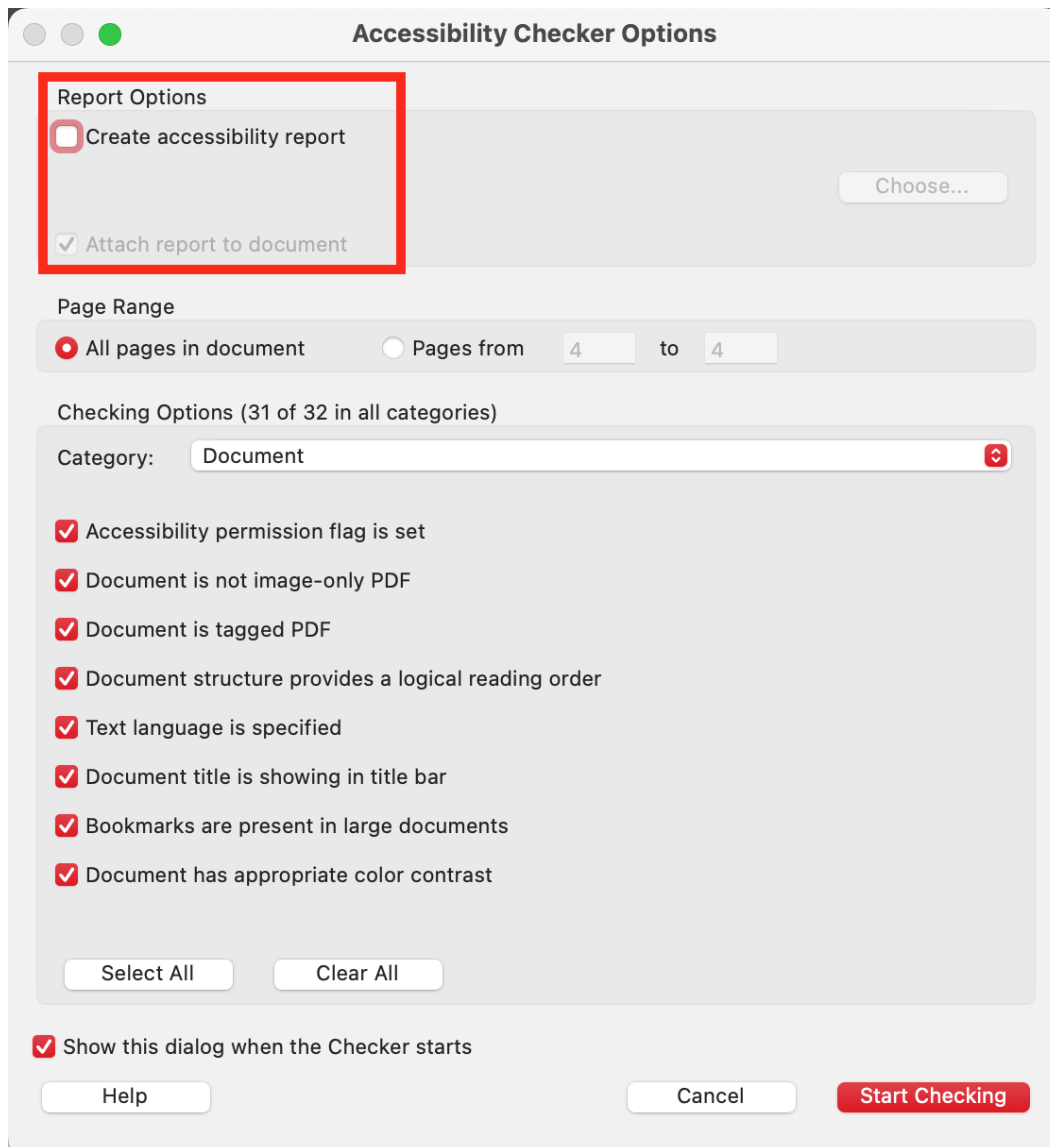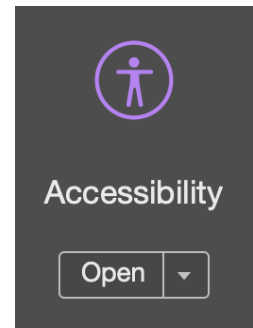5. Figures and images include alternative text

Regardless of the program or language students use to create the thesis or dissertation, these requirements can be met by using the Accessibility features within Adobe Acrobat Pro. The software is available on computers in the Freedman Center in KSL and for download from the [U]Tech Software Center for $29.

Running the Accessibility Check

Please note that after the **Accessibility Check**, a panel will appear on the left side of the document; this is the **Accessibility Checker** panel. While many types of accessibility issues will arise, only the five types listed above need to be addressed.

To run the **Accessibility Check** in Adobe Acrobat Pro

- Select **Tools** on the top bar
- Scroll down and select **Accessibility**
- Select **Accessibility Check** from the panel that appears
- Uncheck **Create accessibility report**
- Click **Start Checking**

Accessibility

Open ▾

Accessibility Checker Options

Report Options

☐ Create accessibility report

Choose...

☑ Attach report to document

Page Range

⦿ All pages in document   ○ Pages from 4 to 4

Checking Options (31 of 32 in all categories)

Category: Document ▾

☑ Accessibility permission flag is set

☑ Document is not image-only PDF

☑ Document is tagged PDF

☑ Document structure provides a logical reading order

☑ Text language is specified

☑ Document title is showing in title bar

☑ Bookmarks are present in large documents

☑ Document has appropriate color contrast

[Select All]   [Clear All]

☑ Show this dialog when the Checker starts

[Help]   [Cancel]   [**Start Checking**]

Fixing the Document

1. PDF file includes full text

Tip: Save the original document as a PDF using the Save As feature. *Do not use Print > PDF as this may save the document as an image.*

Check to see that the pdf was not saved as an image. In the **Accessibility Checker** panel, look under **Documents** in the upper left corner. Click the arrow to list the specific issues. If it says "**Image-only PDF - passed**," the document is not saved as an image and has passed the first requirement.
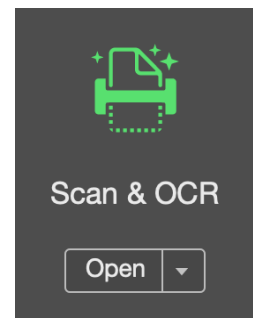
If the document fails this check:

- Under **Document** in the **Accessibility Checker** panel, select **Image-Only PDF**
- Under the **Options menu** at the top of the panel, select **Fix**

Or,

If the document fails this check:

- Under **Tools**, select **Scan & OCR**
- Under the **Scan & OCR toolbar**, choose **Recognize Text > In This File**
- Set the **Pages** to **All Pages**, the **Language** to **English**, and click **Recognize Text**

2. PDF accessibility permission flag is checked

For most documents, this flag is already checked. Verify if this requirement is met by looking under **Documents** in the **Accessibility Checker** panel. If it says "**Accessibility permission flag - passed**," the document has met the second requirement.

If the document fails this check:

- Under **Document** in the **Accessibility Checker** panel, select **Accessibility Permission Flag**
- Under the **Options menu** at the top of the panel, select **Fix**

Or,

If the document fails this check,

- Go to **File > Properties > Security**
- Choose **No Security** from the **Security Method** drop-down list
- Click **OK**

3. Text language of the PDF is specified

To check the language, look for "**Primary language**" under **Document** in the **Accessibility Checker** panel. If it is passed, the document has met the third requirement.

If the document fails this check:

- Under **Document** in the **Accessibility Checker** panel, select **Primary Language**
- Under the **Options menu** ▦▾ at the top of the panel, select **Fix**

Or,

If the document fails this check:

- Go to **File > Properties > Advanced**
- Under the **Reading Options** section, select **English**
- Click **OK**

4. PDF includes a title and headings for major sections of the document

This section is broken up into two parts: the Title Check and the Headings.

Title Check

The **Title Check** is listed under **Document** in the upper left of the **Accessibility Checker** panel.

If the document fails the title check:

- Under **Document** in the **Accessibility Checker** panel, select **Title**
- Under the **Options menu** at the top of the panel, select **Fix**
- If the **Leave As Is box** is checked, uncheck the box
- Type in or copy the thesis or dissertation title into the **Description** dialog box
- Click **OK**

Heading Check

The **Heading Check** is listed at the bottom of the **Accessibility Checker** panel. Headings help readers navigate the document. Heading 1 (<H1>) should be used for major headings such as chapter titles, with Heading 2 (<H2>) and Heading 3 (<H3>) reserved for subheadings.

If the document fails the heading check:

- Under the **Accessibility** panel on the right, select **Autotag Document**
- Run the **Accessibility Check** again
    - Autotagging the document may fix the problem, but new issues may arise. If the headings still fail, continue with the steps below.

Or,

- Under **Headings** in the **Accessibility Checker** panel, select **Appropriate Nesting** and click th **tags** icon
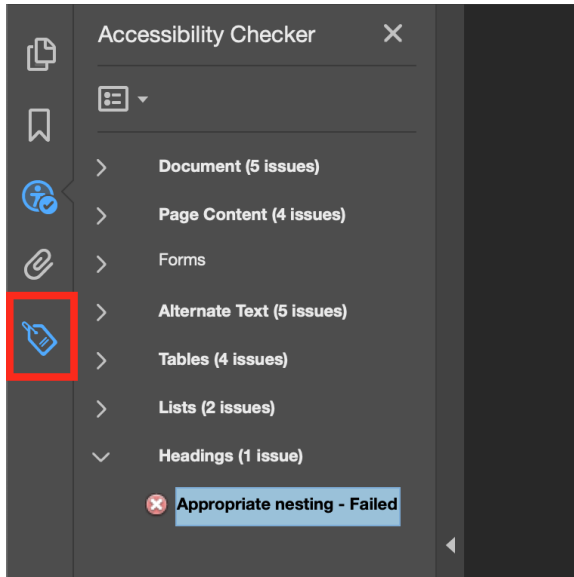
- If there are **No Tags available**, right click and select **Add Tags to Document**
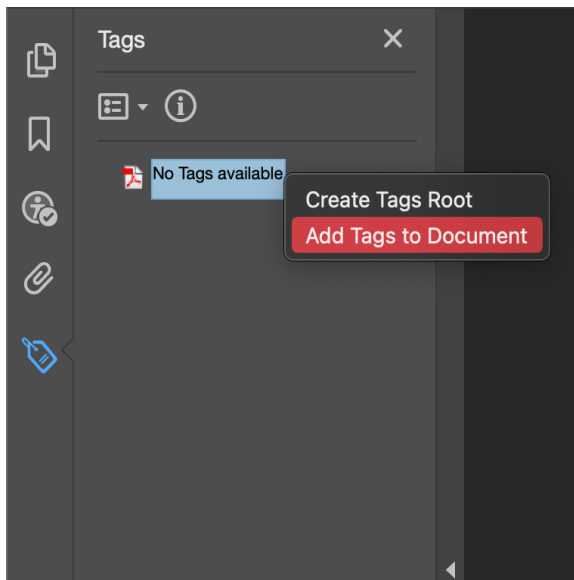
- Run the **Accessibility Check** again
  - Once tags are added (which will add headings), make sure that they are all in order. Under the heading list, there will most likely be a new list of issues that need to be addressed.
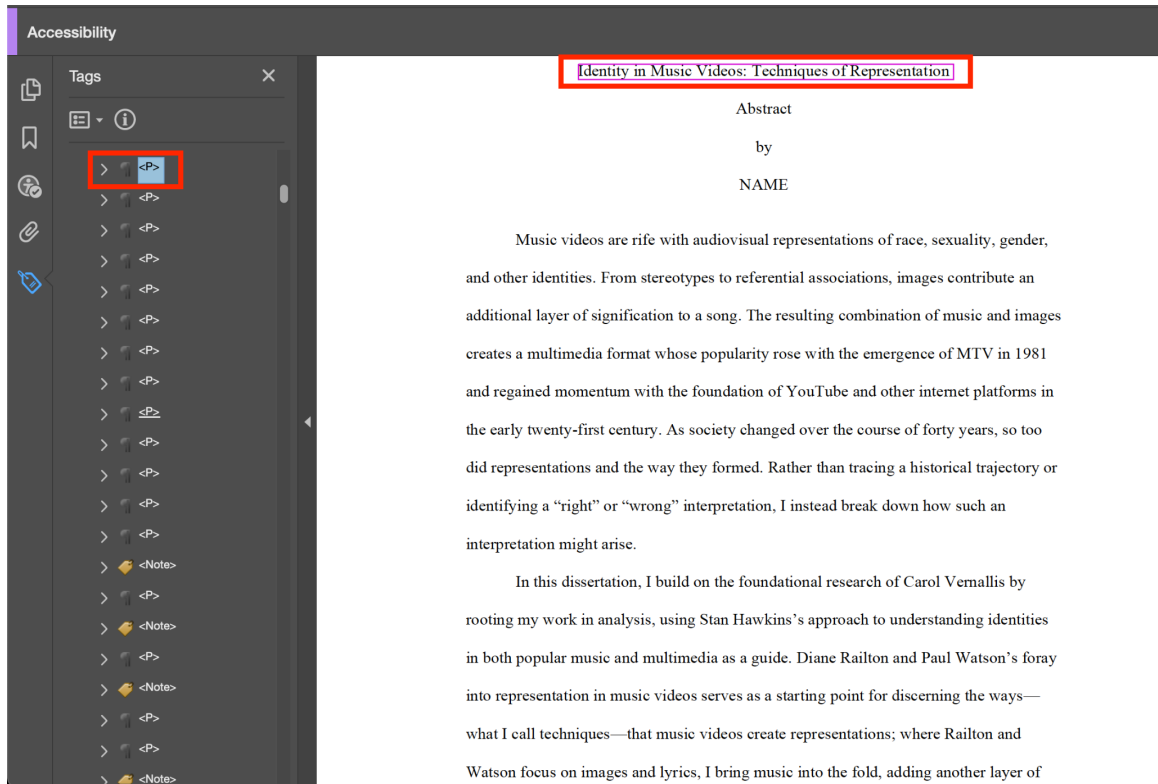
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- To fix heading issues, look under **Headings** and **Appropriate Nesting** in the **Accessibility Checker** panel, select **Element 1**, and right click and select **Show in Tags Panel**
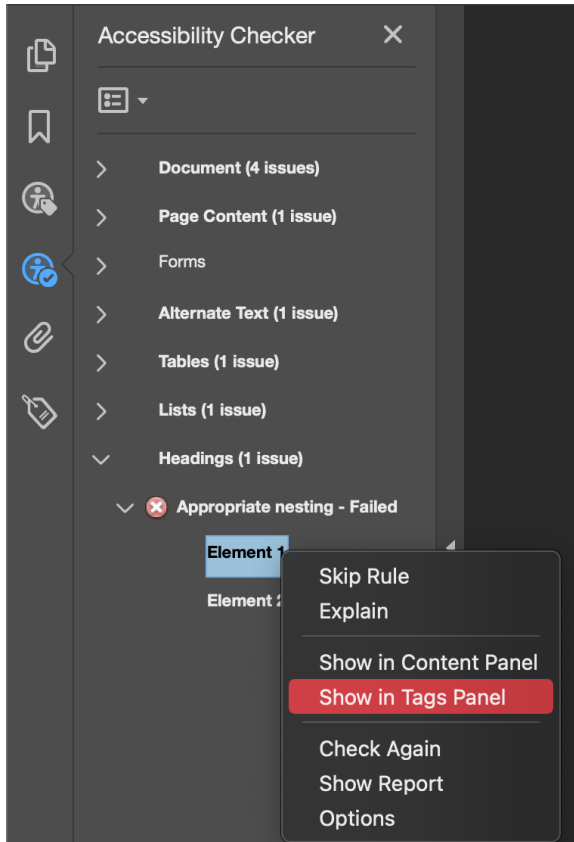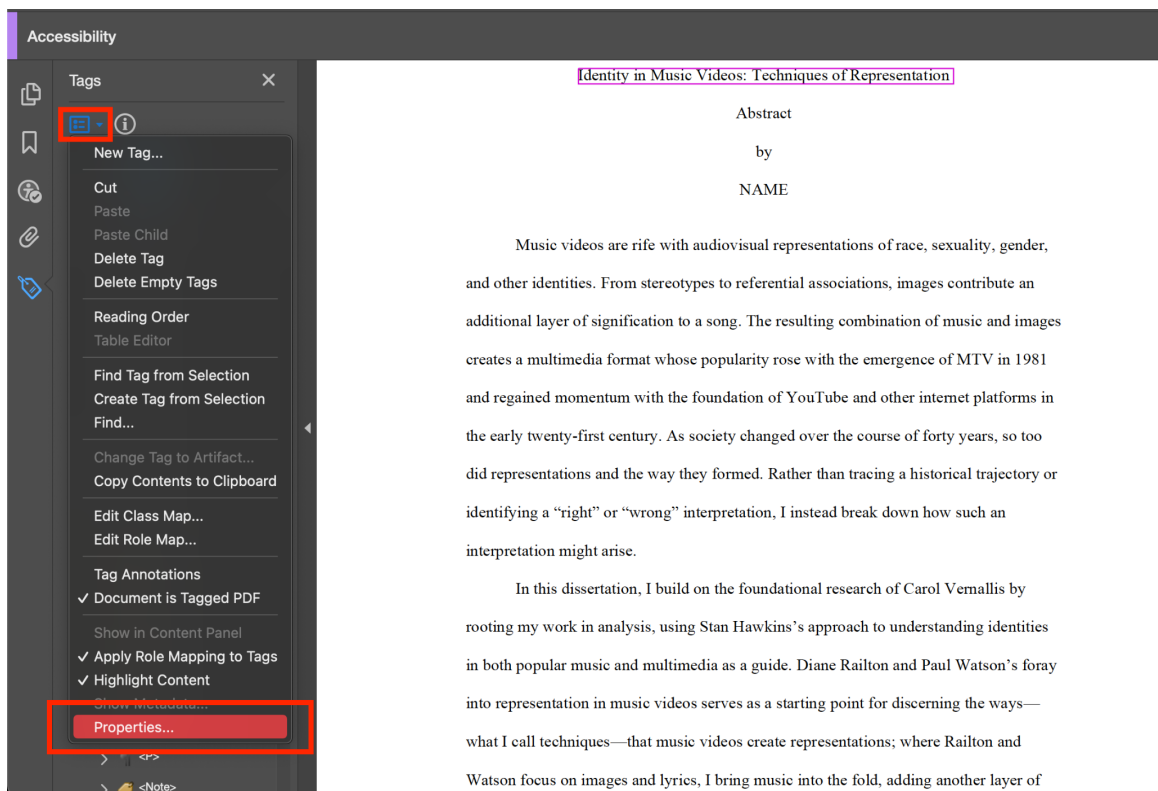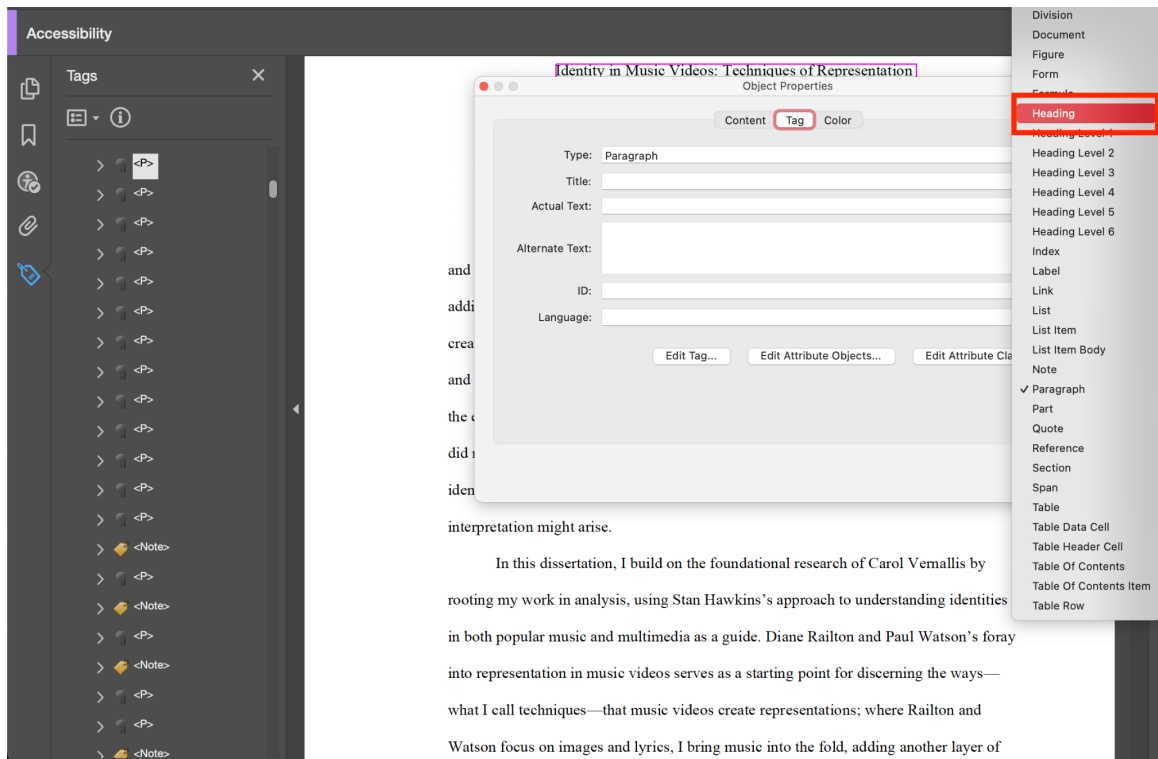

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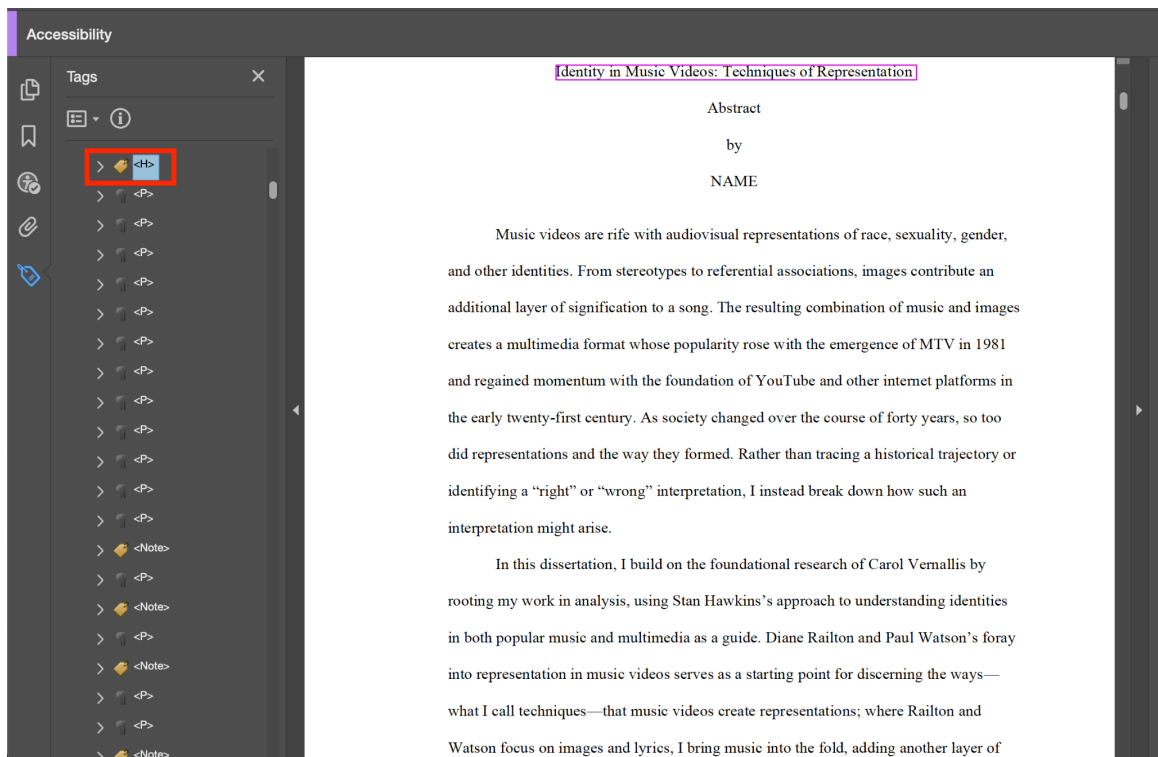- Select the tag affiliated with the heading

- Under the **Options menu** at the top of the panel, select **Properties**

- Under **Type**, select **Heading**

- Click **OK**
- The tag should now be marked **\<H\>**

- Repeat these steps for the major headings in the thesis or dissertation
  - Headings should be numbered the same as the heading level or no more than one heading lower than the previous heading (e.g., <H2> should be followed by <H3> and not <H4> or <H5>). Minor heading levels may also be changed to paragraphs (<p>).

5. Figures and images include alternative text

The **Alternate Text check** is listed toward the bottom of the **Accessibility Checker** panel.

Each image or figure will need alternate text so that a screen reader can describe the image for those with impaired vision. The goal is not to replace the content of the image or figure, but to provide the gist of the information, similar to a caption.

If the document fails this check:

- Under the **Accessibility** panel on the right, select **Autotag Document**
- Under **Alternate Text** in the **Accessibility Checker** panel, select **Figures alternate text**
- Select **Figure 1**
- Under the **Options menu** ▤▾ at the top of the panel, select **Fix**
- In the **Set Alternative Text** dialog box, enter a description of the figure or image
    - To paste the caption as the alternative text, copy the text of the caption *before* selecting **Fix**
- Click **Save & Close**
- Repeat for the rest of the figures

Final Steps

Run the accessibility check once more. This time, make sure **Create accessibility report** and **Attach report to document** are checked.