

Scribely

The Role of the Editor in Making *Images* Accessible

COUNCIL OF SCIENCE EDITORS —
2022 CONFERENCE

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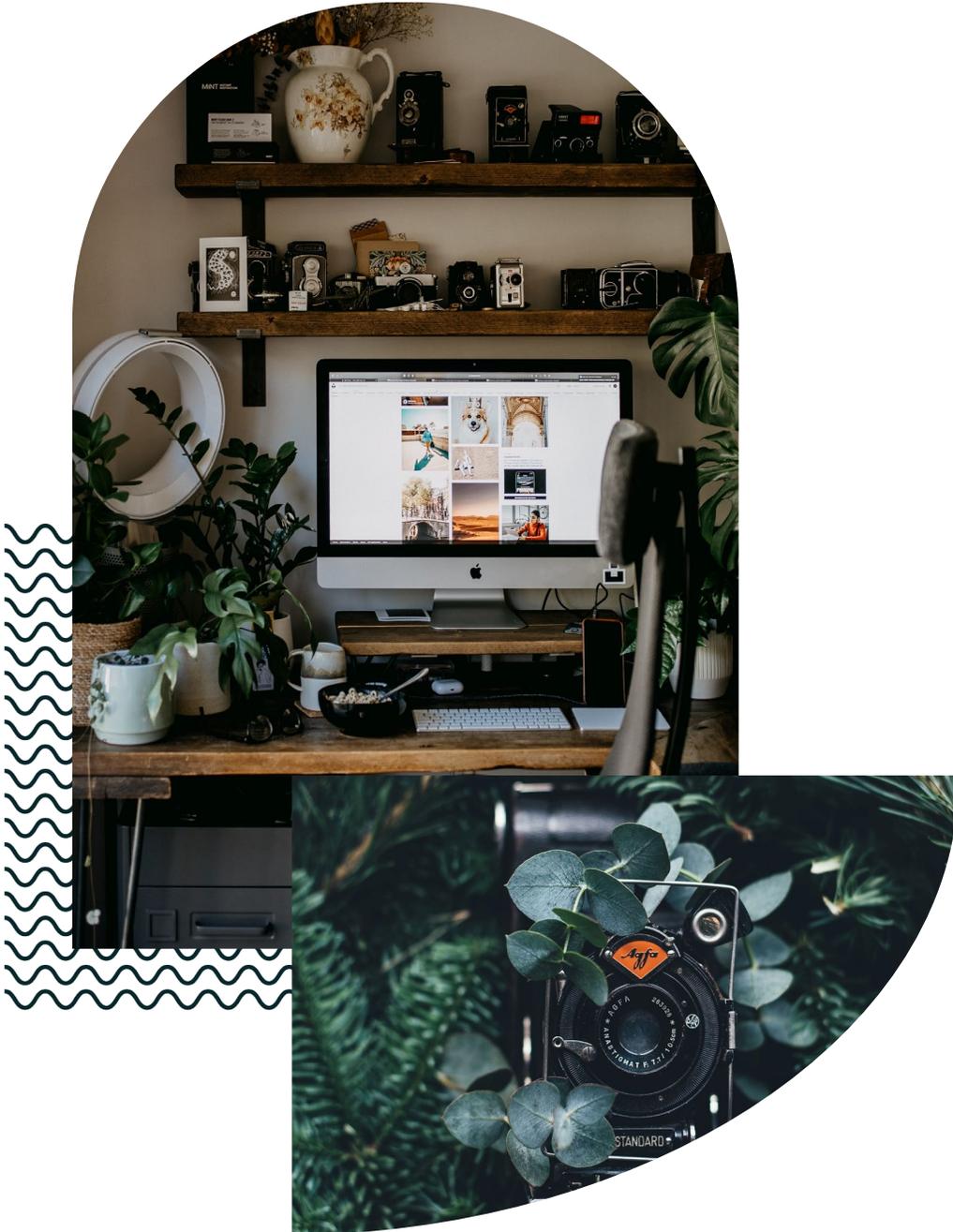
How to Make Images Accessible

ALTERNATIVE TEXT (ALT TEXT)

A brief textual description of the purpose and meaning of an image. Required for WCAG A, AA, AAA.

EXTENDED DESCRIPTION

A more detailed textual description that elaborates on the information provided by alt text.



How to Access Image Descriptions

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY / SCREEN READERS

Reads websites out loud using text-to-speech

Skips over images that do not have alt text

Prompts users on how to navigate to the extended description

Provides freedom, independence, and privacy on the web





Accessibility Matters

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (2010)

2.2B Near or Distance Vision Impairment

285M Blind or Low Vision

39M Legally Blind

15M Deaf-Blind

WEBAIM SCREEN READER SURVEY (2021)

83% Blind or Low Vision

7.3% Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

3.2% Cognitive or Learning Disabled

2.4% Motor Disability

Disability Models

1 BILLION PEOPLE — 15% WORLD POPULATION



CHARITY: Person in need of sympathy and protection



MEDICAL: Person who needs to be fixed or cured



SOCIAL: Person who is disabled by society

*Source: World Report on Disability, WHO, 2011



Shifting Left

BORN-ACCESSIBLE IMAGES

Part of the digital content experience

Authors and editors can create and/or review

Fixing content errors later is not sustainable

Prevent lost adoptions and legal exposure



Ready, set, go?

WHAT IT TAKES TO WRITE ALT TEXT

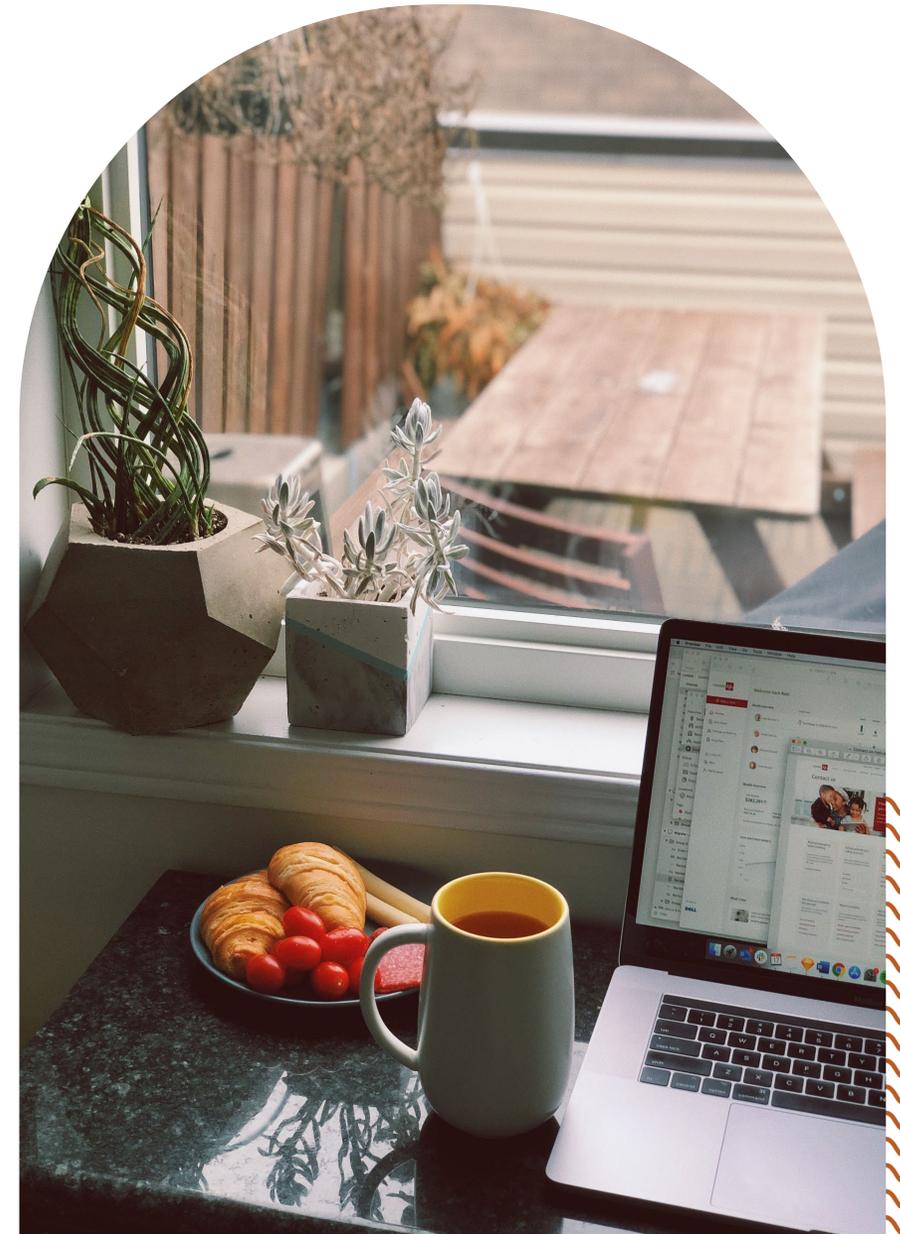
Knowledge of WCAG accessibility requirements

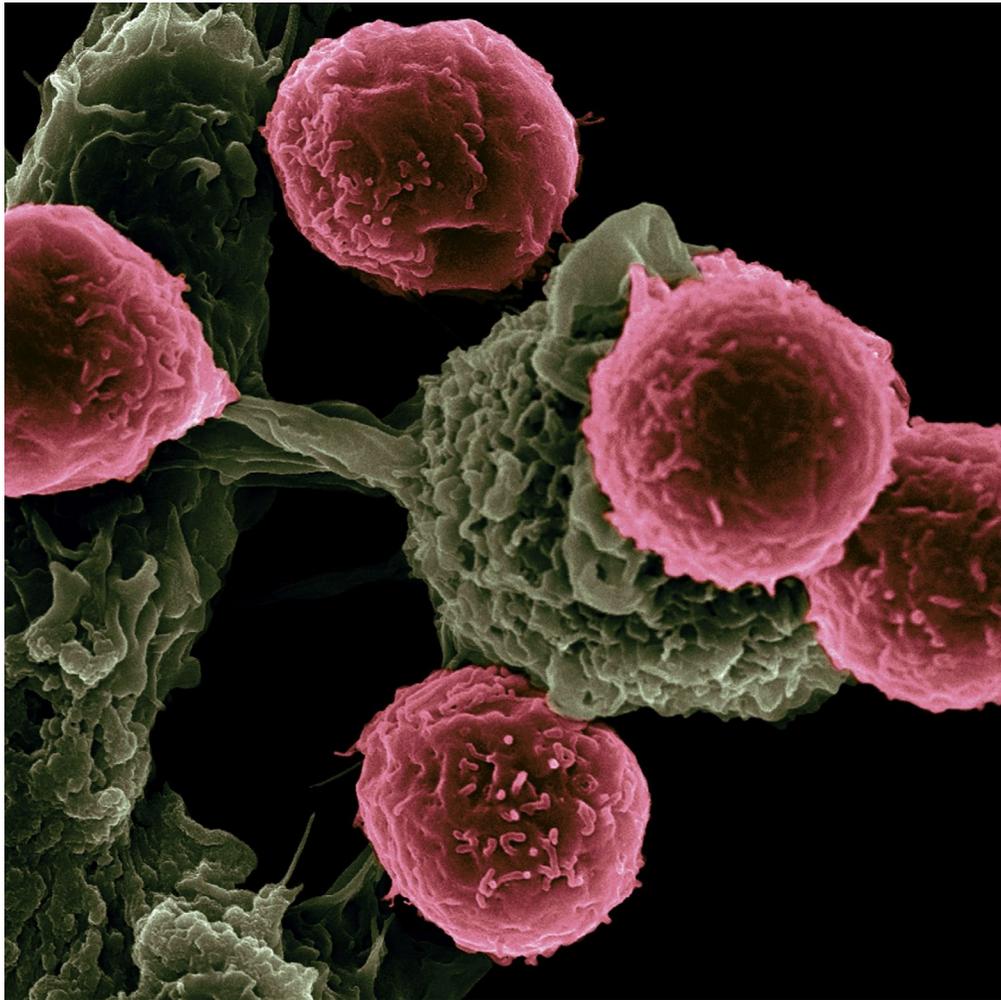
Subject / industry knowledge and expertise

Writing proficiency and effective communication skills

Ability to make informed decisions about subjective content

Ability to put yourself in another person's shoes





Top 5 Alt Text Tips

Think about context, purpose, meaning

Start with main subject / focal point

Describe all relevant details

Keep it short (less than 250, average 125)

Can you visualize the image on the page?

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Top 5 Ext Desc Tips

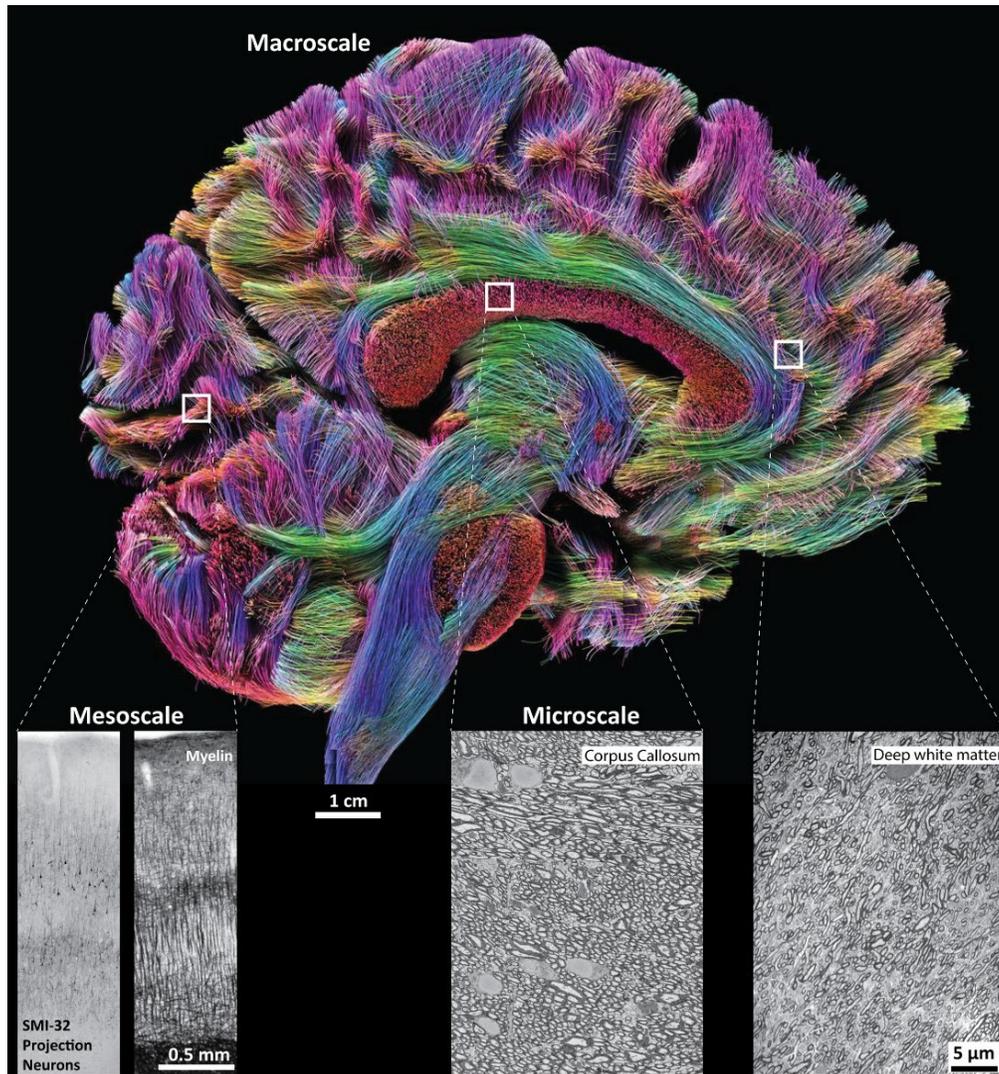
Review surrounding context and do not repeat

Continue information provided in alt text

Elaborate on context, purpose, and meaning

Start general and get more specific

Can you visualize the most relevant details?



Source: [Hilgetag & Zikopoulos, "The Highways and Byways of the Brain." PLOS.org.](#)

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Extended Description

CONTEXT

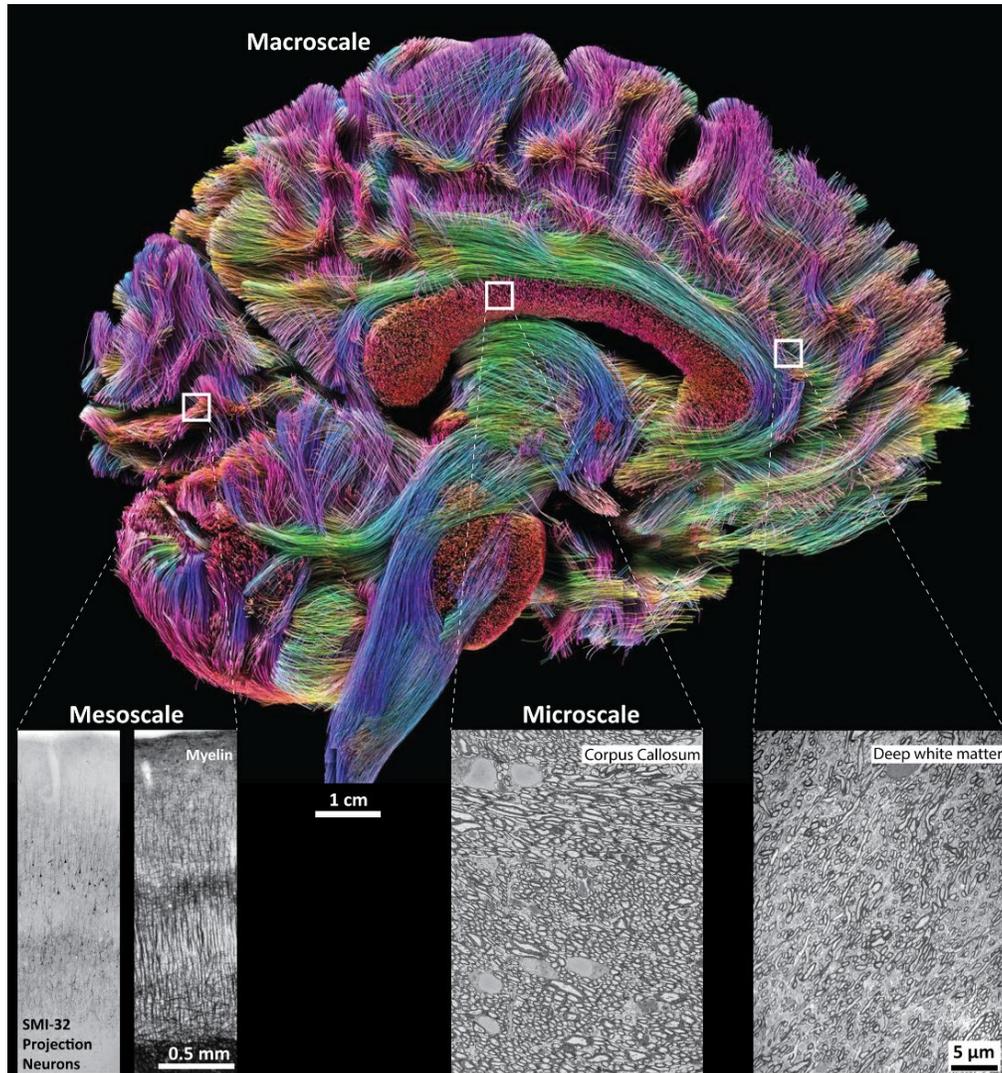
We can use macroscopic and microscopic views to track how many axons pass through a given tract.

OBJECTIVE

Describe the image in a way that connects the concepts in the article with visual details in the figure.

ALT TEXT

Midsagittal macroscale view of the brain shows axons that appear as fine colored threads. Additional microscopic images show mesoscale views of neuronal columns and an axon, and microscale views of cells in the corpus callosum and deep white matter.



Source: [Hilgetag & Zikopoulos, "The Highways and Byways of the Brain." PLOS.org.](#)

Extended Description - Continued

The macroscale view at 1 centimeter shows the whole brain with distinct multi-colored bundles of axons weaving and crossing over one another like yarn, connecting the different lobes of the brain. The corpus callosum appears roughly in the center as an orange c-shaped band of fibrous ends.

The mesoscale view at 0.5 millimeters shows 2 microscopic images of the visual cortex. The first shows vertical columns of SMI-32 projection neurons. The cell bodies appear as black dots with dendrites as thin gray lines extending upwards. The second image is a side view of myelin in different shades of gray and some darker areas.

The microscale view at 5 micrometers shows 2 microscopic images of the corpus callosum and deep white matter below the cingulate cortex. The corpus callosum is a network of cells that appear as white and gray oblong blobs with dark borders, organized into horizontal bands that run across the image. The deep white matter is a more jumbled network of similar-looking cells in crisscrossing bands.

Check Your Work

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND USER TESTING

Review for accuracy, proficiency, and compliance

Test with a screen reader (NVDA, VoiceOver, TalkBack)

Test with users – “Nothing about us without us”

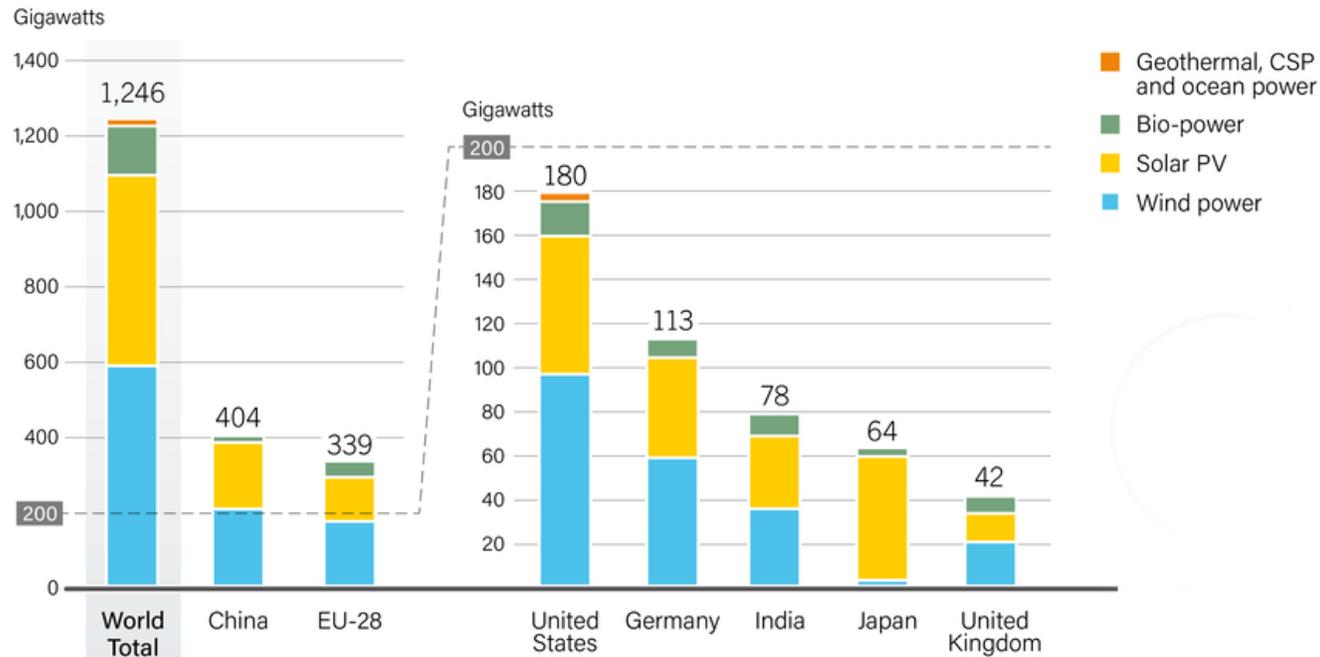
Use this feedback to develop your own style guide

Consult with image description experts



Data Points Example

Renewable Power Capacities in World, EU-28 and Top 6 Countries, 2018



Note: Not including hydropower.

ALT TEXT

Stacked vertical bar chart compares the 2018 renewable power capacities for the world, EU-28, and top 6 countries.

EXTENDED DESCRIPTION

The power capacity totals include the following 4 categories: 1. Geothermal, concentrated solar power, and ocean power, 2. Bio-power, 3. Solar photovoltaic power, and 4. Wind power. Footnote reads: “not including hydropower.”

The power capacity totals, from largest to smallest, are: World Total, 1,246. China, 404. EU-28, 339. United States, 180. Germany, 113. India, 78. Japan, 64. United Kingdom, 42.

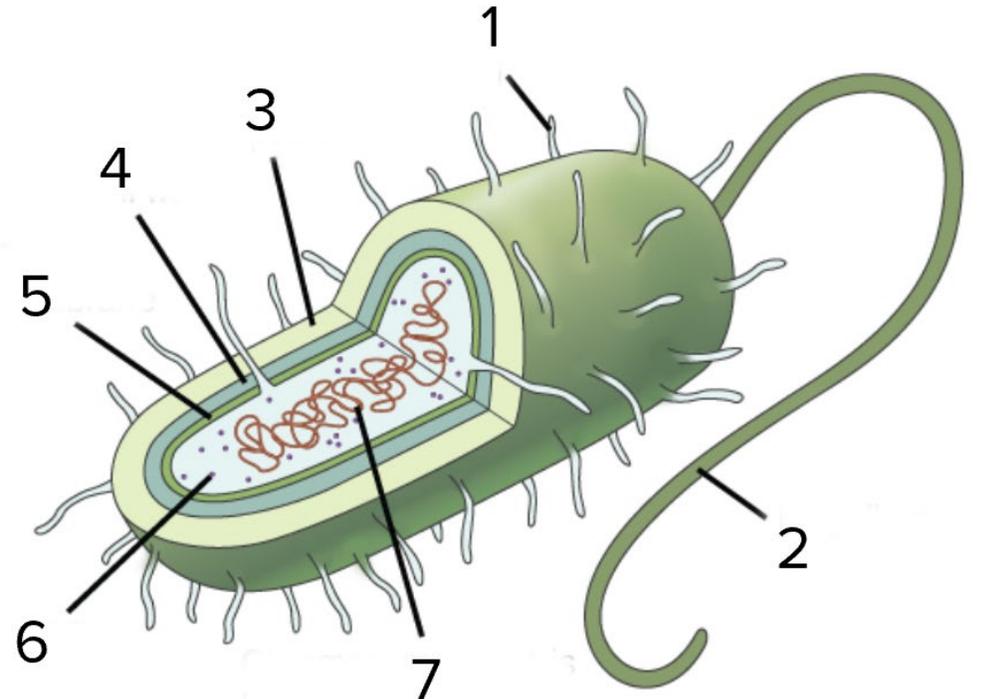
Assessment Example

ALT TEXT

Diagram of a pill-shaped prokaryotic cell with a cutaway revealing the interior cell structures. Lines labeled with numbers point to specific cell parts.

EXTENDED DESCRIPTION

1. Several short hair-like structures on the cell surface.
2. Tail-like structure extends out from one end of the cell.
3. Outermost layer within the cutaway view.
4. Outer band within the outermost layer.
5. Inner band within the outer band.
6. Small dots dispersed throughout and within the inner band.
7. Cluster of tangled lines across the middle within the inner band





andrew-br...splash.jpg

Metadata **Keywords** ☰

<i>f/</i> -- --	2730 x 4096
-- --	6.22 MB 72 ppi
-- ISO --	Untagged RGB

Headline	Road through the Valley of Fire	✎
Description	Long shot of a person riding a skateboard along an empty desert highway that winds through a valley of rust-colored rock.	✎
Keywords	Desert; Nevada; skateboard; person; adventure; outdoor; sport; travel	✎
IPTC Subject Code	Photography	✎
Description Writer	Caroline Desrosiers	✎
Date Created	2/2/2020	✎
Intellectual Genre	Editorial	✎
IPTC Scene Code		✎
Sublocation	Valley of Fire	✎
City	Crystal	✎
State/Province	NV	✎
Country	United States	✎

Accessible Photo Metadata

IPTC STANDARDS UPDATE

Alt Text (Accessibility)

Extended Description (Accessibility)

Headline, Description/Caption, Title

How do you pass it?

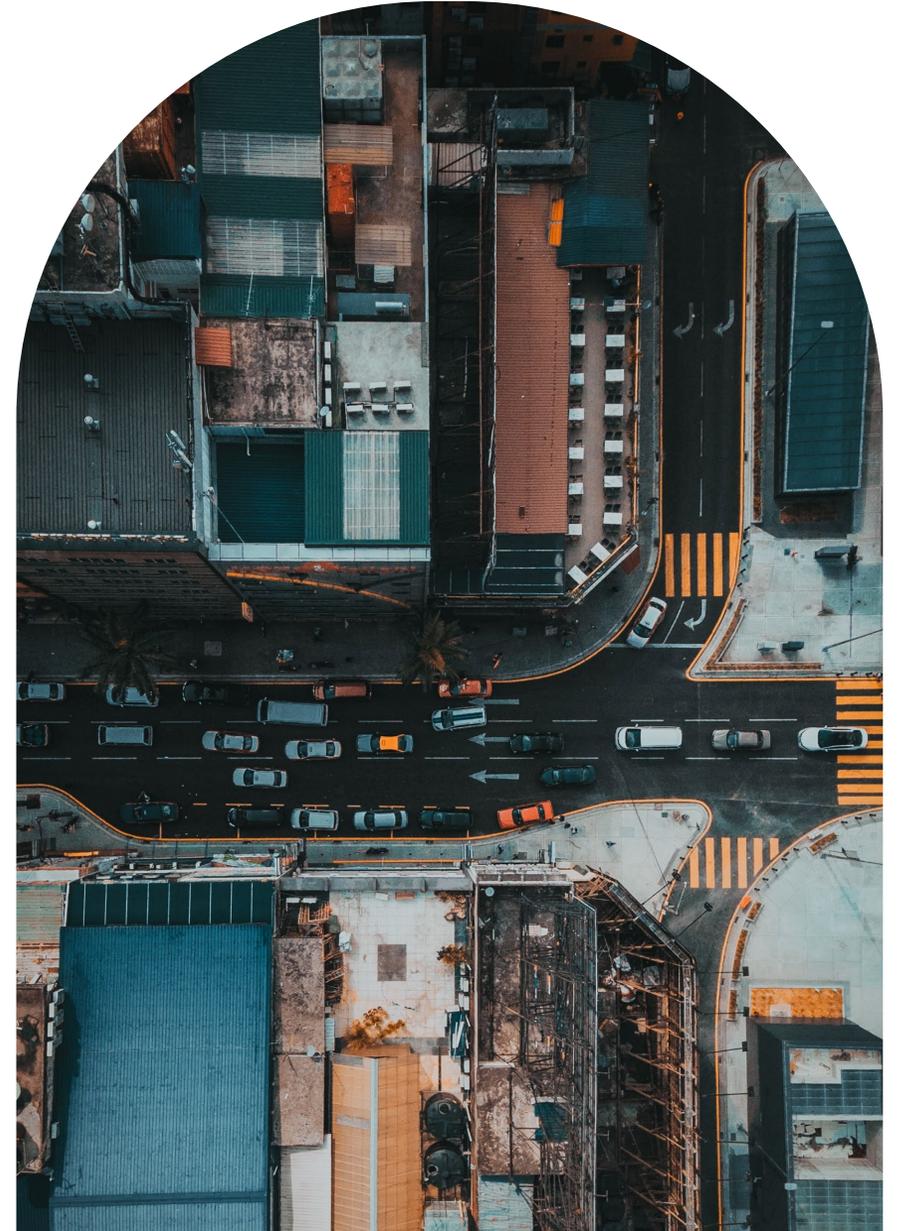
ESTABLISH A WORKFLOW

Create an input channel for all image assets

Add or update IPTC metadata properties

Synergize with other systems (DAM, CMS, PIM)

Share & distribute assets directly to output channels





Your content is not complete until it is accessible to everyone.





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