Online Web Accessibility: Seeing the Forest and the Trees

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Our Focus

• Why accessibility in higher education?
• The approaches – both are necessary
  — The trees
  — The forest
• Discussion

GOALS

Made possible by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), US Department of Education. No official endorsement should be inferred.
Why Accessibility?
Why Accessibility?

Just as we designed accessibility for the *built environment*, we need it for the *digital* one.
Why Accessibility?

Digital accessibility allows participation and engagement of students, faculties and staffs who have disabilities.

These individuals could not otherwise participate on par with their peers with independence and dignity.

Open Access is at issue
Who is Affected? Those with disabilities

- Vision
- Hearing
- Fine motor
- Cognitive
- Seizures
- Combinations of the above

While 19% of the US population has a disability (US Census), approximately 8.5% has a disability that affects computer and internet use. These are your students and employees.
ONE EXAMPLE OF INACCESSIBILITY
Brown University

Transfer Supplement to the Common Application

Application Type

This form will be used to initiate your application file and must be submitted before we can receive your Common Application Transfer documents. Please complete all the sections and submit the forms electronically.

Please indicate desired level of entrance:

- Sophomore
- Junior

Official standing will be based upon evaluation of transferable credit by the Office of the Dean of the College at Brown. Please refer to the Transfer section on the Admission Office website for more detailed information on transfer credit: http://brown.edu/Administration/Admission.

- Check to indicate the semester of your preferred entrance:
  - Fall Semester
  - Spring Semester

- There are a limited number of spaces available each semester, so it is not always possible to accommodate an applicant's preferences. If you are not admitted to your semester of preference, would you still like to be considered for admission to another semester? (Submit your application for the semester you prefer now.)

- If you are not admitted to your semester of preference, how would you like to be considered for the next semester? (Submit your application for the next offering now.)
Why Accessibility:

It is the RIGHT thing to do for your institution

- Provides the basis for inclusion in our digital society
- The ethical and moral argument is what many of our efforts, and our network, are all about
Why Accessibility:

It is the SMART thing to do for your institution

- Reflects institutional mission, leadership, and values
- Compatible with mobile and emerging technologies
- Good for ALL users
Why Accessibility:

It is the SMART thing to do for your institution

- Makes sound fiscal policy (Good ROI)
  - Student and employee outcomes
  - Efficiencies and cost controls
  - Recruitment/retention of a diverse group
  - Some funding entities now require it
  - Enhanced collaboration potential in the US and abroad (i.e., Calif; UN CRPD 96 ratified, 147 signed)
  - PR & development
  - Legal protection of the institution
Seeing The Trees . .

Achieving and sustaining accessibility throughout your institution

Jonathan Whiting, WebAIM; National Center on Disability and Access to Education (NCDAE) Utah State University
Web Accessibility Principles applied
(the trees)

Jonathan Whiting
ITC eLearning 2012
February 29, 2012
POUR

• Perceivable
• Operable
• Understandable
• Robust

From Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0
Ensure POUR content across disability types

- **Vision** - blind, low vision, color-blind
- **Hearing** - Deaf and Hard-of-hearing
- **Motor** - Difficulty using a mouse or keyboard
- **Cognitive**
- **Seizure**
Perceivable
Operable
Understandable
Robust
Auditory Disabilities

From webaim.org/intro/
Blindness

- Headings
- Alternative text for images
- Meaningful link text
- Reading order
Headings

The Wrong way to do headings:
• PPT and MS Word- Plain text enlarged
• HTML-<p class=“heading2”>Big text (usually) resized with CSS</p>

The right way to do headings
• PPT- Use slide templates
• Word- Use styles panel
• HTML- <h2>Use true headings</h2>
alt="Blue ITC logo with a small globe that serves as a dot in the i. Next to the logo is green text that reads Instructional Technology Council"
...For more information on this topic, read Essentials of Online Course Design: A Standards-Based Guide
Reading order

Inserting items on the page using text boxes etc. can sometimes cause reading order issues

Instructional Technology Council

There’s that logo again
Low vision

Use good contrast and adequate font size. As you can see poor contrast and smaller font size make it much more difficult to read text. Also remember that you should not use images for...
Color blindness

The green mushrooms listed here are OK to eat. The red mushrooms will kill you.

– Amanita
– Chanterelle
– Porcini
– Shitake
– Tylophilus
The green mushrooms listed here are OK to eat. The red mushrooms will kill you.

- Amanita
- Chanterelle
- Porcini
- Shitake
- Tylopilus
Perceivable
Operable
Understandable
Robust
Keyboard accessibility

CNN (boo!)

vs.

WebAIM (yay!)
The secret to Everlasting Happiness
Please finish reading this text – it will give you the secret to everlasting happiness. The secret is simple, all you need to do is to stop worrying about the key to everlasting happiness and enjoy the moment.
Sorry! Time’s up!
Better luck next time!
Perceivable
Operable
Understandable
Robust
Understandable

• Be careful with movement and other distractions (including transitions)
• Semantic organization (headings, lists, etc.)
  • Be consistent
• Simplify, Simplify
Robust

Perceivable
Operable
Understandable

Robust
Browser support
Standards
Device-independence
POUR (again)

- Perceivable
- Operable
- Understandable
- Robust
Preferred Formats for Web Content

HTML > PDF > Doc/PPT > Anything else

...except PPT slides, then PDF is usually better
PDF in a nutshell

• Tagged PDF = accessibility-enabled (not necessarily “accessible”) PDF
• Do as much as you can in the source document
• Make sure you export correctly
• Do not print to PDF
• Need Acrobat Pro to edit tagged PDFs
  – TouchUp Reading Order tool is your friend (and enemy)
WAVE
web accessibility evaluation tool

wave.webaim.org
And Now
The Forest . .

Achieving and sustaining accessibility throughout your institution

Cyndi Rowland, Ph.D.
WebAIM;
National Center on Disability and Access to Education (NCDAE)
Utah State University
I’ll answer 3 questions in our brief time today

• What is the “Forest”?  
• Why do we need to attend at that level?  
• How can it be achieved?
The Forest

• Entire web architecture of your institution. Includes all things needed for independence and success for students, faculty, and staff
  – Registration, paying fees, getting textbooks
  – Classes, assignments, tests
  – Employment, HR benefits, required training
  – Campus web-based systems needed for employment
  – Social aspects of campus (e.g., news, events)
Why pay attention at this level?

- The problem of inaccessible content continues after a decade of awareness and work
  - 97% of 1st level pages in nationwide PSE sample had problems (NCDAE, 2008)

- Multiple initiatives

- Existing resources
Institutions achieving and maintaining accessibility are doing so at a system-level. Individual or unit efforts can be easily overshadowed by problems elsewhere in the system:

- procurement
- handful of faculty who are trained on the “trees”
- developers who do not design accessibly
Institutional content cannot be considered accessible if you have to navigate inaccessible pages to get to it.
After-the-fact accommodation predominates as the solution

- Institutions lose efficiency and some aspects of effectiveness
- This becomes an institution’s problem if users are tired or angry
Recent Inertia on Accessibility

• Increasing climate of litigation.

Recent high profile complaints include:

– 9 Law schools using specific web-based admissions program
– 4 institutions using Google apps (e.g., Northwestern U, NYU)
– Other recent institutions: ASU; Penn State; Case Western
– Non-higher ed issues (e.g., Oracle, Ticketmaster, Disney, Jet Blue Airways, CNN, Target, MARTA)
Recent Legal Inertia on Accessibility

• Department of Justice (Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking) to clarify the intent of the ADA with respect to digital accessibility. Expect to hear more in 2013.

• White House Letter to all College and University Presidents

  – “It is unacceptable for universities to use emerging technology without insisting that this technology be accessible to all students”
A public entity violates its obligations under the ADA when it only responds on an ad-hoc basis to individual requests for accommodation. There is an affirmative duty to develop a comprehensive policy in advance of any request for auxiliary aids or services (Wadell, 1998)
Undue Burden

...the subsequent substantial expense of providing access is not generally regarded as an undue burden when such cost could have been significantly reduced by considering the issue of accessibility at the time of the initial selection. (Office of Civil Rights)
A commitment to enterprise-wide system change could eliminate current and future problems for some students, faculty, and staff with disabilities.
GAINING ONLINE ACCESSIBILITY TO LEARNING THROUGH SELF-STUDY
• Ready resources
  – Recommended Practice Indicators for Institutional Accessibility
  – Action Paper
  – Benchmarking and Planning Tool
    • Self-study can be used during cycles of reaffirmation

• Resources under development
  – Institutional Blueprints
    • Directed resources
    • Improved tool functionality
  – Cost Case Studies
  – Accreditation Blueprints
    • Aide transition for Regionals
    • Aide use by institutions during quality improvement

GOALS

Made possible by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), US Department of Education. No official endorsement should be inferred.
Help your institution quickly and efficiently become web accessible.

Create an Account  Watch the Video

Already have an account? Sign in now >>

**Where You Are**

The first section of this tool guides you through a series of questions to compare your institution against proven indicators of web accessibility.

**Where You Need to Be**

You are then provided detailed charts and analysis comparing your current web accessibility standing to recommended practices.

**How to Get There**

Finally, specific tools and resources are provided as you are guided through making a detailed plan of action to improve your web accessibility standing.
**Work With Your Team**
The GOALS Tool lets you create a team to work with so you can get valuable feedback and assistance along the way.

**Administration Ready Reports**
Save the hassle of getting a detailed report ready. The report function plugs your data right in a report ready for you to edit and hand to any leader.

**Track Your Progress**
Your data is saved so when you use the tool again, you can track your progress and improvement in making web accessibility changes.

**We Help Get You Started**
GOALS staff will evaluate the accessibility of 6 key pages on your website to assist you in identifying areas for improvement.

**Free to First 50 Institutions**
As a grant funded project, we’re allowing free access to the tool for the first 50 that sign up. [Read more details about these free accounts >>](https://example.com/).
Screen shot of the GOALS benchmarking and planning tool "Dashboard". From there the team leader can direct reviewers through a self study of the 4 key indicators of systemwide web accessibility (1) Vision and leadership commitment, (2) Planning and implementation, (3) Resources and supports, and (4) Continuous assessments and monitoring. Screenshot also displays Dashboard features such as your cycle of review, all team members and their status, and status on each indicator.
This indicator includes 4 benchmarks with a total of 16 questions. These should take about 25 minutes to complete.

Your answers are saved automatically.

**Benchmark A**
Identifying and involving personnel who represent key constituent groups at your institution is essential during both the planning and implementation process (Key accessibility personnel may come from many departments or units and represent disability advocates as well as leaders representing technical, faculty, and staff positions). Administrators identify and include these individuals for input to the institution.
**Benchmark A**

Identifying and involving personnel who represent key constituent groups at your institution is essential during both the planning and implementation process (Key accessibility personnel may come from many departments or units and represent disability advocates as well as leaders representing technical, faculty, and staff positions). Administrators identify and include these individuals for input as the institution moves from planning to implementing to maintaining an institution-wide accessible web presence. The broader group of stakeholders are also included as important feedback mechanisms to the web accessibility efforts (Stakeholders are those who are either end users of web content or those who will implement the institution-wide plan).

1) **How involved are your key accessibility personnel -- and those they represent-- in developing your institution-wide web accessibility POLICY?**

- Key accessibility personnel alone are involved in developing the policy.
- Input from the broader stakeholder groups are involved in developing the policy without extensive involvement of key accessibility personnel.
- Both key accessibility personnel and the broader groups of stakeholders they represent are involved in developing the policy.

**Rationale (optional, view other reviewers' rationale)**

1a) **If both key accessibility personnel and stakeholders are involved in developing your institution-wide web accessibility POLICY, check the boxes that indicate the activities in which they are involved? (Check all that apply.)**

- They provide personal input during policy development.
- They solicit input from stakeholder groups.
- They work with stakeholder groups to obtain buy-in for the policy.
- They have helped to make the policy understandable to those who will be expected to conform to it in ways that are productive.
- Other
**Goal Indicator 2: Planning and Implementation**

This indicator includes 4 benchmarks with a total of 16 questions. These should take about 25 minutes to complete.

*Your answers are saved automatically.*

**Benchmark A**

Identifying and involving personnel who represent key constituent groups at your institution is essential during both the planning and implementation process (Key accessibility personnel may come from many departments or units and represent disability advocates as well as leaders representing technical, faculty, and staff positions). Administrators identify and include these individuals for input as the institution moves from planning to implementing to maintaining an institution-wide accessible web presence. The broader group of stakeholders are also included as important feedback mechanisms to the web accessibility efforts (Stakeholders are those who are either end users of web content or those who will implement the institution-wide plan).

**Question 2: How involved are your key accessibility personnel and those they represent in developing your institution-wide web accessibility policy?**

**Answer A:** Key accessibility personnel alone are involved in developing the policy.

- **Clint Dempsey:** I don’t think we can our policy by anyone outside of our accessibility group.

- **Will Johnson:** If you remember at our meeting a few weeks ago, Clint made that point. Only our group is involved at this point.

**Answer B:** Input from the broader stakeholder groups are involved in developing the policy without extensive involvement of key accessibility personnel.

- **Diego Forlon:** No rationale provided.

- **Reasons:**
  - [ ] They have helped to make the policy understandable to those who will be expected to conform to it in ways that are productive.
  - [ ] Other

**Rationale (optional, view other reviewers’ rationale):**
If you see any issues with these responses, please call the team leader, Cyndi, at 801-770-1000.

*The answers can be reviewed until Wednesday, August 21, 2011.*

**Benchmark A**

Identifying and involving personnel who represent key constituent groups at your institution is essential during both the planning and implementation process. Key accessibility personnel may come from many departments or units and represent disability advocates as well as leaders representing technical, faculty, and staff positions. Administrators identify and include these individuals for input as the institution moves from planning to implementing to maintaining an institution-wide accessible web presence. The broader group of stakeholders are also included as important feedback mechanisms to the web accessibility efforts (Stakeholders are those who are either end users of web content or those who will implement the institution-wide plan).

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- Input from the broader stakeholder groups are involved in developing the policy without extensive involvement of key accessibility personnel.
- Both key accessibility personnel and the broader groups of stakeholders they represent are involved in developing the policy.

**Rationale (optional, view other reviewers' rationales)**

The general consensus was that our accessibility group is the only one involved at this point. The person Diego mentioned is no longer involved.
**Institutional Performance Analysis**

**CHART:** Current Scores  
- **Past Performance Comparison**  
  - Show: Fall 2010  
  - Show: Spring 2009  
- **Similar Institution Comparison**

<table>
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<th>Benchmarks</th>
<th>Failure 0-10%</th>
<th>Below Avg 11-25%</th>
<th>Average 26-50%</th>
<th>Good 51-80%</th>
<th>Excellent 81-100%</th>
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<td>A) Personnel: Fall 2010</td>
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<td>B) Policy: Current Level</td>
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<td>D) Implementation: Fall 2010</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Create Your Action Plan - Benchmark A
Inclusion of Key Personnel (Score: 77)

Some analysis on what you can improve on, what you can do better, what you are lacking, all based on your answers to the questions. This could be two columns, individual answers, etc. Just some specifics.

Create Your Action Plan - Benchmark B
Comprehensive Accessibility Policy (Score: 80)

Some analysis on what you can improve on, what you can do better, what you are lacking, all based on your answers to the questions. This could be two columns, individual answers, etc. Just some specifics.
GOALS is currently recruiting for Summer and Fall of 2012

See: ncdae.org/goals/participate.php

Contact:
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Discussion?

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