We Could Be Heroes:
Ensuring accessibility in online courses

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Follow along with me...

https://bit.ly/357VLgW
Today’s Takeaways

1. Identify common accessibility errors
2. Use Canvas integrations to check for course accessibility
3. Employ an effective system for remediation
4. Discuss challenges and opportunities for improvement
Accessibility
Common Accessibility Errors
Lists

Lists are created by manually formatting/typing the numbers or bullets instead of using programmatically formatting feature in docs, slides, or ppts.

Where to find help?

UVaCollab: How can I make lists of items accessible?
W3C Web Accessibility Tutorials: Content Structure
Headings

Headings are distinguished by changing the font size, etc. instead of using formal heading formatting and structure within the underlying code of the document.

Where to find help?

Yale University: Usability & Web Accessibility

W3C Web Accessibility Tutorials: Headings
Text is organized using programming formatting for columns instead of a table. However, if a table is the best way to present the content, use a ‘header’ row and avoid split and merged cells.

Where to find help?

Docs Editors Help: Add or delete columns in a document
SUNY Oswego: Google Docs
Colors

Using inaccessible colors (such as red and green) and color contrasts (such as yellow highlighter on red text) to emphasize or denote. Emphasizing using color alone without in text or other visual emphasizing element.

Where to find help?

WebAIM: Contrast and Color Accessibility
WebAIM Color Contrast Checker
Wave Browser Extension
W3C Web Accessibility Tutorials: Colors with Good Contrast
PDFs

PDFs most often contain content created in an application other than Adobe Acrobat and saved as a .pdf file, which saves it as an image that, unless remediated, cannot be read by a screen reader.

Where to find help?

Creating Accessible Google Documents
NC STATE: Accessibility in the Classroom
Docs Editors Help: Make your document or presentation more accessible
Grackle Accessibility Checker for G Suite (Workspace) Chrome Extension
Table of Contents & Document Outline

Missing formal structure within the document limiting content navigation, organization, tagging, and screen readability.

Where to find help?

Using the Document Outline View Feature in Google Docs to Improve Readability, Accessibility, and SEO

Docs Editors Help: Use document outlines, summaries, & rulers
Canvas Accessibility Checkers
Canvas: UDOIT

UDOIT = Universal Design Online content Inspection Tool ("You Do It") identifies accessibility issues within Canvas course content

Where to find help?

Canvas Guide: UDOIT Information

University of Minnesota: Canvas: Use UDOIT to Scan A Course for Accessibility Issues
Canvas: RCE Accessibility Checker

Tool that detects common errors within the Rich Content Editor in Canvas.

Where to find help?

Canvas Guide: How do I use the Accessibility Checker in the Rich Content Editor as an instructor?

Cornell University: Checking Accessibility
Canvas: Ally Accessibility Report

*Blackboard integration

More than just a checker! Also provides users with a range of more accessible alternative formats by creating alternative formats based on the original content.

Where to find help?

Blackboard Ally

Blackboard Help: Ally in Instructure Canvas
Canvas: Ally Accessibility Report

Where to find help?

Blackboard Help: Ally Quick Start for Instructors
Our Remediation Process
E-CAMPUS REMEDIATION PROCESS

PROACTIVE

Course Production > Peer Review + Comprehensive Accessibility Review

Goal: All courses are 100% accessible according to WCAG 2.1 AA standards before going live for students.

&

REACTIVE

Active course receives Request for Accommodation > Comprehensive Accessibility Review + Preterm Consultation with SDS

Goal: Restore course to 100% accessible according to WCAG 2.1 AA standards.

Where to find information?

W3C Accessibility Standards Overview
Actions:
- 6-10 student workers employed year round
- Extensive onboarding and continuing education
- Fully integrated into our project management (Wrike) and communication (Slack) platforms – regular touchpoints with team
- Robust project management framework, dedicated team member
- Multiple quality checkpoints (tools, Student Lead, Staff Lead)

Impact:
- All courses are 100% accessible according to WCAG 2.1 AA standards before going live for students.
- Meaningful and impactful student worker employment – high demand skills development, experiential development in professional behaviors, collaboration, leadership [+ team]
- Budget friendly
Challenges and Improvements
Challenges

- Student worker schedules: inconsistent manpower, constant management
- Last minute enrollment = last minute request for accommodation
- Staying current on WCAG standards, practices, and tools
- Ongoing continuing education
- Course materials can be very difficult to remediate; & working with faculty
- Wrike doesn’t allow for easy consolidation of data on student productivity
Improvements

- Students’ top priority is their coursework; flexible scheduling, extended work hours, off-campus work opportunities
- Concentrated effort on Proactive approach; close partnership with AccessMU and SDS
- Staying current on WCAG standards, practices, and tools and continuing education is built into team goals
- Coaching faculty to understand Accessibility issues and their role and responsibilities
- Constant record and data improvement efforts
Discussion & Takeaways
Join the Collaborative!

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Miami E-Campus Collaborative for Online Education