7-30-2014

Recommendations to Promote Online Course / Content Accessibility

Christine Bauer

Boise State University
Recommendations to Promote Online Course/Content Accessibility

White Paper

eCampus Center

July 30, 2014
Online Course/Content Accessibility Vision Statement

Boise State University will ensure the accessibility of all of our online courses, digital course content, and educational technologies. By ensuring accessibility, Boise State enhances all students’ opportunities for online learning and provides a leading example of Universal Design for Learning.
Acknowledgements

The eCampus Center would like to express sincere gratitude to the following individuals for their significant contributions to the writing of this white paper during the spring of 2014:

Alicia Estey
Executive Director
Institutional Compliance

Amy Vecchione
Associate Professor/Digital Access Librarian
Albertsons Library

Ana Thompson
Instructional Design Consultant
Instructional Design and Educational Assessment (IDEA Shop)

Annie Kerrick
Title IX/504 Coordinator
Office of the Dean of Students

Betty Miller
Manager, Online Faculty/Technology for Self Support Programs,
RN-BS Online/Distance Completion Track, AGNP, and DNP
School of Nursing

Christine Bauer
Assistant Director
eCampus Center

Linda Huglin
Associate Professor
Organizational Performance and Workplace Learning

Stephen Henderson
Technical Services Manager
Office of Information Technology

Wendy Turner
Director
Disability Resource Center
Online Course/Content Accessibility Vision Statement
Acknowledgements
Table of Contents
Executive Summary:
Accessibility of Online Courses & Content at Boise State
  Where Boise State is Now
  Where Boise State Needs to Be
  How Boise State Can Get There
Introduction
Defining the Need to Ensure Accessibility
  Accessibility & Boise State University’s Strategic Plan & Policies
  Legal Requirements
  OCR Guidance
  Recent Accessibility Complaints & Resolutions
  Accessibility Standards & Principles
  Accessibility Facts & Statistics
Accessibility Efforts at Boise State
Recommendations for Next Steps
  1. Make accessibility an administrative priority
  2. Update and develop new policies to address the issue of accessibility
  3. Develop a plan for a purposeful approach
  4. Conduct an online course accessibility audit
  5. Develop accessibility processes and procedures:
  6. Provide accessibility awareness, training and resources:
  7. Communicate Boise State’s commitment via a dedicated accessibility website
Conclusion
References
Appendix A: Overview of Complaints/Lawsuits Regarding Electronic and Information Technology (EIT)
Appendix B: Overview of Widely Accepted Accessibility Standards & Principles
Appendix C: Trends in Online and Hybrid Courses
Appendix D: Details of Accessibility Efforts at Boise State
Appendix E: Draft of Boise State eCampus Center Accessibility Guidelines
Appendix F: Draft of eCampus Center Expanded Edition of Quality Matters Standard 8
Appendix G: Draft of Vetting Process for Third-Party Online Tools & Resources
Appendix H: Draft of Online Accessibility & Accommodation Responsibilities Matrix
Appendix I: Exceptions Form from Temple University
Appendix J: Additional Components to Include in a Comprehensive Accessibility Plan
Appendix K: Accessibility Related Resources
Executive Summary:
Accessibility of Online Courses & Content at Boise State

Boise State University ("the University") strives to meet the educational needs of our constituents and to provide equivalent educational access to all our students. Many students enrolled in the University have disabilities--cognitive, psychological, or physical conditions that substantially limit major life activities such as learning. For example, students might have disabilities that impede their ability to take in information (seeing, hearing) or process information (thinking, concentrating, etc). To ensure that the University is compliant with legal requirements and best practices, the University must take steps to improve the accessibility of our online courses and content. The purpose of this paper is to describe where we currently stand with accessibility and to recommend a plan for how we can proactively comply with federal requirements and meet the needs of our students.

Where Boise State is Now
Over the past few years, numerous individuals and organizations have taken legal action against institutions of higher education for using technologies that do not comply with legal requirements and accessibility standards. Although we have not conducted an accessibility audit of all our online courses, based on the evidence from the accessibility audit conducted by the RN-BS nursing program—to our knowledge, the only such audit conducted at the University—we anticipate that many of our 300+ online courses do not comply with legal requirements and accessibility standards enforced by the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights and the Department of Justice. Potential noncompliance puts Boise State at legal risk, therefore the University must take action to ensure all our online courses and content are accessible.

Where Boise State Needs to Be
In order to comply with federal requirements, the 300 online courses the University currently offers must be adapted in accordance with the latest accessibility standards and principles of Universal Design for Learning. In addition, the University must put a process into place to ensure that all newly developed online courses are accessible at the time of implementation. Accomplishing these tasks is consistent with our institutional mission and strategic goals, and the benefit to the University extends beyond simply reducing our legal risk; research suggests that making courses accessible to students with disabilities improves course quality for all students.

How Boise State Can Get There
Through this paper, a cross-campus group makes several recommendations to help ensure that our current and future online courses and course content are accessible:

1. Make accessibility an administrative priority
2. Update and develop new policies to address the issue of accessibility
3. Develop a plan for a purposeful approach
4. Conduct an online course accessibility audit
5. Develop accessibility processes and procedures
6. Provide accessibility awareness, training and resources:
Introduction

At first, Susan was hesitant to enroll in an online program at Boise State, skeptical of how things would work and how others would perceive and respond to her learning disability. Unfortunately, shortly after starting her first online course, Susan realized that the online database she needed to use for her research papers was not compatible with her assistive technologies. Susan’s online instructor told her to contact the database vendor. The vendor never replied to Susan’s request for assistance and she was left without equally effective access to all of her online course materials. Eventually, her online instructor told her to just skip the assignments that required the use of the online database and her grade would not be affected.

Dan, a veteran with significant hearing loss, was accepted and admitted to an online program. Dan does not identify himself as a person with a disability. In Dan’s view, people with disabilities need to use wheelchairs or Seeing Eye dogs to help them get around. He considers his hearing loss an occupational hazard and a natural part of getting older. He does not think it appropriate to request accommodations. After all, he is taking an online course; he won’t have to hear anything anyway. All his assignments and discussions will be through writing. Much to Dan’s surprise, the first five online lessons were delivered by video. The first time he viewed the videos, he had difficulty understanding the professor’s strong Southern accent. Turning up the volume did nothing to increase the clarity of the instructor’s voice. Frustrated, Dan hit the closed captioning button and was relieved to find that the video was properly captioned. After reading the captions, he was amazed at how much information he missed the first few times he listened to the lessons.

These are just two of the many stories demonstrating the challenges students with disabilities face when attempting to complete coursework online. Sadly, inaccessible content and technologies can often create additional barriers for students with disabilities to complete their education when a course is fully or partially online.

Boise State, like many other institutions across our nation, has experienced increases in the number of students who enroll in online courses, with our online enrollments growing on average 14% per year over the past 10 years. Currently, 13.8% of Boise State’s annual credit-hour production is online and 10,620 (or 36%) of our students took at least one online class this past academic year, registering in one or more of 1,249 online course sections. Projecting out the current rate of growth means that in five years Boise State University’s online enrollments will be an estimated 13,000+ students with 96,000 credit-hours produced. For many of our students attending traditional classroom-based courses, increased access to online courses provides additional opportunities to graduate on time. For our students who are unable to come to campus, often times online courses provide the only way to finally earn their degree.
In addition to the annual increases in the number of students who enroll in online courses, higher education is seeing several trends that impact accessibility issues:

- Students increasingly demand real-time, ubiquitous access to information and technology (Dahlstrom, 2013, p.5)
- Students increasingly expect more technology systems, and for those systems to be reliable (Dahlstrom, 2013, p.5)
- The number of students with disabilities is increasing\(^1\) (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, p. 46), as are the number of legal actions against universities about disability-related issues (Information and Technical Assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act, 2014; Paire, 2014).

Fortunately, recent accessibility-related complaints and settlements also provide a framework for other universities to follow that will increase access and better meet the learning needs of all students.

Improving access and removing barriers to education are primary aims for departments across campus, in particular the Disability Resource Center (DRC). DRC staff dedicate their time and efforts each day to help students with disabilities have equal and timely access to course materials. Typically, the work to ensure that educational materials are accessible to students with disabilities taking on-campus courses occurs through an accommodations process. However, the accommodations process typically does not start until after a course commences, leading to significant delays in providing accessible material to students. In order for students

\(^1\) According to estimates by the World Health Organization (2011, 2013), the number of people with disabilities is growing - currently approximately 15% of the world’s population. Some factors contributing to the increase in the number of people with disabilities include the following: an aging population, advances in medical technologies, a record number of veterans reporting disabilities, and an increase in the number of diagnoses for Asperger’s syndrome/autism-spectrum disorders.
with disabilities to have timely access to online course materials and for the University to be compliant with legal requirements, courses should be designed to meet accessibility standards at the outset.

Making online course content accessible includes, but is not limited to:

- saving documents in universal formats (such as rich text or accessible PDF),
- providing written transcripts of audio content,
- captioning video content, and
- embedding text descriptions for all images inserted into documents, slide presentations, and online course sites.

Creating accessible content using the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) not only removes barriers and ensures equal access for students with disabilities, but also benefits all students. UDL removes barriers to learning by “creating flexible designs from the start,” (CAST, p.4). “The best teaching practices are those that consider all learners in a classroom setting and pay close attention to differences inherent,” (Santamaria, 2009, p.215). When making online course content accessible to students who are visually or hearing impaired, for example, the same material becomes accessible to students with a wide range of learning disabilities, and benefits other students as well. Providing a single accommodation (such as a transcript for an audio course segment) benefits individuals with various disabilities, characteristics, and/or learning styles/needs; and, incorporating UDL principles broadly to online materials, “can bring us closer to making learning accessible to anyone anywhere at any time.” (Burgstahler, 2004)

Defining the Need to Ensure Accessibility

Accessibility & Boise State University’s Strategic Plan & Policies

According to a recent Office of Civil Rights resolution:

“Accessible” means a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use. The person with a disability must be able to obtain the information as fully, equally and independently as a person without a disability. Although this might not result in identical ease of use compared to that of persons without disabilities, it still must ensure equal opportunity to the educational benefits and opportunities afforded by the technology and equal treatment in the use of such technology. (Resolution Agreement South Carolina Technical College System OCR Compliance Review No. 11-11-6002, [emphasis added], p.1)

Meeting legal requirements as well as our students’ learning needs are two compelling reasons for the University to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to online course materials, and that those materials are equally simple to use. Additionally, ensuring access directly aligns to Boise State’s strategic plan, particularly Goals 1 and 2:
1. Create a signature, high-quality educational experience for all students
2. Facilitate the timely attainment of educational goals of our diverse student population.

Boise State has two established policies related to accessibility (1060--Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment, and 2080--Creating Equal Access to Students with Disabilities). Both encourage the University community to be inclusive by adhering to the Americans with Disability Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (refer to the Legal Requirements section below for details on these federal laws).

The scope of Policy 1060 is very broad -- it encompasses all University students, employees, vendors, and contractors. The policy helps to support the process of purchasing accessible materials and requires vendors and contractors to provide proof of accessibility. Although the scope of Policy 2080 is narrow, focusing only on students with disabilities, it outlines the important steps students must take to request accommodations.

To further support a truly inclusive educational experience at the University, suggestions for amending and purposefully connecting other policies to Policy 1060 and 2080 are included in the Recommendations section below.

**Legal Requirements**

Federal regulations require equally effective access to education opportunities and benefits for students who are otherwise qualified to enroll in the course. Furthermore, accessibility must be built into program and course design; guidance from the Office of Civil Rights ("OCR") states that under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, any implementation of technology should include planning for accessibility. Technology should be accessible from the onset; fully accessible technology should be available immediately upon request ([U.S. Department of Education, FAQ, May 26, 2011](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/faq.html#man)), p. 4). Finally, accessibility must result in educational opportunities that are as timely, equally effective, and equally integrated as those provided students without disabilities.

Applicable legislation includes the following:

- **Section 504** of the Rehabilitation Act (1973), a civil rights law ensuring that institutions receiving federal funds (e.g., financial aid for students, funding for research, etc.) provide equal access to all services and programs, with or without accommodations. The United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, enforces compliance with Section 504 with respect to qualifying post-secondary educational institutions.

- The **Americans with Disabilities Act**, or ADA (1990/2010), prohibits discrimination based on disability. This legislation reinforces Section 504 and adds guidance concerning policies, practices, standards, and effective communication that limit people with disabilities. As a state-run agency, Boise State University is subject to Title II of the ADA. The United States Department of Justice and the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights enforce ADA compliance in institutions of higher education.
OCR Guidance

In addition to the legal requirements listed above, in 2010 the OCR sent to all institutions of higher education a Dear Colleague Letter (DCL), which addressed the issue of some institutions requiring students to use inaccessible e-book readers. In 2011, the OCR followed up with a significant guidance document in the form of frequently asked questions (FAQs) to clarify the intent and expanded scope of the 2010 DCL. Specifically, the scope:

- encompasses students with all types of disabilities, not just visual disabilities;
- applies to any and all technologies used by the institution; all types of learning must be equally accessible to students with disabilities;
- applies to distance/online education as well as technology used in face-to-face instruction regardless of length (pilot programs, established courses, new courses, emerging technology); and
- applies to all institutional operations, staff, and faculty.

As a follow-up, the 2011 DCL provides more specific guidelines on how to apply the message from the 2010 DCL and how to determine if technology is accessible and instructionally necessary. For example, to put the DCL principles into practice, a few of the OCR recommendations specify the following:

- Schools should include accessibility requirements and analyses as part of their acquisition procedures.
- Where accessible technology is not available, a school can comply with Section 504 and the ADA if it provides students with disabilities “accommodations or modifications that permit them to receive all the educational benefits provided by the technology in an equally effective and equally integrated manner”.
- Educational opportunities and benefits provided to students with disabilities [will be] in as timely a manner as those provided to students without disabilities.
- [It will] be [no] more difficult for students with disabilities to obtain the educational opportunities and benefits than it is for students without disabilities.

Recent Accessibility Complaints & Resolutions

Since 2011, students at Penn State, Louisiana Tech, UC Berkeley, and the University of Montana complained or sued the institutions over the use of inaccessible technologies. The OCR also recently conducted a compliance review of the South Carolina Technical College System. Some of the complaints/suits addressed specific classroom technologies. Others addressed broad use of inaccessible technologies—in the library, with ATMs on campus, and on institutional websites. Combining the messages of the OCR guidance and incorporating the various steps outlined in the resolutions and settlements of the complaints/lawsuits provides Boise State with a solid framework for creating a fully accessible educational experience for all students.
The Penn State resolution defined *electronic information technology* (EIT) and the University of Montana resolution reemphasized EIT as any “information technology and any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment that is used in the creation, conversion, or duplication of data or information. The term *electronic and information technology* includes, but is not limited to, telecommunications products (such as telephones), information kiosks, Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) and transaction machines, internet and intranet websites, electronic books and electronic book reading systems, search engines and databases, course management systems, classroom technology and multimedia, personal response systems (“clickers”), and office equipment such as classroom podiums, copiers and fax machines.”

(Resolution Agreement Penn State University OCR Complaint No. 03-11-2020)

The University of Montana resolution defines accessible as an environment in which:

“individuals with disabilities are able to independently acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services within the same time frame as individuals without disabilities, with substantially equivalent ease of use.”

(Resolution Agreement University of Montana OCR Complaint No. 10-12-2118)

Each of these recent resolutions/settlements shares the following components outlining what institutions must do:

1. Develop policy and procedures for EIT accessibility
   a. Non-compliance not an option
   b. Institution-wide purchasing policies must focus on purchasing accessible EIT
   c. Institutions must have a well-publicized grievance procedure
2. Perform an accessibility audit of EIT already in use. Must be performed by knowledgeable individuals.
3. Develop and provide training for faculty on how to purchase and/or create accessible courses
4. Make ADA compliance training a mandatory component of new-hire education
5. Ensure that library databases are accessible and have a system in place to assist students with print disabilities
6. Have an ambitious plan and healthy timeline

For additional information, Appendix A contains an overview of recent complaints and applicable lawsuits against these universities related to their use of inaccessible electronic information and technologies.

**Accessibility Standards & Principles**

Over the past several years, accessibility standards and principles have been established and widely accepted. Two of the most recognized sets of standards and principles are:
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0), a vendor-neutral set of guidelines to create accessible web content (W3C, 2014; W3C, 2008).
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a set of principles for course and curriculum development that gives all students equal opportunities to learn, by providing guidelines for creating course outcomes, materials, and assessments that work for all students (National Center on Universal Design for Learning, 2013).

For further details, an overview of the WCAG 2.0 standards and UDL principles is provided in Appendix B.

**Accessibility Facts & Statistics**

The 2011 World Health Organization reported that approximately 56 million people in the U.S. were identified as having a disability, including approximately 11% of post-secondary students. The report also indicated that the percentage of people with disabilities is increasing disproportionately with population growth, due to a variety of factors such as medical and technological advancement, military operations, and aging society (cited in 3PlayMedia white paper, p.5). Similarly, census data estimates 11% of Idaho’s population ages 18-64 have a disability of some kind, such as sensory disabilities (Deaf/hard-of-hearing and/or blind or low vision), learning disabilities, Autism spectrum disorders, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, psychological disabilities, etc. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012)

To date, 800 students with disabilities have connected with the DRC. Approximately 450 - 500 of those students request academic accommodations each year. Because the University does not collect information on disability status and cannot require students with disabilities to self-identify, the actual number of students with disabilities enrolled at the institution is conceivably much larger than the number who have self-disclosed by accessing the services of the Disability Resource Center.

**Course Enrollment Facts & Statistics**

The following information about the number of courses at Boise State is provided to help gauge the usage of online content across instruction modes: in-person, hybrid and online. Although it would be difficult to determine the extent to which faculty utilize online materials/content to supplement their in-person courses, overall a major portion of content included in hybrid courses and most, if not all, content in fully online courses would be online. Appendix C contains additional data about trends in the number of online and hybrid sections at Boise State.
Finally, when gauging the usage of online content across courses, it is helpful to consider the number of digital videos that Boise State faculty produce through lecture capture and desktop capture:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current Total Number of Videos</th>
<th>Average monthly additions</th>
<th>Average video length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lecture Capture Videos</strong></td>
<td>2,574</td>
<td>250-300 videos</td>
<td>81.6 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desktop Capture Videos</strong></td>
<td>Approximately 1,500</td>
<td>147 videos</td>
<td>14.8 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Currently, one of the most pressing accessibility issues for the University is the need to address video captioning. The above figures illustrated the rapid increase in the creation of video content. Video can be an effective learning medium, and the increase in video use is encouraging; however, to ensure all students have equal access, video content must be captioned.

At this time, very limited resources are available to assist faculty with video captioning, so it is mainly up to faculty to caption their own videos. Most faculty members are not equipped with the appropriate technologies or the technical skills to do so. Although Camtasia\(^2\) software licenses

\(^2\) Camtasia is a screen recording and video editing program that enables the faculty member to do a “desktop capture.” This can include audio and video input from a webcam, and can also capture the audio
and training are available through the Office of Information Technology, these resources do not overcome the extensive time needed to caption videos, which is especially problematic for busy faculty (at best, the amount of time it takes to caption one minute of video is approximately a 10:1 ratio). In fact, current research published by the Education Advisory Board recommends that “the creation of a central budget for services such as captioning and transcription increases faculty and staff willingness to adhere to accessibility guidelines,” and “increases the likelihood that faculty and staff will caption videos and improves faculty’s overall opinion of accessibility policies” (p.4).

The Recommendations section below provides some guidance on how the University can address video-captioning needs through a prioritization process and a phased timeline.

**Accessibility Efforts at Boise State**

Although Boise State has a long way to go to ensure online content across all courses is fully accessible, campus units have made significant progress over the past couple of years. The following briefly describes the recent collaborative strides that have been made toward making online content accessible (refer to Appendix D for further details about each effort).

- **Disability Resource Center & Campus Computer Labs** - Increased the amount/level of assistive technologies and accessibility of campus computer labs
- **Organizational Performance and Workplace Learning Program** - Increased accessibility of online courses through efforts by faculty, graduate assistants and department web design specialist
- **Audit of Nursing Department RN-BS Online/Distance Completion Track Courses** - Conducted an accessibility audit of 14 online nursing courses to determine the level of accessibility and usability, with respect to the ADA, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and W3C WCAG 2.0 guidelines
- **Boise State eCampus Center Accessibility Guidelines** - Crafted a set of online accessibility guidelines to be used by eCampus Center instructional design consultants, developed by a collaborative cross-campus working group
- **Expanded guidelines for Quality Matters Standard 8** - the “top 10” list from the eCampus Center Accessibility Guidelines folded into an expanded resource for Quality Matters Standard 8
- **Vetting Process for Third-Party Online Tools/Resources** - Developed a collaboratively created draft process for vetting the accessibility of third-party online tools and resources (e.g., online resources created by textbook publishers, digital libraries of online content, etc.).
- **Online Accessibility & Accommodation Responsibility Matrix** - Developed a collaboratively created draft matrix to distinguish between online course “accessibility” (prior to the course start) and “accommodation” (during the course) responsibilities for various stakeholders

and video shown on the faculty members’ computers, allowing them to conduct demonstrations, and show slide presentations and web content.
- **Pilot Online Course Accessibility Audit for Humanities 207** - Piloted the auditing process for auditing the accessibility of an online course. Humanities 207 was selected for this project and is currently in progress.

- **Accessibility White Paper for Boise State** - Created this white paper written by a collaborative cross-campus working group

- **Captioning Videos** - Started multiple discussions across campus to determine video captioning needs, resources, and challenges (currently in progress)

- **Accessibility Awareness & Training** - Several workshops and training resources are provided by multiple departments across campus to increase faculty and staff accessibility knowledge and skills (currently in progress)

- **Accessibility Audit Station** - Began discussions to earmark funds to seed the creation of an accessibility audit station (currently in progress)

**Recommendations for Next Steps**

Boise State can learn much from the numerous complaints filed and settlements taken against other institutions as well as from effective strategies that have been implemented in response to legal actions. In addition, when reviewing how the enforcement agencies interpret accessibility obligations under the ADA and trends from Dear Colleague Letters, the Association of Higher Education and Disabilities (AHEAD) outlines an overall strategy universities should take to address accessibility issues:

- Develop a strategic plan to audit and address institutional use of inaccessible electronic and information technologies, which includes timeframes, supports, and accommodations

- Refine policies to define functional and technical standards for access

- Inform and provide training for administrators, faculty and students

Based on these strategies and lessons learned from complaints and settlements, this white paper presents several recommendations for creating a comprehensive accessibility initiative at the university. This section will focus on developing a plan for ensuring the accessibility of online courses and content; however, for the university to be in full compliance, we need to have a more comprehensive plan in place (refer to Appendix J with additional components to include in a comprehensive plan).

**1. Make accessibility an administrative priority**

As with most institutional initiatives, change does not happen unless it has strong support and advocacy from top-level university administration. In fact, research from the Education Advisory Board indicates that “clear directions from the president or provost [to] emphasize the importance of the [accessibility] policy and need for compliance” are essential for campus-wide implementation” (p.4).

- The University needs an administrative champion who leads the way in innovation of online teaching to better accommodate the needs of students with disabilities and to facilitate this process for our diverse student population. Such a leader is needed to effectively implement an accessibility initiative.
As a steward of university resources, promoting and supporting this initiative are not only the ‘right things to do’, but also aligns with our vision to become a Metropolitan University of Distinction.

The DRC helps the University to embrace diversity by providing access and facilitating independence, but where we are now as an educational institution is not acceptable.

2. Update and develop new policies to address the issue of accessibility

With a champion in place to lead the change, the following policy changes are recommended based on recent rulings and settlements.

- Write a new, stand alone policy focusing on the accessibility of electronic and information technology (EIT) that defines functional and technical standards for accessibility and includes alternate media responsibilities and timelines

- Rewrite policy 2080 to include responsibilities for faculty in creating accessible classroom materials from the start, such as adding the following or similar verbiage:

  Boise State University faculty and staff who utilize technologies to create web content for teaching and learning or for sharing information on any Boise State University-affiliated domains will work toward making their materials, courses, and programs accessible for all. Boise State Accessibility Standards, based on standards defined by Section 508 and WCAG 2.0 Level A guidelines, apply when developing new online/blended courses; updating materials, references, or documents in existing face-to-face courses; as well as "reviewing and refreshing" existing online/blended courses. Any hardware or software technologies that students will use in any course must be accessible for all students.

- Amend and purposefully connect the following with Policy 1060 and the new EIT policy:
  - Policy 6030--Contractual Agreements
  - Policy 6130--Purchasing
  - Policy 6150--Independent Contractors
  - Policy 8010--Network Standards
  - Policy 8040--University Webpages and Electronic Publications

3. Develop a plan for a purposeful approach

Creating an accessible campus is an institutional project, which needs to be managed and collaborative in order to be implemented successfully. The strategic plan for accessibility should include a review of the University’s current use of technology, web-based tools, and information related to accessibility. Ideally, the accessibility plan is integrated within the University’s overall technology plan, and “includes time frames for replacing inaccessible technology and opportunities to reprioritize based on ongoing feedback from students with print disabilities” (AHEAD, A Clear Standard, July 24, 2013). In addition, AHEAD recommends an accessibility plan include identifying needed workarounds, accommodations and supports, especially when no alternatives are available to address short-term gaps. Other aspects for ensuring the successful implementation of a purposeful accessibility plan include the following:
• Identify a qualified, long-term project manager with professional project management experience who will:
  o Collaborate effectively with other constituents across campus (e.g., Compliance Office/ADA Coordinator, DRC, Office of Information Technology [OIT], Instructional Design and Educational Assessment (IDEA Shop), eCampus Center, faculty, financial entities, webmaster, etc.)
  o Develop a project schedule
  o Develop a project budget
    ■ Education Advisory Board (EAB) research recommends establishing an accessibility budget that includes funds for staff, technology and vendor services to conduct audits, redesign services, provide video captioning, etc. (2014, p.14-15). For example, EAB research cites the MPR Associates white paper estimating the following costs of retrofitting existing online courses with full accessibility:
      ● Simple online courses (mostly text-based pages and images): Approximately $500 for each course
      ● Complex online courses (contains videos, podcasts, and other heavy multimedia use): Over $2,000 for each course
  o Involve the ADA/504 Compliance Officer (similar to an EITA Coordinator role at University of Montana) who will:
      o Help champion the cause, raise awareness and provide guidance regarding the University’s obligations
      o Maintain a compliance focus by conducting routine audits/spot checks, etc.
  o Establish EIT working groups to address to develop standards in various areas such as:
      o EIT accessibility task force/compliance committee
        ■ Include representatives from various departments (Legal, Compliance, OIT, DRC, Library, IDEA Shop, eCampus Center, online faculty representatives, etc.)
        ■ Promote communication and compliance
        ■ Monitor and enforce responsibilities and any related processes established during the implementation plan
        ■ Recommend incorporating oversight responsibilities of accessibility policy compliance into position descriptions (EAB Research, 2014, p.9)
      o Instructional materials
        ■ Establish and promote accessibility guidelines for creating online course content (refer to Appendix E for sample)
        ■ Support faculty in creating accessible instructional materials (e.g., captioned videos, accessible instructional web sites, accessible readings, etc.)
        ■ Create a repository of captioned videos available on campus
      o Vetting process
        ■ Coordinate with other working groups to create a vetting plan and timeline for purchased and in-house-created EIT instructional materials
          ■ Begin vetting process with new online classes
Create timeline for revising previously generated instructional materials, etc.
Evaluate VPATs and create VPAT repository (potentially work with the National Federation for the Blind to certify VPATs)
Implement an exceptions request process (refer to Appendix I for a sample form from Temple University)

Purchasing
Ensures procedures are in place to purchase accessible technologies to begin with, including the implementation of an exceptions request process (refer to Appendix I for a sample form from Temple University)

4. Conduct an online course accessibility audit
Many universities begin an accessibility initiative with a course audit. Some start by implementing a self-audit process or by auditing a sample of courses, and then expand the audit to include all electronic and instructional materials. Considerations for developing and planning an accessibility audit include the following:

- Determine the details and priorities of audit criteria (perhaps through an EITA working group)
  - Self-audit criteria should contain the number and types of scanned documents/articles, as well as whether the documents are accessible, adhere to copyright restrictions, etc.
  - Consider bringing in an external auditor to conduct the initial audit
- Develop a schedule to audit and evaluate all courses, such as:
  - Beginning [semester] all new online courses
  - Beginning [semester] all existing online courses
  - Beginning [semester] all hybrid
  - Beginning [semester] all on-campus courses using online content
- Develop a schedule to audit and evaluate ancillary EITs, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - Library
  - Learning management systems

5. Develop accessibility processes and procedures:
Once working groups are in place, additional accessibility-related processes and procedures need to be established, such as:

- **Online Course Development & Accessibility**
  Since it is not known whether students with disabilities will enroll in particular online classes, faculty should design courses with the expectation that a student with disabilities will enroll. Research by the EAB recommends proactively creating accessible course material to avoid repetitive work and ensure student with disabilities have timely access to course materials (p.7).
Establishing accessibility guidelines is an essential first step toward ensure accessibility in online courses (refer to Appendix E for a sample). In addition, EAB’s research recommends institutions have a systematic process to implement and ensure accessibility compliance in all online courses, including a review and implementation process for ensuring the accessibility of existing online courses (2014, pp.7-10).

- **Formal grievance process**
  Create a well-publicized, easy-to-find process that allows students, faculty/staff, and visitors with disabilities to alert the campus community to specific EIT access needs.

- **Vetting & exceptions process**
  A vetting process is essential to determine the level of accessibility of online tools and resources prior to purchase. However, instances will arise when such items are inaccessible. Therefore, an exceptions process is necessary to address instances of inaccessible tools already purchased (e.g., outlining a transcribing process for scanned original manuscripts within digital library collections) or being considered for purchase when no other alternatives are available. Appendix G and Appendix I provide samples of vetting and exception processes.

- **Video captioning process**
  EAB research indicates that creating a central fund -- rather than a charge-back model -- to assume costs for auditing courses, redesigning services and video captioning “increases faculty and staff willingness to adopt accessibility standards” (2014, p.15). In addition, identify a centralized coordinating entity/individual with closed captioning expertise who will work in conjunction with the DRC to coordinate resources to assist faculty and academic departments and provide recommendations and options for captioning resources.

6. **Provide accessibility awareness, training and resources:**
Once policies are in place and the initiative is launched, support resources and training are essential to promote awareness and buy-in. The following are a few examples of the types of training and resources needed:

- **Buy-in & awareness strategies**
  - Establish a high-level administrator as Accessibility Champion to improve compliance. Example:
    - Ask the provost to send out a statement on importance of creating/using accessible content/technologies. Such a statement adds authority to policies, reaches the entire campus, and enforces the consequences of non-compliance (EAB Research, 2014, p.13).
  - Employ strategies for effectively reaching faculty. Example:
    - Work with the faculty senate to determine the most effective way to gain faculty buy-in
  - Emphasize the positive impact of accessible content on students, faculty and staff. Examples (from EAB Research, 2014, pp.13-14):
- Develop scenarios to help community members understand the experiences of students with disabilities
- Create videos of students with disabilities discussing the impact of accessibility on their learning experiences
- Profile faculty and staff emphasizing their success due to support services
- Communicate the benefits of accessible course content has for all students; for instance, including captions can enhance understanding and recall for all students and improve comprehension speed for non-native English speakers

**Provide training for administrators, faculty and students**
EAB research (2014) suggests the following training schedule and content:
- **Faculty & Staff**
  - Schedule: New-hire orientation, after policy changes, and by request
  - Content: Document accessibility policies (e.g., PDF, Word, PowerPoint); video captioning and transcription policies and procedures; and accessible web design standards and procedures
- **Developers & Procurement Managers**
  - Schedule: New-hire orientation, after policy changes or accessibility improvements to technology, and by request
  - Content: Accessibility software procurement policies and procedures; website accessibility policies and standards; and web application accessibility policies and standards
- **Students**
  - Schedule: At request of faculty during class
  - Content: Accessibility design for student presentations (e.g., document accessibility); and video-captioning policies and procedures

**Provide “how-to” and other accessibility support resources**
- Provide one-page tip sheets on creating accessible content aligned to Accessibility Guidelines (refer to Appendix K for examples of accessibility related resources)
- Clearly outline accessibility and accommodation responsibilities to various stakeholders (refer to Appendix H for a draft of a Responsibilities Matrix)
- Integrate accessibility and accommodation resources within current faculty training (e.g., “how-to” identify students in need, “next steps” resource for faculty when a student provides a letter of accommodation, experiential learning to help faculty identify with disabled students’ online learning experiences)

7. Communicate Boise State’s commitment via a dedicated accessibility website
EAB research recommends simplifying and centralizing accessibility guidelines and resources to encourage faculty and staff compliance (2014, p.7). Accessibility websites serve as a
database or centralized collection of accessibility-related tools and resources. Several universities have created excellent examples of accessibility websites to follow, such as:

- Temple University Accessible Technology
- University of Montana
- Penn State
- Michigan State University Web Accessibility
- Kansas State University K-Access
- University of Washington DO-IT

Several components these institutional accessibility websites typically include are:

- Accessibility related policies, procedures, and guidelines
- Quick link for students to request accommodations
- Accessibility checklists and tools
- Available accessibility training for students, staff and faculty
- Accessibility tips, FAQs and announcements
- One-page “how-to” tip sheets on creating accessible content
- Information about accessibility audits
- Overview of how students with disabilities interact with the web and why they need certain functions
- Testimonials from faculty and staff on the importance of policy compliance
- Testimonials from students with disabilities on the impact of accessible course materials on their learning
- Who to contact with accessibility-related questions
- Links to external resources

Again, the above outlines recommendations for ensuring the accessibility of online course and content. However, for the University to be in full compliance, Appendix J provides additional suggestions for expanding these recommendations into a more comprehensive accessibility initiative.

Conclusion

At first, Susan was hesitant to disclose her disability for fear of being denied admission into an online program at Boise State. Today, due to the department’s proactive preparations and efforts to audit their online courses, along with the collaborative response by the DRC and other departments across campus, Susan is successfully completing her third semester of online courses at Boise State. For Dan, the captioning already in place enabled him to access the coursework and complete his assignments in a timely manner without the need to request accommodations.

Although Susan and Dan’s stories represent real-life scenarios of how departments across campus can rally together to meet students’ needs, faculty and staff involved have learned many lessons along the way. Specifically, these stories illustrate the necessity to plan and work ahead so that all online courses and materials at Boise State are produced with accessibility in
mind from the beginning. Ensuring the accessibility of all online courses and content is the right thing to do, and research shows that improving the accessibility of digital content improves learning outcomes for everyone, not just persons with disabilities.

In summary, the purpose of this document was to provide a context for the need to ensure that online courses and content at Boise State are accessible to all of our students. While there are challenges to making online courses and content accessible, over the past several months, the University has made notable strides toward making online courses and content universally accessible. However, to make stronger strides, Boise State needs a purposeful approach. The set of recommendations included in this document will help the University to move toward becoming more compliant in meeting accessibility requirements, as well as to remove barriers and ensure equal access to online courses and materials for all our students, including those with disabilities.
References


# Appendix A: Overview of Complaints/Lawsuits Regarding Electronic and Information Technology (EIT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Main focus</th>
<th>Resolution requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2011 | Penn State University *(OCR complaint)* | EIT defined as “information technology and any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment that is used in the creation, conversion, or duplication of data or information. The term electronic and information technology includes, but is not limited to, telecommunications products (such as telephones), information kiosks, Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) and transaction machines, internet and intranet websites, electronic books and electronic book reading systems, search engines and databases, course management systems, classroom technology and multimedia, personal response systems ("clickers"), and office equipment such as classroom podiums, copiers and fax machines.” | 1. Accessibility audit  
2. Accessibility policy and implementation  
3. Purchasing accessible EITs  
4. Accessible search engine for library  
5. University website accessibility  
6. Learning Management Systems  
7. Ensure accessibility of electronic podiums  
8. Clickers  
9. Accessible ATMs |
| 2011 | Louisiana Tech University *(lawsuit)* | University’s use of MyOMLab, an inaccessible online learning product. Sighted students had 24/7 access to the software which included tutorials. Instructor required the software for homework and also used to administer tests for the class. | 1. Create/revamp anti-discrimination University policies.  
2. Solidify the role of the disability services office at the university—liaison between student and all involved in providing instruction; oversee accommodation process; respond in a timely manner to concerns; include grievance policy in university policies  
3. University develop and implement ADA Training  
4. New hires required to complete ADA Training |
| Year | University of California, Berkeley (lawsuit) | Alternative media for students with print disabilities | 1. Establish clear procedures for students to request materials in alternate format.  
2. Clarifies role of disability services: Provide alternate format in a reasonable time frame (10-17 days according to UCB website)  
3. Clarifies role of Faculty: submit textbook selections at least 7 weeks prior to semester  
4. Clarifies role of University: yearly notification to faculty about textbook submission deadlines; review faculty who do not comply with deadline to determine if violation of Code of Conduct  
5. Have assistive technology available in several campus locations  
6. Library assistance for students with print disabilities  
7. Update library website to be accessible  
8. Annual progress reports on above requirements |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Actions/Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2013 | South Carolina Technical College System | Result of compliance review, not a complaint. Web accessibility (websites, learning management systems, student information systems, library) | 1. OCR found many parts of websites are not accessible  
2. Reminded SCTC of the 2010 OCR letter and 2011 Q/A Dear Colleague letters that spelled out: substantially equivalent ease of use for students with disabilities |
| 2013 | University of Montana                | Complaint that U Montana was using inaccessible technology including: Moodle, live chat, scanned written documents, library database, registration platform, classroom clickers  
OCR defined accessibility as “individuals with disabilities are able to independently acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services within the same time frame as individuals without disabilities, with substantially equivalent ease of use.”  
Definition of electronic information technology same as in Penn State resolution.  
Defined equally effective as “the alternative format or medium communicates the same information in as timely a fashion as does the original format or medium.”  
Defined legacy websites as those published prior to July 30, 2013. | 1. Establish EIT policy and procedures  
2. Establish grievance procedure  
3. Purchasing procedures to purchase accessible materials that fill the definition of accessible  
4. EIT training for faculty on tools for creating accessible courses  
5. Designate EIT Coordinator to coordinate university-wide EIT accessibility efforts  
6. Student survey to identify EIT barriers  
7. EIT Accessibility Audit to identify EIT barriers  
8. Corrective Action strategy based on survey and audits  
9. Library and university websites will be made accessible  
10. Learning management system barriers will be rectified in determined time frame. |
Appendix B: Overview of Widely Accepted Accessibility Standards & Principles

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0)


The WCAG 2.0 contains twelve standards grouped under four distinct principles: Perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust, and each guideline has an established success criteria by which it can be tested. A brief explanation of each principle is provided below:

1. Perceivable - Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.
2. Operable - User interface components and navigation must be operable.
3. Understandable - Information and the operation of user interface must be understandable.
4. Robust - Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies. (W3C, 2014).

The twelve standards are classified as follows:

1. Perceivable
   1.1. Provide text alternatives for any non-text content so that it can be changed into other forms people need, such as large print, braille, speech, symbols or simpler language.
   1.2. Provide alternatives for time-based media.
   1.3. Create content that can be presented in different ways (for example simpler layout) without losing information or structure.
   1.4. Make it easier for users to see and hear content including separating foreground from background.

2. Operable
   2.1. Make all functionality available from a keyboard.
   2.2. Provide users enough time to read and use content.
   2.3. Do not design content in a way that is known to cause seizures.
   2.4. Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are.

3. Understandable
   3.1. Make text content readable and understandable.
   3.3. Help users avoid and correct mistakes.

4. Robust
4.1. Maximize compatibility with current and future user agents, including assistive technologies.
When content is tested against the twelve principles, three levels of conformance -- A, AA, and AAA -- indicate the range of compliance. The rigorous classification and testing applies to all technologies used to support accessibility of electronic content.

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**
Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a set of principles for course and curriculum development that enables all students equal opportunities to learn, has its foundation in the principles of Universal Design. Such principles are applicable to any product or environment in order to make it usable for anyone without the need of adaptation (Burgstahler, 2012). As adopted by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), UDL consists of three main principles to effectively apply UD to teaching and learning:

I. **Provide Multiple Means of Representation** - To produce resourceful, knowledgeable learners
   1. Provide options for perception
   2. Provide options for language, mathematical expressions, and symbols
   3. Provide options for comprehension

II. **Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression** - To produce strategic, goal-directed learners
    4. Provide options for physical action
    5. Provide options for expression and communication
    6. Provide options for executive functions

III. **Provide Multiple Means of Engagement** - To produce purposeful, resourceful learners
    7. Provide options for recruiting interest
    8. Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence
    9. Provide options for self-regulation

The UDL principles provide a research-supported framework for creating effective curricula, and “to reduce barriers, as well as optimize levels of challenge and support, to meet the needs of all learners from the start. They can also help educators identify the barriers found in existing curricula.” (CAST, 2011). In other words, UDL is a type of blueprint or map for creating objectives, activities, and assessments that anyone can use, avoiding the one-size-fits-all scenario, thus creating a flexible environment that “can easily be customized to fit individual needs.” (CAST, 2011)
Appendix C: Trends in Online and Hybrid Courses

The following information about the number of courses at Boise State is provided to help gauge the usage of online content across instruction modes: in-person, hybrid and online. Determining the extent to which faculty utilize online materials/content to supplement their in-person courses would be difficult. For hybrid courses, however, we could estimate an overall percentage of online course content, and we could estimate that most, if not all, content in online courses is indeed online.

The current academic year (2013-14) shows a 21.7% increase from the previous year in officially classified hybrid courses, a number that has been historically growing in the past seven years. With increased interest in the “flipped” classroom model (Ash, 2012), more and more face-to-face sections are using online lectures, which include a variety of multimedia content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ONLINE</th>
<th>IN PERSON</th>
<th>HYBRID</th>
<th>INDEPENDENT STUDIES</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SU13</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA13</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>4,031</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP14</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>3,626</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4,296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>1,406</td>
<td>8,581</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10,223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although the above numbers indicate the total number of courses by semester and instruction mode, multiple sections of a course can be offered in the same semester. For example, the following outlines the number of fully online sections offered during the 2013-14 academic year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fully Online Sections</th>
<th>Totals (Excluding Labs)</th>
<th>Totals (Including Labs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SU13</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA13</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP14</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>668</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: Details of Accessibility Efforts at Boise State

Although Boise State has a long way to go with ensuring that online content across all courses is accessible to students with disabilities, campus units have made significant progress over the past couple of years. The following details describe recent collaborative strides that have been made toward making online content accessible, as well as timelines and contacts for each effort.

- **Disability Resource Center & Campus Computer Labs** (Wendy Turner, DRC)
  - Assistive technology (screen readers, screen magnification, etc) available in all OIT computer labs via the cloud.
  - Online Testing Center (OTC) now fully accessible. Students using testing accommodations receive those accommodations in the OTC. Exam accommodations include extra testing time, a reduced distraction testing environment, use of Assistive Technology to access the computerized exam.
  - Accessible technology and accessible computer stations available throughout the library.

- **Organizational Performance and Workplace Learning (OPWL) Program** (Linda Huglin, OPWL)
  - All course audio files include a written transcript (created by faculty or graduate assistants)
  - All course video files are captioned (by the department web design specialist)
  - Text descriptions are included for all images (by faculty or graduate assistants)

- **Albertsons Library** (Amy Vecchione, Library)
  - All instructional videos are captioned and accessible
  - Streaming videos that are not captioned can be made available captioned by request

- **Audit of RN-BS Online/Distance Completion Track Courses** (Betty Miller and Vivian Schrader, RN-BS Online/Distance Track; Bob Casper, Peter Jurhs, and Travis Moore OIT Customer Care and Max Davis-Johnson, Office of the AVP for OIT)
  - In fall 2012 the nursing department conducted an accessibility audit of 13 online nursing courses to determine the level of accessibility and usability, per ADA Section 508 and W3C WCAG guidelines.
    - The audit created a roadmap for the program’s professional development of online faculty, changes needed in course content and the shortcomings of the architecture of Blackboard Learn 9.1 learning management system, and inaccessible LMS tools to avoid.
      - Based on lowest accessibility scores, 5 categories, across the courses, required improvement:
        - Web-Based Content Formatting
- Non-text content such as video or audio tracks can be viewed either during the connection or downloaded later for access at a later time.
- Online tables use headers to clearly associate row and column.
- Online tables include summary text which explains the purpose of the table.
- Where course documents use "bold" or "italic" text for emphasis, this is done with logical markup.
- Where course documents include numbered or bulleted lists, they use HTML list markup rather than formatted text.

Web-Based General Design

- When non-text content is used to provide essential course content, the same information is available in a text format which can be used online or saved for use at a later time.
- When visual and audio presentations are time-linked, the alternative text transcript includes time marking or a video description to facilitate linking the transcript to the visual presentation.
- When visual and audio presentations are time-linked, the alternative.
- The design of the course website provides a unique URL for each page of the site.

Chat/Bulletin Boards

- When chat rooms provide course content or organizational assistance, chat transcripts are posted within 72 hours.
- If chat room participation is a course requirement, an alternative means of participation is provided that is not time-intensive.

Online Course Syllabus Information

- The course site includes information about student service offices available on campus. This information includes the physical location of offices as well as contact information.

Web Based Content Availability

- When multimedia content is embedded in a web page, the student is able to pause, rewind, fast-forward or restart the content.

Since 2012, the RN-BS program has continually refined and audited online content and created quality assurance groups and resources while carrying out multiple projects with OIT (Customer Care, Multimedia, Training and Communications); eCampus Center (Accessibility Group);
DRC, Instructional Design and Educational Assessment (IDEA Shop; instructional design consultants) and Learning Technology Solutions (LTS; Blackboard corporate liaison) to report known LMS problems to have prepared, specific educational resources.

As of summer 2014, accessibility and universal design activities continue to represent key, regular processes, activities, education and collaborative relationships for the RN-BS internal and external to the campus. A report about the RN-BS Online/Distance Completion Track’s experience to enhance online accessibility and usability for students, will be made available in fall.

**eCampus Accessibility Group** (Christine Bauer, eCampus Center)
- During the summer of 2013 nine representatives from multiple departments across campus (eCampus Center, DRC, Title IX/504 Coordinator, OIT, IDEA Shop, Library, OPWL, Ed Tech, Nursing) gathered to develop a set of online accessibility guidelines to be used by eCampus Center instructional design consultants while working with faculty developing online courses. (Note: General Counsel declined the invitation to participate as part of the group but graciously offered to answer any legal questions from the group.)

**Boise State eCampus Center Accessibility Guidelines** (Christine Bauer, eCampus Center)
- A comprehensive draft of accessibility guidelines resulted from the work of the eCampus Accessibility Group during the summer of 2013. Although the set of guidelines is still a work in progress, it outlines specific strategies for creating digital content with accessibility in mind. In addition, the guidelines provide a framework for developing and disseminating training resources aligned to these strategies, which will be collaboratively developed by eCampus Center and IDEA Shop as time and resources allow.
  - From this comprehensive list, the eCampus Accessibility Group identified the “top 10” essential items to form a baseline of basic accessibility requirements for online course content.
  - Refer to [Appendix E](#) for a copy of the Accessibility Guidelines.

**Expanded resources for Quality Matters Standard 8** (Christine Bauer, eCampus Center)
- The Quality Matters rubric(™), a nationally known set of standards for online course design, has been used for several years by Boise State faculty as a guide for designing high-quality online courses. Since spring 2013, accessibility information and resources have been integrated into all aspects of the eCampus Quality Instruction Program (eQIP), including the eCampus Course Design & Development Seminar (eCD2S), eCampus Course Development Phase (eCD), eCampus Teaching Online Seminar (eTOS), and Quality Matters Peer Reviews.
(QMPRs) and aligned to Standard 8 of the Quality Matters rubric, which specifically addresses accessibility.

○ Because Quality Matters was already in use by Boise State faculty to guide the design of online courses, it seemed logical to fold the “top 10” within a framework already established and used by faculty. To continue the work of the Accessibility Group, the eCampus Center folded the “top 10” list into an expanded resource for Quality Matters Standard 8.

○ The Accessibility Group reviewed and provided input on a draft document folding the “top 10” essentials under the Quality Matters Standard 8 guidelines. Faculty serving on the eQIP instructional team also provided feedback. The document was piloted with faculty participating in eCD2S in spring 2014. Refer to Appendix F for a draft of the eCampus Center expanded edition of the Quality Matters Standard 8.

○ In preparation for implementing the expanded guidelines for Quality Matters Standard 8 into the Quality Matters Peer Review process, accessibility-related questions were added to the QMPR Lead Course Developer Worksheet (7b, 8: 8a-8c) and piloted during the spring 2014 QMPRs. Feedback from participating faculty will be gathered and incorporated to make further improvements.

- **Vetting process for Third-Party Online Tools/Resources** (Christine Bauer, eCampus Center)
  ○ While working with faculty developing online courses during the fall of 2013, the eCampus Center had an immediate need to draft a process for vetting the accessibility of third-party online tools and resources (e.g., online resources created by textbook publishers, digital libraries of online content, etc.). The eCampus Center contacted the DRC to collaboratively create and pilot a just-in-time vetting process.
  ○ During spring 2014 the process was reviewed by and feedback received from faculty on the eQIP team:
    ■ Instructions seem pretty clear
    ■ The more we can take off faculty shoulders the better
    ■ Create a repository of publisher contact information and vetting results
    ■ Clearly identify and communicate what incentives faculty have for doing this
  ○ Input from representatives in OIT, IDEA Shop and Library has been received and incorporated into the draft. The process was piloted with faculty participating in the spring 2014 eCD2S/eCD. Refer to Appendix G for a draft of the Vetting Process.
  ○ Next steps for this project include establishing a long-term plan for a VPAT evaluation process and creating a centralized repository to store evaluated VPATs. In addition, a timeline will be established for applying the vetting process with new online courses integrating third-party tools into the course design and for third-party tools that have already been purchased and used in current
Online Accessibility & Accommodation Responsibility Matrix (Christine Bauer, eCampus Center)

While working on the above activities, it became clear during spring 2014 that it would be helpful to distinguish what needs to be made accessible when an online course is being developed from what constitutes an accommodation for students with disabilities while taking an online course. The DRC and eCampus Center collaboratively drafted a matrix that attempts to clarify responsibilities for various stakeholders who must distinguish between categories of “accessibility” (prior to the course start) and “accommodation” (during the course).

Input from representatives in OIT, IDEA Shop and the Library has been received and incorporated into the draft. The potential for broader application of the responsibilities matrix needs to be discussed and explored. Refer to Appendix H for a draft of the Responsibilities Matrix.

Pilot Accessibility Audit for HUM 207 (Christine Bauer, eCampus Center)

Two Boise State faculty members redeveloped Humanities 207 during summer 2013, incorporating numerous graphics, audio and video content items. The revised course was taught during fall 2013 and a QMPR of the course was conducted in spring 2014. Because the use of multimedia content was essential for students to learn the course objectives, Humanities 207 was also selected as a pilot for auditing the accessibility of an online course.

During spring 2014 the two faculty members who developed the course and are also experienced QMPR reviewers completed an initial accessibility audit using the expanded Quality Matters Standard 8 document. Feedback on the document was obtained and a meeting with DRC was held to discuss initial results of the audit, along with faculty questions and concerns about making particular content more accessible.

Next steps for this project include having the DRC conduct a more in-depth accessibility audit of the course to address faculty concerns, and developing accessibility training resources for QMPR peer reviewers.

White Paper on Accessibility of Online Content at Boise State (Christine Bauer, eCampus Center)

During the spring of 2014 the Accessibility Group reconvened to continue its work, which resulted in this white paper to provide recommendations for developing an institutional plan to ensure online course content is accessible to all students.

Captioning Videos (Christine Bauer, eCampus Center; Tammy Schmidt, OIT)

Discussions are in progress with DRC, OIT, Library, IDEA Shop and eCampus Center to determine what on-campus resources are currently available for video
captioning and to develop a decision tree for instructors on the process for getting videos captioned.

○ The Instructional Video Standards group is charged with developing guidelines for the use of instructional video at Boise State and making recommendations to support the guidelines. Currently, the group is in the process of gathering and coding data on the attitudes about and practices of instructional videos at Boise State University. As part of the interview/survey process, 4-5 questions related to video accessibility were included. The group will soon disseminate the results of the instructional video interviews/surveys, along with the information gathered from the accessibility questions.

● Accessibility Awareness & Training (Ana Thompson, IDEA Shop; Christine Bauer, eCampus Center)
  ○ Meetings will soon be held with representatives from DRC, IDEA Shop, OIT, Library and eCampus Center to discuss the collaborative creation of resources aligned to guidelines for developing tip sheets/training materials for faculty to create accessible content.
  ○ IDEA Shop is inserting Universal Design principles into the workshops it offers. Universal Design (UD), as defined by the UDL Guidelines graphic organizer (CAST, 2011), involves a full incorporation of accessible design principles as well as best practices in teaching and learning. Using UD principles in the training that IDEA Shop provides for faculty and staff will reinforce those principles, thereby encouraging faculty to create learning content that is ready for students who require accommodations such as screen reader-friendly materials and interfaces as well as captioning/transcription for multimedia.
  ○ Accessibility awareness and/or information resources have been integrated into all eQIP components: eCD2S, eCD, eTOS, and QMPRs.
  ○ When appropriate, instructional design consultants from the eCampus Center and IDEA Shop provide accessibility recommendations during consultation meetings with faculty.

● Accessibility Audit Station (Christine Bauer, eCampus Center)
  ○ The eCampus Center will be earmarking funds to seed the creation of an accessibility audit station. Timing of the purchase and location of the station is yet to be determined.

Discussions with DRC, IDEA Shop, Library, and OIT will soon be held to generate initial ideas for developing a process for auditing the accessibility level of courses (define responsibilities, funding needed, etc.).
Appendix E: Draft of Boise State eCampus Center Accessibility Guidelines

Boise State eCampus Center Online Course Accessibility Guidelines

(This checklist is based on WCAG 2.0 Guidelines (Level A) and Section 508 standards, and adapted from checklists by Penn State & Michigan State & K-State & WebAIM 508, WCAG 2 Checklists.)

Online Course Syllabus

1. Add/ Boise State’s Disability Resource Center Syllabus Statement to the course syllabus.
   b. Students with disabilities needing accommodations to fully participate in this class should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations must be approved through the DRC prior to being implemented. To learn more about the accommodation process, visit the DRC’s website at http://drc.boisestate.edu/students/getting-started/.

2. Consider adding a statement to the syllabus regarding the accessibility of the Learning Management System (LMS) used to deliver the online course (refer to General LMS Guidelines below). For example:
   a. According to Blackboard’s Commitment to Accessibility webpage, the company is committed to ensuring that the Learn platform is both usable and accessible by everyone, regardless of age, ability, or situation. Blackboard measures and evaluates accessibility using two sets of standards: the WCAG 2.0 standards issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act issued in the United States federal government. For Blackboard Learn 9.1 SP11 conformance statement for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, Level AA see Learn Accessibility Conformance Statement.

General Online Course Site Considerations

Basic HTML Content

1. Ensure standards for all other elements below (text, links, color, tables, charts, images, etc.) are satisfied.

2. Ensure all files are accessible prior to uploading into the web page (refer to Online Course Content guidelines below).

3. For pages, provide titles and section headings that are descriptive, informative, and formatted using standard heading level tags (H1-H6). Create a logical, hierarchical order with the headings to help users with screen readers to quickly identify the page title from major sections and subsections of the page.
4. When inserting images, use the ALT tag to meaningfully describe each image. The phrase “image of” or the like is not necessary.
5. Make sure color schemes have enough contrasts between light and dark.
6. If you copy formatted text from a word processor, reformat the page using the HTML editor tools.
7. Display the HTML code if you wish to manually edit it for accessibility purposes.
8. When using tables for formatting/layout, use the SUMMARY field to indicate the table is being used for layout purposes. Use relative sizes (e.g., width=25%) rather than absolute sizes (e.g., width=200”).

Text, Color, and Hyperlinks
1. Use fonts styles designed for a computer monitor (e.g., Arial, Verdana etc.) and use styles for formatting. Italics text should be used minimally, and blinking text should be avoided. Underline should be reserved for hyperlinks.
2. Use heading level tags (H1-H6) to create a hierarchy of sections as opposed to bold text for headings.
3. When possible, use relative font sizes rather than absolute sizes (pixels or points) to allow text to be more easily and appropriately resized across multiple devices and platforms.
4. Use ordered lists so items are numbered, or include the item number within your text.
5. Embed a link within a phrase that clearly describes the purpose and/or location of the new page (e.g., type “Visit the Chronicle of Higher Education website” rather than “Click here…”). Avoid using the same text in links that point to different locations.
6. Keep the following in mind when using color:
   a. Ensure users can distinguish between links and surrounding text. If using color to identify links, ensure contrast is sufficient and additional differentiation is present when users hover over the link (e.g., link becomes underlined) avoid using navigation buttons that have wallpaper, which makes it difficult for assistive technology to read.
   b. Bright colors cause an afterimage effect. With two bright colors together, the afterimages interfere with one another, causing a “visual vibration” (red/green; blue/orange; green/magenta; yellow/cyan; blue/magenta; orange/yellow; and blue/green). This can be reduced by placing a neutral color between the two areas of bright colors or by making one of the colors a pastel or dark shade.
   c. Color coding alone should not be used as the only means of conveying information, indicating an action, prompting a response, or distinguishing a visual element. Supplement color coding with differences in other properties (e.g. color coding with boldface, variations in lightness or shape, etc.).
7. Ensure instructions do not rely on shape, size, sound, or visual location (e.g., “Click the square icon to continue” or “A beeping sound indicates you may continue” or “Instructions are in the right-hand column”).

Images
1. Use the ALT text (alternative text) property to provide a clear text alternative for all images, including buttons and hot spots.
2. For images with an associated function, use the ALT text to describe the function.
3. Use the Long Description tag to describe the information in complex graphics, or include a link to a description on a separate page.
4. Provide a null (alt="") ALT text for decorative images that do not convey content.

Tables, Charts & Graphs
1. Use header tags in tables for tabular data to ensure that information makes sense when read left to right, top to bottom.
2. Use of tables for layout purposes is discouraged. If you must use tables for layout purposes, do not use header tags. When using tables for formatting/layout, use the SUMMARY field to indicate the table is being used for layout purposes. Use relative sizes (e.g., width= 25%) rather than absolute sizes (e.g., width=200”).
3. Use table captions and summaries where appropriate.
4. Avoid merging cells and/or using blank cells for formatting purposes.
5. Provide ALT text to summarize the information presented in charts and graphs.
6. Supplement color coding in graphs/charts with other elements (differences in texture/lightness, line style, etc.) so the information is readable in black and white.

Math and Science Notations
1. Add a label for each formula or equation.
2. For images, use the ALT text or Long Description tag to describe the notation in words.
3. For text versions, provide an extended description or a link to an extended text description which reads out the formula in words (e.g. replaces symbols like ≠ with words like “not equals”).

Audio
1. Provide a transcript for non-live, web-based audio content.
2. Provide a mechanism to stop/pause/mute/adjust volume for audio that automatically plays on a page for more than 3 seconds.

Videos
1. Provide a text or audio description of non-live, web-based video-only content (video that has no audio track).
2. Synchronized captions for non-live, web-based video content is the preferred method for delivering accessible video (using YouTube tools, Camtasia, etc.). Recommended practice for instructors new to captioning is (a) to write a transcript first and then record the video, posting the transcript along with the video, or (b) use an outline to guide narration and then use speech-to-text tools to generate the captions.

Animations
1. Provide a text-based alternative.
2. Avoid automatic animations, blinking objects, or scrolling. Provide a mechanism to stop/pause/hide animated content that automatically plays on a page for more than 3 seconds.
3. Ensure animations with audio have synchronized captions or a text transcript.
Online Course Content

**Microsoft Word documents**

1. Use styles (as opposed to changing the font size, bold, etc.) to format document elements, such as the title, paragraph headings, etc.
2. Provide ALT text descriptions for all images, charts/graphs, and tables.
3. Specify column and row headings in tables.
4. Use numbering for lists or bullets for groups of related items.
5. Phrase linked text to clearly describe the purpose and/or location of the new page (e.g., type “Visit the Chronicle of Higher Education website” rather than “Click here…”).
6. Test your document using the Accessibility Checker (available in Word 2010 and newer).

**Microsoft PowerPoint presentations**

1. Use unique titles for each slide.
2. Use the Outline Pane to ensure all text is accessible.
3. Use the Notes Pane to transcribe narration or provide additional explanations.
4. Use colors with enough contrast to distinguish items, or use other elements (circles, etc.) to highlight particular items.
5. Provide captions or transcripts for embedded multimedia.
6. Provide ALT text descriptions for all images, charts/graphs, and tables.
7. Specify column and row headings in tables.
8. Phrase linked text to clearly describe the purpose and/or location of the new page (e.g., type “Visit the Chronicle of Higher Education website” rather than “Click here…”).
9. Verify the reading order of slide elements.
10. Post an accessible PDF version (i.e., as a text version rather than an image) of the presentation. Refer to PDF section below for details.

**Microsoft Excel spreadsheets**

1. Use header tags in tables for tabular data to ensure that information makes sense when read left to right, top to bottom.
2. Use of tables for layout purposes is discouraged. If you must use tables for layout purposes, do not use header tags.
3. Use table captions and summaries where appropriate.
4. Avoid merging cells and/or using blank cells for formatting purposes.
5. Provide ALT text to summarize the information presented in charts and graphs.
6. Supplement color coding in graphs/charts with other elements (differences in texture/lightness, line style, etc.) so the information is readable in black and white.
7. Give all sheet tabs unique names in Excel spreadsheets.
PDF files (created from Microsoft Office 2010 files)
1. Before converting to PDF format, ensure above standards for Word/PowerPoint files are satisfied (include appropriate headings, list, column and row headers in tables, descriptive links, images with descriptions, etc.).
2. Provide a link to the Adobe Acrobat Reader download page.
3. For links to PDF files, include some sort of indication on the page that the link is different (e.g., “Course Syllabus (PDF”).
4. Use “Save as Adobe PDF” to save the document along with accessibility tags to a PDF format:
   ○ Ensure the “Document structure tags for accessibility” option is checked.
   ○ Check the option for “Create bookmarks using:” and select the Headings option.

PDF files (created from scanned documents)
1. Provide a link to the Adobe Acrobat Reader download page.
2. For links to PDF files, include some sort of indication on the page that the link is different (e.g., “Course Syllabus (PDF”).
3. To create an accessible PDF version ensure the file includes labels or tags identifying embedded images and that text content is stored as text, not as a large image.
4. When in doubt, create a text-only or HTML version of the content.

General Learning Management System (LMS) Guidelines

Basic HTML pages
1. Ensure standards for all other elements above (text, links, color, tables, charts, images, etc.) are satisfied.
2. Ensure all files are accessible prior to uploading into the LMS (refer to above standards).
3. For pages, provide titles and section headings that are descriptive, informative, and formatted using the Styles drop down menu. Create a logical, hierarchical order with the headings to help users with screen readers to quickly identify the page title from major sections and subsections of the page.
4. When inserting images, use the Image Description field in the Insert/Edit Image window to meaningfully describe each image. The phrase “image of” or the like is not necessary.
5. Make sure color schemes have enough contrasts between light and dark.
6. If you copy and paste formatted text from a word processor, it may not look as expected. Be sure extra coding is removed. Depending on the LMS this may be done for you automatically or tools may be provided in the HTML editor.
7. Use the HTML Code button to display the HTML code if you wish to manually edit it for accessibility purposes.
8. When using tables for formatting/layout, use the SUMMARY field (e.g., located under the Advanced tab in the HTML Editor Blackboard) to indicate the table is being used for layout purposes. Use relative sizes (e.g., width=25%) rather than absolute sizes (e.g., width=200”) in tables.
Assessments

1. As with any course content, make sure that any media used in assessments (images, audio, video) have appropriate alternative text, transcripts or captioning.
2. When choosing question types, avoid options which use complex interactive features, such as the use of dropdown lists or drag and drop. Multiple layers of interaction present more accessibility issues for users with mobility impairment, screen readers, or certain cognitive disabilities.
3. Students who need additional time for completing timed assessments and assignments should register with Boise State’s Disability Resource Center. The DRC will provide the student a letter outlining the accommodations needed. The student must present that letter to the instructor when requesting accommodations. If a student requests an accommodation without a letter, refer them to the DRC.

Accessibility of Blackboard Tools & Features

According to Blackboard’s Commitment to Accessibility webpage, the company is committed to ensuring that the Learn platform is both usable and accessible by everyone, regardless of age, ability, or situation. Blackboard measures and evaluates accessibility using two sets of standards:

- the WCAG 2.0 standards issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), and
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act issued in the United States federal government.

For the Blackboard Learn 9.1 SP11 conformance statement for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, Level AA see Learn Accessibility Conformance Statement.

The following features and tools within Blackboard 9.1, Service Pack 11, conform to WCAG 2.0 (Level AA) standards. Faculty are encouraged to use them:

- Personal Settings (locate, modify)
- Announcements (read)
- Content (create, locate, review)
- Discussion Boards (locate, participate)
- Assignments (create, submit, grade)
- Assessments (create, read, respond, submit)
- Course wiki (contribute, upload files)
- Course blog (locate, post, interact)
- Grade Center (enter, manage, submit, review grades)

Blackboard is the university LMS platform and is accessible. For other LMS platforms (e.g., Moodle, Canvas, etc.), please check with the vendor to confirm that its product is accessible.
Web Conferencing Tools

Blackboard Collaborate
1. Ensure the tools are usable by a screen reader in case a participant is visually impaired.
2. Use captions or instant messaging if a participant is hearing impaired. If a user still experiences problems after implementing accessibility options (refer to resources below), consider using the teleconferencing feature for audio, or another accessible text chat, or a voice chat client such as Skype, which has JAWS scripts available.
   ○ For additional information about Collaborate’s accessibility features, refer to the Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing Accessibility Guides for Moderators and for Participants.

Adobe Connect
1. Ensure the tools are usable by a screen reader if a participant is visually impaired.
2. Use captions or chat texting if a participant is hearing impaired. If a user still experiences problems after implementing Connect’s screen reader accessibility options and accessibility features (refer to resources below), consider using a telephone for audio, or another accessible text chat, or a voice chat client such as Skype, which has JAWS scripts available.
   ○ For additional information about Connect’s accessibility features, refer to the Adobe Connect 8 Accessibility Features webpage.

Advanced/Other Web Design Elements

Advanced Web Design Considerations
1. Avoid significant HTML/XHTML errors by validating HTML, XML and CSS against an appropriate online/offline validator (e.g., use the validation tool provided by the W3C, a body concerned with worldwide standards for the Web).
2. Whenever possible, use CSS and appropriate semantic tags to facilitate accessibility (e.g., use STRONG and EM tags for bold and italic).
3. Ensure that web applications do not disrupt or disable industry-standard accessibility browser features.

Other Web Design Elements
1. Skip Navigation: For pages with lengthy navigation, put a skip navigation link at the top of the page to enable screen readers to skip directly to the content.
2. Keyboard Accessible: Ensure that students can navigate to all page elements using a keyboard (i.e., keyboard focus is never locked or trapped on a particular element). Ensure that all page functionality is accessible using the keyboard, unless the function
cannot be accomplished another way (e.g. freehand drawing). Ensure that any page-specific shortcut keys do not conflict with existing browser and screen reader shortcuts.

3. **Plug-ins & Applets:** When a web page requires a plug-in or other application on the user’s computer to interpret page content, provide a link to the needed plug-in.

4. **Image maps/rollovers:** Use client-side image maps to coordinate embedded links within an image. Ensure the ALT text includes the most relevant information. For rollovers showing complex concepts, provide a link to a text description.

5. **On Focus/On Input:** When a web page element receives focus (to react to keyboard input) or a user inputs information/interacts with a control, ensure that it does not result in unpredictable changes that could confuse or disorient the user (e.g., substantial changes to the page, spawns pop-up windows, changes keyboard focus, etc.)

6. **Frames & iFrames:** Clearly title each frame and file name and use the TITLE attribute to facilitate navigation and frame identification.

7. **Forms:** Clearly associate form labels with each element by placing them to the left of the element. Use LABEL and FIELDSET tags to facilitate accessibility (e.g., provide information about required format/value/length with the label or title attribute). Provide clear identification of form validation errors, with quick access to problematic element so users can easily fix the error and resubmit the form.

8. **Multiple languages:** When a different language is used, specify the language of the page content using LANG tag and use appropriate HTML entities for special characters and punctuation.

9. **CSS style sheets:** Ensure CSS formatting produces an accessible page and that the page is still functional, readable, and understandable if CSS is disabled.

10. **Flashing Content:** Ensure no page content flashes more than 3 times per second.

11. **Automatic Date Stamping:** Consider one of several non-JavaScript options available in which a date is inserted by a server or Web editor.

12. **Dropdown or floating menus:** Ensure a text-based menu is included. Floating menus are difficult to use with screen readers and for users with mobility impairments or some types of cognitive impairments.

13. **Redirects or timed actions (e.g., clicking ok to continue being logged in):** Provide adequate response time for users of screen readers or users with mobility impairments. In some cases, a redirect should be replaced with a static page containing a link.

14. **Popup windows:** Ensure a link to the content is available even if JavaScript is disabled. Windows should permit scrolling and resizing for low vision users.

15. **Dynamic pages:** Ensure all HTML: chunks include accessibility tags and that all ALT tags or frame TITLE tags are meaningful and not numeric database entries.

16. **Scripts:** Ensure that navigation using JavaScript has a NOSCRIPt alternative, and/or that the information provided by the script can be identified with functional text which can be read by assistive technology.

**Interactive elements:** Provide sufficient labels, cues, and instructions for required interactive elements (e.g., instructions, examples, properly positioned form labels, etc.)
Appendix F: Draft of eCampus Center Expanded Edition of Quality Matters Standard 8

Suggestions for Meeting Quality Matters™ Standard 8

The purpose of this document is to provide faculty with a practical list of ways to increase the accessibility of their online course and to help address Quality Matters™ General Standard 8: The course demonstrates a commitment to accessibility for all students.

Please note this accessibility standard incorporates the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and is consistent with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

Standard 8.1 - The course employs accessible technologies and provides guidance on how to obtain accommodation. (Essential)

- Include the Disability Resource Center (DRC) statement in the course syllabus. (Note: Please inform students they can also email the DRC at drcinfo@boisestate.edu and to indicate they are online students when contacting the DRC.)
- Include a statement and/or link in the syllabus and/or course about the accessibility of the Learning Management System. For example:
  - According to Blackboard’s Commitment to Accessibility webpage, the company is committed to ensuring that the Learn platform is both usable and accessible by everyone, regardless of age, ability, or situation. Blackboard measures and evaluates accessibility using two sets of standards:
    - the WCAG 2.0 standards issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and
    - Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act issued in the United States federal government.
  - For the Blackboard Learn 9.1 SP11 conformance statement for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, Level AA, see Learn Accessibility Conformance Statement.

Standard 8.2 - The course contains equivalent alternatives to audio and visual content. (Very Important)

Most courses are a work in progress in meeting Standard 8.2. eCampus Center encourages reviewers to look for places where the course does some of the following suggestions well, not just the weak points.

- Use ALT tags to provide a clear text alternative for all images, including image buttons and image maps/hot spots.
- Provide a transcript for all audio content. Provide a text-based alternative for animations.
• Whenever possible, provide synchronized captions for (non-live) videos. (NOTE: YouTube can create automatic captioning for uploaded videos. Its accuracy is limited, but the captions can be edited.)

• Use captions or chat/instant messaging for live broadcasts or web conferences if a participant is hearing impaired. (When storing recordings of live sessions for future use, include synchronized captions with the video.)

• Provide a mechanism to stop/pause/mute/adjust volume for any audio/video content that automatically plays on a page for more than 3 seconds. (NOTE: These types of controls are already built into the YouTube and Kaltura video players.)

Standard 8.3 - The course design facilitates readability and minimizes distractions. (Very Important)

• Use a limited number of font styles (1-3) that are easy to read on a computer screen (e.g., Arial, Verdana, etc.). Use appropriate fonts and spacing to avoid readability issues (e.g., over-crowded lines/words).

• Use heading levels/styles (as opposed to bold text for headings) to create a consistent structure/hierarchy of sections.

• Use text formatting, color-coding, and/or graphics/animations purposefully, not just to add “interest” (e.g., use bullets/numbered lists to convey key points or group like items, reserve underlining for hyperlinks only, minimize use of italics, etc.).

• Use color judiciously to ensure sufficient contrast between the text and background. Supplement color-coding with formatting elements such as bold and italic (i.e., do not rely on color-coding alone to convey meaning).

• Avoid the use of blinking text and/or any content that flashes more than 3 times per second.

Standard 8.4 - The course design accommodates the use of assistive technologies. (Very Important)

• Ensure content and navigation is logical and intuitive. Use “skip navigation” links at the top of the page so that screen readers can skip over repetitive navigation elements. (NOTE: The Blackboard learning management system automatically provides skip navigation.)

• Use meaningful phrases that are descriptive and easy to understand for headings/titles, file names, and embedded hyperlinks. Include ALT tags with all hyperlinks.

• Ensure all files used in the course are accessible (e.g., accessible PDF files, word processing documents, presentations, etc.).

• Use column headings/header tags in tables for tabular data to ensure information is properly organized. Limit the use of tables for layout purposes.

• Provide sufficient labels, cues, and instructions for all forms and/or interactive elements.
Appendix G: Draft of Vetting Process for Third-Party Online Tools & Resources

Purpose
In accordance with Boise State Policy 1060, the Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy, Boise State is “committed to maintaining a working and learning environment that is free of unlawful discrimination and harassment and in which every employee, student, contractor, vendor, customer, and visitor is treated with dignity and respect,” which includes providing accessible online courses for our students. When working with faculty who are designing and developing online courses, eCampus Center instructional design consultants need to help faculty assess the accessibility of all materials, instructor-created or third party.

The following vetting process is meant to assist the instructional design consultant and the faculty member in instances when the faculty member would like to use online tools and/or resources created by third parties (e.g., textbook publishers, etc.). The process also enables collaboration between the eCampus Center, IDEA Shop, LTS and the Disability Resource Center (DRC) while supporting the faculty member in vetting the level of accessibility of those third-party tools/resources, and/or in finding equivalent, accessible alternatives for those tools/resources.

Approach
Instructional design consultants will help raise faculty members’ awareness of accessibility issues during the online course design and development process. If during the design and development process it is discovered that a faculty member wants to use a third-party online resource or tool, the instructional design consultant needs to ask the faculty member whether s/he knows about the resource/tool’s level of accessibility and to determine whether the resource/tool will be used in the course as:

- One of multiple options to support student learning, or
- An integral part of the course and/or student learning.

If the latter is true, the instructional design consultant will assist the faculty member in investigating the level of accessibility of the resource/tool using the process outlined below. In addition, the instructional design consultant will also help find and encourage the faculty member to consider using other accessible tools/resources as equivalent options. The instructional design consultant can also enlist the assistance of the DRC, library, and other departments across campus.

Vetting Process
1. Identify the following information:
a. What type of technology is it?
b. Who is the vendor of the resource/tool?
c. How will the technology be used in the course? Is it required or optional?

2. Ask the faculty member if s/he is comfortable with contacting the vendor to inquire about the level of accessibility of the product (request the vendor to provide a VPAT, a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template).
   a. If so, provide faculty member with a list of accessibility questions (see below) to ask the vendor, and ask the faculty member to include the instructional designer on the email.
   b. If not, the instructional design consultant will contact the vendor for the faculty member using the same list of questions as above.

3. Forward the information to the DRC for follow-up. The DRC will also help evaluate the accessibility level of the product.

4. If the product is not accessible, the DRC will collaboratively work with the instructional design consultant and the faculty member to provide expertise and recommendations for making the product accessible and/or identifying other equivalent options.

Third-Party Accessibility Questions
The purpose of this form is to give instructors and departments a list of accessibility questions to see if an online tool/resource is accessible. To fully complete this form, you may need to contact the publisher/vendor first.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your Email:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Phone Number:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Number &amp; Name:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of the Tool/Resource:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web address of the Tool/Resource:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of how the tool/resource will be used in the course. Please also indicate if the tool will be used by students as a primary resource for learning, or as one of several tool options for students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendor/Publisher Name/Contact Name:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendor/Publisher Email:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Vendor/Publisher Phone:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Does the publisher/vendor have an Accessibility Statement that indicates whether or not it meets ADA and 508 standards?  
(Request from the vendor a [VPAT](http://example.com), a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template.) |     |    |
| Has the product been tested for usability by persons with disabilities?   |     |    |
| Is the tool/resource accessible to the blind who use screen-reading technology such as JAWS, WindoEyes or NVDA? |     |    |
| Can a demo be provided to show how the product works with a screen reader?|     |    |
| If videos are included, are they captioned?                               |     |    |
| Can a user highlight a sentence within the tool/resource, copy it, and then paste the sentence into a separate document? |     |    |
| Does the vendor/publisher have a department that will work with Boise State’s Disability Resource Center? |     |    |
| What is the turn-around time for the vendor to respond to accessibility questions/needs? |     |    |
| What process does the company use to rectify/address accessibility issues? |     |    |
| What progress, if any, has been made in the last year to improve the level of accessibility of the product? |     |    |

Sample of a similar online form from Truckee Meadows Community College.

**Implementation Timeline:**

- **Fall 2013:**
  - Draft a document for the vetting process
  - Pilot with 1-2 faculty members
- **Spring 2014:**
  - Continue pilot
  - Share draft with other departments (OIT, IDEA Shop, Library, etc.) to review and revise the vetting process
Consider how to make it a more formalized procedure to be used outside of the eCampus Center (e.g., expand to include technology used in the classroom, Boise State website, software used at the university, etc.)

- Next Steps:
  - Review the Office of Civil Rights’ ‘Dear Colleague’ Letter FAQs to see what needs to be included (Question 10)
  - Review Kansas State University’s 29 questions to revise/add to Third Party Accessibility Questions.
  - Create a centralized repository of VPATs evaluated by DRC (across eC2, AT, library, OIT/purchasing, etc.)
    - Develop long-term plan for evaluating VPATs
  - Start applying vetting process with new online courses with new tools and already purchased tools:
    - Gather info about volume and resource needs
    - Establish and conduct accessibility audit
    - (self-audit? third party audit? repeated process?)
    - Expand process to include software procurement (Purchasing), previously developed online courses & hybrid courses
    - Expand process to be applicable to broader technologies used across campus (WordPress, etc.)
Appendix H: Draft of Online Accessibility & Accommodation Responsibilities Matrix

The following matrix outlines the responsibilities of various stakeholders related to ensuring the accessibility of online courses and content during the course development process/prior to the course start, and while the course is being taught. These responsibilities may also be adopted for use with on-campus and hybrid courses, although additional items may need to be added.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>During course development/ Prior to course start:</th>
<th>During the course:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Student Responsibilities** | ● Self identify as a student with a disability who is requesting classroom accommodations by completing the [Disability Resource Center (DRC) Getting Started](#) tasks:  
   ● Submit Request for Services form & attend Intake meeting  
   ● Once accommodations have been approved, log in to the [Access Portal](#) to request accommodations needed for particular class(es)  
   ● An electronic Letter of Accommodation will be sent to appropriate professors and student’s Boise State e-mail addresses  
   ● Meet with professors to review Letters of Accommodation. | ● Contact the DRC immediately with any questions or concerns about accommodations or delivery of the accommodations established for the course.  
   ● Notify the DRC if you no longer need accommodations for the course or you have dropped the course. |
| **Academic Department/ Program Responsibilities** | ● As new third-party resources are licensed/purchased, department/program will adopt contractual accessibility language with vendors who provide these online resources. Coordinate with established purchasing processes.  
   ● Ensure that all application | |
and LMS software used by students across the curriculum conforms to latest accessibility standards
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Responsibilities</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure online course/content conforms to latest accessibility standards</td>
<td>• If any students request accommodations, make sure the students have worked with DRC staff to identify appropriate accommodations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• QM Standard 8 list (including closed captions for all videos, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Guidelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaborate with eCampus Center, AT and DRC to vet the accessibility of third-party tools and resources prior to inclusion in the course design</td>
<td>• If students have questions about accommodations or request adjustments to an existing accommodation, refer them to the DRC first before making the accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vetting Process for Third-Party Tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Include instructions in the syllabus and the Getting Started module on how students with disabilities should contact the DRC to identify and initiate appropriate accommodations:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Boise State Teaching Online Guidelines:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure the course syllabus includes statements related to the Boise State’s disability syllabus statement (please also include the DRC email address at <a href="mailto:drcinfo@boisestate.edu">drcinfo@boisestate.edu</a> and tell students to let the DRC know they are taking a course online)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure disability accommodation information is distributed via syllabus, welcome email and/or posted in the course. Include a statement and/or link in syllabus and/or course about the accessibility of the LMS (e.g., Blackboard’s Commitment to Accessibility)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Make adjustments to the course learning activities and the assessment settings according to the Letter of Accommodation from the DRC to ensure students receive appropriate accommodations (e.g., allow students more time to complete assignments or assessments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Notify the DRC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Coordinate with DRC and Library to develop a plan to ensure previously purchased media is accessible.
• Look to purchase captioned-versions of audiovisual media whenever possible.
• Look to purchase only transcribed audio and audio-described versions of audiovisual media whenever possible.
• Update any inaccessible audio or video to include transcriptions/captions that will be used during the course prior to student use, whether optional or required.

immediately if the student makes any complaints about the accommodations
• Caption faculty-created videos immediately if received a Letter of Accommodation from the DRC stating that student needs captioned materials to have equal access to the course. If no accommodation letter received and video will be used more than one term, schedule captioning to ensure that the video will be accessible before it is used in future semesters.
| Disability Resource Center (DRC) Responsibilities | Support Unit Responsibilities:  
- eCampus Center  
- IDEA Shop  
- OIT  
- Library | Other captioning needs:  
- For captioning support for media created by faculty for use beyond one semester, see the Captioning Decision Tree flowchart |
|---|---|---|
| ● DRC Educational Access Coordinators work with students to determine appropriate classroom accommodations.  
● When students request accommodations in a class, the DRC notifies faculty of the necessary accommodations via an electronic Letter of Accommodation sent to the faculty's Boise State e-mail.  
● Collaborate with faculty, eCampus Center and AT to vet the accessibility of third-party tools and resources prior to inclusion in the course design  
  ○ Vetting Process for Third-Party Tools | ● As new third-party resources are licensed/purchased, support units will adopt contractual accessibility language with vendors who provide these online resources.  
IDEA Shop/eCampus Center:  
- Provide faculty with training and how-to resources related to creating accessible course content that conforms to latest accessibility standards  
- Work with faculty to ensure online course/content conforms to latest accessibility standards  
- Collaborate with faculty and DRC to vet the accessibility of third-party tools and resources prior to inclusion in the course design |
- **Vetting Process for Third-Party Tools**
  - Work with the DRC to identify ways to improve accessibility for all online courses/content
  - Work with the DRC to identify technologies and instructional strategies that will effectively support online students with disabilities
  - During the design and development phases of the course, conduct Quality Matters Progress Checks to ensure the course design meets all “essential” Quality Matters Standards related to accessibility

**Library:**
- Distance librarian Megan Davis notifies students of her availability to assist with retrieving library resource.
- The library will provide and recommend library owned and maintained online resources and materials (database articles, media, etc.) that are accessible to online students.
  - Assist faculty with finding suitable, alternative media products that are captioned and accessible.
  - Assist faculty with identifying materials that are accessible prior to purchase.
  - If no accessible media is available for purchase, library staff
will work with faculty to consider alternative media, and if no alternative is accessible, document the exception.

- If a student is enrolled in the class and the exception is required material the library staff will refer the student to the Disability Resource Center to make the material accessible whenever possible.

- Library web sites, databases, and other resources will be functionally usable with currently employed assistive technology.

- As new resources are licensed and/or purchased the library will adopt contractual accessibility language with vendors who provide the library with these online resources.

- The library will maintain a database of transcribed audio and captioned video resources that are available for faculty, staff, and student use.

- The library will maintain a record of all permissions for transcribing, captioning and digitization of copyrighted library resources.

**Other:**

- Conduct accessibility audits for online courses upon request (need to define what
| an audit is, identify who performs audit, perhaps a separate department/group of experts across campus)  
| • Provide captioning/transcript support for faculty created videos  
| • Purchasing should integrate into the procurement process |
Accessibility Exceptions Request

Introduction

According to Temple University Policy #04.71.13 "Temple University is committed to ensuring that the information and technology that it creates or provides in conducting its activities is accessible in accordance with applicable law. All members of the university community with responsibility for creating, managing or disseminating information and technology are responsible for ensuring that such information and technology are compliant with this policy and the related standards and guidelines." The policy also has provisions which allow the Accessible Technology Compliance Committee to grant exceptions to the policy, on a case by case basis, under circumstances including, but not limited to, undue hardship or if a reasonable accommodation can provide appropriate access.

To request an exception, please follow the instructions below. The Accessible Technology Compliance Committee will evaluate all exception requests. You may be contacted to provide further information, or clarification regarding the request. If you require assistance in completing this form, please contact accessibility@temple.edu, your school/college Accessibility Liaison, or Paul Paire at 215-204-7291.

Instructions

Complete this form as fully as possible. You may attach additional documentation and information if desired or applicable. Once completed, you may email the form as an attachment to your school/colleges Accessibility Liaison; Administrative departments without an Accessibility Liaison should submit the form directly to accessibility@temple.edu or create a THelp request and attach this form to the request.

Types of exceptions based on section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended

Exceptions may be granted based on the following basis:

- **Commercial Non-availability**
  Section 508 makes allowances if an alternate accessible product does not exist which meets the business's requirements. In this incident, the most accessible product which does meet the business's requirements must be purchased.

- **Fundamental Alteration**
  If making a product accessible would fundamentally alter the nature of the product or its components, it does not need to be made accessible.

- **Restricted Access to the technology product/resource**
  Products installed in locations with restricted access such as data centers, and which aren't interacted with except during maintenance, are not required to be accessible. The software which runs on the products (for example web based software) would still need to be accessible, or have their own exemption request form submitted.

- **Undue Burden**
  If making the information or technology accessible would cause an undue burden (significant difficulty or expense) to the university as a whole, then an exemption may be granted on a case by case basis by the Accessible Technology Compliance Committee.

Notes

The completion and submission of this form does not guarantee that the exception will be granted.
# Accessibility Exceptions Request

## Requestor Information
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requestor’s Name</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit Date</td>
<td>Response requested by date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Product or Resource Information
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Product or Resource</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please provide a description of the product or resource.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Please indicate the type of user(s) for product or resource. Please check the approximate number of each type of user(s):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students 1-99</td>
<td>☐ Students 1-99 ☐ 100-999 ☐ 1000-9999 ☐ 10,000+ ☐ All students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you know the exact number of students who will use the product or resource please indicate here:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees 1-10</td>
<td>☐ Employees 1-10 ☐ 11-99 ☐ 100-499 ☐ 500-999 ☐ 1000+ ☐ All employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you know the exact number of employees who will use the product or resource, please indicate here:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the public</td>
<td>☐ Members of the public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Please provide the anticipated cost of the product or resource to be incurred this year:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please provide the anticipated cost of the product or resource to be incurred in subsequent years:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility Roadmap</th>
<th>Does the vendor have an official roadmap for incorporating accessibility into their product or resource?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, what’s their timeline for accessibility compliance?</td>
<td>☐ &lt;1 year ☐ 1-2 years ☐ 2 – 3 years ☐ 3 – 4 years ☐ 4+ years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usage</th>
<th>Please describe how the end-users will use the product or resource and if it used as part of a learning process, include how.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In use?</th>
<th>Is this product or resource currently in use at the University?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown or N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>What category of information or technology is appropriate for the product or resource? (check all that apply)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Web based system or content ☐ Video or multimedia content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Hardware (including telecommunication equipment) ☐ Software or Operating System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Kiosk or other self-contained, closed products ☐ Desktop or portable computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accessibility Exceptions Request

Required? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please indicate if the product or resource is required for coursework or job function:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exception Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Commercial Unavailability (an accessible alternative does not exist commercially)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Fundamental Alteration of nature of product or components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Restricted Access (i.e. it is stored in a data center)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Undue Burden (making the product accessible would cause significant difficulty or expense to the university, based on resources available to entire university)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explain how or why the product or resource meets the exception indicated

Note: if "commercial unavailability" was chosen as the exception, please list the vendors researched and why they are not an acceptable alternative.

Reasonable Accommodations

Describe reasonable accommodations which could be made to provide equal and equitable access to either the product or resource, or to an equivalent alternative. Consider users with various disabilities that could not use the product or resource (such as blind/low vision, deaf/hard of hearing, people who can use a computer only via keyboard interface, people who need to use a computer via speech to text software, people who cannot or have difficulty speaking, people who are color blind, people with cognitive issues, etc.) What types of reasonable accommodations could be made for these individuals? (Note: changing the learning objectives of a course is not considered a reasonable accommodation.)

Date received by the Accessible Technology Compliance Committee Date

Date reviewed by the Accessible Technology Compliance Committee Date

Status: ☐ Approved ☐ Denied ☐ Retracted

Notes:
Appendix J: Additional Components to Include in a Comprehensive Accessibility Plan

To expand on the recommendations provided in this white paper, the following components would need to be added to create a comprehensive accessibility plan.

3. Develop a plan for a purposeful approach (possible additions)

- Consider participating in the GOALS project organized by the National Center on Disability and Access to Education. Use the center’s institutional Benchmarking and Planning Tools as a mechanism to track Boise State’s web accessibility initiative.

- Expand the number of working groups to include:
  - Web materials and resources (Recommended for implementing a comprehensive approach across campus)
    - Review the accessibility of various web based forms (admissions, financial aid) and resources (My Boise State, etc.) used by online and campus-based students.
  - Campus computing (Recommended for implementing a comprehensive approach across campus)
    - Review the accessibility of computer labs across campus (including library and departmental labs, testing centers, etc.) to ensure software is currently accessible and assistive technologies are available.

4. Conduct an accessibility audit (possible additions)

- Expand the audit of ancillary EITs to include:
  - University and WordPress webpages
  - Peoplesoft
  - MyBoiseState
Appendix K: Accessibility-Related Resources

Other related laws:

- [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998](#) requires that federal agencies ensure the accessibility of their electronic and information technology, including web-based Intranet and Internet information and applications. Although Section 508 applies specifically to federal agencies, it is considered a best practice to comply with Section 508, at minimum.

The National Center on Disability and Access to Education

- [GOALS Project/Benchmarking](#)
- [Cheat Sheets](#)

Examples of accessibility websites from other universities/organizations

- [Temple University Accessible Technology](#)
- [University of Montana](#)
- [Penn State](#)
- [Michigan State University Web Accessibility](#)
- [Kansas State University K-Access](#)
- [University of Washington DO-IT](#)
- [Association of Research Libraries](#)

Supplemental Resources from [3PlayMedia white paper](#)

Accessibility & the Law

- [Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)](#)
- [Definitions: What is Web Accessibility?](#)
- [Disabled Population Overview and Disability Types](#)
- “From Where I Sit” Stories of Disabled Students
- [International Accessibility Laws and Standards](#)
- Higher Education, the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 508
- [Section 508 Government Website Requirements](#)
- [Section 504: Protecting Students with Disabilities](#)
- Summary of WCAG 2.0 Principles & Guidelines
- [WebAIM: Web Accessibility in Mind](#)

E-learning Policy Aids

- [Container, Content, and Capability: The Three C’s of Accessibility and Distance Education](#)
Creating and Producing Accessible Content Courses
Guidelines for Producing Instructional & Printed Materials in Alternate Media for Persons with Disabilities
Selecting Software for Students with Learning Disabilities
Tutorials for Creating Accessible Documents in Multiple Formats (For Faculty)
University of Washington: IT Accessibility Policies in Higher Education (List)

Procurement Policy Aids
California State University Procurement Policy Documentation
University of Washington Procuring Accessible IT Guidelines

Online Learning Consortium (formerly Sloan Consortium) University Accessibility Webinar Series
Administrative Panel: Understanding the Law & Building Accessible Institutional Infrastructures
Student & Alumni Panel: What Students with Disabilities Want Faculty & Administrators to Know
Faculty Panel: What Faculty with Disabilities Want Institutions to Know
Accessibility Specialists: Understanding Invisible Disabilities and What this Means for Online Education

Universal Design Aids
Accessibility Checklist for Web-based Course Material
Creating Video and Multimedia Products That Are Accessible to People with Sensory Impairments
Deafness and the User Experience
Microsoft Accessibility for Developers
Section 508 Accessibility Resources of EIT Professionals
Triage for Accessifying Websites The World Wide Web Consortium
U.S. Department of State, Voluntary Product Accessibility Template
WCAG 2.0 Accessibility Checklist

Partnerships
Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)
American Federation for the Blind: Accessibility Partnerships
American Library Association HP Library Technology Access Initiative
California Department of Social Services: Deaf Access Program (DAP)
Equal Access to Software & Information (EASI)
National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM)

University Accessibility Resources
Section 508 Academic Inclusion Plans [Complete Educational Institution List]
California Community Colleges High Tech Training Center Unit
California State University Accessible Technology Initiative
From **Northwest Nazarene University paper**

**References and Tutorials for Creating Accessible Materials from Microsoft:**

- Quick References
  - Make Word Documents Accessible
  - Make PowerPoint Presentations Accessible
  - Make Excel Spreadsheets Accessible
  - Make PDFs Accessible
  - Use the MS Office Accessibility Checker

- Video Tutorials
  - Make Word Documents Accessible - Total less than 12 minutes
  - Find and Fix Accessibility Issues in Word - 3:15 minutes
  - Find Accessibility Issues in PowerPoint - 1:02 minutes
  - Find and Fix Accessibility Issues in Excel - 2:42 minutes

**Tutorials for Creating Accessible Materials** *(Michigan State University)*

- Creating Accessible Course Pages in ANGEL
- Creating Accessible PDFs
- Creating Accessible PowerPoints
- Creating Accessible Videos
- Creating Accessible Word Documents
- Creating Accessible Course Pages Using Multimedia Tools (e.g., Flash)

**Penn State University**

- Accessibility Resources

**University of Washington (DO-IT website)**

- Resources
- Illustrative Examples of Accessibility

**Kansas State University K-Access website**: Resources for Creating and Acquiring Technology

Among the questions to ask when creating and/or acquiring technology are:
● What educational opportunities and benefits does the school provide through the use of the technology?
● How will the technology provide these opportunities and benefits?
● Does the technology exist in a format that is accessible to individuals with disabilities?
● If the technology is not accessible, can it be modified, or is there a different technological device available, so that students with disabilities can obtain the educational opportunities and benefits in a timely, equally effective, and equally integrated manner?
● Did you speak with your vendor about the accessibility of their product? (29 Questions for Software Vendors.)