Why is Accessibility important to your training?

Accessibility & Training

Web accessibility is a hot topic in education today as all learners must have content that is accessible to them, no matter their disability, learning deficiency, or device.

Reasonable Accomodations

World Wide Web

What is a disability?

Where do I begin?

Accessibility is not just about a disability

Quick Tips

Accessibility & User Experience

Assistive Technology

What is web accessibility?

How do we check?

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Web accessibility is a hot topic in education today as all learners must have content that is accessible to them, no matter their disability, learning deficiency, or device.

What is a disability?

- Simply put, A limitation (Riesmeyer, 2013)
- As noted by the US Department of Labor (2013), a disability "is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of a person's major life activities. A disability need not be obvious; such conditions as learning disabilities, psychological illnesses, asthma, or infection with HIV may qualify as disabilities under the law."

Categories of disabilities

Major categories of disabilities include:
- Motor (Inability to use a mouse, slow response time, or limited fine motor control)
- Cognitive (Learning disabilities, distractibility, inability to remember or focus on large amounts of information)
- Visual (Blindness, low vision, or color-blindness)
- Auditory (Deafness or hearing difficulties)

Reasonable Accomodations

Often, as trainers we are required to provide reasonable accommodations for an individual with a disability.

It could include extended test times, transcripts for video lectures, or outlines of specific content.

An accommodation is classified as an adjustment or auxiliary aid that has no hardship on the operating entity or requires a complete alteration of the services provided.

Accessibility is not just about a disability
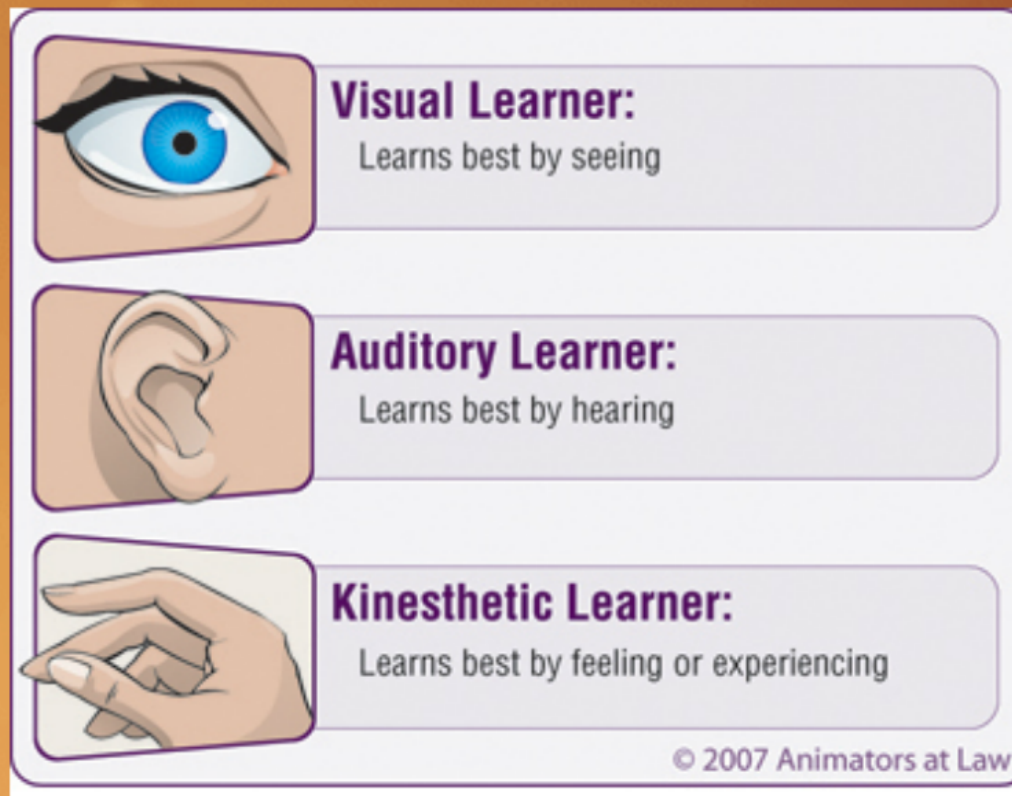
- Accessibility is not just relating to a disability; it reaches out to different abilities, devices, and situations.
- Accessibility relates to different… (Riesmeyer, 2013)
  - Abilities
  - Devices
  - Situations

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Abilities

Different abilities include how well we read, how fast we take in knowledge, and whether we are visual or auditory learners.

Visual Learner:
Learns best by seeing

Auditory Learner:
Learns best by hearing

Kinesthetic Learner:
Learns best by feeling or experiencing

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Devices

Different devices include desktop and laptop computers, mobile phones, tablets and iPads, mice and trackballs, keyboards, and screen readers.

Situations

Different situations can vary. For instance, studying in a quiet library or café may not be a good time to listen to a video lecture or podcast. This is where closed captioning or a transcript can make a huge difference.

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World Wide Web

- With the topic of web accessibility in mind, let's first talk about the World Wide Web.
- How is it used? We all tend to have different priorities and reasons for using the web such as news, e-mail, shopping, entertainment, education, and communication.
- The internet, while convenient, is vastly different to a user with disabilities. Think about it, the world is available to us with a computer screen and a mouse.
- Of course, this isn't the case for someone who cannot use a mouse, read a screen, or hear media over speakers or a headset.

What is web accessibility?

Web Accessibility refers to the regulations regarding accessible content on the World Wide Web.

Though the regulations were formed for individuals with disabilities, these guidelines can be used in a universal fashion to make content accessible to all and to ensure that websites are usable by all individuals whether a disability is present or not.

Tim Berners-Lee; director of the World Wide Web Consortium states: "The power of the web is in its universality. Access by everyone regardless of disability is an essential aspect."

Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology has primarily been used by individuals with disabilities, which includes examples such as:

- Alternative input devices
- High contrast features available on computers and mobile devices
- On-screen keyboards
- Screen readers such as JAWS and Orca
- Text enlargers
- Transcriptions
- Voice recognition software such as Dragon Naturally Speaking

Screen Reader Example
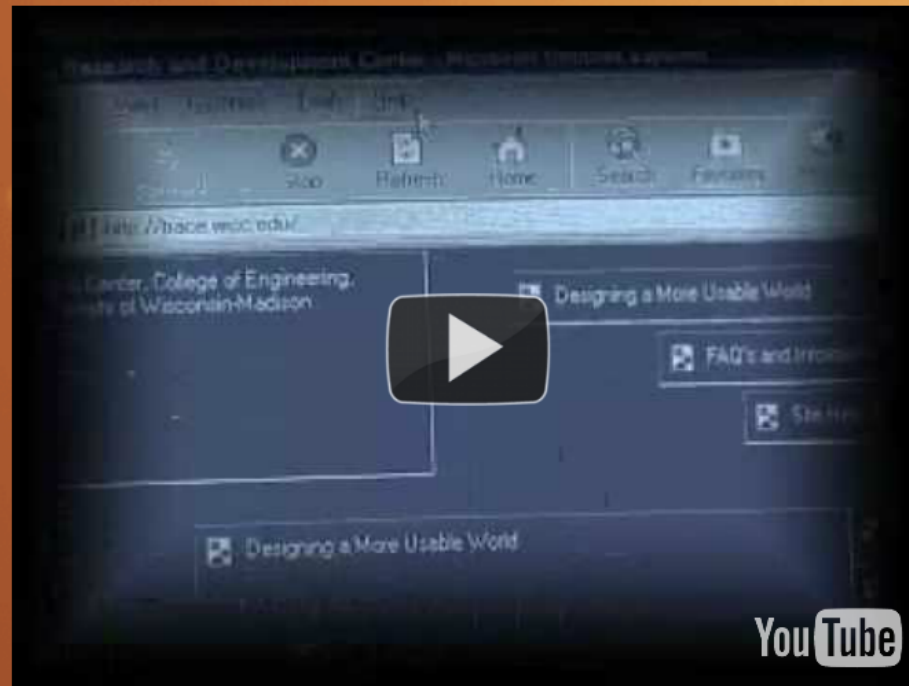
Where do I begin?

1. Review the literature
    - Regulations
        - Section 508
        - WCAG (2.0)
2. Recommendations
    - Reviews & Tips on Web Accessibility
3. Build it!
    - Website/Document
4. Test your product
    - Accessibility Checkers
5. Revise & Distribute

Section 508

- Non-text elements
- Multimedia
- Color
- Styles
- Image Maps (outdated)
- Data Tables
- Frames
- Flicker
- NoScript (outdated)
- Links to plugins
- Skip Navigation
- Redirects

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0

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

Quick Tips

- Use relative font sizes on web pages/documents
  - Headings: H1, H2, H3, H4
  - Paragraph
    - Try to avoid Bold text for headers, use the H settings instead
- Web Links
  - Links are always underlined.
  - Do not underline normal text unless it is a link.
  - Use meaningful names
    - "Click Here" isn't a meaningful link
- Alternative Text (ALT Text)
  - Required for all graphics and objects
  - Be descriptive, yet concise
    - Unacceptable ALT: A cute dog
    - Acceptable ALT: A small, ten-pound dog with brown, white, and black markings and is of the Pomeranian and Papillon breeds
- Documents
  - Utilize the styles bar and ribbon in Microsoft Word
  - Paragraph spacing
    - Refrain from hitting "enter" for spaces

How do we check?

- WAVE (WebAIM): http://wave.webaim.org/
  - Things to look for:
    - Errors
    - Alerts (Case-by-case)
    - Color Contrast
- Document Accessibility Checker
  - Look for:
    - Heading text
    - Alt tags
    - Reading Order

Accessibility & User Experience

Remember, a disability has been defined as "a limitation." This can be a limitation from a major life activity.

Accessibility is the tools available for users with disabilities to perform major life activities without limitation.

With the emergence of technology, we have found accessibility has needed to adopt regulations to govern accessibility with the world wide web and ever-changing technology.

Assistive technology is available for users to navigate the web and use technology efficiently. In fact, the telephone, typewriter, touchscreens, and scanners are actually devices that began as assistive technology.

In order for a user to use technology, we have to make our products accessible to them. We know our products are accessible by using the tools and resources available, such as accessibility checkers.

Behind those eyes...

Behind our own eyes, can be a disability, and sometimes it is not blatant.

As an individual with a disability, I have Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, which was a bit troublesome for me prior to college.

Closed captioning has helped me greatly as I have an auditory processing delay and a slight hearing loss. If you combine my learning styles of visual and hands-on, it can be a bit messy when a lecture is strictly audio.

Dragon Naturally Speaking 12 helps with research and graduate coursework for I have carpal tunnel syndrome.

So, even though I may not always require accommodations and my disability does not completely inhibit me from performing daily tasks; it doesn't mean we should ignore it.

It's always best to keep accessibility in mind. You never know who may come into your classroom that has special needs or may be the face in front of a disability.

Accessibility & You

As trainers, we need to ask ourselves: Where we our society be without the use of assistive technology or accessibility? Where would my learners be? Where would I be?

As noted earlier, while accessibility was originally designed for users with serious disabilities; we all can benefit from the regulations, assistance, and technology available regarding accessibility.

We have found through this presentation that accessibility has tips, tricks, and a wide variety of tools available to help us create, test, and deploy our products.

By adopting accessibility into our teaching or training practices, we will be reaching all of our learners needs.

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