Designing an Accessible Online Course

Melanie Thornton
Coordinator of Access and Equity Outreach

Housekeeping

- Recording
- Captioning
- Participants muted by default
- Questions
  - Chat
  - Questions Queue
- Handout: exploreaccess.org/handouts/

Disability Employment Awareness Month

The University of Arkansas
Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance
and
Partners for Inclusive Communities
celebrate the **30th Anniversary** of
Disability Employment Awareness Month
with a series of informative webinars:

Ten Tips for Everyday Digital Access October 7th
Disability Harassment in the Workplace October 13th
Designing an Accessible Online Course October 21st
Creating a Campus Culture of Access & Inclusion October 27th

For more information and to **register,** visit oeoctraining.uark.edu.

Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance
oeoc@uark.edu 479.575.4019

This year marks not only the 75th observance of NDEAM, but also the 30th anniversary of the ADA. Both milestones are being commemorated with a range of events and activities centered on the theme "Increasing Access and Opportunity."

The Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance has partnered with Partners for Inclusive Communities to provide training opportunity for this month

Please register for additional Disability Awareness Month Webinars at oeoctraining.uark.edu

Accessibility and Accommodations

If there are any questions about accessibility or accommodations for the campus community, please contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance (OEOC)

- oeoc.uark.edu
- titlevii@uark.edu
- (479) 575-6208

Student Accommodation Requests: Center for Educational Access

- cea.uark.edu
- (479) 575-3104

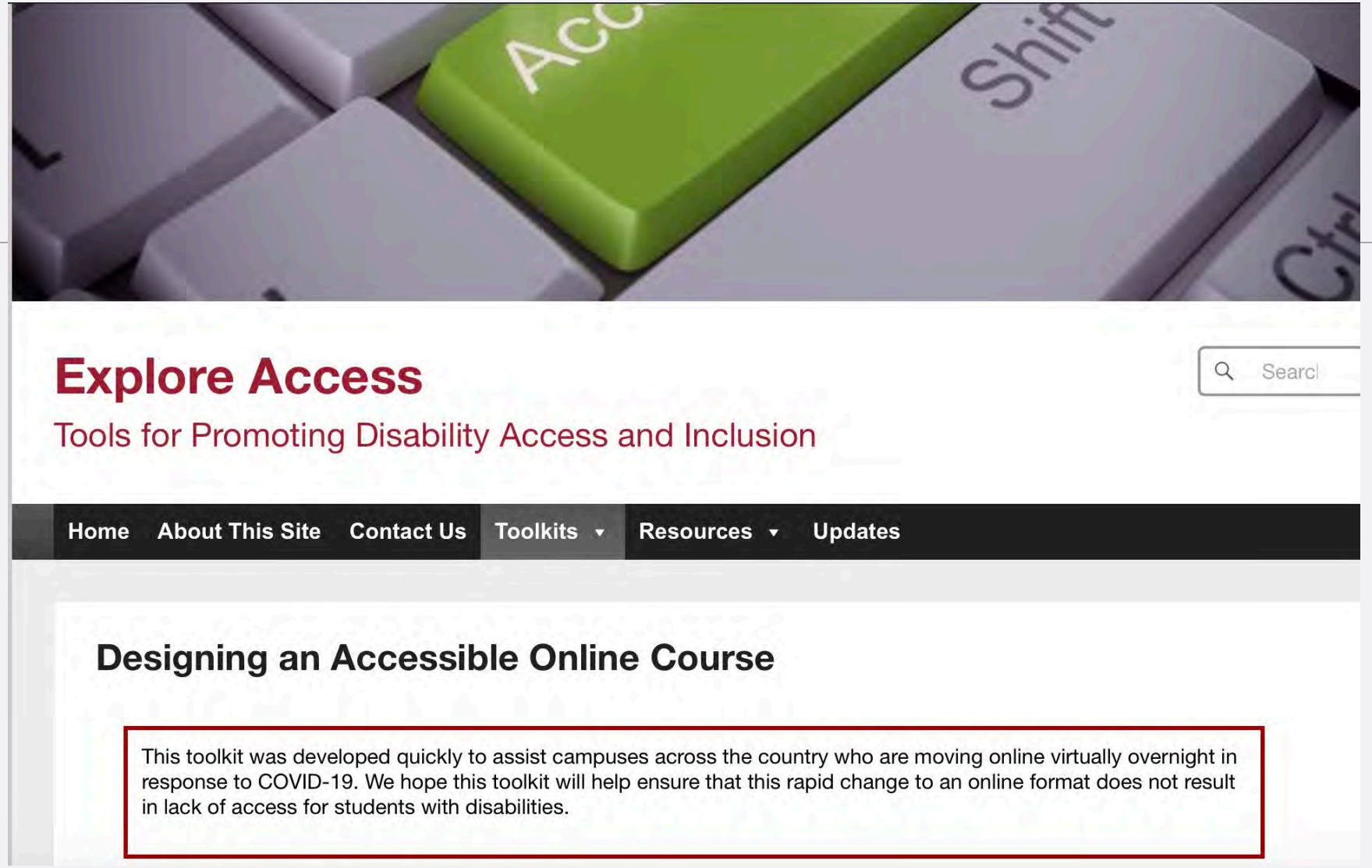
J’onnelle Colbert-Diaz

Associate Director Compliance Officer & ADA Coordinator

- Oversees the processes for reporting and resolving concerns of discrimination and harassment
- Oversees requests for disability and religious accommodations
- Provides training to faculty, staff and students regarding discrimination and harassment

Melanie Chandler
Equal Opportunity Specialist

- Monitors the recruitment process to ensure non-discriminatory practices
- Assist ADA Coordinator with ADA efforts.


Explore Access
Tools for Promoting Disability Access and Inclusion
Search
Home
About This Site
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Toolkits
Resources
Updates
Designing an Accessible Online Course
This toolkit was developed quickly to assist campuses across the country who are moving online virtually overnight in response to COVID-19. We hope this toolkit will help ensure that this rapid change to an online format does not result in lack of access for students with disabilities.

What is Digital Accessibility?

Digital accessibility involves the creation of websites, mobile applications and electronic documents that can be easily navigated and understood by a wide range of users.

Common Barriers to Online Learning

- Inaccessible documents
- Videos without captions
- Videos that are only visual
- Images with no alt text
- Links that are not descriptive
- Headings are not structured properly
- Navigation that requires a mouse

Intuitive, Perceivable, & Navigable

Intuitive: The layout of the course is simple, consistent and predictable.

Perceivable: The content is designed so that it can be perceived by a wide range of users, regardless of disability.

Navigable: Course navigation does not assume that the student is using a specific device, such as a mouse. A user can navigate the course using the keyboard alone or with the use of assistive technology in ways that are equally effective.

Choose an Accessible LMS

Learning Management Systems

At the U of A:

- Blackboard
- Blackboard Ally
  - Blackboard Ally Overview
- Other options

Communicate Your Commitment to Access and Inclusion

U of A Syllabus Statement

The following is an example of a statement that can be used or adapted for your course syllabi:

University of Arkansas Academic Policy Series 1520.10 requires that students with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact me privately to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through the Center for Educational Access (contact 479–575–3104 or visit cea.uark.edu for more information on registration procedures).

Other Syllabus Statement Options

- It is the policy and practice of [university name] to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment—such as time-limited exams or inaccessible documents—please notify me as soon as possible. Students are also welcome to contact the [disability resource office].
- It is the goal of [university name] that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact the [disability resource office] to request accommodations.
- Adapted from: Refocus 2.0: Syllabus Statement

Share Accessible Documents

MS Word Documents

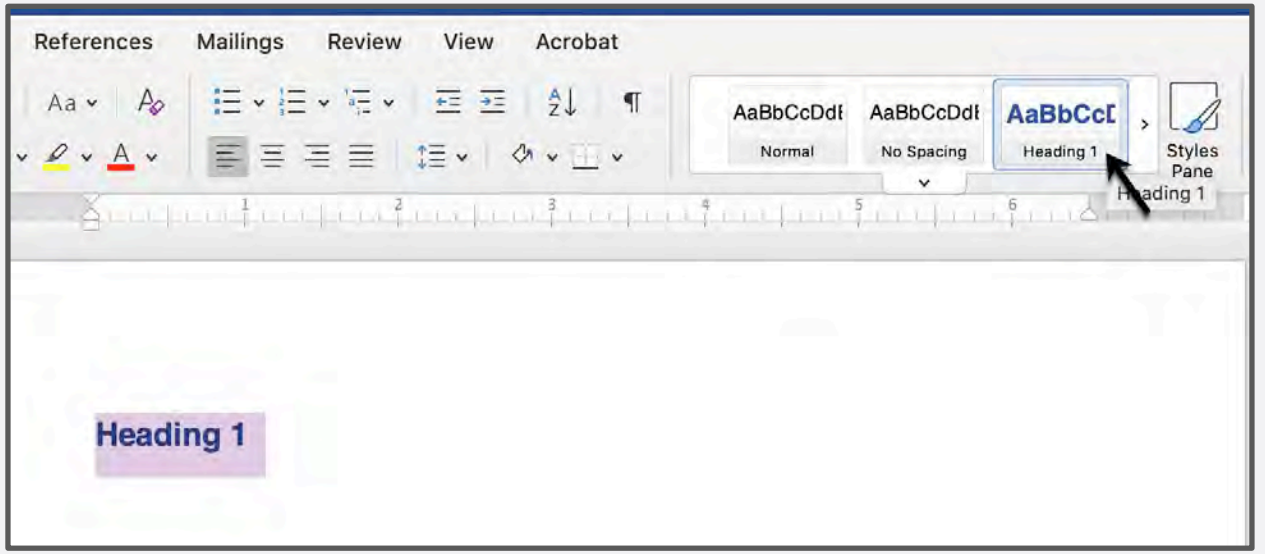
1. Use headings to provide document structure
2. Add alt text to images
3. Create meaningful links
4. Save as PDF (instead of printing to PDF)

Using Headings to Provide Structure

- Headings provide structure to your document.
- Using normal text and applying styles such as larger size, different color, or bolder text does not create a true heading.
- Don’t use headings when you don’t need a true heading.

How to Add Headings

- Highlight the text
- Click on the appropriate heading
- Or use keyboard shortcuts
  - PC: Control+Alt+1
  - Mac: Command+Option+1

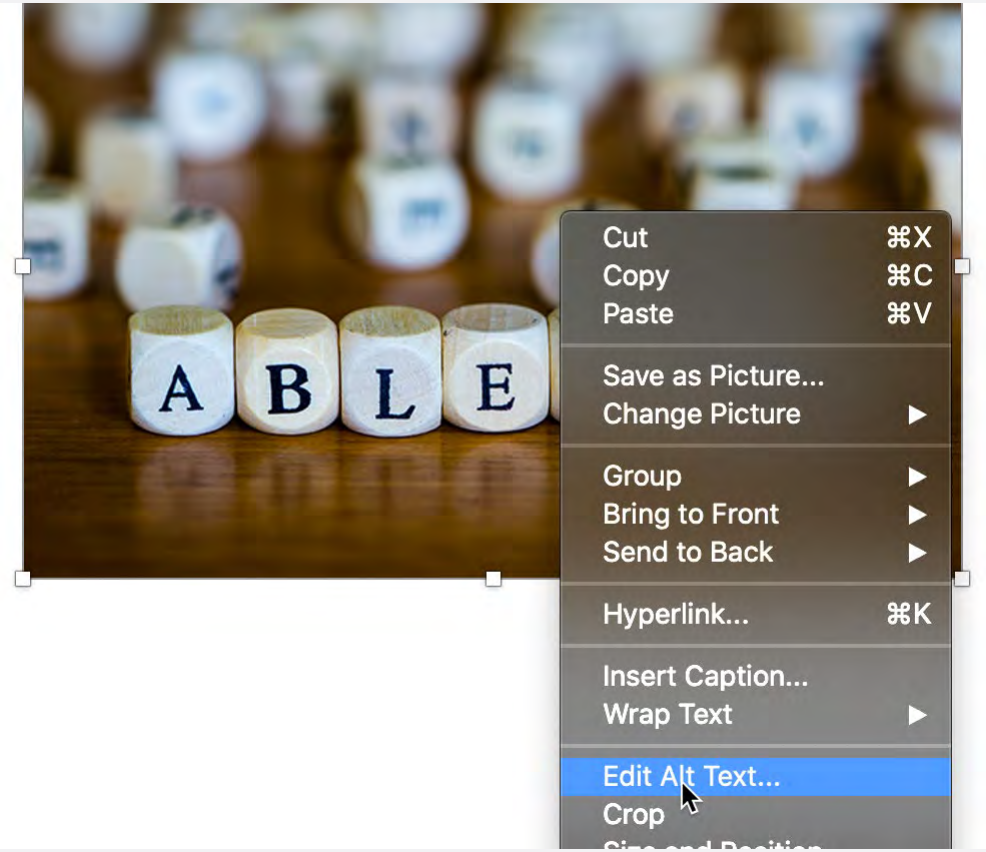


Making Images Accessible with Alt Text

- Without alt text, a screen reader user will not know what an image is.
- The screen reader will just say “graphic”
- Describe what is in the image. No need to say “image of” or “picture of”

How to Add Alt Text

- Right click on the image
- Choose Edit Alt Text
- Write the description in the box that appears to the right of the document.



Creating Meaningful Links

- Instead of: https://exploreaccess.org/post-123141341313413413 4/
- Use this: Latest Post: Creating Meaningful Links
- Instead of this: Click here to learn about accessible documents
- Use this: Learn more about accessible documents.
- Instead of this: Annual Report (PDF, DOC)
- Use this:
  - Annual Report (PDF)
  - Annual Report (DOC)

PowerPoint Presentations

- Provide a unique heading for each slide
- Use good contrast
- Choose slide layouts that fit your content
- Add alt text to images
- Save as PDF (rather than print to PDF)

PDF Documents

- Start with an accessible source document.
- Save the document to PDF by choosing, Save as PDF rather than printing to PDF.
- Simple documents should convert pretty well from MS Word to PDF.
- More complex documents may need to be checked for accessibility and even remediated for accessibility.
- If you have a Professional version of Adobe Acrobat, you can run an accessibility check.

Share Accessible Videos

Accessible Videos

- Video player accessibility
- Captioning
- Descriptions of visual content
- Transcript

Organize Content in Consistent Ways

Sample of Course Layout

Module 1: An Introduction to Universal Design

M1 Video
- What is Universal Design? (YouTube) - AD & CC

M1 Reading Assignments
- A Historical Perspective of Universal Design (PDF)
- Universal Design as a Philosophical Framework (PDF)
- The Principles of Universal Design (PDF)

M1 Activities
- M1 Reaction Paper (DOC)
- M1 Questions to Ponder (Discussion Board)
- M1 Self-Test (DOC)

Module 2: Universal Design in Postsecondary Settings

M2 Video
- Universal Design in Postsecondary Education (YouTube) - CC & AD

M2 Reading Assignments
- Students with Learning Disabilities in Higher Education: A Growing Population
- Models of Universal Design (PDF)

M2 Activities
- M2 Reaction Paper (DOC)
- M2 Questions to Ponder (Discussion Board)
- M2 Self-Test (DOC)

Encourage Good Discussion Board Etiquette

Use Meaningful Subject Lines

Instead of: Readings

Use: Week 2 Readings

Instead of: Question

Use: Question about Service Animals

Provide Accessible Video Conferencing

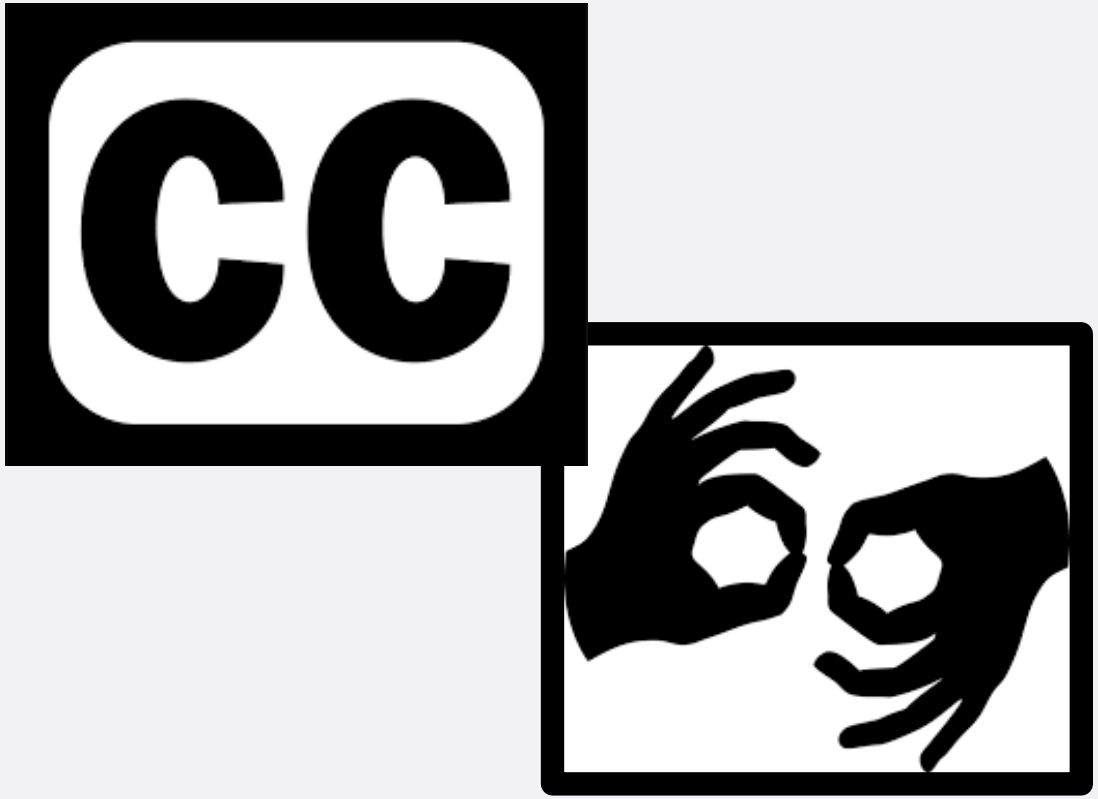
Accessible Video Conferencing

- The Video Conferencing Platform
  - Blackboard Collaborate
  - Zoom
- Communication Access
  - Sound quality
  - Captioning
  - ASL Interpreters
- Shared content
- Recording lectures

Implementing Accommodations

Common Accommodations

- Extended Time on Exams
- Captioning
- ASL Interpreters
- Policy modifications
  - Attendance policy
  - Video on policy



Suggested Resources

Explore Access:

- Designing an Accessible Online Course Toolkit
- Creating Accessible Documents

Suggested Resources: U of A

TIPS for U of A Faculty:

- Accessibility
- Setting up CEA Accommodations for Test and Quizzes

Center for Educational Access:

- CEA Home Page
- Faculty, Accommodations and COVID-19
- Creating Accessible Course Content

Thank you!

- Next week's webinar:
  - Creating a Campus Culture of Access and Inclusion

Contact Me

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Partners for Inclusive Communities

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Follow UA Partners on social media:

- Facebook: @uofapartners
- Twitter: @uofapartners
- LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/uofapartners/