**Accessibility Training Series 1-Meeting Recording**

January 21, 2025, 4:01PM

34m 46s

**Erika Blair** 0:03
We are being recorded now.
Beautiful.
Both screens?
I'm sorry. On both screens, we're recording. The meeting is. So I think just this.
Yeah, should we start?
Yeah, yeah.
You wanna kick us off?
Come on, take over.
OK.
So thanks for joining us.
This is our first accessibility.
Well, the first session in our accessibility training series, we're gonna start today with kind of the importance of accessibility and.
What some kind of bare minimum basics are we have set these up so that we can kind of deliver some content pretty quickly and then we've got some time. We've got the room for the full hour. So if you have specific questions, things you're working on, we can.
Dive into that a little deeper, OK?
So we will go ahead and get started.
OK, we should introduce ourselves.
That's a good idea.
My name is Erika.
I'm the learning designer over in the open Academy.
And I'm Mona Maharjan.
I'm the web developer and I asked.
It encompasses accessibility, so I'm also doing that.
So I am.
So we're built like doing the training so we can help our campus community with this since accessibility has not been bigger part of a discussion at ESF.
So this is our way of starting off and we can get the conversation going and make people realize how important it is, yes.
Well, maybe.
Just click and it'll work.
Yeah. OK. OK.
So the first is why do we need accessibility?
So this is just a definition of what accessibility actually means by the Office of Civil Rights.
So it just means when a person with a disability disability is afforded the same opportunities and for information engaged in the same interactions and enjoy the same services as a person without disability, which is just like we just want everybody to have equal.
Opportunity. Just afford the same rights to everybody, and there are so many things we do not we take for granted that for somebody with even a slight disability might be a huge challenge.
And that's something we all need to keep in mind.
And the other, if that does not convince you that there are likely legal ramifications for that, there has been laws and it's been here for a while.
That's been years that Ada was passed, which is like private discrimination with disabilities in various areas of public life. And what we do not realize it.
It also encompasses the web because web is so much part of our life and all the digital content that we consume.
So ADA does not only cover like we need to have wheelchair ramps, we need to have like doors to be accessible.
It also means that anything you are passing on, like an e-mail, anything you put on the website needs to be accessible for people.
With disabilities, there is Section 508, which is a federal which requires federal agencies to make their electronic and information technologies accessible to people with disabilities, which means like websites, all the apps on your phones. If you're sending anything via emails, chats, pictures, everything, and which another.
One that specifically applies to us is NY, New York State, New York State's Office of Information Technology Services.
So it is regarding all the information communication technologies.
Just gonna sneak in and grab this so I can monitor the chat.
OK.
So what are the types of disabilities?
I mean, you all know like certain types, but there are so many more and this helps you like realize how much people with disabilities, different types of disabilities are the challenges they face.
Yeah, blind that we all know.
And low vision like people can see, but they they also have low visions, you know, like they can see certain things clearly.
So you need to make sure that things have like proper contrast.
That's because somebody with low vision and this is something like that. All can also happen. Like with age, you know, like you're perfectly well. And then you're like, this is fine.
I can see it and everything and as you go like older and older, your vision starts to go.
Then you're like, you realize, another is color blindness, something that you don't think about. But then for, like, easy for you to see and everything but a person with color blindness, it's a huge challenge.
Cognitive disabilities, like when you have cognitive disabilities, you're watching videos.
Without subtitles or something, it's harder for them to get what it is.
What is happening?
Speech disabilities.
Deafness, which is another reason why we need to include closed captioning in all the videos that we upload for our like I would talk like specifically for ESF, but in general as a whole deaf blind.
Seizures, so make sure like there are no flashing contents on anything you put on reading disabilities, which is, I'm sure, like if you're a faculty member that you've encountered this.
I need to make sure like what we can do to.
Help them with these.
Motor disabilities, which is why we need to have like everything on the website, the keyboard accessible that if somebody has motor disabilities and cannot use the mouse as a normal person, they should be able to access all the content as well.
Sorry, there is a note in the chat to share the screen.
I just want to make sure it's visible.
Can folks joining us online see the screen?
It should be shared.
No. Oh dear. OK.
Hold on. Let me share your screen.
Oh, you've got it. OK, you do have it.
Oh, Gregory has it.
Anthony does not.
Alright, let me try sharing.
I mean, just share the open a little bit.
You should work. There we go.
Are you able to see it now, Anthony?
Here I see it. OK, beautiful alright.
OK.
I can just.
Alright. Yeah, it'll be like.
Oh.
And there are like other multiple disabilities that people deal with.
So when you.
'Re going to like do double duty here, OK?
So when you put an inaccessible document in Blackboard, so Blackboard does have an automatic accessibility checker. When you put something that's inaccessible in there.
Well, when you put anything in there, you'll see a little gate.
If that little gauge is red, that's bad news.
Green is good, right?
So this one.
So this document that we I have uploaded here is an orange gauge, right?
I can click on that gauge.
To see exactly what is wrong, right?
So then I'll see this screen.
Where it it says all issues right? If I click on that or hover over that it tells me exactly what's wrong. The document that I've uploaded does not.
I have headers.
It does not have enough contrast, right?
I have yellow text on a white background and it contains tables that are also missing headers.
So this is really handy because it tells you exactly what you need to fix in that document, and it's also things that we are going to cover right now.
So let's hop in.
OK.
Here we go.
Yeah, I think I can move this one, OK.
So when you're starting any document, the most important thing is having a title and a heading, and if you don't put up a title like Word, PowerPoint or anything, we'll just put up whatever title that you've put in and put that. Pull that as the title of the.
Document, so make sure you have like a unique title for your document and it matches the content because title is what clues people into like what the document is.
So make sure it encompasses what the document actually means and just don't put up anything like you know, just a short form or something that only you understand.
And another, it's very important to use headings, so there are different levels of headings from H1 to H6 that you can use on any Microsoft document. If you use styles.
So H1 is the title of the document and every document can only have one H1. So you cannot keep using it and everything else will be like H2H3 you.
An important thing to make sure you do is like have when you have headings, make sure you use it hierarchically.
That is like H 2, then it follows
H 3 follows and then H 4.
You have a question?
Heather tiles gives you the option of a title.
Yeah, but you wouldn't use that as a title?
No, no, it has to be like H 1.
I know I that's when I first heard that too.
I was like, well, why is there a Title one then?
I just don't even don't even use the title.
Don't use the title or the title style.
H1 through H6 and make sure like the title of the document is always H1 and it will automatically pull H1 as the title in your metadata.
But if you just want to go through like word metadata and then change those things, you can do that too.
But the title doesn't.
I don't know for some reason it doesn't.
I know, I know.
So you can nest your headings from being like H2H3 and then like another heading starts like H twos.
But don't like mix them up. And one of the reasons we're doing this is for any like visually challenged person person with visual disabilities. If they're using like screen readers, then they can skip through the document using the headers.
So imagine that you want to get to a certain portion in like a 50 page document.
But you can.
You have to go through everything because there are no headings and they cannot like find out which portion, which section they want to they want to read or they want to listen to.
So that's the reason we do this and do not ever use like bold or increase the size of the font in place of using the actual heading style because.
The machine will will not understand that it's a heading.
So it's only like it's not like visually even if you see like it's bigger. So when you see it, it's like oh, this must be the heading.
The machine does not understand that. So always make sure to use like Microsoft Word styles to make sure your headings and if you want to change those then you can do it in Microsoft Word like change the font of your heading, whatever the inbuilt style it's giving.
And never skip heading levels.
This. Oh, go ahead. Go ahead. And the styles and.
There there are.
And how does he word it?
Right. Sorry. This they're up in the top and we will have the way we've kinda structured the the time here is we'll have a chunk of time to like dig in -- no--
That's perfect to kind of dig in and go into into specific kind of troubleshooting, yeah. And also we'll do the next will be on word, yes, yeah.
And then our next session next month will be even deeper into Word
So this one is more like a general what you need to keep in mind when you're just.
designing like either a document or a PowerPoint, or if you're designing like a web page to keep in mind.
So another issue is color contrast.
So you always need to have a high contrast between text and background, so people with low vision, people with like other visual disabilities can see it.
And I'm telling you, even with perfect vision, when the contrast is bad, it's very hard to like, squint your eyes. So.
There are certain color combinations that you should avoid and like you can see like the bad contrast.
If you can read this from back there.
Then you can see like good contrast and bad contrast like how much it impacts the even the information that you're trying to give out.
So we have a few tools that helps you do like a color contrast check and I've provided I can provide the resources but this is how it will give you the thing. So we need to make at least make sure that we get AA like passes for.
Like small text and large text, but it's better if you have passed like everything so you can check like the foreground color and background color and then see like how good your contrast is. If it works or it doesn't work.
If you're really using like a different other than like black and white, if you're using some. If you want to use the colors on the background at foreground and make sure that you check against these.
One that I was kind of surprised is lower than I thought it was going to be is red text against a white background and it really. Yeah, it's not great. Like the bright red that we like the default red.
It's not a great contrast.
It never passes
So you just need to make it darker, yeah?
A few tools, but if you're just Google, like color contrast checker, it'll give you like couple of other options, but we can provide.
We'll provide the slides, right.
Yes, we can provide the slides and we can have the resources for these.
OK. And the other are hyperlinks, which we love to use.
But what we need to make sure are whenever we use a hyperlink, make sure the link is descriptive and make sure the link stands out. The standard is always been like a blue with an underline.
So with this you also need to understand that now that we are still ingrained with like, whenever it is underlined, we think of it as a link, you know, because it's been like used so long by this format in Microsoft Word.
and like other places we see, so make sure like whenever you're making a document, try to avoid underlines.
Because subconsciously we're always like, oh, that must be a link.
I can't click on it I can't
I know I can't click on it, so if you need to like make something stand out try to use like bold and not underline.
We use italics or bold but not underline because it always like people are always thinking like it's a link.
And the reason you need to make sure the links are descriptive and not the whole URL spelled out is because when you're doing it on a screen reader, it will read out the entire thing.
If you're putting it as like this, so it'll read out like HTTPS colon slash slash www.esf.edu.
So it will spell out the whole thing.
So imagine a person who uses a computer on a screen reader and that it's going to just spell out the whole thing, and you don't even know what the link actually means.
That's another reason, right?
To avoid like click here or anything like that like that.
Your hyper text.
Your hyperlink shouldn't be the words here.
Click here. Click click. Click here are like read more.
Things like that because it does not provide any context clues.
You don't know what click. If you just see click here.
What? What?
Where does it lead you? Right? Is that the information?
You actually want or are you just going to be like wasting your time?
Like clicking that link, going to that page, and then going back again.
So use something descriptive like Green building conference.
But you know, like exactly where it's taking you.
And I like that tip about if you're going to be printing the document to to use like to use.
Yeah, the the entire thing, so.
I can do OK.
I'll do this one.
OK.
So another important is images or other visual elements.
So this is a huge one so.
For a visually challenged person, if they're just using screen readers, they don't know what an image is.
So make sure like all the images have an alternate text.
And alternate text needs to be concise and descriptive so that it explains what the image is.
So for the website what I need to what I would like to point out is, you know when you have a low connection and you only get like sort of an image icon and then there's text with it.
And if that is the alternate text that just shows up.
So imagine like somebody just, even if you have good vision.
But then they're in some place where there's low vision, like low connectivity issues, and then they know what the what, the context of the picture is.
Because you have good alternate text on it. So on websites it also helps with that.
And then the saying goes for Blackboard. Like if you've got a module image or an image in one of your documents, you can add alt text to that and you can also label it decorative.
Which is and make sure like all the non like images that you're just using for decoration are marked decorative so that it does not impede with the screen readers. You know screen reader will just like skip over that because it does not actually provide any significance or context.
To their document, other than just being like visually pleasing or just.
A decoration.
For now, it's better, like when you do like any Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, anything, it will do an auto generated alternate text. Then you can just go ahead and like edit that.
Yeah, definitely not that good.
It's not great.
It's not great.
I was doing a document and I had screenshots and the alt text that it gave me was like white rectangle.
I was like, well, yes. But there's also things in the rectangle.
That's not great, definitely check it.
It sometimes it gets like close enough, but it's not great, so make sure like you check that.
So an example of a good alternate text.
What is a good alternate text?
It's like it has to be descriptive.
It's concise and it provides context to the image.
So this is the alternate text that I provided for an image.
So what you visualize when you read a group of young college students laughing and walking on a sidewalk?
So does this match what you were thinking?
Like that's exactly what's happening.
Yeah, yeah.
So this is what you could and don't try to like flourish at with like other other like like you're writing an essay like trying to be over descriptive.
We don't need that.
We just need people to understand what the image is.
An example of bad alternatives. There are a lot, so using "image of" or "picture of" to start off, because don't do that because when a screen reader uses it, it'll already like say "image of" or like a "picture of"
So when you add that to the alternate text, it'll be like "image of image of..."
So don't add that and being too vague or too detailed, don't put like too many details like oh the dress she is wearing is like flowy and it has these pattern unless like it actually works like for like a.
Marketing or like you're buying something and it needs to describe the dress. Other than that don't put like so much context into it that it like the when you're listening to it. It's just like it's not a novel.
And repeating caption. So if you have a caption for an image and an alternate text then it should not be the same. The alternate text should only provide meaning to the image and not like be the same thing as the caption, because caption can be like a little more.
Elaborative or like more like to the context of the actual document.
But the alternate text does not need to be all that.
And not specifying decorative images, it did not specify too many like flourishes to the thing.
So this is an alternate text like picture of a person wearing goggles and holding a bottle.
Imagine what you can picture it in your mind.
And this is the image. It provides it but sort of.
It doesn't give you the entire context of that thing like I I could. You could picture swimming goggles, holding a water bottle, someone sitting on a pool, right.
Like that could be a lot of things.
Yeah, it could be a lot of things.
And if you're adding this to like some like for a lab or something, it doesn't really give you the context or anything.
And this is like a better one for that as a student wearing safety goggles and pouring liquid in a graduated cylinder.
Provides a little more context to it.
And there are now lots of like AI softwares and everything that will like help you with these like to put like like even Microsoft Word does that and if you just put it like somewhere else like give an alternate text for this it will help you but it.
It's always better to like to write something at least.
And text styling so do not make text like really really small.
It'll be very hard to read.
We need a minimum of 12 point font.
And there are lots and lots of fonts that Microsoft Word provides, but don't use like all the decorative fonts you try to use.
Simple fonts, preferably sans serif fonts like Ariel, Veranda and Helvetica.
And it is because these like helps you like separate between like the L and the 1
Like uppercase I with like 1 or something which is like really confusing in some of the other fonts.
So these just makes it like clearer.
So simple is better.
I know we like to make decorative things. We like to make. Look at pleasant, but the simpler you get, it's easy.
More accessible it is.
And try avoid using like all caps because sometimes when you do all caps screen readers will read out like each letter separately.
Avoid using it.
Yeah, it'll just spell out everything.
Tables tables are things I do not like because people try to make it complex.
And tables. You need to make sure that you have set the rows and columns label in the data.
There are ways to do that and also make sure that complex try to avoid complex tables with like multiple rows.
Try to make the table simple.
Try to break it out into like multiple tables if you have to do it and don't use table just for because you like how it looks.
It's not for layout, it's to give the information that needs to be on a table or form.
And no, merging cells do not split cells.
That's such a bummer
I love merging cells.
I like to do, but it's it's some, it messes up the entire thing when you're doing it on screen readers so.
The good news with tables is with the header rows. That is kind of a default like when I was trying to upload that inaccessible document to Blackboard, I had to go in and turn that off.
So at least that.
Should default should be set.
And there is lists.
Make sure you're using list from the style sections and not just drawing your own dots and stuff.
I forgot to mention this on table like whenever you're using a table, make sure you're inserting the table.
And not like drawing the table. If you're inserting it then it will read it as a table in your screen readers. If you're drawing it, it'll picture it as a picture.
It will think it's a picture. So same thing with the list. If you're using for any ordered list.
Use the numbered list and for unordered use bullet list.
And just avoid typing manually like numbers, even numbers. Try to make sure you're using the actual listing, because that's how the machine will actually recognize it as a list.
Sometimes it doesn't.
And accessibility checker. This is what we have in all Microsoft 365 products.
So this is what it looks like. It's like there's like an accessibility thing and it does like check accessibility.
So when you click this it'll show you like most of the things that's wrong with your document.
And you can do this like as soon as you start a new document, keep it running and it'll tell you like this is missing a header. If you insert a picture, it'll tell you that it's missing an alternate text, or it will give you a suggestion for an.
Alternative text.
And you can either accept it or you can just change like edit it to make your own.
So this will do all those things.
So it's always a good idea to, whenever you start a new document or you start a new presentation slide to get it running as soon as you start your document. And it's always easier to like, do your, make sure the document is accessibility from the moment you're build.
It up, instead of going back and doing it.
So biggest thing it'll be like extra work after you've finished something and then you have to go back and edit everything.
So we'll switch places.
So just like word has an automatic like a built in accessibility checker we mentioned Blackboard does as well, so this document.
Our our little accessibility--
So when you upload a document, PDF, PowerPoint, anything in Blackboard, that little gauge will eventually appear.
It won't be immediate.
It does take a minute. Sometimes you have to like go out and go back in, but this will be visible to you at some point.
After uploading the item so before our document had an orange gauge right?
And then we were able to click on it and see exactly what was wrong.
Now it has a green gauge, so we are shooting for green.
This one is actually perfect.
I went and found a like perfectly accessible document to put in here.
So it's not gonna tell us anything about what we need to fix 'cause. It has a perfect score. So we don't necessarily.
Perfection.
We can.
We can go towards it, but our goal is green, right?
We want our our documents to be green and we can always, you know, go in and improve if we need to. But our our goal is to have a green gauge for everything in Blackboard.
So I think we have to click the actual slides on this.
Oh, or that? Yeah.
OK, OK.
So questions, comments. Concerns.
We can dig into some detail like example things if you've if you've got them and folks online as well.
Questions. Are we so good?
Or specific things you're working on and you're like, wait, how do I like, what do I do with this table?
I have these merged cells or any anything.
Specific that you want to dig, dig into.
This is the New York State Office of Information Tech Services assess.
Whether everything we do is accessible and is there a certain percentage of their goals like goals, do you know?
I mean, as far as I know, we have a standard that we have to meet.
So right now I think it's like we get 2. something so, but they have like said, we need to just meet whatever the newest standard of WCAG is.
Like web accessibility guidelines.
So it's not that they will come specifically and track every colleges, but there has been instances when people have like sued colleges to because their material was not and any anybody in public can also do that.
Yeah, that's what I was going to point out.
This is a Department of Justice thing.
So that means anyone?
Any student, anyone who goes to our website and is not able to navigate it.
In the way that they need to can bring suit against us.
I guess just the kind of the spirit behind our
Kind of tongue in cheek title of how to not get sued. Mm hmm is because it it really is anyone and we have been sued before.
So will there be like preventative audits?
How do you how do you that?
I don't know.
I don't know that I am not.
I don't know that, but they will always give us like this is the new standard that we have to meet.
But I don't know if they have like come and checked like what's happening but.
I know like there were multiple colleges like, I think SUNY wide was hit.
So they like all the college for their accessibilities and then Department of Justice comes here and then tell you like they I think they give you a warning.
They give you like a time to get everything up to date.
Syracuse University was hit
I know Harvard was hit
And then they did. Like they redid their entire website because of that to make sure. And when they redid their website, I had been to one of their like web conferences where they presented and they said the reason was doing.
Because of the accessibility issues with their current website and when they redid their new website, their entire focus was only accessibility.
And the reasoning was that we cannot use was we are Harvard, they will come to our website anyways, right?
So we're gonna make sure like it is accessible.
That is our priority now. The designs, not anything else.
Yeah.
(question from the room about internal checks)
Like it's no pressure on Mona or anything.
Yeah, yeah, internal audit check is me. Yeah.
Yeah, which is another reason to not send scanned files.
Yeah, because scans files are basically picture for the machines and it's not an actual document.
So is scanning of pages a problem?
Yes, if you're putting it up on the website, it is. If you're just using it for yourself, yeah, if it if it's gonna be just a handed out thing in class, that's fine.
But if it's on Blackboard, then yeah. So yeah, putting on a blackboard would be an issue.
We would want to see if we can find a digital version like a pdf version of it, or see if if we can link to it like link.
Maybe the library has? Yeah, has a digital version of it that we can link to.
You don't know.
That's one of the time verdicts.
Well, I scan.
And.
....
I just ran into this literally yesterday.
I have one of my classes I uploaded students exemplars of student drawings.
So it's like, how do I work around that?
I mean drawings just uploaded and I think like make sure you have good descriptive descriptions for those.
Right. But I don't know how to do that.
Yeah, like I uploaded it as PDF because it was someone else.
Oh, if you upload it as apdf, make sure the PDF has the descriptions. You can do it in the PDF so we can we can touch base maybe? Yeah. How to do that?
OK.
Maybe that would be a work around.
I know like there are multiple things that we still need to work around, but The thing is like it also depends on. We don't have our own disability services here. So we have to rely on Syracuse universities.
Because I work around would be like, you know, you said like this is what we have. But if there's any student with which who needs accommodations, then we can provide that kind of thing to that might be.
But I know like we go through Syracuse universities, right, Heather?
Yeah. For the folks online, that question was about how to put student exemplars on Blackboard that are essentially drawings.
If if scanned items are not great for screen makers.
Yeah. When it comes to like mathematics and science, there are additional challenges because, you know, mathematics involves a lot of symbols.
A lot of mathematical equations that are not part of, like a vocabulary of like the Microsoft Word. So.
There are.
It's being worked on and it's continually like we are making progress. Start putting on more stuff, but it's always a challenge.
Any questions from online?
No, just a thank you. But we do have our next.
Next up in our series will deep dig deeper into word.
So that will be Thursday, February 18th, Tuesday, Tuesday, February 18th, the third Tuesday of every month.
Right here in Baker 309.
So we can kind of have the same set up where we'll kind of deliver some information.
In the first little bit and then if there are specific documents or things that you want to work on, we can kind of be on hand for that.
Maybe setting up like some kind of template for yourself so you know you've got kind of the headers and the tables and everything all set up and then you can, you know, make a copy of that document and use that as your template for your future documents.
Do they put up like word on Blackboard?
Like Microsoft Word.
Yeah, people like you can upload a Word document. Yeah.
Yeah.
Which will scan all of those. All of those things, the table headings, the colour contrast, all of that.
All right.
And then the recording of this session will be on the accessibility website along with the slides, and we can do all that.
And if you have any questions, you can e-mail either Erika or me.
We can set up a time.
We also do have accessibility at esf.edu as a web like an inbox. If you have specific accessibility related issues.
Can you e-mail me or just e-mail there?
All right, beautiful.
Thanks for for joining us and we hope to see you next month.
Bye folks online.
Sharing not.
Sharing. Not anymore.
I'm just gonna close this, OK?
Leave, yeah.

 **Erika Blair** stopped transcription