

CIDI Webinar Series: Learn from the Experts

Date: 5/26/2022

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>> Doug Neal: Good afternoon, everyone. For those who are interested, please know that there is a StreamText link in the chat box where you can follow captions there. And there's also the option to see closed captioning at the bottom of your Zoom screen. Carolyn Philips, I got that it's 2:02. I will wait until 2:05 if that's okay.

>> Carolyn Philips: That's okay.

>> Valerie Morrison: I do have a lot of content to get through today.

>> Carolyn Philips: We might want to go ahead and get started.

>> Doug Neal: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm excited to welcome you to our new CIDI web series. If you would mute your microphone and turn off your video for today's purposes. Please know that if you would like to view closed captioning, there's a StreamText link in the chat box. And also you have an option in Zoom at the bottom where you can select closed captioning.

For now I will turn it over to our codirector for CIDI and that is Carolyn Philips. Carolyn Philips, please go ahead.

>> Carolyn Philips: Thank you so much, Doug. I appreciate it. Welcome everybody. We're thrilled that you are here for our first webinar of our webinar series. Y'all are in for a treat. I was just telling Dr. Morrison how much I enjoy listening to her and learning from her. And this is a topic that's always evolving and changing when it comes to choosing alternative formats. I'm excited that you're with us and Dr. Morrison is sharing her expertise with us. Thank you all. We love the work that we get to do with you here at the center for inclusive design and innovation. We continue to thrive and continue to move the conversation forward when it comes to accessibility. So know that this is a dialogue in that we want to hear from you throughout but also after. So please do let us know how we can help your students achieve their goals and be successful. So I'm going to turn it over. Thank you Doug for creating this series and thank you to our captioning team. We look forward to hearing from you Dr. Morrison.

>> Valerie Morrison: Thank you so much Doug and Carolyn. Great introduction. Again I have a slide starting how to access the closed captioning by clicking on the zoom tool bar for the CC symbol or if you want to access the StreamText link available in the chat that's available to you too.

I am Valerie Morrison, the e-text manager here at CIDI. I've been working with these great people for about 10 years now. What my team and I do is we transform inaccessible text books and course materials and brochures and anything that you can throw at us and we try to transform it into many different accessible file formats that someone can use assistive technology to read aloud. We transform into many different file formats which I will try to get through today. There's a lot of different factors why people choose the file formats that they do. So I have a lot of content that I want to try and get through today. I will try to speak clearly for our lovely captionist Heather. And thank you again for joining us here today. My e-text team we work with university staff, publishers, corporations, state agencies -- a whole host of different customers come to us and we try to ensure that the material they create can be distributed in accessible ways for people who rely on screen readers, text-to-speech software or other assistive technology.

The goals today we have a quick half hour. So I broke it down into three main goals. First I want to talk about choosing the right file format. Some of the decisions and thoughts that go into that from our experience working with customers. Then second, learning how you yourself can check files for accessibility. I feel like there may be a change of familiarities and expertise with these different programs. So,

I'm going to go over some of the basic ways you can check a file and make an assessment about whether it needs further work and production on it to be accessible.

And then finally, the third goal is I've offered some checklists for you that we can leave behind. We don't have to go over them one at a time. They're pretty lengthy. They're the check list we internally use for making files accessibility and remediating different text book files and course materials.

So I thought this might be helpful for you if you would like to have it. We can certainly circulate the PowerPoint after the meeting today.

So getting started on choosing the right file format. We have a lot of file formats. As members you probably have taken a peek at our e-text services and description page on the CIDI website. If you haven't, it's extensive. We list every single file format you see here, and we have a separate drop down button. If you click on this link it will take you to the page and down below we have descriptions how to make each of those file formats. So you can get an idea about how to create an accessible file format.

So we make accessible PDF files that have normal structure tags and bookmarks for easy navigation. Sometimes we get to a PDF that the publisher has provided to us and we realize there are big chunks or whole pages that are still an image and not -- they don't have accessible highlightable text.

And in some cases we'll need to do OCR in order to create an accessible PDF for people.

Another file format we specialize in is the ETPDF. ET stands for enhanced tags. So for those books we work on making sure that the structure tags are optimized for use with the assistive technology. So the screen reader knows what the headings are, how the table is structured. That takes more time and expertise with tagging. We also add alt text to our enhanced tagged PDFs.

Microsoft Word docs we make those with brief or long alt text descriptions. We get lots of orders for EPUBs. HTML that can be accessed with a browser. DAISY files which used to be very popular 10 years ago. We get just a few orders for DAISY files these days. PowerPoint presentations. We do long alt text descriptions and PowerPoints are a new offering. Not new anymore. We started making those in 2015. So I can't blame the pandemic on not knowing that was a long time ago. That was a long time ago before the pandemic.

We have alt text writing for projects with complex images and another format is a Learning Ally audio book. We partner with Learning Ally.

That was a lot. Just to explain a little bit about that page that you'll get to, you'll see some of our file formats have a standard per page rate. So a disability service provider or any kind of customer could maybe guess at how

much -- they could make a fair assessment and say my material is 100 pages. Multiply it by the per page rate and they have a pretty good idea of what the cost will be. But there are some file formats such as the ETPDF, PowerPoint and alt text projects, those we quote for you so that you will know -- you'll have a very good estimate of how much time it will take us and the cost.

The reason is these are far more time consuming generally. And we need to look at our production schedule to give you an estimate that we want you to agree to before we start the work. The screen shot on the slide shows you where you would provide your name and date to accept the quote digitally in our service portal.

So, getting to how you choose the right file formats. Students and customers choose particular file formats for many reasons, and I'm going to get to a very complex chart that helps you really fine tooth comb those in a minute but this slide is about generalities.

So one thing that you could count on is that students are always going to pick PDF because they're familiar with it. It's ubiquitous file format.

Everyone has been giving a PDF at some point. Adobe Reader is free to download. It's built in. People are familiar with PDF.

The PDF also looks identical to the original. So

a lot of students who are sighted prefer that because they know exactly what they're getting and they know-nothing is missing.

But then there's some students who are okay with the fact that well maybe the content doesn't look exactly the same, it's not formatted the same way but they want adjustable content. So, this is primarily students who might be blind or low vision who would benefit by resizing the content. People with print related disabilities such as dyslexia may want to change the font size or colors or manipulate the content in some way. And that's hard to do with a PDF. It's more hard and rigid. If I gave you a Microsoft Word doc of a text book you could change the font to whatever color you want to.

So students who want adjustable content we recommend they get a Microsoft Word doc or EPUB or HTML file over a PDF where the formatting is more locked down.

Finally, another overarching decision that determines what kind of file format someone chooses is whether or not the images are described. There are some individuals who want image description. Some students or individuals who want brief descriptions because they don't want to get bogged down with lengthy details of every image. And there are some students who don't want to miss a thing. They might be tested on this material and they want to make sure all the alternative text descriptions are comprehensive.

So thinking about whether or not alt text is

present in a file format is a big decision high up in the flow chart of when people are making decisions about what file format to choose.

So here on this slide we have a very complex robust chart to identify key accessibility features in all of our different file formats that we offer. This is very small text. I apologize. It's a lot of information to get through. So we are happy to provide a Microsoft Word version -- an accessible version of this chart upon request if anyone would like it. We can easily get that to you, along with this PowerPoint. If you're watching a recorded version of this webinar you can take a quick screen shot. We've listed the file formats at the top. PDF, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Word with long description, DAISY, EPUB, HTML, PowerPoint, and Learning Ally. And then we check off what accessibility features they offer. Audio read aloud without synthesized speech. This is a very detailed decision chart that may help you when decided what file format you or someone you're making an order for might prefer.

And then this next slide shows the rest of that giant chart with more accessibility features. And again we're happy to provide an accessible version of this chart. And we also on our CIDI Access YouTube channel we have a video choosing the right accessibility file format that has more guidance that goes more detailed information about what file

format people prefer and what accessibility features each file has.

Some common barriers to accessibility. Some of these are obvious. Some are not. Not having headings or bookmarks. Images not being described. Having the reading order be confusing or out of order so it doesn't read correctly. The screen reader might read across columns or skip material or interrupted by footnotes in confusing ways. Flashing images or animations are often inaccessible to people. Having distracting back grounds, poor color contrast. Videos without captions. Videos without audio description and having very complex language or high level vocabulary can be inaccessible to a wide audience.

So, that being said, I want to move on to the second goal where we focus a little bit more on how you check files for accessibility. So if you are creating your own file, you can build these accessibility features in from the very beginning. What my colleague Sheryl calls "baked in accessibility." That you are including image descriptions and accessible headings in every document that you make so you don't have to go back and do a lot of fixing and timely retrofitting. If you inherit a file online or if you reach out to a publisher, how do you determine if it's accessible? The key accessibility features you want to look for -- this is how I prioritize them. This is not everything I look for, but the

main four. Is there clear navigation with headings or bookmarks? Where people can use a keyboard short cut to advance? Two, is there accessible text that can be highlighted? Sometimes you get a PDF from a faculty member and they say it's accessible, I've given it to you online but it might be a scanned image of a page. So someone using a screen reader would not be able to access that text. Their screen reader would pronounce the word "image" for the entire page. So if that's the case, then we want to do more accessibility work. Perhaps run it through an OCR engine. That stands for optical character recognition. That's one of the things we do inhouse.

Three, you're going to want to make sure text can be selected in a logical reading order. So while you're figuring out whether the text can be highlighted, you can see as you highlight the text on the page if it highlights in a strange order, the screen reader might read the material in a strange order. So doing testing with highlighting can help you access your resource that you find online.

And then finally, alt text description or image description. Are the images described? Are they adequately described? Do you need to go in and make them more descriptive of what the visual information is in the image or chart or graph, et cetera?

One final note: If you are spending a lot of time on accessibility of files and you've poured a lot of energy

into files, always check them after you up load them in the new place you place them. Sometimes the accessibility work can be blocked or fall away. We've had experiences where we worked and made an entire text book accessible and then it was up loaded to an LMS and it was locked down and it could not be accessed. It got rid of our formatting. So always test where the file eventually is going to live.

All right. So according to my priorities, I think the things you want to access are headings and bookmarks for navigation -- what did I say? Headings for navigation. Text that can be highlighted. Logical reading order and alternative text description. So I'm going to show you how to do those four things.

In Microsoft Word, if you go to the view tab -- I've got my View tab circled in my screen shot here. On the View tab if you click on the check box next to navigation pane it will open up the navigation pane on the left side of your Microsoft Word doc. That's where you can enter in all of your different headings in a document.

So, in order to create a heading, you just highlight a word or sentence that you want to be a heading and then on the home ribbon you select heading level 1, heading level 2, et cetera. And that way you can create meaningful headings in a structure for your document. And then people with accessible -- with assistive technology will be able to simply

click through this list to jump from heading to heading.

So you're making meaningful, functional headings for your documents for people to navigate through.

If you are looking to see if a PDF file is accessible, you can view the Bookmark Pane and we are using Adobe Acrobat to make our PDF files accessible and to do remediation work. So in Adobe Acrobat, this is a screen shot of what the Bookmark Pane looks like. And I have drawn a red circle around the bookmark icon on the left menu on the left vertical menu in Adobe Acrobat. You see the bookmarks have the title of a book, all of the front matter as like a bookmark level 2, content, preface and acknowledges and then each chapter has a heading level 1 bookmark. And then if I open up these chapters there would be more subheadings underneath. So the bookmarks help people jump from chapter to chapter. They don't have to scroll painfully through hundreds of pages.

So a bookmark can be generated from a Word doc with headings. So if you create a Word doc and go through the trouble of making accessible headings, those will be saved as accessible bookmarks if you save as a PDF.

If you inherit a PDF and want to add bookmarks to it, highlight the text on the page and press control and the letter B at the same time or highlight text, right click, and select add bookmark.

And then finally, in PowerPoint I wanted to hit

some of the basics. Microsoft Word and PDF seem to be the most used file format. So just like you want accessible headings or bookmarks, having unique and descriptive slide titles serve as your easy navigation accessibility feature in a PowerPoint. In order to view your slide titles easily once you've created PowerPoint presentation, you'll go to the home ribbon and select the view tab and then choose outline view. And this is a screen shot of what you'll see. Every single slide title is in bold and all of the text on that slide is in regular font.

So slide titles help everyone understand and focus on your key points and know where you are in your presentation.

So just like having accessible headings and bookmarks these are accessibility features that are really benefiting everyone. Everyone who uses your file, everyone who attends your presentation is really going to benefit from having descriptive titles so they know where you are in your presentation.

So here's a screen shot of highlighting some text like I mentioned before. If your text is not selectable, we would recommend that it go through optical character recognition or OCR. And highlighting your text will help you make sure that the columns are read separately and not bunched together. And so that's an example of checking your reading order.

We have some slides here where I inform you how to insert alt text. So to add alternative text in a Microsoft Word doc, you right click on the image, select edit alt text and then type your description in the description field using proper grammar, spacing and punctuation.

You can also add alt text by using the accessibility checker in Microsoft Word which I will get to in a moment.

For PDF files if you want to add image description, using Adobe Acrobat, you can select the reading order tool. Turn on the accessibility tools first. Then select the reading order tool. And it will highlight all of your images in your PDF and you could simply right click on them and type in your alt text. And again, running the accessibility report in Acrobat will help you find out which images are missing alt text description.

So I'm running out of time so I just want to go through this accessibility check list with you. These are instructions about how to access the accessibility checker and use this to your advantage. This works for both Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. They're available on the review tab in both Word and PowerPoint. If you select check accessibility it will run a report and this screen shot shows an example of all of the errors and warnings and tips and why to fix and how to fix. You can run the accessibility checker right away on a document

that you inherit in order to gauge how much work it's going to be to make it accessible. And if you are missing alt text on images, they will appear in a list in the checker and you can simply click on each one to go to that image in your document to add alt text.

And this is the screen shot of what the accessibility checker looks like in Adobe Acrobat. In order to run the accessibility checker in Acrobat, you open accessibility tools, full check and then this generates a report if there's images that need to be described or if your color contrast isn't high enough, if you don't have your primary language selected. It gives you a great run down of all the different accessibility features that you might want to take advantage of.

So these last 3 slides these are the check lists that we use internally. It's way too much to get through in a half an hour but I wanted these on here as a leave behind for all of you attending this webinar. We'll be sending out -- hopefully we can send out this PowerPoint to you all so you will have access to this at a later date. We have check lists that we use internally for making Microsoft Word doc, PDF files and also PowerPoint presentations fully accessible. And so these go a little bit above and beyond what the accessibility checker can find. And we like to use these so we make sure that students -- our primary customers are in the higher ed space

but we want to make sure for all of our customers we're transforming this material to make it as fully as accessible as possible. So you might want to keep these and refer back to these. These are check lists that I use in some of my other trainings that I give to our members or people who ask us for accessibility help and guidance. So I wanted to include these for you all.

So, I have gone over by a few minutes. I apologize but I wanted to see if there's any questions, any comments, any suggestions for future trainings or future webinars. That's all of my content. I kind of went over a little bit. I apologize.

>> Doug Neal: We thank you for your subject matter expertise and sharing it today with our audience. For those who might want to ask a question, please feel free invited to do so. If you would like to post a question in the chat. Also please note that we will be posting a recording of this session. We'll post the PowerPoint and the transcript along with all of our future sessions that we provide. Please be reminded that we'll host these learn from the expert webinar series the last Wednesday of every month at 2pm and we will host the recording and the PowerPoint if you are unable to attend.

I don't see any questions in the chat box. Thank you everybody for joining us. Thank you Dr. Morrison. Please be

invited to join us next month and we look forward to seeing you. "Where can we find the PowerPoint later?" We will post that on our webpage under our education tab. We'll send out a notification to locate this and future recordings.

Thank you. With that being said, thank you everybody for your time. Thank you Dr. Morrison. On behalf of Carolyn Philips and Eric Trevena our codirectors here at CIDI, we certainly want to thank everybody for joining us and we look forward to seeing you next month.