Implementing a University-Wide Accessibility Program at Penn State

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October 10, 2012
ARL Membership Meeting
Washington, DC
Overview

• The agreement with the National Federation for the Blind (October, 2011) has strengthened our efforts to develop a coordinated approach (http://accessibility.psu.edu)

• This presentation will review the agreement’s key elements and describe the university’s strategies to achieve its accessibility vision

• And I offer a reflection on CourseLoad and e-texts
A Word about Penn State

- Established 1855, PA’s Land Grant
- 24 campus locations + large World Campus
- 96K students, 9K faculty, 28K staff
- $805M annual research expenditure
- 21K degrees awarded in 2011-2012
- 560K Alum, 169K+ Alumni Assoc members; 1 out of 720 Americans an alum; 1 of 70 in PA
Elements of the Plan

- Accessibility audit
- Policy changes
- Procurement
- Course management system (ANGEL)
- University libraries’ web accessibility
- Classrooms
- Clickers
Accessibility Audit

• In January 2012, PSU licensed HiSoftware, a website accessibility audit application
  ▫ Budget units were trained on HiSoftware by appointed Web Liaisons

• The Accessible Technology Information (ATI) Committee conducted a scan of a sample of official PSU web sites
  ▫ The audit established a baseline to be utilized to establish assessment and measurements of progress to attain compliance with University Policy AD-69.

• A three-year corrective action plan was developed, including dates, action items, goals, and leaders responsible
Overview of Triage Approach

- Audit sites (e.g., 2X/year)
- Select pages (e.g., analytics)
- Test
- Fix problems

- Triage Method for Web Accessibility link:
  - http://accessibility.psu.edu/triage
Accessibility Audit

- In March 2012, a report from every Web Liaison’s unit was generated to enable assessment of each unit’s status and begin to prioritize a plan for corrective action and remediation.

- In April, 2012 the results of the audit and strategic plan were shared and the University’s three-year plan and corrective action plan were posted on http://accessibility.psu.edu.

- In September 2012, each Web Liaison unit submitted a progress report outlining each unit’s progress on website remediation.
  - The Web Liaison group will continue to regularly assess progress.
Policy Changes

• In August, 2011, Penn State updated its web accessibility policy AD69 to require conformance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.0, Conformance Level AA
  ▫ PSU distributed its policies and procedures on accessibility through Web Liaisons, numerous trainings, workshops, meetings and sessions with faculty, staff, and administrators

• On April 24, 2012, the Faculty Senate revised Senate Policy 43-00 (Syllabus) formally requiring all course syllabi to contain a statement informing students with disabilities of their rights and options and directing students to the Penn State Office of Disability Services
Policy Changes

• Penn States supports a comprehensive training and information resource for web accessibility at http://accessibility.psu.edu/. It includes:
  ▫ Information about Penn State accessibility policy
  ▫ Plans for implementing accessibility audits and repairs
  ▫ The NFB agreement language
  ▫ Information on how to optimize accessibility for multiple technology options and document types

• This site has been utilized widely throughout the University and over 75 pages of content were either added or updated
• Some universities simply point to our site and say: “Ditto”
Procurement

• ATI is currently consulting with the PSU’s purchasing group on their obligations with respect to the Agreement

• ATI will provide for support to Purchasing to evaluate vendor claims made in Voluntary Product Accessibility Templates (VPAT) and Requests for Purchases (RFP)

• ATI is currently working with Purchasing staff on language requiring accessibility in RFPs and purchase / license contracts
Course Management Systems

• PSU decides to begin search for new course management system 2009 because ANGEL was purchased by Blackboard

• Team put together to research new systems and included a team on accessibility; lots of proposed new systems included IT staff and faculty with knowledge of accessibility issues
  ▪ Pilots included students who used screen readers

• In May we reached an agreement with Blackboard to address all of the accessibility issues in ANGEL 8.0 and future versions, so we have a roadmap for this important part of our environment.
University Libraries’ Web Accessibility

• Phase I: implementation plan in place for accessibility of all Library Web sites and search engines by October 2012

• Phase II: ongoing evaluation and remediation of collections and archives not part of web site

• Web accessibility team of seven individuals, with additional assistance available as needed
University Libraries’ Web Accessibility

• All pages are based on templates that have been re-written to be 100% accessible

• Page Content has been reworked through a step-by-step, iterative process of ongoing testing and remediation

• Assets
  ▫ Word, PDF, PPT, etc
  ▫ Reviewed all assets viewed at least once in last 6 months (based on Google Analytics)
  ▫ Work with web authors to remove, remediate or replace inaccessible assets.
Web Site Testing

SiteCheck Software
August, 2011-August, 2012
Web Site Testing

HiSoftware Compliance Sheriff
February, 2012-ongoing
Web Site Testing

1. Scan
2. Test/Fix Code
3. Test/Fix Content
4. Test/Fix Assets
5. Repeat
Web Site Ongoing Accessibility

- New policies and guidelines for web pages:
  - Revised Web Accessibility Policy (UL AD15)
  - Revised Content Management System Policy (UL AD19)
  - Revised Web Accessibility Statement
  - Advanced accessibility training required for all web content authors

- Implemented new feedback form for:
  - Requesting assistance from Adaptive Technologies
  - Reporting an accessibility issue
  - Requesting a resource in an alternative format

- Weekly accessibility scans of entire web site
  - Distributed accessibility specialists responsible for ongoing remediation
Libraries Microgrant

• Screen reader (JAWS) guides for popular Libraries’ databases
Library Partnerships

Adobe

Siteimprove

Serials Solutions
A ProQuest Company
Libraries Phase 2: What’s next?

• Collections platforms
• Partnerships with vendors (new and ongoing)
• Resource review and reporting
• More screen reader guides
• New Adaptive Technology and Services lab on 1st floor of University Library, front and center.
• Universal Design of all University Libraries, physical and virtual

• Implications? ARL is producing a paper on accessibility, and what PSU has done has implications for all libraries.
Classrooms

• PSU modified podium design to allow instructors to access podiums without unlocking
  ▫ New podiums will be in place in 55 rooms by Aug. 24, 2012, and will be phased in to other locations as rooms are updated or added
  ▫ Braille identification is being added to the touch panel functions buttons
  ▫ PSU made programming changes to Crestron podium control systems that will allow a user to bypass the touch screen log-in using voice control
    • This programming will be activated in rooms on an as-requested basis
Clickers

- PSU chose I-clicker (http://www.iclicker.com/products/accessibility/) based upon student and faculty feedback. Accessibility features:
  - 6 large buttons with raised letters
  - Steady green light indicates the vote was received while a blinking red light indicates the vote was not received for students who are color blind or have low vision
  - Visually impaired individuals raised battery compartment as a tactile reference point. Free Braille stickers to be placed alongside the buttons. NEW vibrating clickers give students with visual impairments evidence of vote confirmation
  - The NEW web>clicker is a browser-based voting application specifically focused on the needs of students with disabilities
A Reflection on CourseLoad

• Recently NFB complained publicly about the Educause-sponsored pilot of CourseLoad (an e-text product) because of the inaccessibility of textbooks in this platform
  • http://campustechnology.com/articles/2012/10/02/national-federation-of-the-blind-takes-on-etext-pilots.aspx
• This pilot involves ~20+ universities, and some have dropped out of the pilot
• While universities have always been committed to innovation and pilots, it is critical that strategies for accessibility be built into the pilot, not bolted on after a pilot starts
The Way Ahead

- You can track our progress at our accessibility website:
  http://accessibility.psu.edu