Universal Design & Accessible Materials

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Background: Accessibility at CU-Boulder

- Accessibility of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy approved 9/17/15
- http://www.colorado.edu/accessibility/policy-and-standards
- “CU-Boulder commits to ensuring that the information and communication technology (ICT) that it creates or provides in conducting its programs, services, and activities is accessible to people with disabilities, in accordance with applicable law and our moral and ethical commitments”
- “CU-Boulder shall make training and resources readily available to faculty and staff... regarding accessible ICT” → Alaina’s role stems from this element of the policy
- Full implementation campus-wide expected to take through FY 2018

Universal Design for Instruction

- Designs for a broad range of learners with a diversity of characteristics, including students locating on the disability spectrum
- Proactive rather than reactive

7 Principles of Universal Design (UD)
1. Equitable (equitable use for all people)
2. Flexible (flexibility in use, participation and presentation)
3. Simple & Intuitive (consistency of design, good usability)
4. Perceptible information (information is explicitly presented and readily perceived)
5. Tolerance for error (supportive, rather than punitive, environment)
6. Low physical effort (minimize unnecessary physical effort or requirements)
7. Space for use (learning space and size appropriate to both students and instructional methods)
GETTING STARTED WITH ACCESSIBLE ICT AND UD

Accessible Materials

If a computer can read the content aloud and provide the same access to key information as what might be obtained by seeing the content visually, then it is functionally accessible.

Do you work with any of the following?

- Word Docs
- PowerPoint
- Google Apps (Docs, Slides, etc.)
- External websites (Wordpress, etc.)
- Digital textbooks
- Pdfs
- Video content
- Voicethread or other synchronous platforms
- Desire2Learn, Canvas or other learning management systems

Mindful consideration when creating materials will allow all of these kinds of works and more to be accessible to a wide range of users; sometimes specific training is necessary.

In general, for Word Documents:
Be sure that you are using headers in the Styles pane to properly “tag” levels of the document.

In general, for PowerPoint:
Be sure that you are using template layouts and never using text boxes that you insert into slides (double-check the outline view).

Accessibility vs. Accommodation

Accessibility can be designed proactively when the materials are created. Accessible materials should be useful for any user, but especially users who require screen reader technology. In contrast, accommodations are special considerations that happen to materials that a broad range of users do not find useful (an article printed in Braille, for example). Even when you have planned for Universal Design in every possible way, there will always be special cases for accommodation, and that’s okay! It’s just part of having a diverse society of people.

Resources for Education and Support

We are working to build a variety of support resources to support you in making your course materials accessible.

- CU-Boulder resources: http://www.colorado.edu/accessibility/resources
  - Quick sheet references (checklists), web resources, vendor links
  - Optical character recognition for remediating pdfs: bit.ly/CUSensusAccess
  - Syllabus template and exemplars
  - The DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology) Center
    http://www.washington.edu/doit/
  - Captioning support on YouTube:
    https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2734796?hl=en