A to Y: Accessibility Workshop
Panel 5

How do you define accessibility?

Presented by Amelia Dickerson, Kevin Darcy and Mike Williamson
Accessibility and Usability Lab
In your group, discuss and come up with 2-3 concise definitions of the word(s) accessible/accessibility.

What does it mean in the work that you do?
Do you see any limitations with these definitions? How? Where?
Is there one definition that we can use that will encompass all of this?
There may not be, but don’t despair!
How do you define a color?
You’re already doing great work! Keep doing that thing that you’re doing!
Understand that:

• You don’t have to know every definition
• Other people may be defining accessibility differently
• When you talk with/collaborate with others they may be coming from a different understanding
• Use other definitions to increase the tools in your tool belt
• The AUL is a resource in this effort
Definitions:

Group 1:
- Ease of access
  - Fewer barriers – not just digital (physical as well)
  - “Problem with definition – only applies to websites”
  - Difference between building our own things v. ready-made/purchased technology

Group 2:
- Descriptors v. definitions
  - Culture shift; proactive approach; more welcoming
  - Accommodations as supports for all students v. just “one-off”
  - Empowering students
  - Framing language; beliefs around a11y – starts at the top

Group 3:
- A11y (when done right) helps everyone
- A11y levels the playing field
- Reactive approach v. proactive

Group 4:
- Looking at a11y through lenses; how are we framing (it’s contextual)
  - Physical, digital, etc.
  - “It hits everyone in multiple ways”
  - Modalities (approach things in various ways)

Group 5:
- Multiple methods (different ways to approach a problem)
- Making it as easy as possible to complete a task
- Making sure software applications can be used by anyone; removing barriers
  - Putting more options in place, more methods for access (we’re not removing barriers, we’re providing barriers)
- Art – broadening online environments