Creating Accessible Documents for the Classroom

A Focus on Accessible PDFs

What Falls Under an Accessible Text Accommodation

- Textbooks

- All handouts—PDFs, Word docs, images, webpages, etc.

- Exams

- Short answer: anything you want the student to read.

Where Do I Come In?

- Textbooks: AES office finds alternate texts
  - Tip: Universal design model would encourage finding resources that already have an electronic version of textbook (e.g. ebooks)

- Handouts: Combination of Faculty & AES office
  - Tip: How documents are made accessible depend on origin—created by you or pre-existent. Pre-existent PDFs are the focus of this presentation.

- Exams: Faculty but AES can assist
  - Tip: Depends on how document is created and how exam is presented

- Webpage documents: Faculty
  - Tip: Webpages should be ADA-compliant, so it would be good to check these before choosing them for assignments. You do not have to make them accessible but you are responsible to provide accessible materials if you are going to assign a web-based reading.

PDFs: What Can I Do?

- Ideally, you should choose PDFs that are already set up to read. Some journal articles are already readable, some are not.

- Technically, our copy/scanning machines *should* create an OCR version of scans. (still need to be checked)

- Try to avoid old scans, which are ultimately just images.

- When a PDF does not read, there are steps you can take.

PDFs: What Can I Do? (cont.)

- To check if a PDF is readable in Adobe: Go to View→Read Out Loud→Activate Read Out Loud
  - If the text isn't able to be recognized as text, Adobe will ask if you want it to scan the document. Select yes.

- Listen to the document afterwards to see if it reads—Adobe is equipped with a free screen reader. Go to View→Read Out Loud→Read this Page.

- If your document doesn't read what you see on the page, it's not going to read with other screen readers.

Tools for Fixing Inaccessible PDFs

- An old brief guide that was circulated several years ago

- The Adobe scan to recognize

- Manually fixing the PDF

- Other possibilities

Old Guide to Accessible Text

- Adobe Acrobat DC – Making Files Text-Readable

- Pros:
  - Using "Edit Text & Images" will recognize text in the PDF.
  - The file will have selectable, searchable text if text is recognizable.
  - May work for very good scanned materials.

- Cons:
  - Must scroll to each page to recognize text.
  - Doesn't consistently read regardless if text is recognized.
  - Doesn't work *at all* if it's a poorly scanned document.
  - **Misses the most important step: listen to the document!**

Adobe Scan

- Many PDFs simply need to have Adobe recognize the text. Use the Read Out Loud function in Adobe to do this.

- If a PDF does not read at all, or doesn't read what is on the page, the PDF will need to be manually fixed. You can do this step, or you can have AES do this part.

- Currently, AES do not have any formal software programs to resolve the issue. Our office spends many hours manually fixing text that are not readily accessible.

How to Manually Fix PDFs

- Run the Activate Read Aloud steps and see if the document reads.

- If document doesn't read, or doesn't read what's on the page, do one of the following:

  - 1) Export document to Word and see if you want to manually clean up the document yourself.
  - 2) Contact the AES office to create accessible PDFs from ones that are not readable.

How to Manually Fix PDFs (cont.)

- Things to keep in mind:

  - Images need captioning

  - Graphs and Tables may not translate well from PDF to Word; can create them out of images from the original doc (then caption) or can recreate as best as possible in Word

  - Try to match the formatting (text-related, paragraph-related, margins, columns, etc.) of the original as best you can

Things to Think About

- There are software programs out there that can help with this process. (AES currently does not have any at this time).

- More and more publishers are creating electronic versions of their textbooks that are not only cheaper but tend to be more accessible.

- Open source items are much more likely to be accessible.

- The Library may also be able to assist in finding accessible articles and such.

- When having AES manually fix PDFs, please keep the separate "—accessible" file as we have technically altered the original (even if not extremely visible) and do not want to create problems with regards to copyright.

Creating Accessible Documents with MSWord

- There are accessibility needs when creating documents that you provide.

- MSWord will generally read (in Word or when converted to PDF) but is not necessarily fully accessible.

- The process to make documents accessible that you are creating is different from what we've talked about today.

Thank You!

- You can always contact the AES office with questions. We can be reached at accessible-info@willamette.edu or 503-370-6737.

- Remember to give yourself as much time as you need to check PDFs.

- If submitting to the AES office, please submit as early as possible; try to provide something that details when the PDF(s) are needed (e.g. syllabus, reading list, etc.).