Creating an accessible learning environment
Student challenges

Explicit alternative format requests

Long delays on receiving requested formats

Excludes many students

Closely related to quality and usability
Instructor challenges

- Lack of awareness of what to do
- Lack of understanding on how it can affect students
- Lack of guidance on how to improve accessibility
Institutional challenges

- No insight into how institution is doing
- Multiple stakeholders
- Manual remediation workflow
- Increased expectation and legal requirements
Data Study

• Large scale data study
  – 20 Higher Education institutions
  – Up to 5 years of data per institution
  – 21+ million content items
  – 700,000+ courses

• Looks at all courses in institution


Content Type Distribution

- Most common content types are Image and PDF
  - Not a great starting point for accessibility
- Uploaded files still outweigh WYSIWYG content
- Significant institutional differences
Scanned Documents

• Very minor overall downward trend

• Some institution are improving significantly
  – Strong connection with institutional initiatives
Images Without An Alternative Description

- Over 75% of images don’t have an alternative description
- Deteriorating slightly over time
  - Many systems now set file name as default alt text
Documents With Contrast Issues

- Roughly 1 in 3 documents is flagged as having contrast issues
- Consistent across institutions with no noticeable improvement
Overall Accessibility Score

• Minor overall improvement in last 5 years

• Some institution have clear upward trend. Others are flat or even declining
  – Strong connection with institutional initiatives

• At the current pace, it will take another 20 years to get to 50%
Making course content accessible
Accessibility in the LMS

The Learning Management System is an important player in this.

Committed to providing Ally to everyone, including non-Blackboard products
Demo
Alternative accessible versions
Automatically checks for accessibility issues and generates alternative accessible formats.

Instructor feedback
Guides instructors on how to improve the accessibility of their course content and alters future behavior.

Institutional report
Provides detailed data and insights to help further improve course content accessibility at the institution.
Included in Ally license

- LMS integration
- Technical integration support
- Report orientation and admin training
- SLA & Support
- Use of 3rd party services (OCR, Audio)
2017 WCET Outstanding Work Award Winner

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