

Accessible content is better content with Blackboard Ally

Challenges

Inaccessible course content poses barriers to student success, but institutions lack the resources and insights to address complex accessibility challenges, and instructors often lack the awareness and skills to fix accessibility issues with their course content.

Working towards a more inclusive learning environment

Blackboard Ally focuses on making digital course content more accessible and helps deliver higher quality and more useable course materials that can benefit all students. Through a seamless integration with the LMS and leveraging IMS LTI and Caliper, Blackboard Ally automatically scans course materials for accessibility issues and assigns an accessibility score to each content item. It then provides an institution-wide course content accessibility report that delivers deep insight into the institution's accessibility performance. Ally also provides detailed feedback and guidance to instructors on how to improve the accessibility of their content, and automatically provides students with a range of more accessible alternative formats such as Semantic HTML, Audio, ePub, Electronic Braille, etc.

By automating the creation of more accessible alternative formats for course content, Ally makes an immediate impact on the institution's accessibility level. Ally has already checked the accessibility issues of **135m content items in 5.5m courses**.

Learning Impact Outcomes

Ally supports key pillars of Universal Design for Learning, such as representing learning content in multiple modalities through the alternative formats. Ally's accessibility reporting helps institutions prioritize where to focus, design improved support structures for content remediation, and monitor progress over time. By providing instructors with the information and resources they need to improve the usability of their course content, Ally is helping drive a cultural shift that prioritizes content accessibility as a crucial step towards inclusivity.

Return on Investment

By automating the creation of alternative formats for course content, Ally makes an immediate impact on the institution's accessibility level. CSU Chico reports that Ally decreased content remediation time by over 25%, saving the campus time and resources.¹ Ally also offers a scalable, data-informed approach to improving content accessibility at both the course and campus level, and Ally's in-context feedback and guidance helps scale accessibility professional development efforts for instructors. Cheryl Kautz, of Grand Valley State University and 1st Place Award Winner of the Most

Inclusive Classrooms in the United States comments,

"Blackboard Ally will help me ensure that my courses are as accessible as possible for my students, save me time, and most importantly help faculty at GVSU to focus on improving student success."²

1. <https://elearnmagazine.com/higher-education-accessibility/>

2. <https://gvsuelearn.wordpress.com/2018/03/27/gvsu-selects-blackboard-ally-to-support-inclusive-education/>