

IT ACCESSIBILITY TASK FORCE

A progress report to
Kelli Trosvig, Vice President and CIO, UW- IT &
Randy Hodgins, Vice President, Office of External Affairs
From Task Force Co-Chairs Sheryl Burgstahler and Gina Hills

July 14, 2016

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

CHARGE

Develop and implement plans for promoting IT accessibility and establishing best practices campus-wide.

OBJECTIVES

- Continue taking steps toward more accessible UW websites and other IT and institutionalizing cooperative relationships between key stakeholder groups.
- Develop strategies that can be applied campus-wide, such as accessibility audits, progress reports, and the availability of tools such as SiteImprove.
- Recommend steps toward a more coordinated campus-wide effort in promoting the design of accessible websites and other IT.

ACTIVITIES

- Review the UW home page and other important pages to ensure that they reflect a high level of accessibility.
- Ensure that current and future templates for UW web pages are designed to be accessible and include an accessibility link as part of the templates.
- Review the Accessible Technology at the UW website (uw.edu/accessibility/) and recommend the addition of content useful to the campus community (e.g., best practices, templates, specific campus guidelines).
- Develop plans for promoting web accessibility, including who should be involved, what the processes would be, etc.
- Submit annual progress reports to project sponsors.

TASK FORCE PROGRESS

The task force has met monthly since June 2012, engaging in all of the assigned activities.

MEMBERSHIP

The original members of the task force represented UW External Affairs and UW Information Technology (UW-IT). The number of stakeholder groups engaged in the task force has gradually increased to include those represented by the following members:

UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

- Victor Balta, News & Information Director, balta@uw.edu
- Gina Hills, Director, Web Communications, Marketing & Communications, ghills@uw.edu (co-chair)

UW-IT

- Sheryl BURGstahler, Director, Accessible Technology Services (ATS), sherylb@uw.edu (co-chair)
- Dan Comdem, danc@uw.edu, and Hadi Rangin, hadir@uw.edu, [Access Technology Center \(ATC\)](#)
- Rick Ells, Senior Webmaster, Communications, rells@uw.edu
- Doug Hayman, Technology Specialist (with a specialty in captioning), ATS, dhayman@uw.edu
- Terrill Thompson, Technology Accessibility Specialist, ATS, tft@uw.edu

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Ian Campbell, Manager, Disability Services Office, campian@uw.edu

STUDENT SERVICES

- Bree Callahan, Director, Disability Resources for Students, brec@uw.edu

OFFICE OF RISK MANAGEMENT

- Amanda Paye, Title IX/ADA Coordinator, apaye@uw.edu
- John Hoql, Training Specialist, jpahogl@uw.edu

UW PROCUREMENT SERVICES

- Raymond Hsu, Assistant Director, rayhsu@uw.edu

CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Theresa Ronquillo, Instructional Consultant and Affiliate Faculty Member, tmr51@uw.edu

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FUTURE PLANS

As shared in the September 2012, July 2013, July 2014, and June 2015 reports, the full task force meets monthly and subgroups meet regularly to make progress within three areas of concern: enhancement of online resources, promotion of accessible IT, and exploration of policies/processes. Accomplishments in these three areas since the last report are summarized below.

EXPLORATION OF POLICIES/PROCESSES

- **UW's IT Accessibility Guidelines and Checklist.** The IT Accessibility Guidelines document (uw.edu/accessibility/guidelines/), developed by the task force and subsequently approved and signed May 1, 2015, by Kelli Trosvig, Vice President and CIO of UW-IT, continues to be shared throughout campus and the corresponding detailed instructions within the IT Accessibility Checklist (uw.edu/accessibility/checklist/) are regularly updated.
- **Procurement Guidelines.** Recommended procurement steps, developed in a collaboration between UW Purchasing and UW-IT staff, were added to the section "Procuring Accessible IT" at uw.edu/accessibility/procurement/.
- **Annual IT Accessibility Report.** The 2015 ATS report is attached as an Appendix to this report. Ideally, this report would become more expanded and campus units would be required to submit similar reports on their progress toward more accessible IT each year.
- **Inaccessible PDFs.** The task force continues to identify the proliferation of inaccessible PDF

files to be a high-level concern on campus. Per the task force recommendation, the Provost was asked to fund at least one more ATS staff member so that there can be one person, along with student helpers, proactively approaching PDF file owners on campus, helping them make their PDFs accessible and ensuring that they have the skill set to do so in the future. Terrill Thompson has been looking for possible tools to help with this effort.

- **DRS and ATC Processes.** The collaboration between DRS and ATC continues to increase and has become a model for other campuses. Key to this success is regular collaboration, an understanding of respective roles—e.g., with respect to IT, DRS provides accommodations to students registered in their office, such as captioning videos and making documents accessible; ATC works on similar issues but proactively—e.g., encouraging faculty and staff to caption videos and use accessible documents and setting up training and processes so that they can do so).
- **ADA Compliance Support.** Salome Heyward, a civil rights attorney with over 30 years of experience in the field of disability discrimination law and disability management, was hired by the Office for Compliance and Support to, among other things, lead an effort to evaluate the University's risk level in its efforts toward more accessible IT. She is working closely with the Task force. Her recommendations are expected by the end of 2016.
- **Future Plans.** The task force will continue exploring ways to
 - promote implementation of the IT Accessibility Guidelines.
 - further address IT accessibility in the procurement process.
 - ensure that complaint-reporting processes at the UW are effective for identifying high-risk IT accessibility problems (in a related effort we may invite someone from the Attorney General's office to speak with the task force.).
 - develop efficient strategies to identify inaccessible PDFs, remediate them, and train staff responsible for posting PDFs.
 - continue to offer capacity building institutes for the UW and for Washington State postsecondary institutions.
 - work with Salome Heyward to improve/expand IT accessibility mandates, services, processes, and collaborations and further align with legal mandates.

ENHANCEMENT OF ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Website Improvements.** Task force members and their associates continued to improve the Accessible Technology at the UW website (uw.edu/accessibility), especially in areas that help staff and faculty implement the UW accessibility guidelines.
- **Future Plans.** The task force will continue to
 - continue to enhance the Accessible Technology at the UW site to make content more complete, to make it easier for users to find information they are looking for, and to create and post more “how to” pages and videos;
 - work with others on campus to more regularly promote training on PDF, website, and video accessibility; and
 - expand the reach of SiteImprove when possible by (1) shrinking the crawls of inactive sites in favor of crawling new sites whose owners would like to participate and (2) promoting training opportunities to ensure more consistent use of the tool.

PROMOTION OF ACCESSIBLE IT

- **Captioning.** The task force continues to identify the proliferation of uncaptioned videos to be a high-level concern on campus. ATS staff worked with the SBCTC (State Board of Community and Technical Colleges) on a solicitation for a statewide captioning vendor for Washington. 3Play Media won the completion and plans are now underway to develop practices that ensure prompt, accurate, and efficient procurement of captions for all state postsecondary institutions interested in participating. ATS continues to promote captioning in Panopto video capture processes and to

locate uncaptioned videos on high-level, high-traffic websites and, when identified, work with the host to get captions included. However, now there is only one staff member working 20% of his time on this effort; this is not nearly enough time to promote captioning campus-wide and help units arrange for captioning. This year ATS successfully received approval to use temporary funds from UW-IT to fund the captioning of a sample of some high-impact, high-use videos and to test captioning approaches in a small number of large classes that use Panopto.

- **SensusAccess.** ATS and DRS continue to co-fund a license for this web-based product that converts a document from an inaccessible format (e.g., a scanned PDF image) to a more accessible one and are promoting its use by students with disabilities through DRS and ATS. This service does not satisfy all accessibility needs (for example, it doesn't add tagged structure to PDFs, which is necessary for effective use by screen reader users). However, SensusAccess does generate a readable document that is accessible for students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities, who read with support from assistive technologies. This provides a quick, short-term, do-it-yourself solution for students who need to access inaccessible documents when the DRS office is closed. The UW Document Conversion Service is located at <http://tinyurl.com/uw-doc-convert> and is linked from the DRS, Accessible Technology at the UW (uw.edu/accessibility), ATC, and other websites.
- **Campus Presentations and Events.** Task force members identified key organizations, delivered presentations and conducted meetings—e.g., the Accessible Web user group, the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Web Council, the Office of Research, Educational Outreach, UW Bothell, UW Tacoma, and Tech Connect. Task force members conducted a Front End Technology community of practice and hosted activities for Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) in May that included an Access Technology Center open house. ATS staff members also continue to support a promotional website (nomouse.org) and a #nomouse campaign to increase awareness about the importance of ensuring that websites can be operated with the keyboard alone.
- **UW-IT Training.** With high-level support, from UW-IT's Academic Services unit, ATS continues to work to ensure that accessibility is being included as a topic in all of UW-IT's Learning Technologies courses, using expertise and materials from the ATC as needed.
- **Campus Web Accessibility Proactive Checks and Support.** A designated temporary, part-time staff person within ATS routinely reviews UW websites for accessibility and gives suggestions to website owners. Site owners are encouraged to consult the Accessible Technology at the UW site as a resource, use standard UW templates that have accessibility built-in and consider using SiteImprove to monitor their sites for accessibility problems. Results from ongoing Web accessibility reviews are included in the annual IT accessibility report included as an Appendix to this report.
- **Capacity-Building Institutes (CBIs).** With input from the task force, ATS sponsored two CBIs related to accessible IT. One lasted one and one-half days and was for campuses statewide. Each school was represented by someone from a disability-related position and someone from an IT-related position. Ongoing communication takes place online within the Accessible IT Community of Practice to further discuss how we can increase the accessibility of IT on all postsecondary campuses in Washington State. A similar one-day event focused specifically on the UW. Both events increased the knowledge of participants and their ability to promote accessible IT in their units and campus-wide. Well received by participants and with documented outcomes (e.g., increasing numbers of task forces and other efforts to promote accessible IT, the development of a state contract for captioning), similar events are being planned for 2017.
- **IT Accessibility Capacity-Building Award.** The task force presented to the UW Bothell campus an *Accessible IT Capacity Building Award* for promoting the accessible design of IT and universal design of instruction both on-site and online. Recipients of these awards are groups of people at the UW who, together, have promoted the procurement, development, deployment, and use of IT that is accessible to faculty, staff, students, and visitors with disabilities.

- **IT Accessibility Liaisons.** The task force and ATS have been working to increase the number of individuals established as IT Accessibility Liaisons, formally agreeing to communicate online, meet about three times per year, and promoting accessible IT in their units. A meeting of IT Accessibility Liaisons is being planned for fall 2016. Now voluntary, it would be ideal if high-level administrators would require that key units assign IT Accessibility Liaisons within their units.
- **Future Plans.** Future work includes
 - delivering more presentations on universal design and learning technologies;
 - enhancing UW-IT training to include more specific accessibility content, considering other training and professional development (e.g., for online instructors) on campus to promote the inclusion of accessibility topics;
 - promoting the use of SiteImprove and SensusAccess;
 - continuing to develop and implement marketing plans regarding captioning;
 - assigning and supporting IT Accessibility Liaisons in all key units and conducting regular meetings;
 - planning for Washington State and UW Capacity Building Institutes in 2017, as well as a statewide event focused specifically on accessible online learning;
 - developing and promoting GAAD activities and additional events to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the ADA;
 - targeting TAs/RAs and branch campuses with training;
 - continuing to offer the series of one to one consultations with Hadi on accessible web design;
 - focusing more efforts on IT administrative products, such as course registration, ticketing systems, space scouting, etc.; and
 - increasing efforts to address issues related to IT-based learning and supporting faculty, including incorporating more accessibility content into courses supported by the Center for Teaching and Learning.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO SPONSORS

Many of the staff members who have made the UW a recognized leader in accessible IT have been funded by federal grants secured by ATS (as part of its DO-IT Center, which was established in 1992). Although these efforts have benefited the UW, much of this work is focused nation-wide as required by the funding sources. Funding from UW sources for these efforts has been relatively small. The task force is proud of its accomplishments since its inception, particularly in developing campus guidelines, increasing campus awareness and supporting accessibility enthusiasts. However, as revealed in data provided in the Appendix, we are far from reaching a high level of accessible IT campus-wide. We have thousands of websites and documents (mostly PDFs) that are not accessible and many videos without captions. Campuses that are making the greatest progress toward accessible IT today include those that have received formal civil rights complaints from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights or the Department of Justice. ATS and the task force have used the resolutions that have resulted from these complaints as our guide for making our campus compliant with legal requirements, but we do not have the high level of funding and institutional buy-in that becomes available once a formal complaint is made. The task force is doing what it can to avoid this happening at the UW. We have no shortage of ideas for activities to take on, but there is a shortage of central funding for adequate staffing levels and related costs (e.g., for captioning high-impact videos) to support a rigorous initiative to bring our campus to a place where campus units accept accessibility as a required part of their design and procurement processes as they do with respect to IT security and privacy issues and thus routinely apply accessibility guidelines to ensure the procurement, development, and use of accessible IT.

The task force asks that its sponsors

- require the procurement, development, and use of accessible IT (by applying the IT Accessibility Guidelines, developing procedures, assigning staff) within their respective organizations.
- help ensure that regular statements are made to other campus leaders about requirements that their units procure, develop, and use accessible IT (by applying the IT Accessibility Guidelines, developing procedures, assigning staff) within their respective organizations.
- share widely the IT Accessibility Guidelines and the availability of support services on campus (e.g., ATS) to help units apply them. Specifically, help educate leadership groups on accessibility requirements and the UW's efforts and resources, perhaps inviting task force members to present to the president's cabinet, deans group, etc., so that they can in turn share with their staff that the procurement, development and use of accessible IT is required; that guidelines and support is available; and that IT accessibility should be reflected in staff assignments and procedures.
- ensure the availability of adequate numbers of staff members to promote and support accessible IT. Continuing to increase the number of ATS staff members would, for example, allow them to more proactively provide training opportunities and identify and work individually with staff members who design, develop and support websites, documents, and videos to help them learn to make IT more accessible.
- explore ways that permanent central funding might be located to support some specific accessibility efforts, such as the captioning of high-visibility, high-use, and high-impact videos.
- help the task force identify and develop strategies to more broadly communicate to campus leaders about the importance of accessibility and the tools in place to help improve IT accessibility.

Thank you for your continued support of task force efforts.