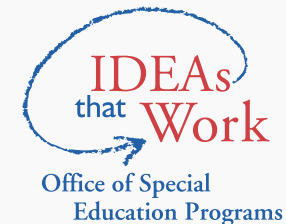


Weiss Center Accessibility Forum

December 5th, 2023



RHONDA WEISS CENTER
FOR ACCESSIBLE IDEA DATA





Ground Rules

- Silence phones by turning the ringer off.
- If you have a call, please take it in the hall.
- Refrain from sidebar conversations.
- Always identify yourself when you speak.
- Spell out acronyms.
- Minimize sounds of clapping applause. Instead, use other quiet methods, such as snapping fingers or hand waves.
- Any service animals present are working.



Logistics

- Meeting in the Alexandria meeting room.
- Bathrooms and Breaks.
- Lunch Logistics.

Agenda

1

Introduction & Project Overview

Fred Edora and Johan Rempel

2

Accessibility Overview & Discussion

Johan Rempel and Valerie Morrison

3

ADAPT Scope

Nichole Bui

4

Discussion

Jim Lesko, Sara Sinani, and Nichole Bui

5

Wrap-Up

Jim Lesko and Sara Sinani





Welcome and Introductions

Main Facilitators:

- Jim Lesko
- Sara Sinani

Technology Lead:

- Nichole Bui

Project Direction and Assistance:

- Fred Edora (as Co-Director)
- Johan Rempel (as Co-Director)
- Bill Huennekens (as Senior Advisor)
- Tony Ruggiero (as Technical Assistance Subject Matter Expert)
- Emily Deaver (as Project Coordinator)

Virtual Facilitators:

- Charlie Silva (as Technical Assistance Subject Matter Expert)
- Darren Wright (as Communication and Dissemination Lead)
- Valerie Morrison (as Accessibility Advisor)

OSEP Project Officer:

- Eric Caruso

Let's Get to Know Each Other

- Introduce yourself to the group
- State your name
- Where you are from
- Organization you are representing



OSEP Remarks

Eric Caruso



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Rhonda Weiss' Legacy

It was only after Rhonda Weiss' passing that her husband Hirsh discovered more about just how extraordinary she was.

According to Hirsh, Rhonda Weiss “kept much of her 41 years as an attorney at the U.S. Department of Education and swashbuckling disability rights advocate to herself.”



Project Overview

Fred Edora and Johan Rempel



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What Is the Accessibility Problem?

- From the proposal:
 - “Many state staff often do not understand what it takes to make a data heavy resource or artifact, including any visuals, dynamically accessible to visually and cognitively impaired individuals, as an example.”
- Year 1 reality as quoted by stakeholders:
 - “Most do not know how to [produce accessible content] nor what all needs to be done.”
 - “Just getting to 508 compliance is a good standard to strive for, along with standardizing practices about ‘what accessibility needs to be.’”



Weiss Center Mission

- Content Accessibility is the highest priority in everything we do.
- Activities conducted at this center are in remembrance and in honor of Rhonda Weiss.
- Broad activities:
 - Development of a FREE data visualization reporting tool that allows States to publish IDEA Data products that are accessible, usable, and manipulatable by persons with disabilities.
 - Providing Technical Assistance on making data reporting and publications accessible to persons with disabilities.



Accessibility First

Accessibility is at the heart of everything we do at the center.

You'll hear us talk about:

- “Accessibility first”
 - Our approach is not an afterthought, it's embedded in every step of our process from conception to dissemination.
- “Nothing about us, without us”
 - by including people with disabilities early in our product life-cycle we can create better experiences for **ALL** users.

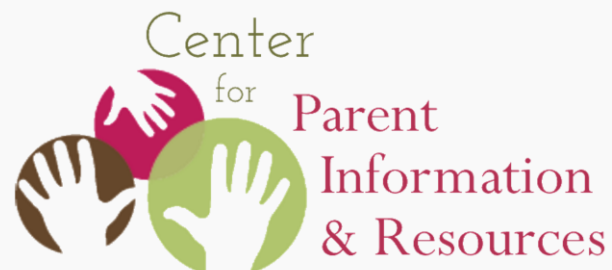
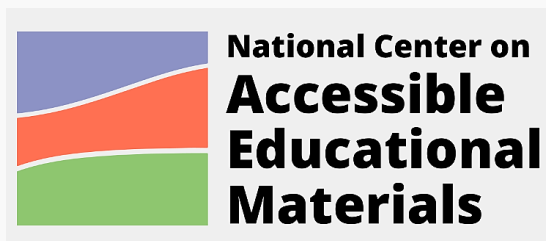


Our Partners





Some of Our New Collaborators:





Achieving Better Accessibility for All

The Rhonda Weiss Center for Accessible IDEA data is dedicated to promoting equity and inclusion for students and individuals with disabilities.

- Achieving better accessibility goes beyond 508 compliance, as the current base level of 508 compliance establishes minimum accessibility requirements.
- Our goal is to provide individuals with disabilities full and equal access to IDEA Part B and Part C data in accessible formats.



What are we doing to address the accessibility problem? (1 of 2)

- Raising Weiss Center awareness through:
 - Communications
 - Webinars and Universal TA
 - Conference activities
 - Collaboration activities
- Requirements gathering for the tool via OS3 meetings and user research meetings
- Relationship development



What are we doing to address the accessibility problem? (2 of 2)

- Responding to initial technical assistance requests (state TA, Community of Practice)
- Development of an accessibility data system framework (Year 1 Set-Aside)
- Building accessibility capacity of the staff and the field



How have we engaged stakeholders?

- We have engaged with over 500 external stakeholders at:
 - Conferences and Presentations
 - OS3 Meetings
 - Webinars
 - Technical Assistance
 - National Advisory Council
- These stakeholders include state education agency staff and Part C providers as well as accessibility experts, individuals with disabilities, and parent/advocacy groups.



Accessibility Needs

We conducted meetings across the country to better understand the data accessibility needs. Stakeholders included:

- Part B and C managers
- Accessibility agency leads, specialists, and consultants
- Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) staff
- Advocates
- Family members
- Students



Accessibility Quotes

- "Accessibility seems to be treated as an afterthought."
- "Accessibility is view subjectively instead of as a right."
- "Accessibility awareness does not go beyond the Office of Special Education."
- "We try but... producing accessible content is difficult and time consuming."
- "There are only two team members in the unit that know anything about 508 standards."



Lived Experiences (1 of 2)





Lived Experiences (2 of 2)



Accessibility Overview

Johan Rempel and Valerie Morrison



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Nothing About Us, Without Us

A phrase used by the disability community to achieve the full participation and equalization of opportunities for, by, and with persons with disabilities.



Accessibility Is a Human Right for People with Disabilities





Making it Personal Means Making it Meaningful

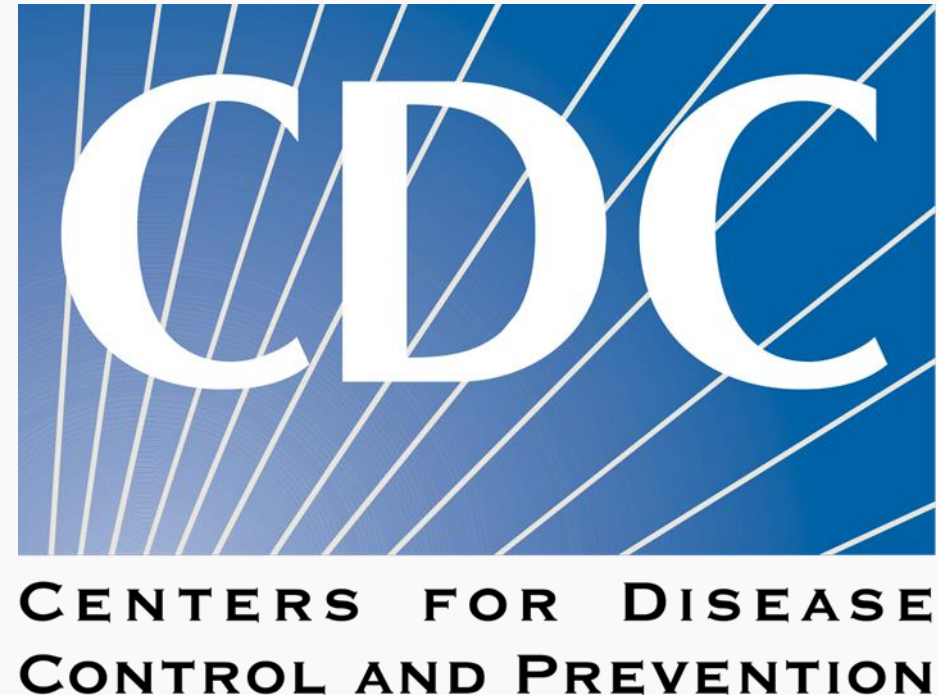
- Many of the children with disabilities we serve today will be the adults needing access to IDEA data tomorrow.
- Some of these same children with disabilities may be future parents, advocates, policy makers, and administrators.
- Equitable access to IDEA data for people with disabilities is equivalent to the curb cuts and wheelchair ramps in the built environment.



Living with a Disability

According to the CDC, approximately 1 in 4 (27%) of adults in the United States are living with a disability that can affect their ability to:

- see
- hear
- communicate
- reason
- walk
- perform other basic life functions















Source: [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html): [https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html]

Permanent, Temporary and Situational Disabilities



- 100% of us will have one or more disabilities at some point in our lives if we live long enough.
- Creating accessible and inclusive products and services benefits everyone.
- Not considering the needs of people with disabilities in products and services disenfranchises up to 27% of the population.

	Permanent	Temporary	Situational
Touch	 One arm	 Arm injury	 New parent
See	 Blind	 Cataract	 Distracted driver
Hear	 Deaf	 Ear infection	 Bartender
Speak	 Non-verbal	 Laryngitis	 Heavy accent

Inclusive
A Microsoft Design Toolkit



NPRM – Accessibility of Web Information and Services

- Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM)
- 60-day comment period to gather public feedback and input on the proposed rule, which ended on Oct. 3rd
- Proposed Update to Title II of the ADA impacting state and local governments
- Adopt the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Version 2.1, Level AA as the technical standard that state and local governments would need to follow





Section 504 Celebrating 50 Years!

- Civil Rights Law Impacting Education Programs and Activities.
- Section 504 was historic because for the first-time people with disabilities were viewed as a class – a minority group.
- Previously, public policy had been characterized by addressing the needs of particular disabilities by category based on diagnosis.

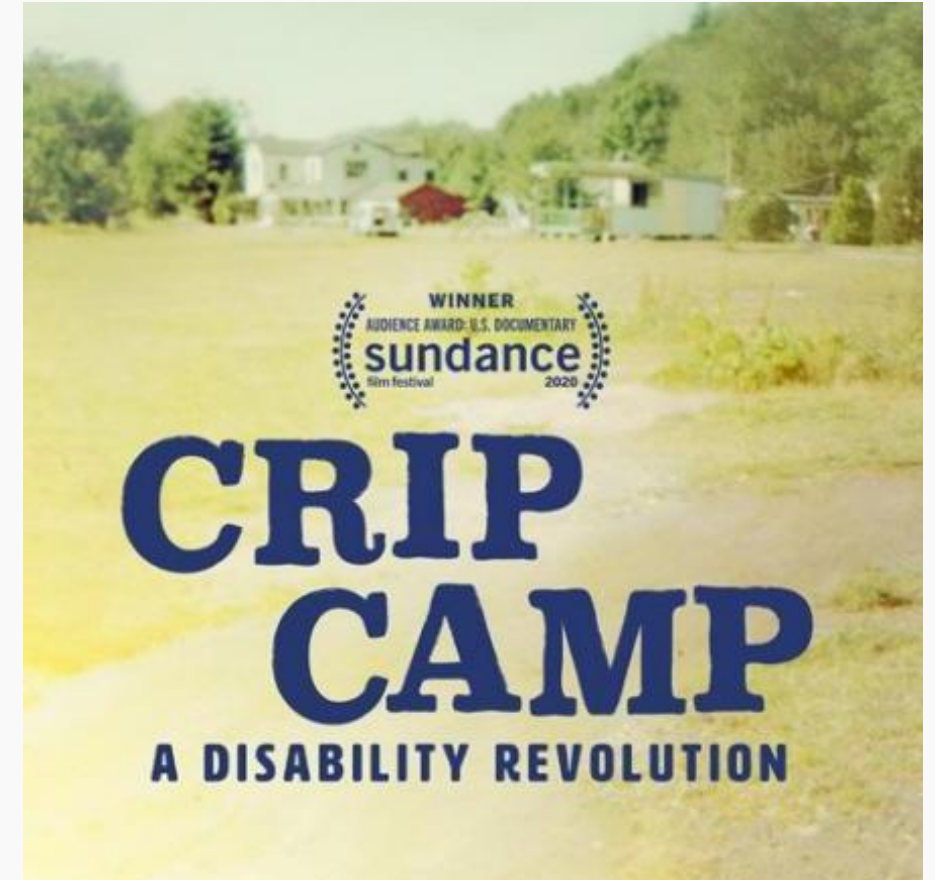




Judy Heumann (1947 to 2023)

"Disability only becomes a tragedy when society fails to provide the things we need to lead our lives — job opportunities or barrier-free buildings, for example. It is not a tragedy to me that I'm living in a wheelchair."

– Judy Heumann





How Compliance Is Often Defined

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- WCAG 2.0/2.1 (Level A/AA)
- Revised Section 508 (ICT Refresh)
- Section 504





How Best Practice Is Often Defined

- WCAG 2.0 (Level AAA)
- WCAG 2.1 (Level A, AA, AAA)
- WCAG 3.0 (draft version)
- Input from Users that may not be included in existing guidelines





Dispelling the Myths of Compliance and Best Practice

- Best practice is not a gold standard that necessarily exceeds the needs of people with disabilities.
- Compliance and best practice is a journey, not the final destination.
- Compliance and best practice is everyone's responsibility, not just the person with the metaphorical clipboard.
- Integrating practices beyond compliance can be a cost save in the long run, not a cost add.



Document Accessibility

Below are some of the ways we've been able to support states with document accessibility through the Weiss Center:

- Delivering accessibility trainings on various programs and skills.
- Offering technical assistance and support looking at individual files.
- Creating tools and guidelines for making accessible documents.
- Building accessible Word Doc and PowerPoint templates.
- Reviewing documents for states for greater accessibility.



Accessibility Projects and Partnerships

Disability Service Teams in Higher Ed

Local and State Government Agencies

Nonprofits and Corporations

Federal and International Organizations





Who Needs Accessible Documents?

Many different populations rely on screen readers, text to speech software, and other assistive technology to access their documents and websites, including:

1. Individuals who are blind, or experience color blindness or low vision
2. Individuals with learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, or ADHD
3. Individuals with head injuries, trauma, or cognitive disabilities
4. Individuals who have motor disabilities or temporary ailments
5. Auditory learners
6. Aging population



What Needs to Be Accessible?

All documents, websites, and videos containing the following:

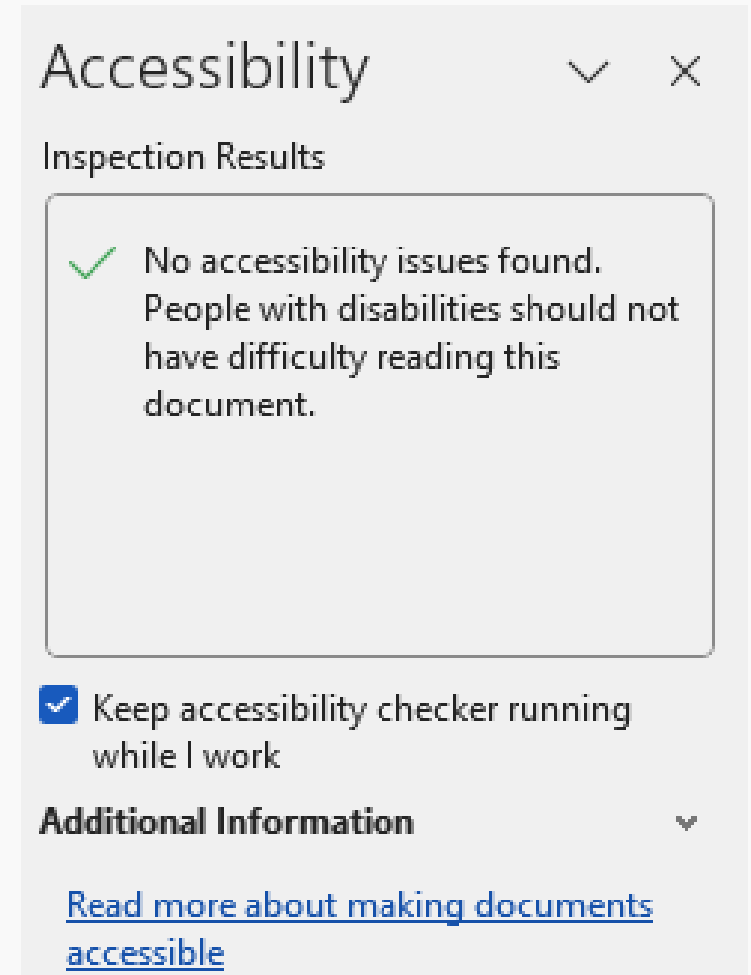
- Special Educational Information
- IDEA Data and Graphs
- SPP/APR Reports
- SSIP Reports





User Centered Approach to Accessibility

- Our accessibility work focuses on the end user's experience.
- We don't rely exclusively on checklists that may be out of date or focused on legality rather than functionality.
- We use both automated accessibility checkers and manual, user-based testing.





Accessibility and Universal Design

Is my content easy to navigate?

Do I have headings and bookmarks for easy navigation?

Are my design choices accessible?

Have I chosen fonts, colors, and backgrounds with accessibility in mind?

Are my visuals clearly and fully described?

Have I written alt text descriptions and captions for my images?

Are my data tables accessible?

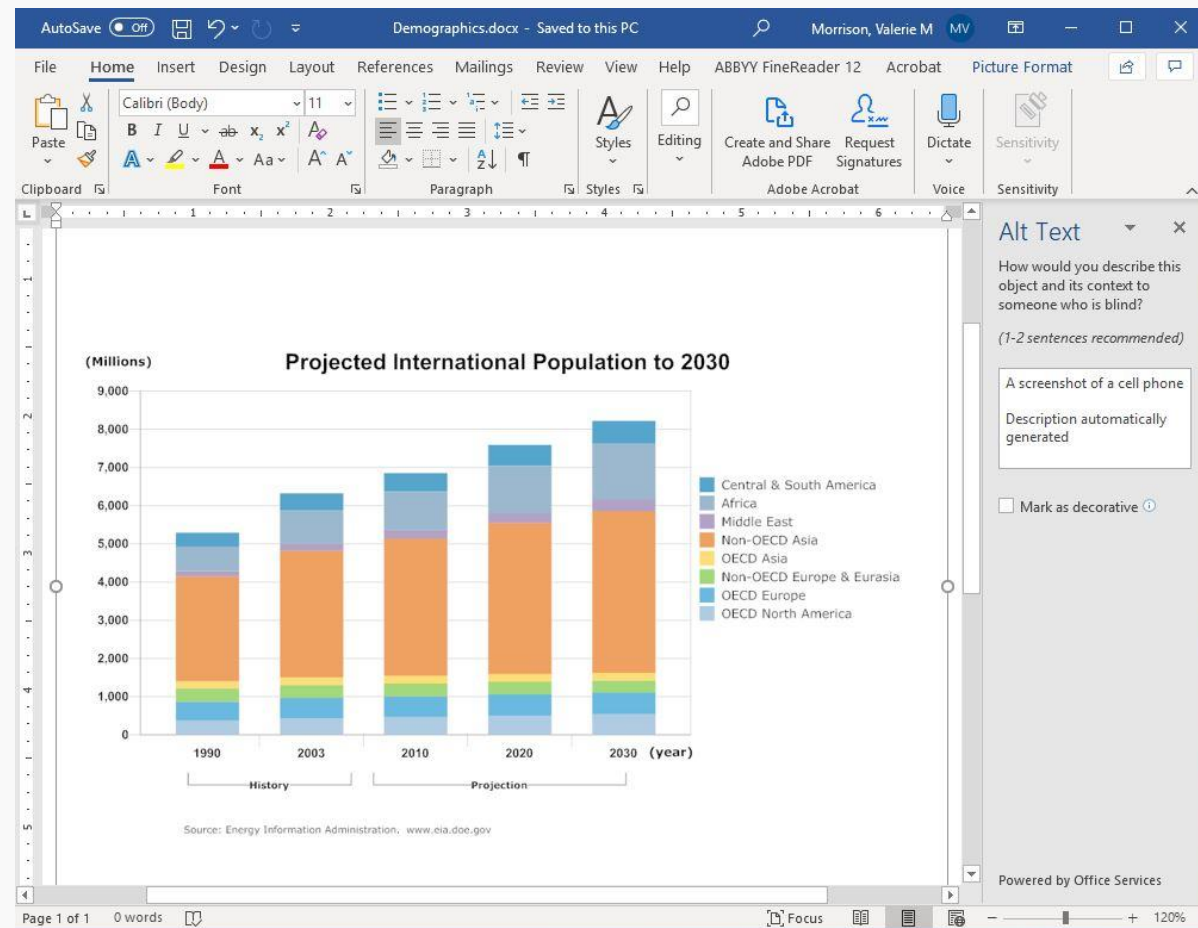
Do I have merged or empty cells? Is there a clear header row?



Automation Can Create Errors

Often the automated tools within programs can introduce accessibility errors:

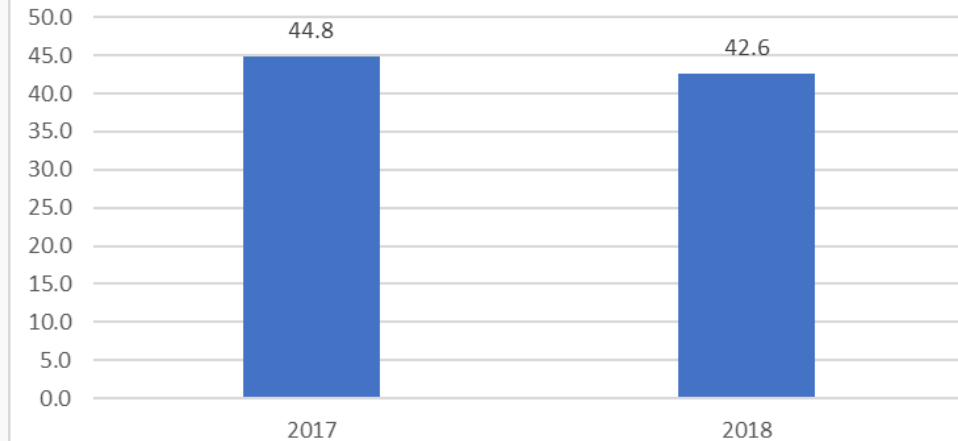
- Automated Alt Text tool in Microsoft Word
- Designer feature in PowerPoint
- Autotagging tool in Adobe



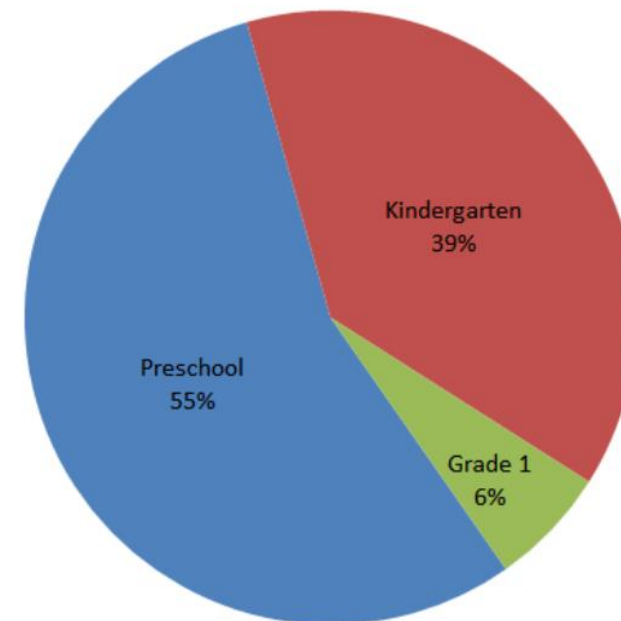
IDEA Data Accessibility

- IDEA Data is complex and incorporates many figures, tables and graphs.
- Presenting this data in ways that are accessible and clear will make the data more understandable, meaningful, and usable for everyone.

Percent of SWD Scoring Developing or Above in Math



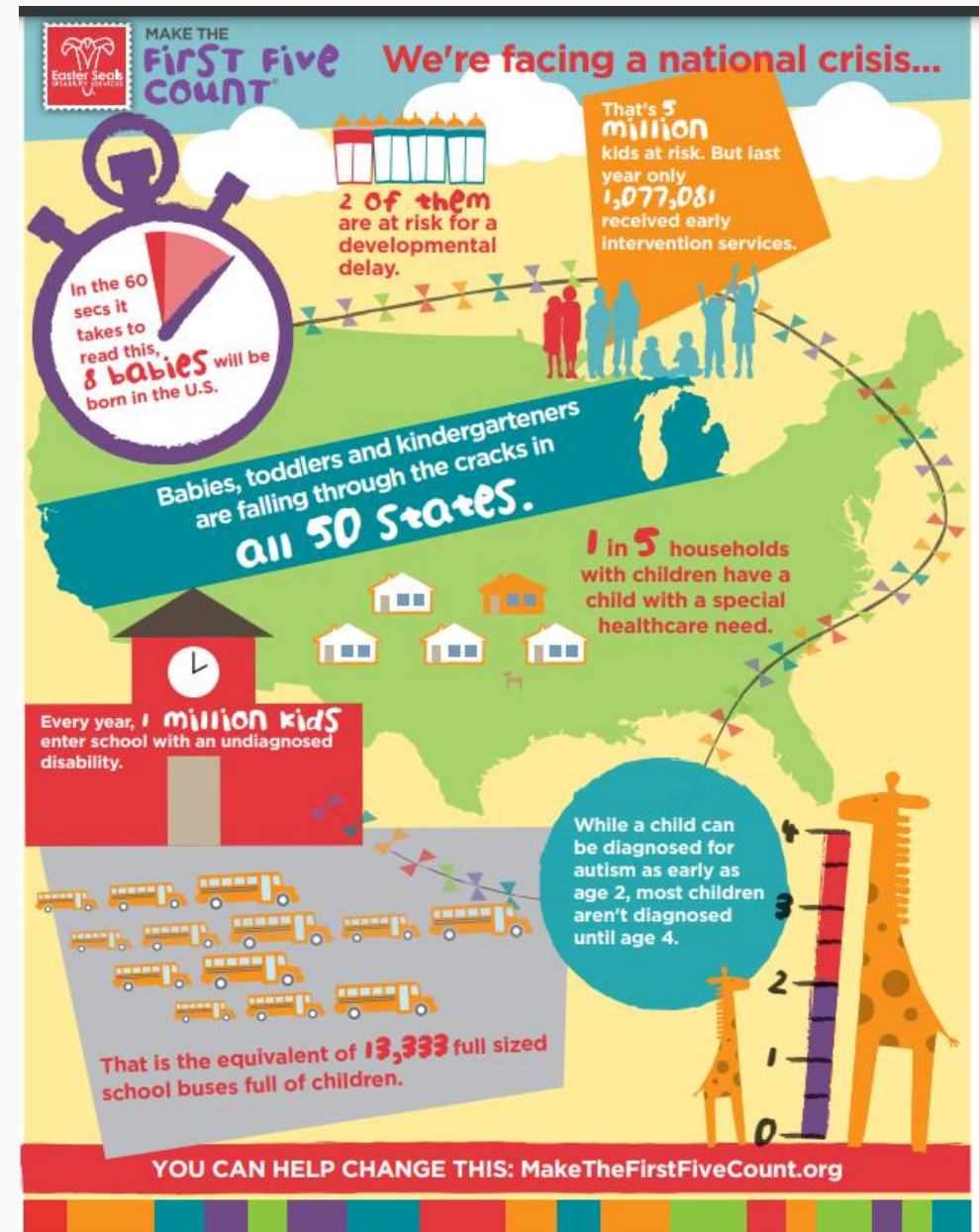
Percentage of Students with Disabilities Ages 3-5 by Grade, 2017-18





Cognitive Load

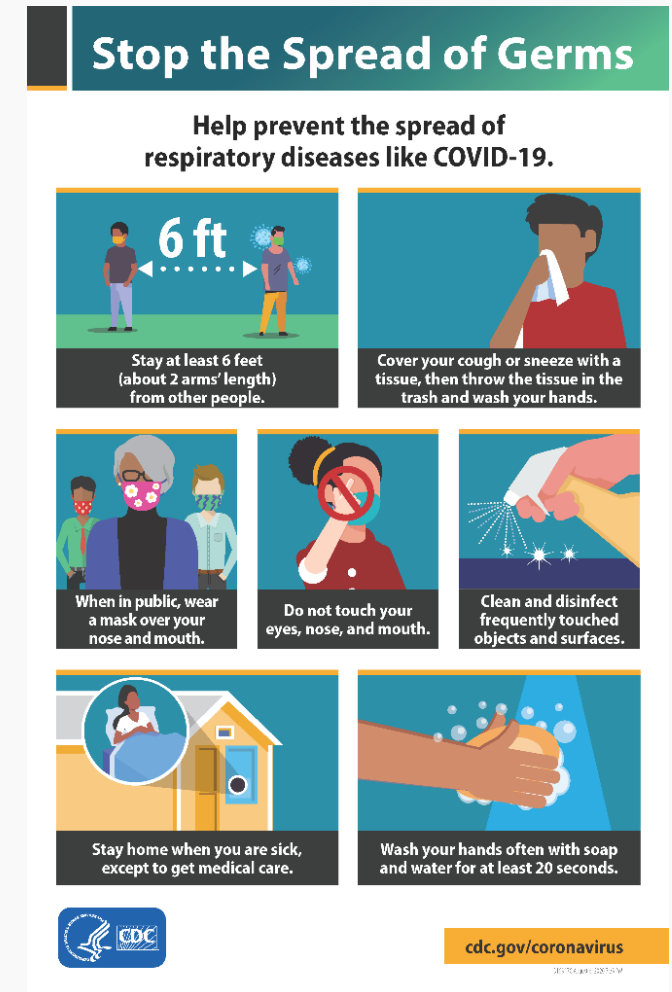
- Cognitive load, also referred to as Auditory Fatigue, is something to consider when describing complex infographics or data-driven charts and graphs.
- Research shows that people can hold up to 7 ideas in their head at once before their working memory becomes overwhelmed.





CDC Project Reviewing COVID-19 Infographics

- Inaccessible graphs and infographics can have severe ramifications on public health.
- Collaboration with the CDC and CDC Foundation on their COVID-19 materials to make them more accessible.
- Research article titled “Creating Accessible Infographics: Describing Scientific Data in Ways Everyone Can Understand” for the *Assistive Technology Outcomes and Benefits Journal*.





IDEA-Specific Curriculum and Resources

- Developing an instructional curriculum focusing on disability awareness and digital accessibility to address states' needs related to accessible IDEA data.
- We're identifying specific needs and building this curriculum based on input from individual states, Community of Practice, National Advisory Council, and Subject Matter Experts.
- This curriculum will be modular-based, building upon the continued needs of states throughout the lifecycle of the grant.

Break – 15 minutes

Accessibility Discussion

Jim Lesko and Sara Sinani



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Accessibility Discussion Questions

- What are your go-to data sources?
 - i.e., U.S. Census Bureau data, USDE, HHS, CDC
- What are the barriers individuals with accessibility needs experience in daily life?
- What are your lived experiences or those of individuals you know who have disabilities?
- What are the top 3 challenges for accessibility?

Lunch – 90 minutes



Reminder of Ground Rules

- Silence phones by turning the ringer off.
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- Refrain from sidebar conversations.
- Always identify yourself when you speak.
- Spell out acronyms.
- Minimize sounds of clapping applause. Instead, use other quiet methods, such as, snapping fingers or hand waves.
- Any service animals present are working.

Afternoon Agenda

1

ADAPT Scope and Demo

Nichole Bui

2

Discussion: Barriers and Potential Solutions

3

Wrap-Up

Jim Lesko and Sara Sinani



Accessible Data Analysis and Publishing Tool (ADAPT) Scope

Nichole Bui



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96.3% of the internet today is not fully accessible to people with disabilities.

Source: [WebAIM Million](#) 2023 report on the accessibility of the top million home pages.



Poll #1

Did that surprise you?

- Yes
- No



Poll #2

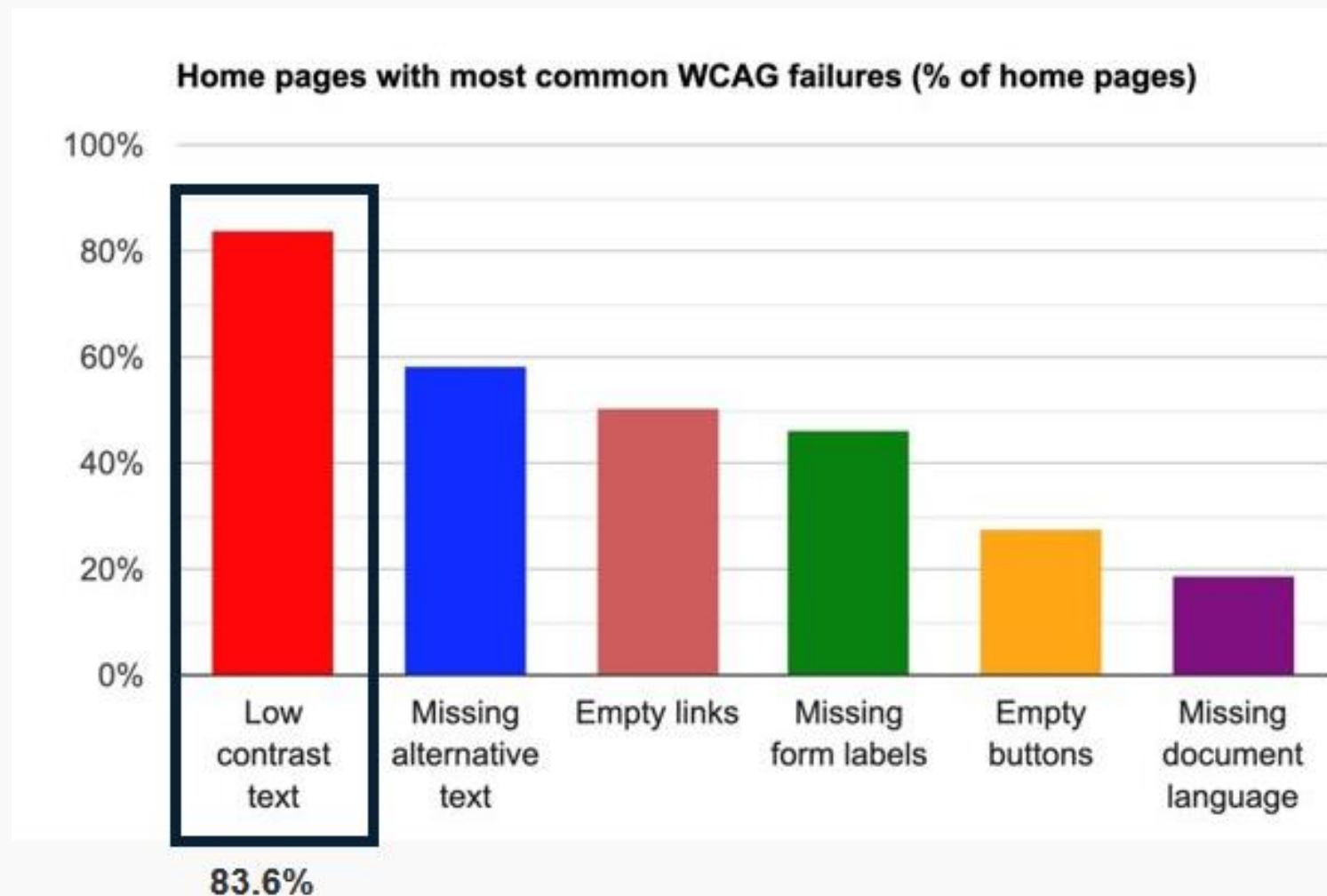
What is the most common accessibility issue on the Web?

- Low contrast text
- Missing alternative text
- Empty links



Most Common WCAG Failures

Source: [WebAIM Million 2023](#) report on the accessibility of the top million home pages.



State of Digital Accessibility and IDEA Reporting

Charlie Silva

After each of our webinars, our evaluation survey asked attendees:

What challenges do you or others have with accessible data, documents, content?



The results are in... (1 of 2)

- “Accessibility is viewed subjectively instead of as a right; this awareness is difficult to influence.”
- “Data is not presented in a format that all folks can access and is not always easy to understand. Data systems are often difficult to navigate.”
- “A challenge is converting all of our data visualizations into a format that is ADA compliant. Our level of awareness is in its infancy stage, still learning.”



The results are in... (2 of 2)

- “How to show charts/graphs in a way that is accessible. There are only two team members in the unit that know anything about the 508 standards, but we do have robust conversations as a team on the impacts of language, culture, intended audiences, etc. We can be better at this though.”

Poll #3

Part B: What percentage of States / Territories have data representations for IDEA Child Count data?

- Less than 10%
- 10 to 15%
- 16 to 20%
- Greater than 20%

Poll #3: Answer – 11.7%

Part B: What percentage of States / Territories have data representations for IDEA Child Count data?

- Less than 10%
- ✓ 10 to 15%
- 16 to 20%
- Greater than 20%

Poll #4

Part C: What percentage of States / Territories have data representations for IDEA Child Count data?

- Less than 10%
- 10 to 15%
- 16 to 20%
- Greater than 20%

Poll #4: Answer – 5.4%

Part C: What percentage of States / Territories have data representations for IDEA Child Count data?

- ✓ Less than 10%
- 10 to 15%
- 16 to 20%
- Greater than 20%



How did you do?

Did anything surprise you?

ADAPT Overview

Nichole Bui



Open-Source Stakeholder Sessions (OS3)

- Conducted virtual and in-person stakeholder sessions:
 - Virtual (20 Participants)
 - Washington, DC (17 participants)
 - Seattle, WA (20 participants)
 - Atlanta, GA (23 participants)
- Attended by diversity of States



Diverse OS3 Attendance

- 80 total participants
 - Included persons with disabilities (blindness, low vision, motor impairment, neurodivergent, deafness)
 - Roles included Part B and Part C data managers, LEAs, partner centers, parents, researchers, students, advocates, accessibility specialists
- Provided accommodations:
 - CART services, ASL, accessible digital materials, motorized scooter, closed caption, sensory-friendly room



Guiding Principles

- Meet each State where they are at.
- Leverage existing resources to minimize burden on State staff.
- Educate users on terminology.
- Achieve equitable access for everyone.



What Is ADAPT?

- Acronym for **A**ccessible **D**ata **A**nalysis and **P**ublishing **T**ool.
- Modern, collaborative, accessible reporting solution.
- Web-based tool hosted in the Cloud.



ADAPT Benefits

- Broader data use by more diverse end users.
- Improve decision-making affecting children with disabilities and their families.

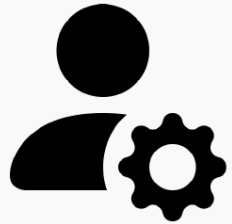


Why Use ADAPT?

- Support IDEA data sets and allows data managers to create and publish reports that are accessible for people with disabilities.
- Help lessen the burden on States and improve their capacity to make IDEA Part B and Part C data accessible.
- Help create a more inclusive world with more diverse perspectives.



ADAPT Users



Authorized Users

Authorized State users have access to ADAPT Admin.

- IT, data managers, state directors, administrators, etc.

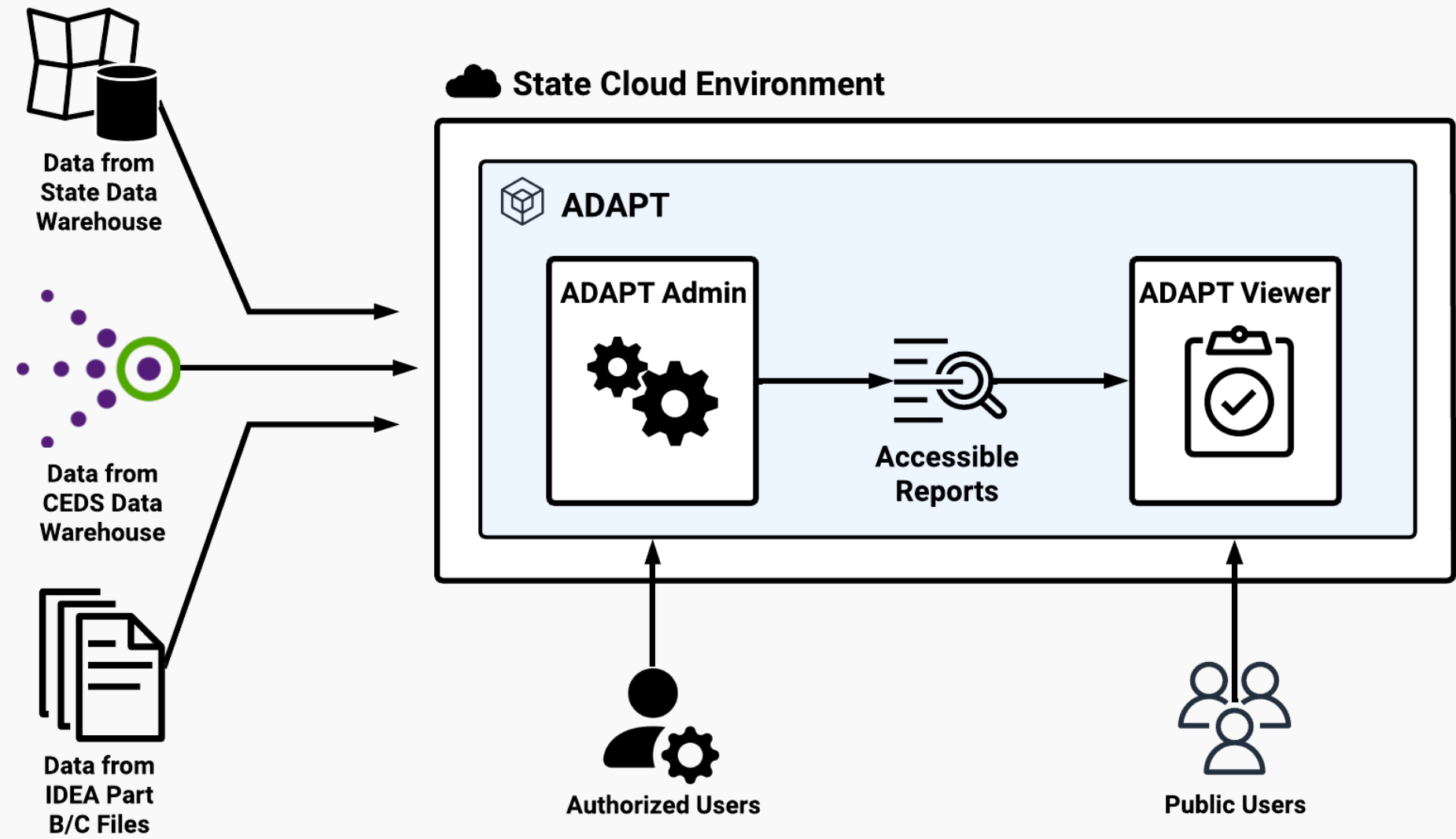


Public Users

Public users have access to ADAPT Viewer.

- Students, parents, educators, researchers, advocates, etc.

Overview of ADAPT





Step-by-Step Guide to ADAPT

STEP 1

States implement ADAPT in their cloud environment and upload data from their:

- State Data Warehouse
- CEDS Data Warehouse
- IDEA Part B/C Files



STEP 2

In ADAPT Admin, state authorized users can create accessible data reports.



STEP 3

State authorized administrators review the created reports to:

- Approve
- Request revisions



STEP 4

Once approved, the accessible data reports can be published to ADAPT Viewer and accessed by the public.

ADAPT - Accessible Data Analysis and Publishing Tool

CEDS - Common Education Data Standards

IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

ADAPT Demo

Johan Rempel



Feedback

- What accessibility features for ADAPT stood out to you?
- What would make ADAPT even better?
- How can accessibility initiatives of the Weiss Center inform other educational initiatives?



Technology Considerations

- What are you excited about that ADAPT could help states with for people with disabilities and those without disabilities?
- What types of additional assistive technologies (AT) need to be considered when accessing information?
- What are additional considerations to ensure that ADAPT works well with AT tools?
- Are there any other accessibility/usability aspects of the ADAPT tool that should be considered?



Features for State Users (1 of 2)

Manage Data Sources

Define the location where data that is being used for reporting originates from.

Manage Data Views

Define the collection of data that is used for reporting.

Manage Reports

Develop reports that display the data representation in an accessible format.

Manage Glossary

Define the definitions for commonly used terms that are referenced in reports.



Features for State Users (2 of 2)

Manage Users

Assign users and their roles and permissions.

Manage Branding

Configure the logo and colors to match the State's branding guides.

Manage Disclosure Avoidance

Define suppression rules to protect student privacy based on reporting level for the State.

Manage Tool Settings

Configure the ADAPT experience based on the State's specific requirements for workflow approvals, publishing, data taxonomy, etc.



Features for Public Users

View Reports

Access and filter reports published by the State. View and download tabular data.

View Glossary

View definition for terms used in the reports.

Question: What features would improve the first release?



ADAPT Roadmap – 2024

Minimum Viable Product – Jan 2024

Define the data source and data collection needed to create an accessible Child Count report.

Change accessibility settings.

Release 1 – Sept 2024

Create reports for other 616 and 618 Part B / C data collections.

Define glossary terms.

Apply suppression rules on public reports.

Configure ADAPT experience.

Public user experience.



ADAPT Roadmap – Future

Release 2 – Sept 2025

New data source types and reports.

Workflow approval and email templates.

Language access.

Account creation for public users.

Other based on user feedback.

Explore AI integration?

Release 3 – Sept 2026

Other based on user feedback.

Explore Chatbot integration?

Question: What other features should be considered in the roadmap?



User Research Metrics

- 14 total participants
 - Included persons with disabilities (blindness, motor impairment, neurodivergent)
 - Roles included Part B and Part C data managers, LEAs, partner centers, parents, researchers, students, advocates, and accessibility specialists



User Research Inputs (1 of 2)

- Add a Bookmark feature to save sections, not the entire page, for later use.
- Provide a hover feature to glossary terms, in addition to the expand capability.
- Add glossary definitions near the terms in the data representation component.
- Add an additional filter action inside each section that could trigger the filter panel from each section.
- Make the main action row stick on the top of the page as it scrolls.



User Research Inputs (2 of 2)

- Add a quick view for “Recently viewed reports.”
- Use headings to divide content and use the first heading to describe the intent of the view.
- Do not repeat the alt text in the caption. Instead, describe the graph type as alt text and use the caption to represent the data in text format.
- Do not repeat the primary navigation or nest a primary navigation section inside a parent also called “primary navigation.”
- Include how many results there are in the message in the announcement.



User Research Feedback (1 of 2)

- “I love the fact that it is not only navigating me by a landmark, but it is reading me the small descriptions that go with each region, that’s gorgeous.”
- “That is not only useful for screen readers, but that’s going to be useful to cognitive and intellectual disabilities users too, because what your descriptions do so well is they make clear what you are supposed to do with this part of the page.”
- “I’m so excited to see this tool come together, and I’m also excited to see what implications its design has for the accessibility of all different types of data to people with disabilities in the future.”



User Research Feedback (2 of 2)

- “The ADAPT experience was generally intuitive, clean and easy to use.”
- “The proposed layout for the Child Count report was easy to read and understand. Quick Summary section gives a good entry point to understanding the entire report. Data visualizations were understood without any questions.”
- “The skip navigation provides a good summary of how the page and way to navigate directly to a section heading or region for helping screen reader users navigating a complex interface.”

Break – 15 minutes

For Discussion



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Barriers and Potential Solutions (1 of 2)

- What are the reading levels and comprehension challenges that need to be considered when developing content?
- What are some suggestions on improving navigation when accessing a webpage or website?
- What are some current barriers, and potential solutions, in building an accessible website?



Barriers and Potential Solutions (2 of 2)

- What are the skills and knowledge needed for people with disabilities to more effectively access IDEA-related data?
- What are the ways in which the Weiss Center could provide assistance and support to maximize access to IDEA data for people with disabilities?
- What does the Weiss Center need to understand and implement to make resources easily accessible for individuals with disabilities?

Wrap-Up

Jim Lesko and Sara Sinani



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Thank you!

The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, H373Q220002. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer: Eric Caruso.



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