# So You’ve Hired an Accessibility Coordinator (or Specialist)- Now What?

What to Expect when you are Expecting… a Digital Accessibility Specialist

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## Objectives

Learn about strategies, challenges, and successes used at The Ohio State University and Ohio University in order to improve digital accessibility.

Learn about attainable goals and plans for implementation in order to provide guidance for improving an institution's web and digital accessibility.

Discuss the steps that have been taken in the institutions along with their long-term timelines.

## Introductions and Institutions

### Ohio University Introduction

Laura Fathauer, Web Accessibility Coordinator

Part of Web Services team in OIT

Providing auditing, training, and evaluations of Information Technology accessibility

### Ohio University institution

“Building the bridge as we cross it.”

Enrollment: 34,587 (Sp 2017) (Main campus, regional, eCampus)

Regionals-6

75% centrally hosted websites

### Ohio University History

Committee created Information Technology Accessibility Policy and created Web Accessibility position concurrently; ongoing advocacy and education by Web Services Manager. Information Technology Accessibility Policy sponsored jointly by ADA Coordinator and CIO.

Staff: Web Accessibility Coordinator, 2 student employees.

### Ohio University Current

Building on past work

In place when I arrived: Policy in place, migration process to more accessible CMS.

Policy is “From here, forward” approach to improving accessibility.

Implementing purchasing evaluations process and supporting Information Technology Accessibility Policy.

Auditing OHIO sites and applications and prioritizing improvements.

Identifying and coordinating resources and training.

### Ohio State University

Julia Novakowski

Systems Analyst in Digital Accessibility

Help support the Digital Accessibility Center with evaluations and with training related to the emerging policies.

When friends and family ask what I do:

“We build (metaphorical) digital wheelchair ramps to the internet”

### Ohio State University Program

The Ohio State University is refreshing and expanding our digital accessibility program

This process includes a

1. Policy revision

2.   Coordinated training

3.   The implementation of a scanning tool

### Ohio State University History

The Digital Accessibility Center (DAC) was formed as the Web Accessibility Center (WAC) in 2003 through a collaborative partnership between the Office of Student Life Disability Services and the ADA coordinator’s Office.

In 2017, the WAC was renamed to Digital Accessibility Center to appropriately reflect the increasing use of digital information and services delivered through other digital channels such as phone and tablet applications.

Staff

Digital Accessibility Specialist, Systems Analyst, Director

### Ohio State University Mission Statement

The Digital Accessibility Center is dedicated to supporting Ohio State’s core values of diversity and inclusion, by honoring and celebrating differences through improving digital access.

We aim to support the campus community in furthering the goal of providing equal access to campus programs and activities for people with disabilities and learning differences.

It is our passion that we work towards creating a fully accessible world for everyone using the Universal Design model and accessible design and development practices.

## SCOPES- What do we do?

### OHIO University Scope

Purchasing

Accessibility in new web CMS- UI and QA of migrated sites.

Prioritizing remediation of existing public web sites (UI and CSS elements).

Education & Training

### Ohio State Scope

#### Education & training

Evaluation of vendor purchasing and evaluation of new and existing development that is occurring on campus.

#### Vendor purchasing-

Ensure that they are digitally accessible (Director- approves- the whole team helps evaluate)- High risk items-

#### Remediation and exceptions

Websites and applications that have been purchased or will be purchased (Director- approves under ADA coordinator, whole team evaluates)

Evaluate digital communications-

Evaluate and write up reports for websites and applications (Specialist and Analyst).

#### Educate

We meet with developers and content creators to help inform them about best practices on creating accessible content.

## Process?

### OHIO Process: Purchasing

Policy implemented in phases:

IT is classified as high, medium, or low risk based on public/students: “high risk” web applications: over 50 students or public.

Phase 1: High risk web applications; new and contract renewals.

Phase 2: Other types of IT, ; medium & Low risk web applications, desktop software.

Department submits an exemption request to ADA coordinator; reviewed by ADA and OCIO; as part of exemption request they need to provide a plan for providing access to content when requested.

### OHIO Process: Purchasing

Requesting VPATS from vendors

Recommending they develop a Version 2.0 if they haven’t already

Originally intended to have two levels of evaluation; an initial “level 1” and a fuller WCAG “Level 2”.

Developed in consultation with other institutions.

### OHIO Processes: Websites

Provided training on WCAG and accessibility testing tools and manual checks to developers

Training by providing solutions to issues identified (the “how”).

Periodic evaluating front page of top 200 sites; will be expanded as we add resources and/or tools.

Remediating high-use interactive elements: focus indicators, color contrast, keyboard controls & SR enhancements for UI controls

Web Services provides CMS infrastructure; content owners responsible for content.

### OHIO Process: In-House applications

Completing an audit of issues based on impact of issue and level of effort required to fix.

Older platform already planned for retirement- some apps may just go away or be fixed with the replacement.

High impact, level 3- potential rewrite/revamp of UI

High Impact, level 1- blocks to keyboard access of critical process

### OHIO Process: Education & training

Prioritized meetings with campus units:

ADA coordinator & Web Accessibility Coordinator meeting with reps from units; depending on structure of the unit, can be communications staff, web developers, etc.

Asking to identify someone who can provide accessible format when requested.

Document accessibility trainings (2-part)

Processes that have high impact: “saving as PDF.” Using styles.

“here forward”; plus top document remediation

### Ohio State University policy

Purpose of the policy:

“To ensure equal access to digital information and digital services for all university constituencies”

1. This process includes a policy revision

2. Coordinated training

3. The implementation of a scanning tool

### Ohio State University Parallel Process: Scanning Tool

Begin with a campus wide audit of each website and a training plan for this new scanning tool

Current public facing websites

Training staff who produce online content

Plans for remediating public facing websites

### Ohio State University Parallel Process Campus Training

The Systems Analyst will help design a plan and course of action to ensure digital accessibility utilizing the principles of backwards design.

Identifying content creators across the campus

Curate the batch of training modules best suited for those respective groups

Help support the training  
Ohio State University: Where are we in the process?

The DAC has expanded from the director and a GAA to a director, two employees and funding for a GAA.

The digital accessibility specialist has gone through DeQue Training and works on evaluations.

The systems analyst is going through Access University Training and works on evaluations and training for the campus.

## Evaluations

### Ohio University Evaluations

Level 1; “easy checks” from W3C:

common accessibility issues across content.

Students doing similar tasks for QA on migrated sites as they do for public websites and for externally contracted web applications.

Intent to do an initial assessment and only do a full if it passes level 1.

Level 2 full WCAG evaluation, ordered by issue type.

Undergoing some revision to get better information at level 1.

Developing JIRA process to track and monitor parts of evaluations.

### Ohio State Evaluations and Workflow

#### Where do requests come from?

Complaints, interest in new purchases and new development.

#### Prioritizing

Doing evaluations in timely manner means chunking out time and prioritizing and being ready to drop everything if there is something that requires attention.

#### Develop a system that works for your school.

We use a shared excel sheet and shared folders and documents of the evaluations in OSU box.

#### Structure for evaluations?

There is no ONE way to do it.

Art not a science

#### Create a process for evaluations

We use a template, but also recognize that depending on who the evaluation is for, the final product may change.

Who is the audience? Developers? Administrative associates who were told they need to email us? Departments?

#### Getting started

High level issues- high priority

Start with the main page

#### Page by page

Analyzing semantic structures- Headings, landmarks, menubars, and navigation for screen reader and keyboard reliant users.

Special interactions (Forms? Events/Calendars? Survey/questionnaire?)

#### Use screen shots

We really like Screenpresso

#### Workflow?

The digital accessibility specialists work on the report and then the director checks for clarity.

#### Once the Evaluation is complete

Email point of contact the evaluation

Usually set up a face to face

Digital Accessibility Center

## Challenges?

### OHIO Challenges

Externally purchased applications:

Level of detail of evaluations.

Getting access to evaluate vs. a demonstration

Vendor-determined deadlines

VPATs version 1.3

What do we prioritize?” “What’s absolutely necessary?” “Where do we start”

Bottleneck of having to review work of students

### Ohio State Challenges

I’m one person

Time

You can’t do it alone.

Training

Outside packages?

(Deque, Level Access, Paciello Group)

Free online training?

In house development?

Prioritization

Websites and applications

Purchasing

Workflow

Who does what? and When? and How? Bottle neck?

Awareness

Informing people on campus that digital accessibility should not be an add-on, but needs to be considered at the start of any purchase or development.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

### OHIO Next Steps

Process recommendations (agile development; moving target).

Expanding training.

Expanding purchasing evaluations and iterative improvements on process.

Proposal for additional resources.

### Ohio State Conclusion and Next Steps

Doing evaluations takes patience.

Training takes patience.

Currently the process is time consuming.

Digital accessibility specialists, systems analyst, and director working together on every report works.

This is not sustainable as the work increases.

Training new hires will be a challenge.

Way down the line- Best work flow for the influx of requests for evaluations (ticketing system? Tracking system of work completed).

Ongoing Work

Raising awareness of our office, worth, and requirements for digital accessibility.