Digital Accessibility Quick Guide

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, require that all individuals have equal access to online instructional opportunities. The ADA **requires that online courses be fully compliant from the start of the course**. The definition of "accessible" used by the Office of Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Education regarding inaccessible IT is as follows:

> *"Accessible" means a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use. The person with a disability must be able to obtain the information as fully, equally, and independently as a person without a disability.* Exceptions to meeting this standard cannot be granted.

Tips for creating accessible courses

Hyperlinks:
- Ensure all hyperlinks have unique and descriptive text

Text Design
- Use basic fonts that are easy to read. Studies show digital text in sans serif fonts are easier to read.
- Use high-contrast color combinations for text and infographics. Otherwise individuals with colorblindness or low vision are unable to differentiate the text from the background. Color should not be relied on to convey information.
- Text formatting should be simple. The only text that should be underlined is text that is hyperlinked.

Images/Graphics
- Add Alternative Text to describe the image or graphic. LATTE, MS Office, Google Docs, etc., have an alt text or description option when adding or formatting the image or graphic.
- Avoid images of text; screen readers cannot read them.

Audio/Video Items
- Audio files require written transcription (spoken words and important sounds) and video files require captioning (open or closed).
- It is best practice to have audio or video clips that are 3 to 10 minutes in length. If the content that takes longer to cover, it is best to create short, segmented videos, each ranging from 3 to 10 minutes in length.
- Be sure to use individual microphones to obtain clear audio.

Documents
- All text in a course should be readable by screen readers and searchable, which allows learners to search for words or phrases within a document:
  - Use approved word processors such as those in Microsoft Office or the text editor in LATTE
  - Export Word to PDF with accessibility enabled
  - No images of text or image-based PDFs. When scanning, use any available "OCR" options to create editable text or use Recognize Text in Acrobat DC.
- Tables need to have identified headers and labels and should be simple; don't overuse merged cells.
- Never use invisible tables to layout information.
- **Course Syllabus:** Include the accessibility statement for students which outlines accommodation procedures. Download the accessible syllabus template or create your syllabus directly in LATTE.

The Center for Teaching and Learning provides instructors with consultations and resource materials for universal design for learning. This accelerates a university commitment to creating and sustaining learning environments accessible to students. All of these efforts create a more inclusive learning opportunity for all of our students.

Accessibility Checklists & Resources

There are multiple ways to achieve compliance with ADA guidelines. See the Faculty Toolkit for digital accessibility for more information. An asynchronous LATTE course on digital accessibility is also available. Email the digital accessibility help desk for guidance or to report an issue with this document.

Document and Presentation (Slides) Design

Application	Tips for Creating Accessible Content	Helpful Tools
Documents • Microsoft Word • Google Docs • Pages	☐ Use built in layout and styles to create headings and document structure ☐ Provide alt text for images ☐ Use high-contrast color combinations for text ☐ Don't rely on color or formatting to convey meaning ☐ All text in a course should be searchable, which allows learners to search for words or phrase within a document – no images of text ☐ Tables and charts need to have identified headers and labels ☐ All links should be unique and descriptive (exceptions for printed/projected documents)	• Microsoft built-in Accessibility checker for Windows • Microsoft built-in Accessibility checker for Mac • Apple Pages accessibility • Color Contrast checkers • MS Word accessibility • Google docs accessibility ○ **Google websites and products are Banned in China –** contact help@brandeis.edu for possible workarounds
Slides - Design • Microsoft PowerPoint • Google Slides • Keynote	☐ Use simple slide layouts and formatting – consider accessible templates ☐ Keep text box use to a minimum. Two per slide: one for the heading and one for content is ideal ☐ Keep layout consistent – clear headings always in the same place, for example ☐ Don't rely on color or formatting to convey meaning ☐ Don't use hard to read fonts. All fonts should be at least 20 pt if they will be projected ☐ Use good table design	• Microsoft built-in Accessibility checker for Windows • Microsoft built-in Accessibility checker for Mac • Apple Keynote accessibility • MS PowerPoint accessibility • Google Slides accessibility ○ **Google websites and products are Banned in China –** contact help@brandeis.edu for possible workarounds

| Slides - Sharing digital files

• Microsoft PowerPoint
• Google Slides
• Keynote	**Sharing a .ppt file** ☐ Check object reading order if sharing the presentation as a .ppt or similar ☐ Provide alt text for images ☐ All text in a course should be searchable, which allows learners to search for words or phrase within a document – no images of text ☐ Tables and charts need to have identified headers and labels **Sharing as a document** ☐ Be aware, exporting as PDF in PowerPoint creates an inaccessible image-based PDF ☐ If you have existing PowerPoints, especially if you rely on the notes field to convey information, a quick, more accessible way to share with students is to export each file as a handout. You can find this function in the *File > Export* menu. The resulting handouts will be Word files that you can edit ☐ Provide alt text for images ☐ All text in a course should be searchable, which allows learners to search for words or phrase within a document – no images of text ☐ Tables and charts need to have identified headers and labels	● Microsoft built-in Accessibility checker for Windows ● Microsoft built-in Accessibility checker for Mac ● Apple Keynote accessibility ● MS PowerPoint accessibility ● Google Slides accessibility ○ **Google websites and products are Banned in China –** contact help@brandeis.edu for possible workarounds
InDesign	☐ Use clear, logical, consistent headings and document structure ☐ Provide alt text for images ☐ Text: use high-contrast color combinations ☐ Don't rely on color or formatting to convey meaning ☐ Don't use hard to read fonts. ☐ Avoid images of text, except logos ☐ Keep layout consistent – clear headings always in the same place, for example ☐ If exporting to PDF, make sure accessibility settings are enabled	● Creating accessible PDFs with InDesign

PDFs		
PDFs Check level of accessibility and make fixes with Adobe Acrobat DC	☐ Start with an accessible source document (follow the above for Word/ InDesign) and export the PDF with accessibility settings on. *Currently accessible Google docs **do not** export as accessible PDFs* ☐ If you are creating a PDF using Acrobat DC (free through ITS for all Brandeis-owned computers) there is an accessibility checker in the *Tools* menu that will help guide you as you work on your document	• [Check how accessible your PDF is using Acrobat DC](#) • [Fix PDF accessibility issues](#) you find using Acrobat DC • [Request Acrobat DC for your Brandeis computer](#)

LMS (LATTE) and other web pages

Application	Tips for Creating Accessible Content	Helpful Tools
LATTE	☐ Choose the approved, accessible course shell ☐ Build content directly within LATTE instead of uploading files, when possible. ☐ Use built-in heading options to create headings and document structure ☐ Provide alt text for images ☐ Use high-contrast color combinations for text ☐ Don't rely on color or formatting to convey meaning ☐ All text in a course should be searchable, which allows learners to search for words or phrase within a document – no images of text ☐ Tables and charts need to have identified headers and labels. ☐ All links should be unique and descriptive (exceptions for printed/projected documents) ☐ Use MathJax for building accessible equations directly in LATTE ☐ Only include video with captions and audio with transcripts ☐ Only include documents, video, etc. you know are accessible	• LATTE accessibility tips • Moodle text editor tips • Writing Equations in MathJax using LaTeX • Perusall • VoiceThread • H5P - content types accessibility checklist • Posting a Zoom Recording to LATTE via Echo360
Other Web pages	☐ Use headings and structure in a logical way ☐ Include alt text for all images that convey information ☐ Hyperlinks should be descriptive and unique ☐ Colors and Graphics select strong, contrasting color combinations for text and graphics and directly label	• Brandeis Web accessibility best practices • Brandeis CMS guide • WordPress accessibility info • Use the free WAVE Evaluation Tool or install the free aXe plug-in for Chrome. • W3C's Web Accessibility

	charts and graphs	Initiative accessibility fundamentals
	☐ Tables and charts need to have identified headers and labels	• Google Sites
	☐ Use approved accessible video players (e.g. Ensemble, Echo360, etc.)	○ **Google websites Banned in China –** contact help@brandeis.edu for possible workarounds

Audio and Video

Media/ Application	Tips for Creating Accessible Content	Helpful Tools
Audio-only	☐ Text of spoken or sung audio should be provided. ☐ Include important sounds, in addition to words in your text description. ☐ For known works, list the title and composer. You may also link to posted lyrics or a screenplay (if available) instead of rewriting the text	• Otter.ai can provide a free rough transcript that may be edited for accuracy and punctuation. • Best practices for accessible audio and video
Video (general)	☐ Use approved accessible video players (e.g. Ensemble, Echo360, etc.) ☐ Text of spoken or sung audio should be provided as captions. If there is no sound, captions or other note should state "no audio" ☐ Include important sounds, in addition to words in your text description ☐ **Accurate captions** are crucial to video accessibility. Machine-generated captions (Auto-captions) must be reviewed and edited for accuracy and punctuation. Check for a "CC" logo or button in your video player. Watch the video while displaying the captions to check for accuracy ☐ Use a free DIY captions editor to correct inaccuracies, add punctuations, etc. ☐ If you move your video file, be sure that you also move any captions files (usually	• Free DIY captions editors: ○ YouTube **Banned in China –** contact help@brandeis.edu for possible workarounds ○ Amara (built into Ensemble: Brandeis MTS info about Ensemble) ○ Subtitle Horse ○ Echo360 • MTS can assist with outsourcing your videos for professional human captioning (for a fee). • Best practices for accessible audio and video • Best practices for producing video • Creating descriptive transcripts

	.vtt format) with it ☐ A text-based transcript of the spoken text, plus added descriptions of on-screen text or important actions makes for a more enriched experience for those who cannot see the video. Transcripts are also very useful for many other learners and can be used as study guides	
Echo 360 Preferred hosting platform for academic content including classroom captures, pre-recorded presentations, and Zoom recordings.	☐ Use checkboxes under *video* ☐ Broadcasts from classrooms will be shown with auto-captions which should be edited after class *before* posting recordings ☐ All Echo360 videos will receive auto-transcripts, which should be reviewed and edited using Echo360's transcript editor tool then "applied as closed captions"	• Posting a Zoom Recording to LATTE via Echo360 • MTS info on Echo360 • Using Echo360 with LATTE • Captioning recorded video with Echo360
Zoom	• Zoom offers a list of accessibility features • When relying on audio for communication, you can enable real-time captions to be entered by someone in your meeting • **Record to cloud** will produce a file for machine-generated captions a few hours post-meeting • Zoom recordings (to the cloud) are automatically copied to Echo360.	• If you want to upload your Zoom recording to Ensemble, LATTE, etc. you can download the machine generated captions file (.VTT) from your Zoom recordings page, edit the auto-captions, and upload them with the video file • Managing Zoom Cloud Recordings • See how Zoom recordings copy to your Echo360 library
Ensemble	☐ Use checkboxes under *video*	• Brandeis MTS info about Ensemble • Ensemble website

YouTube	☐ Use checkboxes under *video*	• **Banned in China –** contact help@brandeis.edu for possible workarounds • Adding auto-captions • Editing captions

Other Tools

Application	Tips for Creating Accessible Content	Helpful Tools
Qualtrics Survey Tool	• Most common question types in Qualtrics are accessible without any additional changes	• Qualtrics also offers a list of accessible and non-accessible question types on their website. • Use Qualtrics' built in accessibility checker in the *Tools* section