

Do I Need Alt-Text?

A conversation about accessibility in
academic libraries

Today's Presenters:



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Agenda

1. Presentation on accessibility practices and policies for academic libraries
2. Q&A for submitted questions about library accessibility
3. Share successes and challenges in a group conversation via chat

Learning Objectives

1. Identify concrete accessibility policies and practices to enact in your library
2. Learn about the accessibility concerns faced at other libraries
3. Participate in a conversation around successes and challenges

Brandeis University Library Accessibility



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Library Accessibility Culture

- Commitment from Leadership
 - Strategic Plan
 - Access and Equity
 - Resources
- Training Library Staff
 - Project Work
 - Lunch N' Learns
 - Workshops
 - LibGuides
 - Professional Development
- Implementation of Services
 - Accessibility included in job descriptions
 - Collaboration between Library departments

Building Accessibility

- Main entrance is wheelchair accessible
- Handicapped parking spaces located near the main entrance
- Restrooms and water fountains on Level 1 are wheelchair accessible
- Elevators are located in both Library buildings
- Braille on signage throughout the building
- Slip-resistant materials on stairs
- Lighting is either automatic or one-touch

Proxy Borrowing & Material Retrieval Services

- Patrons may designate another person as their "proxy"
 - Proxy Borrower Request form
- Library staff are available to retrieve books from the stacks
 - Upon request

Scanners

- Scanners with Optical Character Recognition (OCR) capabilities
 - Student and faculty designated
 - OCR many languages, including non-Roman scripts
- Scanners with OCR + Auto-Tagging capabilities
 - Faculty designation
- Crowley scanner for Library staff



Electronic Materials

- HathiTrust Proxy Service
 - HathiTrust Digital Library Collection
 - Designated staff members as proxy
- ProQuest Ebook Central
 - Ebook full-text access
- JSTOR
 - Older materials by request



Interlibrary Loan & Document Delivery

- Request accessible materials through Interlibrary Loan
- Request Document Delivery of items owned by the library, and make note to scan with OCR

Library Website & LibGuides

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Guidelines
 - Heading Structures
 - Alt-Text for all images
 - Descriptive links
 - Accessibility Testing
 - Screen Reader
 - Keyboard Only
 - Color Contrast
- Accessible text-only map
- Library chat widget suite
- Accessibility training
 - CMS editors
 - Library systems
- LibGuides detailing best practices
- Institutional Repository
- Archives & Digital Exhibits

Software: Kurzweil 3000



- Assistive technology text-to-speech, learning tool
- “Supports the concept of Universal Design for Learning with a suite of powerful reading, writing, test-taking, and study skill tools”
- Available on all Library cluster computers
- Personal use licences

Classroom & Consultation Practices

- Check in with the faculty member
- Narrate the location of items on the screen
- State aloud what you are writing things on the board/document
- Use videos with closed captions
- Demonstrate how to turn on captions and the availability of transcripts for streaming services
- If students have an interpreter or captionist with them, speak to the student, rather than the interpreter/captionist
- When teaching, repeat students' questions

Advertise Accessibility

- *“The Library is happy to provide services as needed for users with disabilities. Please inquire about services not listed here by contacting the Information & Borrowing desk at ____.”*
- *“Brandeis University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ancestry, religious creed, gender identity and expression, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, genetic information, disability, veteran status or any other category protected by law.”*
- Accessibility Support Office Hours in Library

Question & Answer



What are Libraries exploring in regards to physical accessibility?

- ADA compliant building
- Handicapped parking near accessible door
- Accessible door with vestibule
- Wheelchair space between stacks
- Braille markings for key areas and stacks
- Large-print, braille, and audio book collections
- Accessible map
- Input from patrons

How do you assure that incoming ILL articles are OCR?

- HathiTrust Proxy service
 - Screen-reader accessible copy of any print book located in our collection or the collections of HathiTrust member libraries
- Collaboration and open communications
- Open source options

Open Source Resources

- **The Library of Congress** partnership with the National Library Service
 - Free braille and audio books.
- **The American Printing House for the Blind**
 - Free accessible textbooks, magazines, and tactile graphic
- **Access Text Network**
 - Publishers create free accessible versions of textbooks
- **The Open Textbook Network**
 - Free/low costs e-textbooks
- **Project Gutenberg**
 - Free ebooks (many are older works for which copyright has expired)
- **RoboBraille**
 - Free file conversion a file into the accessible format of your choice

How are institutions making digitized items for course reserves and document delivery as accessible as possible?

- Request OCR Text for ILL and Document Delivery requests
 - If for any reason, scans come back without OCR, students can directly contact ILL and items will be re-scanned
- Awareness and education of OCR for patrons
- Request ProQuest Ebook Central to unlock an account so a patron can have access to the full-text for the e-books
- JSTOR materials (including ebooks) should generally be rendered in an accessible and DRM-free format

Do you have policies/workflows for making institutional repository content more accessible?

- Hire a knowledgeable firm for design and development of accessible templates
- Migrate content to accessible templates for exhibits and IR content
- Use accessible templates for all new exhibits and IR content
- Look at things holistically to get an idea of what to work on first
- Look at analytics - who is visiting? Is the site dead or popular?
- Make a road map for fixing what is still in use
- No reason why some less popular resources can't be archived - doesn't have to be available

How can teaching librarians anticipate accessibility needs?

- Make accessibility a habit:
 - Workshop or class materials
 - LibGuides
- Check-in with Faculty
- Follow teaching best practices
- Universal Design for Learning
- Campus Partners

Do you caption time-based media your library creates for classes that is placed in course management systems?

- All audio and video content in the LMS or website
- Media Technology Services collaboration
 - Captions
 - Transcripts
 - Audio Descriptions
- Zoom & Echo 360 Auto Captioning services
- Self-captioning via YouTube workshops



Group --- Conversation

Please share in the chat:

- What accessibility challenges does your Library face?
- What a11y successes can you brag about?

Thank you!

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[Brandeis.edu/library/about/visit/accessibility.html](https://brandeis.edu/library/about/visit/accessibility.html)

[Brandeis.edu/web-accessibility](https://brandeis.edu/web-accessibility)