Evaluating the Accessibility of E-Resources

Overview

Accessible electronic resources are an essential component of an inclusive teaching, learning, and research environment. However, many libraries struggle with how to go about evaluating the accessibility of the hundreds of e-resources in their collections. At Western Washington University, we developed a pragmatic workflow to manage this process in order to inform purchasing and renewal decisions, remediation, and direct vendor communications. Using a combination of crowdsourcing and triage, this workflow is a recursive process that educates and invites all library employees to participate in accessibility efforts. This poster presents the key stages in the workflow, from ingest to the ongoing cycle of action and tracking.

Explore our supplementary resources, below, for more details about how to implement this workflow at your library.

Join the Discussion

Join the authors for a **Q & A Zoom session** on **Friday, June 26th, at 11:00 a.m.** Pacific Time.
Password: access20
Want to submit questions ahead of time? Be sure to share your queries through this Q&A submission form.

Learn More

For more information visit our Evaluating the Accessibility of E-Resources libguide

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The E-Resource Accessibility Lifecycle

1. Collect

- Locate accessibility documentation for each e-resource platform in your library collection.
- Involves accessibility personnel; e-resources specialists; and volunteers.
- Upon completion of this stage, you will have located a VPAT for each e-resource platform you subscribe to-- or determined that accessibility documentation is not available.

2. Score & Triage

- Inventory the accessibility documentation you've gathered and use the presence or absence of documentation to score and triage platforms for further scrutiny.
- Involves accessibility personnel; and e-resources specialists.
- Upon completion of this stage, you will know which of your e-resource vendors are most or least engaged with platform accessibility and be able to prioritize further testing and follow-up action.

3. Test

- Test the accessibility of platforms that demonstrate moderate engagement with accessibility and pose an uncertain risk to the organization. Do not test platforms with high or low levels of vendor engagement; instead, take action.
- Involves campus web accessibility experts; accessibility personnel; and e-resource specialists.
- Upon completion of this stage, you will be able to distinguish which platform providers have engaged meaningfully or superficially to ensure platform accessibility.

4. Take Action

- Actions will depend on the level of vendor engagement and risk a platform poses.
- Involves accessibility personnel; acquisitions unit; vendor negotiations team; contracts officer or office; and e-resource specialists.
- This stage will likely be ongoing and relies heavily on the platform provider's response to library requests and your library's ability to provide on-demand access alternatives to mitigate accessibility barriers.

5. Track Progress

- Retain documentation and testing results so that they can be reviewed and updated by library stakeholders. Track communications with vendors to hold them accountable to remediation timelines.
- Involves library IT; university or municipal information technology infrastructure; e-resources specialists; acquisitions unit; accessibility personnel; vendor negotiations team; and contracts officer or office.
- This stage is ongoing. It informs subsequent cycles of accessibility evaluation and has significant implications for the renewal of e-resources that consistently fail accessibility evaluations.