Quick Reference: Accessibility Tips for Online Content

Making content and activities accessible takes time, but it's time well spent. All students benefit from having accessible materials, whether they have a documented disability or not.

Below are some steps that faculty can take to help ensure that content made available to students through OSU's online teaching tools (Canvas, etc.) are accessible.

Provide equivalent alternatives to multimedia

When looking for and selecting multimedia for a course, choose videos that are *already accurately captioned* whenever possible. Note that "machine" (or automatic) captioning, which is now available in YouTube, Zoom, and Kaltura, is generally only about 80% accurate. We want to aim for 99% accuracy of captions.

When recording audio or video for your course, develop a script. It can be posted alongside the media as a transcript and can also help you to create a better recording.

Make files accessible

When creating documents (e.g., Word, PowerPoint, etc.), use the formatting options called "heading styles." These tools create structure in your document (title, main section headings, sub-headings, etc.) that is recognized by screen readers. Be sure to use the styles in order: a Heading 1 (H1) comes before a Heading 2 (H2), etc.

When saving your file, give it a meaningful name. "Lecture Notes" or "Chapter 1" does not give students enough information. A better example would be "Lecture Notes, Chapter 1."

Note that Word and PowerPoint files are often more accessible than PDF versions of those documents, so it is preferred to post Word and PowerPoint documents in your course site.

Use color with caution

Dark text on light backgrounds, or light text on dark backgrounds is recommended as a strategy for selecting colors in any document or course to help students with low vision. The Contrast Checker tool can help you to choose a high-contrast color palette.

Also avoid using color as the only indication of meaning on documents or slides. Many students are affected by some form of colorblindness (such as an inability to distinguish between red and green).

Create meaningful link names

When adding a webpage link, it is important to name the link meaningfully. All students, and especially those using screen readers, will benefit from this clarity.

For example, if you want to share a link to a YouTube video, don't say "Click Here" or "http://www.youtube.com/dfsdaudio234." These links don't tell students how they will know if

they arrived on the correct destination page. Instead, label all links meaningfully, such as "Video of Captain Horatio Hornblower" or "OSU Libraries Website."

Provide "alternative" descriptions for images

For students that are using a screen reader, adding "ALT text" (an alternative description) for images helps to convey the educational value of images *or* to skip over unnecessary decorative images efficiently. ALT text should be added to all images/graphs added within documents such as Word or PowerPoint documents as well as within Canvas.

Support and Resources

Utilize Ally and the UDOIT Accessibility Check tool to check for further accessibility improvements:

Canvas offers 24/7 support via phone or chat. You can access assistance via the "Help" button within the Canvas course menu to receive immediate assistance. Ecampus faculty can also contact EcampusFacultySupport@oregonstate.edu for assistance with accessibility questions.