

Accessible Course Design

Why Accessibility Matters



By creating accessible course content, you improve the learning experience for all learners. For instance, accessible documents are easily navigated to pertinent sections and videos that are captioned assist English language learners or students who may be viewing the video in a noisy environment. As Steve Ballmer, Microsoft CEO from 2000-2014, stated, “Accessible design is good design.”

Beyond being good design, accessible content is a legal requirement. A [growing list of higher education institutions have pending lawsuits against them](#) for various accessibility violations.

- **Section 508** mandates that federal agencies must make electronic information accessible and applies to schools that receive federal funding. An upcoming “refresh” of this law will include stricter rules or all online content.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability. Title II of ADA prohibits discrimination by public entities, and Title II applies to “public accommodations” that are broadened to include online programs at schools.
- **Section 504** is an anti-discrimination measure similar to ADA that addresses web-based communications for public educational institutions.

Tutorials for Creating Accessible Content

Document Type	Remediation Needed	Instructional Videos
Word Documents	Look at bulleted lists, hyperlinks, and tables	Creating Accessible Word Documents And Using the Accessibility Checker
PowerPoint Presentations	Use slide layouts, headings, etc.	Creating Accessible PowerPoint Presentations

Document Type	Remediation Needed	Instructional Videos
PDF Documents	Use tagged elements and include alt text for images.	Creating an Accessible PDF from a Word Document