A11Y TASK FORCE: ORGANIZING FOR ACTION

An initial step towards ensuring Harvard Library is accessible online
“Beginning no later than December 1, 2019, all Site Owners of University Websites should aim to make any new digital content created and produced at Harvard and posted on those sites conform to the Standards, to the extent technically feasible.

Where conformance with the Standards is not technically feasible, Site Owners should consider how to make the content available in an alternative format to individuals with a disability.”

- Harvard University Digital Accessibility Policy
HOW TO BIAS ALLY WORK TOWARD ACTION

● Build a diverse team of motivated people

● Timebox the work using inspect-adapt framework

● Facilitate with lightweight tools and admin support
HOW TO BIAS A11Y WORK TOWARD ACTION

● Build a diverse team of motivated people

● Timebox the work using inspect-adapt framework

● Facilitate with lightweight tools and admin support
● 2-week sprints
● Daily stand up
● 1-hour public demo
● Team retrospective
HOW TO BIAS A11Y WORK TOWARD ACTION

- Build a diverse team of motivated people
- Timebox the work using inspect-adapt framework
- Facilitate with lightweight tools and admin support
● Workbooks for issue tracking

● Document area of the page, issue description, WCAG criteria, assignee, and notes/screenshots

● Teams define page types

● Tab for “all-issues” to combine for recurring issues
HOW TO SET PRIORITIES FOR A11Y WORK

- #1 priority: trust the team
- Provide light framework and clear applicability
- Continuously integrate with existing effort
● Shared team protocols and psychological safety
● Recognize the emotional labor involved
● Enable the team members with autonomy
● Regular reminders of the goals through demo/retro
HOW TO SET PRIORITIES FOR A11Y WORK

● #1 priority: trust the team
● Provide light framework and clear applicability
● Continuously integrate with existing effort
• High / Medium / Low
• Barrier v. usability
• Importance of feature
• Conformance level
HOW TO SET PRIORITIES FOR A11Y WORK

- #1 priority: trust the team
- Provide light framework and clear applicability
- Continuously integrate with existing effort
Teams set priorities as they complete review of each system

Examine issues across page types

Avoid the need to re-review

User stories cross issues
HOW TO COMMUNICATE ABOUT A11Y WORK

● Use content strategy framework
● Design artifacts that demonstrate the value proposition
● Seek actionable feedback on communication artifacts
1. System name
2. User story
3. Frequent issues
4. Reviewer quote
5. Graph of High / Medium / Low
6. Critical issues
7. Footer
HOW TO COMMUNICATE ABOUT AI1Y WORK

- Use content strategy framework
- Design artifacts that demonstrate the value proposition
- Making communication artifacts that are actionable
An initial step towards ensuring Harvard Library is accessible online.

**TEAM WORK PROCESS**
July - November 2019

1. Review major systems for compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA
2. Document and prioritize issues
3. Report and share findings with staff, managers, developers, and content editors

**SYSTEM SUMMARY**

541 issues identified
14 systems reviewed
32% high-priority issues

**SYSTEMS REVIEWED**
- Ask a Librarian
- Class Request Tool
- Colonial North America
- CURiOsity
- DASH
- Harvard Digital Collections
- HOLLIS for Archival Discovery
- HOLLIS Images
- HOLLIS Special Request
- Interlibrary Loan
- Library: Harvard
- Library Feedback Forms
- Library Research Guides
- OpenScholar

**Issues were prioritized as**
- **HIGH**
  - present significant barriers for people with disabilities
  - Example: A screen reader user is unable to submit their work in DASH because forms are improperly coded.
- **MEDIUM**
- **LOW**

**GOOD SYSTEM CURiOsity**
- Few barriers exist

**POOR SYSTEM**
- ILLiad
- Significant issues related to keyboard access, especially with request forms

**DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY IS NEVER DONE**

Accessibility requires ongoing work; it is not finished after initial remediation. Take this case from our work:

After the team had reviewed HOLLIS for Archival Discovery and uncovered issues, we also reviewed a future release to check if these existing issues were fixed. Surprise! The new release had even more accessibility issues than the current version. But because these issues were surfaced before the new release, the development team was able to remediate them.

**NEXT STEPS FOR ALL SYSTEMS REVIEWED**
- Harvard developers will remediate high-level issues in open source and internal systems.
- Product owners will liaise with vendors to report significant issues and request action plans.
- Staff content creators will remediate issues through writing and content reorganization.
HOW TO COMMUNICATE ABOUT A11Y WORK

● Use content strategy framework

● Design artifacts that demonstrate the value proposition

● Making communication artifacts that are actionable
NEXT STEPS

● Action plan

● Models we can use for future work
  ○ At the university
  ○ In the Library

● What about content?