



Digital Accessibility Compliance 101:

What Higher Ed Needs to Know

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CAMPUSGUARD®



Purpose

To discuss accessibility compliance and the growing demands for accessibility in higher ed



Process

Overview of digital accessibility, compliance standards to be aware of, and how teams can begin their compliance journey

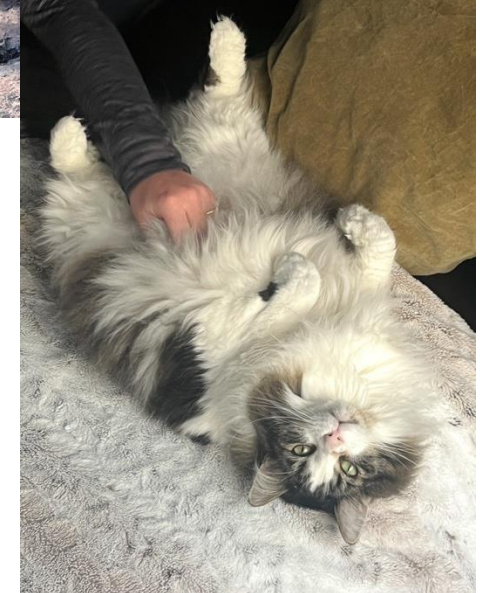
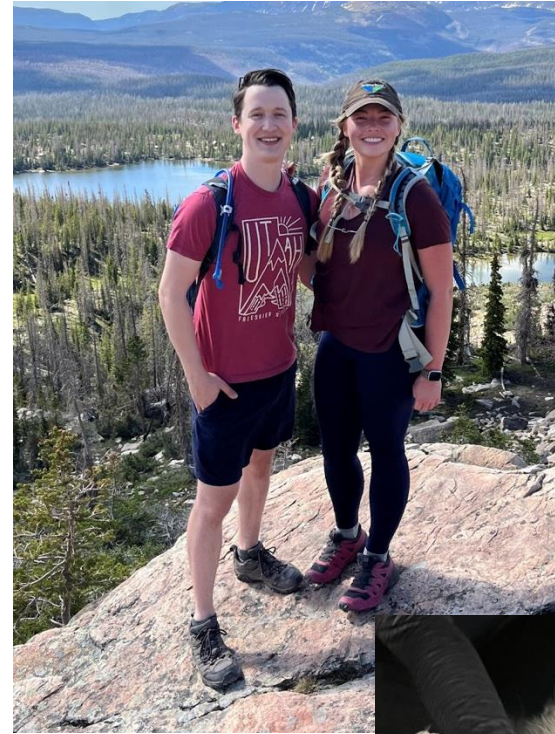


Pay-off

Attendees will have a better understanding of compliance standards their teams should begin working on, and how to start!

About Me

- Marc Lind
- Account Executive w/ Nelnet Accessibility Services
- A11y for ~4 years
 - State and Local Government
 - Education
 - Private Sector
- Located in Utah (MST)



Note: The contents of this presentation are not to be interpreted as legal advice

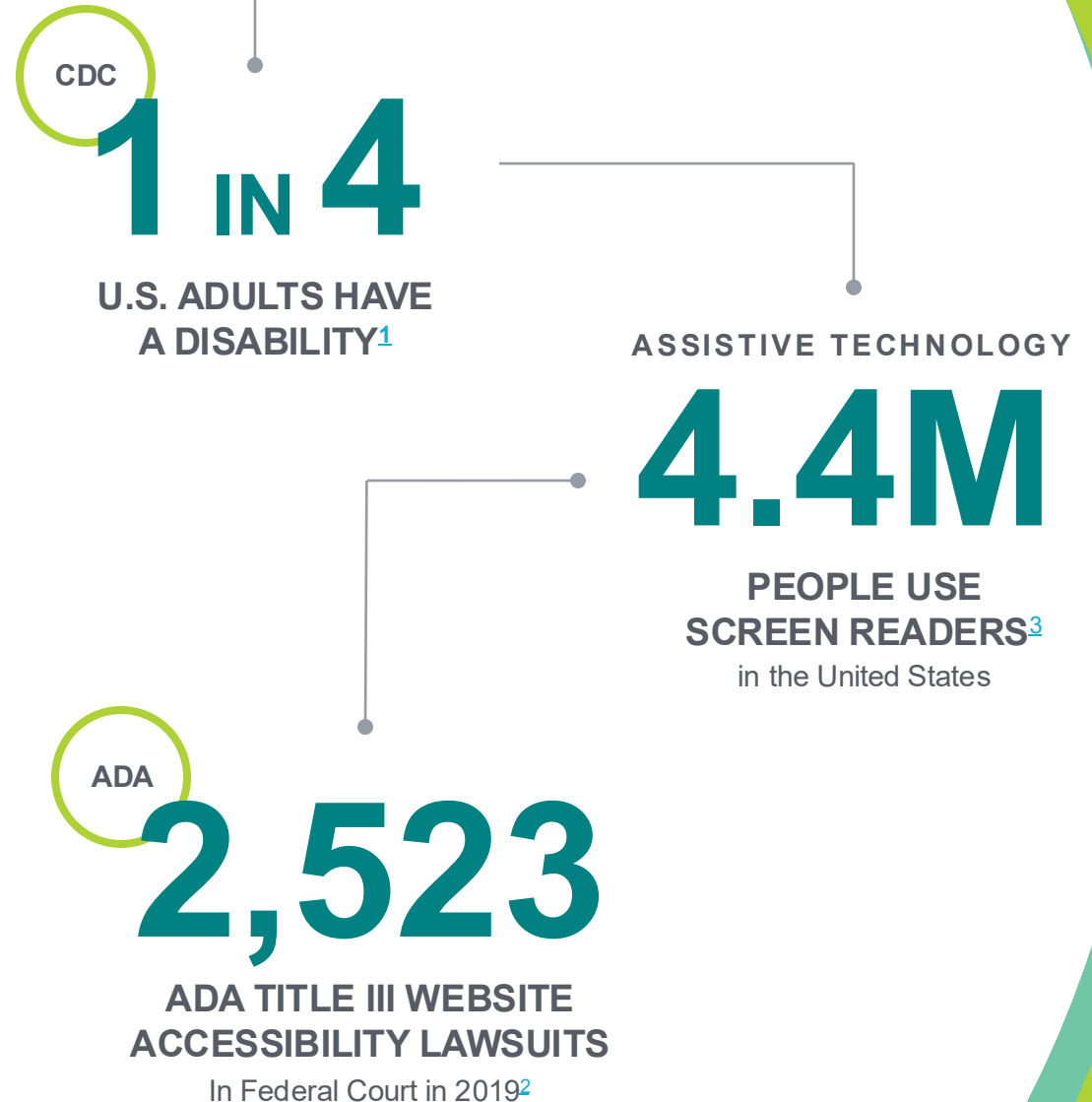
Poll Question!

How confident are you in your organization's current accessibility compliance efforts?



What is Digital Accessibility?

- Section 504 passed in 1973
- ADA began in 1990
 - Ensure **all** private/public places were accessible to people with disabilities
- Today, websites/apps are more relevant
- ADA has been interpreted to apply to website and digital content
 - Key word – **INTERPRETED**
- Laws around the globe in 2024, 2025, and 2026 codifying this

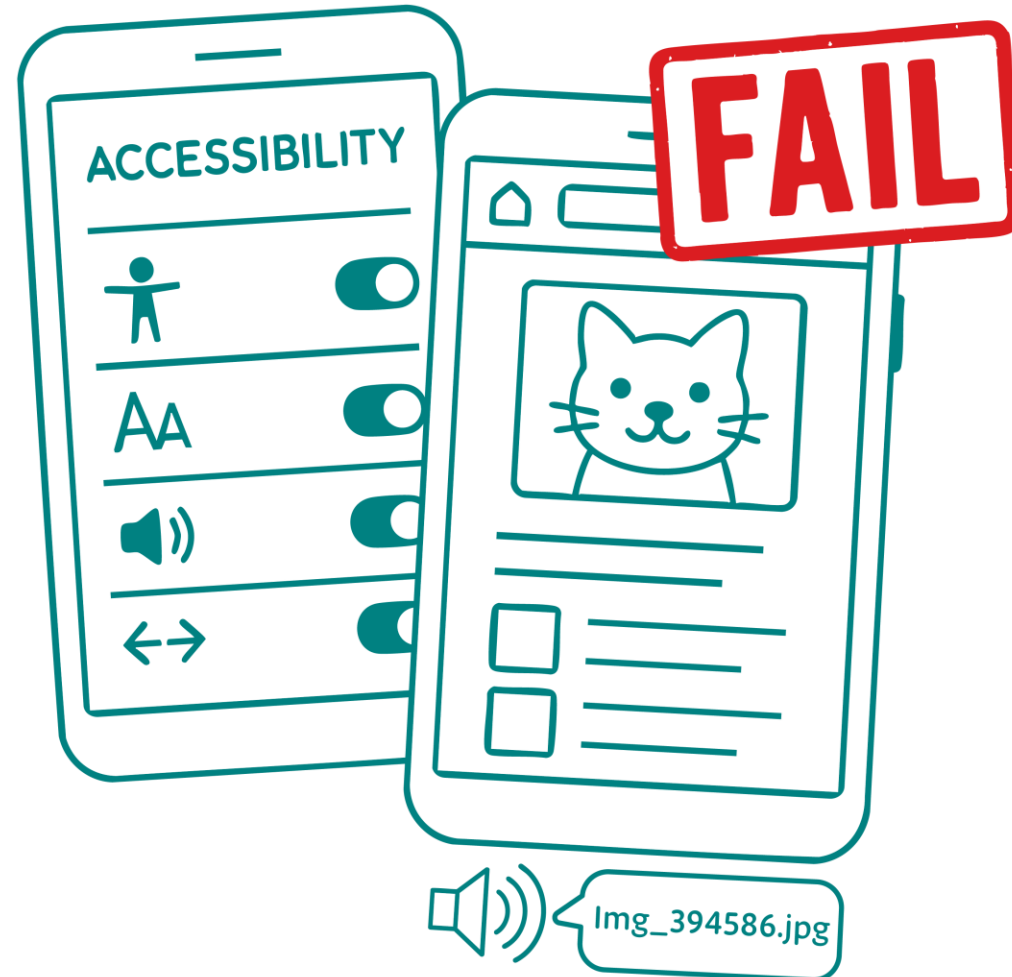


What is an “Accessible” website?

- **WCAG 2.1 AA** are the compliance guidelines
 - 50 success criteria total
- **Blind:** Screen reader compatibility
 - Alternative text for images
 - Properly labeled form fields
 - Proper use of headings
 - Keyboard-only access
 - Audio descriptions for videos
- **Low Vision:** Color contrast, text resizing
- **Deaf or Hard of Hearing:** Captions for audio content
- **Mobility:** Keyboard-only access; ability to slow down or turn off time outs
- **Epilepsy:** No flashing content
- **Color Blind:** Color not used as sole method of conveying information



“Don’t computers already take care of that?”



Poll Questions!

1. What motivates your institution most to prioritize accessibility?
2. What is your biggest challenge in achieving digital accessibility compliance?

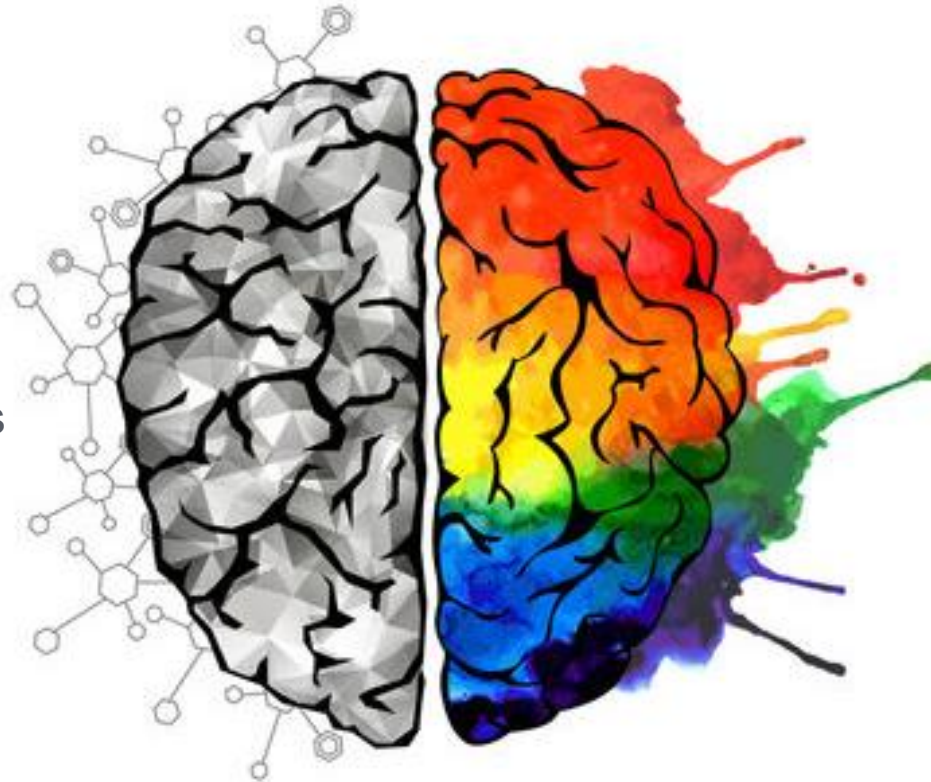


Why Solve for Accessibility



Left Brained

- Logical/factual
- Protect legal risks
- Avoid fines
- Prevent website or products from being barred
- Expand market cap
- Reduce operation costs



Right Brained

- Emotional/creative
- Help people with disabilities
- Improve overall customer experience
 - Universal design
- Sparks innovation
- Family with disability

“The Elephant” - Why Now?

Risks Across the Globe

- **United States** (ADA - 1990)
 - HB21 – 1110 in Colorado (July 2025)
 - [Statewide Compliance Platform](#)
 - DoJ – Title 2 amendment (April 2026/2027)
 - HHS Requirement – May 2026
- **Canada** (AODA – Jan 2025)
 - \$100,000 CAD per day
- **Europe** (EAA – June 2025)
 - Like GDPR – **Applies to US brands**
 - Fines +£1,000,000
 - Restriction of placing products on market



Most Relevant to Education

Department of Justice's Title II Amendment

- **Passed in April of 2024**
 - Sets web and mobile application standards for public entities
- **What is the requirement?**
 - All web-based content and mobile application meet WCAG 2.1 AA compliance
 - Some examples include:
 - University websites
 - Learning Management Systems
 - Student housing portals
 - PDFs
- **Compliance Deadline – Based on Jurisdiction size**
 - Population > 50,000 – April 24th, 2026
 - Population < 50,000 – April 26th, 2027

Procurement Concerns as well

“

*“If a city lets people pay for public parking using a mobile app, that mobile app must meet WCAG 2.1, Level AA **even if the app is run by a private company.**”*

[-DOJ Fact Sheet](#)

”

Where to begin?

1. Leadership Commitment

- Accessibility Sponsor, or form a cross-functional task force
- Your university may already have someone

2. Audit and Inventory

- Catalog all digital assets (websites, LMS, mobile apps, third-party tools)

3. Triage

- After building the list, rank them based on risk

4. Perform Assessments

- Conduct WCAG 2.1 AA manual assessments
- Get compliance documents from vendors

5. Build a remediation plan

6. Institutionalize Accessibility

- Provide training to staff on accessibility policies
- Update procurement policies
- Establish ongoing monitoring and reporting (annual audits, student feedback loop)

Overview of compliance methodologies

1. Automated Tooling (i.e. WAVE, Axe, Lighthouse)

Pros: Free; better than nothing.

Cons: Identifies 25-30% of violations; create false positives.

2. Learn to Manual Test with NVDA (The screen-reader)

Pros: Free... kinda?; stronger results than automated standalone

Cons: Requires training; time consuming; risk if done incorrectly. Need to learn to fix the issue

3. Finding a certified partner

Pros: Work is completed for your team; received instructions on how to fix

Cons: Costly; Results can be overwhelming.

Consider – Who will do the remediation after the gap analysis?

Proving Compliance

- Procurement teams can ask vendor for:
 - Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR)
 - **Voluntary** Product Accessibility Template (**VPAT**®)
- Growing demand for Certified Proof:
 - Student Grade their own paper?
- Not a report card, but a roadmap:
 - “Supports”
 - “Partially Supports”
 - “Does not Support”

Voluntary Product Accessibility Template

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Universal Design

Recall – 1 in 4 People (28.7%) are Disabled

Universal Design Overview

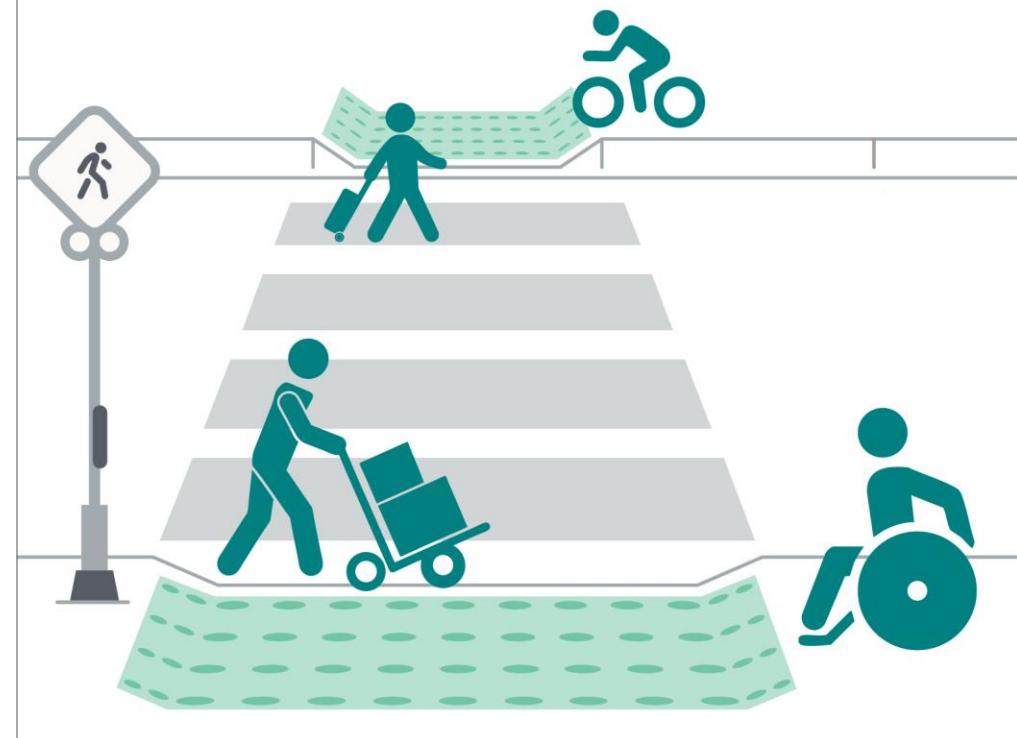
- Designing for disabilities benefits everyone
- Examples
 - Auto-fill at checkout
 - Using “Tab” to navigate is keyboard navigation
 - Talk-to-text
 - Captions

Good UX Experience is Great for Brands

[Tesco Case Study](#) – Accessibility Redesign
Generated £13million (~\$17m USD) ROI
from accessibility

The Curb-Cut Effect

When we design for disabilities,
we make things better for everyone.



Nelnet's Accessibility Services

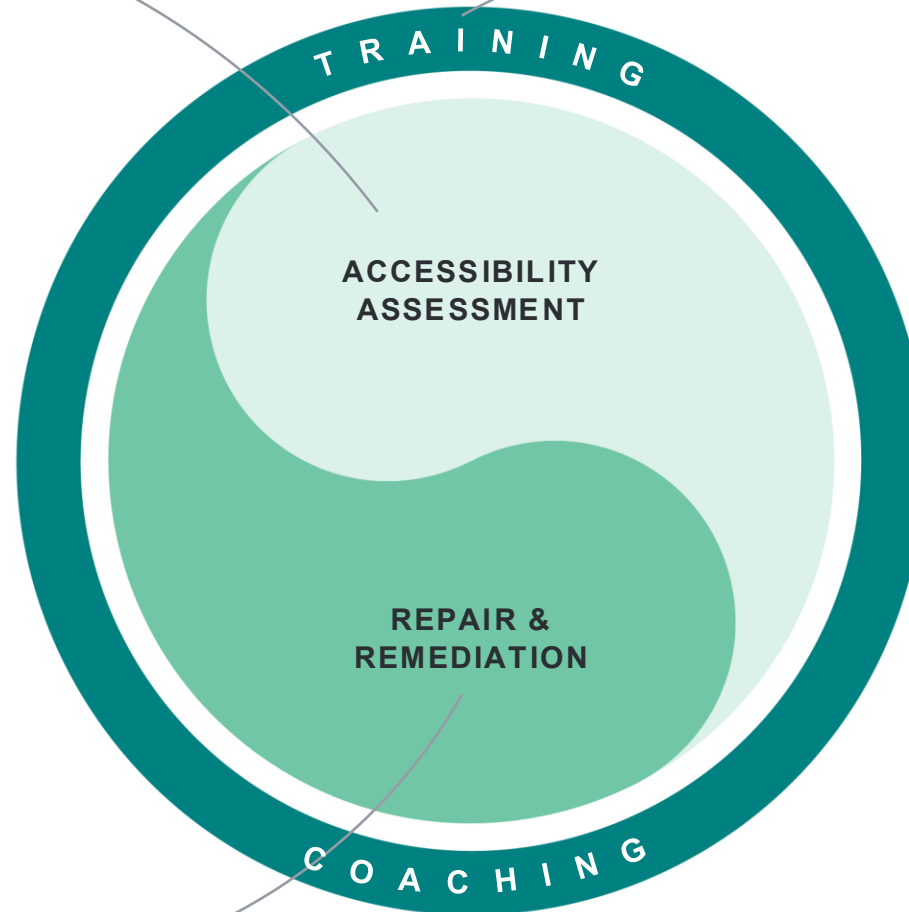


ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT

- Regular evaluations and improvements
- Certified accessibility testers
- Transparent, consultative advice
- Detailed test results
- Automated Scanning to trend compliance overtime

REPAIR & REMEDIATION

- Team with 30+ years experience
- Websites, mobile apps, documents, videos
- Technical standards (WCAG, etc.) to products and services
- Integration with screen readers and speech recognition



TRAINING & COACHING

- Dedicated team
- Understanding of complex disabilities-related laws, standards, strategies
- Accessibility checks and best practices in your processes
- Compliance now and in the future
- Evaluate current environment and recommend roadmap, including policy updates, process changes, and key milestones.



Questions?

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