



# Welcome!

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## “Other Duties as Assigned”: Accessibility in Libraries

- Follow along with us on Google Slides! <https://bit.ly/3ppPoLN>
  - Slide transcripts/notes available in notes sections
  - Access the fully accessible [PowerPoint file for download on OSF](#)
- We welcome active use of the chat.
  - Comments, questions, conversations...we love it all!
- Tweet along!
  - Use #OKACRL2020

# “Other Duties as Assigned”

Accessibility in Libraries



**Cristina Colquhoun**  
Instructional Designer  
Oklahoma State University Libraries  
[cristina.colquhoun@okstate.edu](mailto:cristina.colquhoun@okstate.edu)  
[@call\\_hoon](#)

**Holly Luetkenhaus**  
Director, Library Teaching & Learning  
Oklahoma State University Libraries  
[holly.luetkenhaus@okstate.edu](mailto:holly.luetkenhaus@okstate.edu)  
[@hollyjaneite](#)

**Kathy Essmiller**  
OER Librarian  
Oklahoma State University Libraries  
[kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu](mailto:kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu)  
[@KathyEssmiller](#)

# Poll

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In your role at the Library, how equipped do you feel to create accessible learning, spaces, programming, etc.?

- a. Comfortable. I know what I need to do & how to do it.
- b. Sort of comfortable. I can do some things, & I know what I still need to learn.
- c. Uncomfortable. I can do some things, but I'm not sure is missing.
- d. Very uncomfortable. Why do you think I'm attending this session?!
- e. Other - Somewhere in between.



# First: A Crucial Acknowledgement

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- We're glad you're here.
- You may feel helpless or overwhelmed. You're not alone.

**Our goal is to empower you & help you form a plan forward.**

# Session Goals

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- Define and frame Library accessibility.
- Explore examples of accessibility within various Library roles.
- Reflect on accessibility within your Library role.
- Plan steps for increasing accessibility capabilities.

# Defining Accessibility





# Defining Accessibility in the Library

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## THE WHAT

A person with a disability should have the opportunity to:

- Acquire the **same information**
- Engage in the **same interactions**
- Enjoy the **same services**

...as a person without a disability.

## THE HOW

This should happen:

- In an **equally effective** manner
- In an **equally integrated** manner
- With substantially **equivalent ease of use.**

Paraphrased from [the Office for Civil Rights \(2014\)](#).



# Laws & Accessibility

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2 key laws:

- Americans with Disabilities ACT (ADA)
- Rehabilitation Act of 1973





# Laws & Accessibility: ADA

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## **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)**

Law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in all of the following:

- Employment
- State & local government
- Public spaces
- Commercial facilities
- Transportation
- Telecommunications

# Laws & Accessibility: Rehab Act

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## REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

- Those receiving federal \$
- Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs
- 2 specific sections to note: 504 & 508



# Laws & Accessibility: RA, 504 & 508

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## REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973: SECTIONS 504 & 508

**504:** Must ensure-

- Equal/equivalent access
- Appropriate accommodations/aids
- Interoperability with assistive tech
- **508:**
- Must offer comparable access/use of electronic information technology
- Nutshell: Encompasses all the digital stuff

**In the chat:**  
**Which Library roles do  
you think are impacted  
by these laws?**

# Library Accessibility: Current Paradigm



# What does library accessibility typically look like?

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- 1-2 accessibility reps for the whole library
- Adding in accessibility at end of project or after the fact
- Remediating work when necessary
- Delegating to the instructional designer or institution's teaching center
- Using student workers to fix or remediate
- Compliance, or ensuring legal bases are covered
- Hoping you're doing right by your patrons, but just don't have the space to do more

# Reframing Library Accessibility



Developing a new “norm”



# Reframing the Current Paradigm

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- A system, built BY and FOR those *without* disabilities
- Accessibility is an “add-on,” not foundational
- Uninformed by voices/ experiences of disabled community
- Focuses on “compliance” instead of “equity”
- Leads to “othering”

**INEQUITABLE  
INEFFICIENT  
UNSUSTAINABLE**





We can't "fix"  
accessibility using  
the same methods  
we've been using.



# A New Paradigm = A Shift in Mindset

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Accessibility is:

- An issue of equity & systemic injustice
- A necessary, foundational practice
- Built into workflows, routines, ways of functioning
- Everyone's job
- The “norm”

**EXPAND EQUITY**  
**STREAMLINE**  
**PROCESSES**  
**ELIMINATE**  
**INEFFICIENCIES**

# Making the Shift



A new paradigm? Great! How do we get there?



# But HOW?

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- Step #1: A shift in mindset.
- Will vary by role, department, and library!
- No, it's NOT impossible
- Make a plan of small, manageable steps over time
- What a shift could look like
  - Library-wide shift
  - Individual shift



# Library-Wide Shift in Accessibility

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1. Identify accessibility as a strategic initiative.
2. Identify the full scope of the accessibility landscape.
3. Make a plan for a) remediation and b) building accessibility into roles and workflow going forward.



# Building Accessibility into Roles/Workflow

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## **Equip ALL library roles with associated accessibility knowledge & skills**

- Work with accessibility expert to identify then infuse associated accessibility knowledge/skills into each position's workflow, responsibilities
- Methodically & over time; avoid all at once!
- Provide training (upfront and as needed)
- Document workflow & create checklists (DO NOT rely on institutional knowledge!)
- Allow time & space to learn & adjust (upfront & ongoing)



# Individual Shift in Accessibility

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- Consult with accessibility experts for guidance
  - Oklahoma ABLE Tech
  - Your institution's accessibility or teaching & learning department
  - Library instructional designer
- Incorporate accessibility project by project or task by task
  - Google the software/modality of creation (e.g., “video”)/design + “accessibility” for things you create
  - Attend free accessibility webinars; watch tutorials
  - Create checklists so it becomes routine
  - Peruse curated resources

**Bite-sized changes to workflow over time!**



# Accessibility in Our Department

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- Teaching & Learning, under umbrella of Research & Learning Services
- Old paradigm
  - Add accessibility if we knew about it
  - Send it to Cristina (instructional designer) for help/remediation
- New paradigm
  - Meet with ID before a project to identify accessibility needs
  - Friday accessibility tips during weekly RLS meeting (5-10 min, bite-sized accessibility how-tos)
  - Libguide for reference - [Creating Accessible Learning](#)





# Library Accessibility in Action



Examples from the Edmon Low Library at Oklahoma State University



# Matt Upson

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Associate  
Dean  
Research &  
Learning  
Services



“Accessibility should absolutely be a priority in libraries. It’s not that accessibility in practice is incredibly difficult, but rather it can be difficult to implement because it requires a shift in thinking and functioning. You don’t know what you don’t know, and accessibility is about awareness. We’ve all been trained mostly to not think about accessibility. The paradigm is for an expert to come in and fix things afterwards. The model we want to get to instead is that everyone has the appropriate amount of training and support to be self-sufficient when creating content. It’s about enabling a team to make the shift and make those things happen.

What we’re trying to do at the OSU Library is start with our instruction librarians. Small shifts in their approach over time to enable them to create accessible content from the beginning. We know the way forward. We need to make that a priority that we scale up for the whole library, and hopefully set an example for the campus. We have to start somewhere; take those little steps to start making positive changes.”




# Sarah Milligan

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Director

Oklahoma Oral History  
Research Project



“We transcribe all of our oral history interviews and often increase the print font size of transcripts out for review with those who need it. We are currently working to transcribe our podcast episodes for Dear Oklahoma and Amplified Oklahoma.”

“I’m not sure we are as intentional as we can be. I feel pretty deficient in this category.”

# Bonnie Cain- Wood

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Manager  
Communications  
Services

“We often think we know what accessibility looks like, but I am continually surprised by the simple, innovative solutions people request if you just give them the opportunity to tell you what they need. ...

Here are a few examples:

- Providing web designers with charts to help create color pallets that can be viewed by those with different kinds of color blindness.
- Creating a workflow for closed-captioning video content and ensuring videos on our digital signage include captioning.
- Adding a request for accommodations section to the RSVP for events.
- Creating an internal guide for employees to educate them about service animals.

[View full quote in Appendix.](#)

# Whitney Vitale

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Head,  
Access  
Services

“We had a very rigid policy that circulation students were not able to leave the Desk area and go into the stacks to help patrons pull books. They needed to ask supervisors for a special exception to help patrons that had mobility issues. By making that policy more flexible, and allowing those student workers to go into the stacks to help patrons without permission, we could provide a more accessible service for patrons.”

“Another example was when we realized that the default color scheme for our online study room reservation system made it difficult for patrons with certain type of color blindness to navigate. As soon as we became aware of this problem, we worked with Digital Library Services to change to colors that would be easy to differentiate for all patrons.”

[View full quote in Appendix.](#)

# Accessibility in Action: Library Teaching & Learning





# Accessibility in Teaching

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- Mindset
  - Design for a variety of learning preferences and needs
  - Be flexible & ask questions
- Teaching in person
  - Communicate with teaching faculty
  - Provide visual & verbal instructions and cues
- Teaching virtually
  - Record sessions & provide captions
  - Utilize multiple engagement strategies



# Accessibility in Presentations

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- Everyone should have the opportunity to acquire the same information in an equally effective manner, engage in the same interactions in an equally integrated manner, and enjoy the same services with substantially equivalent ease of use.



# Moving Accessibility Forward in YOUR Library Role



# Resources (1)

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## General

- [Oklahoma Able Tech](#)
- Association of Specialized, Government, and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASGCLA): [Library Accessibility Toolkits: What You Need to Know](#)
- Accessibility for Teams: [A 'quick-start' guide for embedding accessibility and inclusive design practices into your team's workflow](#)
- OKState Library libguide, updated weekly: [Creating Accessible Learning](#)

# Resources (2)

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## **Making the Case for Accessibility**

- [Web Accessibility Perspectives: Explore the Impact and Benefits for Everyone](#)
- [Making the Case for Accessibility](#)
- [The Business Case for Digital Accessibility](#)

## **Accessibility Laws**

- [A Guide to Disability Rights Laws](#)
- [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)
- [What is section 504 and how does it relate to Section 508?](#)
- [The Current ADA Regulations](#)

# Resources (3)

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## Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](#)
- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) Overview](#)
- [WCAG 2.1 at a Glance](#)
- [Accessibility Principles \(Summary\)](#)

## Web Accessibility

- [WebAIM Resources](#)
- [Web Accessibility Tutorials](#)

# Resources (4)

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## Web Content Accessibility Checklists

- [WebAIM WCAG 2 Checklist](#)
- [Essential Accessibility: The Must Have WCAG 2.1 Checklist](#)

## Universal Design for Learning

- [Universal Design and Accessibility](#)
- [The UDL Guidelines](#)



# Reflection

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Think of one task or small project - specific to your role & level of influence - where you can add accessibility into the process.

Reflect on what you can personally do to start adding accessibility in.

Specific to this task or project, think about:

- What accessibility needs are you already aware of?
- What can you do to figure out what you don't know?
- How will you learn more?
- Who do you need to involve?
- What next steps do you need to take?

Take a few minutes to think about this. Jot down your ideas in this Google Doc, in whichever category best matches your library role.

<https://bit.ly/3ngGA9d>

# Questions?

# Thanks!

**Cristina Colquhoun**

Instructional Designer

Oklahoma State University Libraries

[cristina.colquhoun@okstate.edu](mailto:cristina.colquhoun@okstate.edu)

[@call\\_hoon](#)

**Holly Luetkenhaus**

Director, Library Teaching & Learning

Oklahoma State University Libraries

[holly.luetkenhaus@okstate.edu](mailto:holly.luetkenhaus@okstate.edu)

[@hollyjaneite](#)

**Kathy Essmiller**

OER Librarian

Oklahoma State University Libraries

[kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu](mailto:kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu)

[@KathyEssmiller](#)



# Appendix



# Bonnie Cain- Wood

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Manager  
Communications  
Services

## Full quote:

“Communication Services serves as the public relations unit for the Library. The definition of PR that I embrace is that we use strategic communications to build mutual understanding and trust between a client and their publics. Our job is not only to help our audience understand the Library but also to help the Library understand our audiences. We do this in large part by asking lots of questions and purposefully listening. Collecting feedback from our audiences looks like a lot of things: feedback forms on the website, surveys, focus groups, conversations with event attendees, exit interviews for employees, robust social media monitoring and more. Not being afraid to say “I don’t know” and ask questions even when you know the answers will likely challenge your perspectives and preferences are key to creating that shared understanding and trust. We often think we know what accessibility looks like, but I am continually surprised by the simple, innovative solutions people request if you just give them the opportunity to tell you what they need.”

# Bonnie Cain- Wood

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Manager  
Communications  
Services

## Full quote, continued:

“In practice this has looked like many things. Here are a few examples:

- Contacting users personally to discuss service option when they vent frustrations on social media.
- Providing web designers with charts to help create color pallets that can be viewed by those with different kinds of color blindness.
- Ensuring all web images have alt text and making sure important information is not displayed in image form only on social media.
- Creating a workflow for closed-captioning video content and ensuring videos on our digital signage include captioning.
- Placing signage at a level that is readable at wheelchair height.
- Providing sign language interpreters for events when requested.
- Making a conscience effort when speaking to directly face individuals who tell you they read lips.
- Creating a left-handed work station in our office.
- Providing access to a color palette library for a graphic designer who is color blind.
- Adding a request for accommodations section to the RSVP for events. Specifically we tend to use the phrase “Are there any dietary or accessibility needs we can accommodate for you?”
- Creating an internal guide for employees to educate them about service animals.
- Bringing questions and concerns about accessibility to the attention of decision makers. Most changes don’t happen overnight, but they will never happen if no one knows there’s a problem.”

# Whitney Vitale

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Head,  
Access  
Services

## Full quote:

“For the work we do in Access Services, our most vital practice for making the library accessible to all patrons is building flexibility into our policies and our workflows. In public service you have to be aware of patron needs and be able to change to meet those needs and I see accessibility as an important extension of that.

There are two examples of this approach that I would like to share. The first is that, at one point, we had a very rigid policy that circulation students were not able to leave the Desk area and go into the stacks to help patrons pull books. This would mean that they would need to ask supervisors for a special exception to help patrons that had mobility issues that prevented them from reach particular items in the stacks. By making that policy more flexible, and allowing those student workers to go into the stacks to help patrons without permission, we could provide a more accessible service for patrons.

Another example that comes to mind was when we realized that the default color scheme for our online study room reservation system made it difficult for patrons with certain type of color blindness to navigate. As soon as we became aware of this problem, we worked with Digital Library Services to change to colors that would be easy to differentiate for all patrons.”

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