

# **Digital Inclusivity:**

## **Best Practices in Digital Accessibility to Create Inclusive Work, Teaching, and Learning Environments**



# Introductions



# Who we are

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- Sandi Arendalkowski, Digital Accessibility Lead Coordinator, Center for User Experience, UW-Madison
- Jess Jones, Interim Director, Center for User Experience, UW-Madison
- Ruben Mota, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator, Office of Compliance, UW-Madison

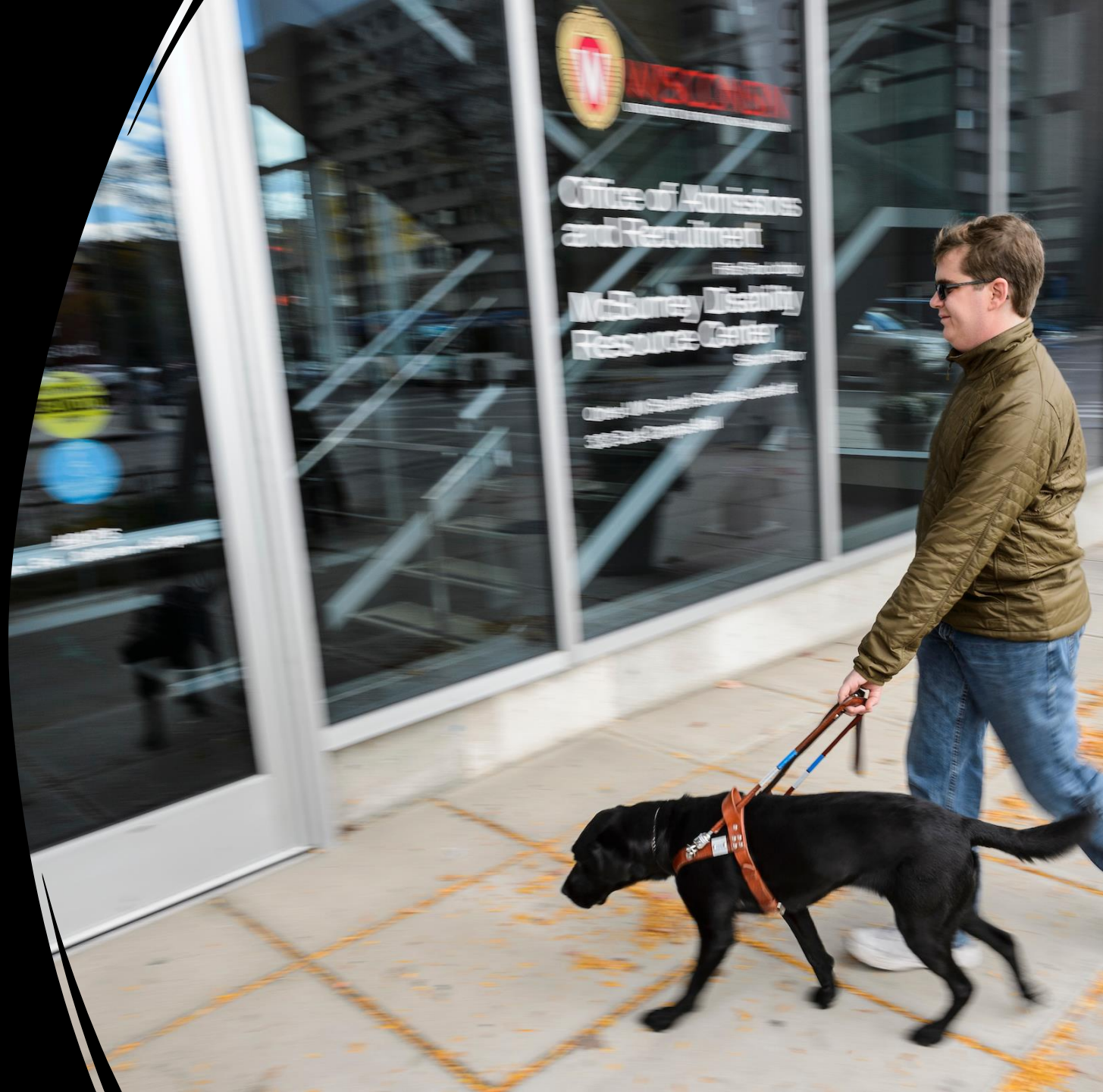




# Objectives

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- We'll identify:
  - How the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the digital divide of inaccessible technology and the need for inclusive, digital best practices
  - How UW-Madison incorporates inclusivity in its digital resources and information technology through the creation of campus resources available to support inclusion
  - Identify UW-Madison's current evolution of creating a shared campus responsibility and commitment to an accessible digital landscape that benefits all users
  - Organizations need a central infrastructure to support digital accessibility implementation across business and operational decisions



# What do we mean by “digital accessibility”?

- The practice of ensuring that digital resources can be used by members of the university community who have a diverse range of abilities. Includes websites, emails, documents, video, web and mobile apps, software, etc. Text
- Acknowledging disability as a facet of diversity, equity, and inclusion

# Impacts of Inaccessible Technology



# Why is digital accessibility important?

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"What is web accessibility?" (60 second video by Women Techmakers)



# The pandemic intensified the impacts of inaccessible technology

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- No captions or bad auto captions
- Poor color contrast
- Lack of access to video conferencing tools
- Lack of access to devices and printers
- Inaccessible digital course materials, including video content
- Inaccessible apps that met COVID testing requirements





# What about accommodations?

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Existing accommodations no longer served students, faculty, and staff in the new remote world.


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And more people requested accommodations as they experienced barriers to the changing work and learning environment.


# The (Not So) New Digital Divide



# Live Demo: What if you can't get the COVID test you need to be able to go to work or attend class?

 Menu ▾

Search by keyword or item # 

Account ▾ 

Nearest store: 311 EAST CAMPUS MALL, MADISON, WI ▾

 **COVID-19 Vaccine Update:** Walgreens is awaiting additional guidance from the CDC before offering booster doses of Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccines. We continue to provide Pfizer-BioNTech booster doses for eligible individuals.



Schedule vaccine ›



FREE  
flu shots †



FREE  
COVID-19 vaccine †



COVID-19 testing  
options

† No cost to you with most insurance or government assistance.

# What is it like to experience inaccessible video content?

## Examples:

- **Video 1:** No audio, no captions
- **Video 2:** No audio, bad captions
- **Video 3:** No audio, good captions
- **Video 4:** No video, good caption, no audio descriptions
- **Video 5:** No video, good captions, bad audio descriptions
- **Video 6:** No video, good captions, good audio descriptions
- **Video 7:** Good captions, good audio descriptions

audio, no video, no description,  
and good CC



# How do we narrow the digital divide?

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- It can be done!
- Successes
  - Continuity of instruction at UW-Madison
  - Safer Badgers app
  - Online student orientation
  - Campus visitor tour
  - Working with third-party vendors



# Recipe for success

- Listen to the people experiencing barriers
- Collaborate across teams and with accessibility professionals
- Clearly communicate to your users what is and what isn't accessible, the general barriers, and how to get assistance
- Organizationally, move towards the goal of shared responsibility

# Building shared responsibility for digital accessibility



# What we learned

- Accessibility is a shared campus responsibility, not a system.
- It becomes systemwide but it starts with an individual practicing accessibility.
- Accessibility shouldn't be framed as "additional work". Instead, accessibility is completing the work that is already being done with inclusive practices.
- The key is to empower university units to utilize our guides and resources ([link](#)) to begin incorporating practices.



# Our landscape: Culture

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Highly decentralized, independent decision-making and funding, large institution with many units separately creating, managing, procuring, and delivering technology on their own





# Our landscape: Awareness

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Low but growing awareness of  
digital accessibility





# Our landscape: Community

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Faculty and staff who want to do the best for our students, their colleagues, and visitors/program participants, but who are juggling a lot of different roles and responsibilities





# Our landscape: Technology

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An ever more complex ecosystem of technology and digital resources, changing every semester, if not more often





# Our landscape: Accessibility

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We provide the university with the tools and services to include accessibility in physical spaces, including elevators and curb cuts; but we haven't had the same expectations and rigor in the digital space



# Major milestones

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- 2000: One of the first universities in the country to establish a Web Accessibility Policy
- 2017: Office for Civil Rights complaint (resolved)
- 2018: Center for User Experience founded
- 2020: First full-time ADA Coordinator hired
- 2021: Refreshed Digital Accessibility Policy drafted and in the shared governance process

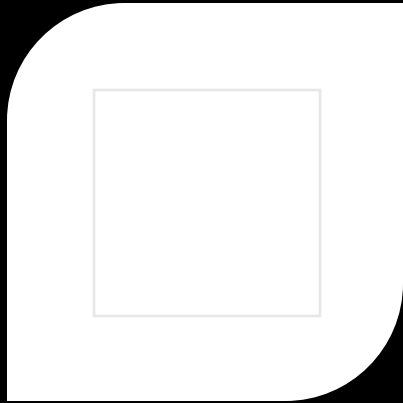
# Building infrastructure, empowering people

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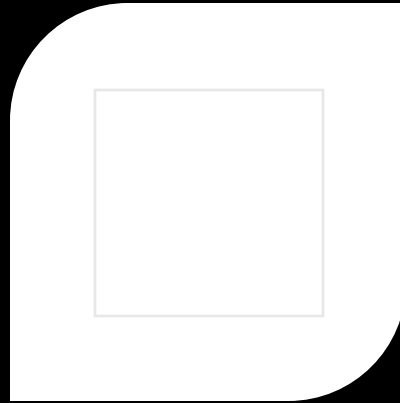
Our principles:

- We can't make your stuff accessible, you need to make it accessible
- Accessibility needs to be baked in to everything you do - it's a practice, a central principle to your work/team and it requires a collective effort
- Right doing should be a pervasive form of business practices for your group

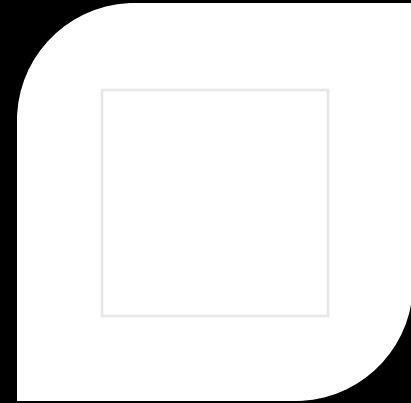
# Current resources



TRAINING SERVICE



EVALUATION AND  
CONSULTING SERVICE



GUIDES



# Moving towards shared responsibility

- Accessibility is a shared responsibility, not a system. It becomes system-wide but it starts with an individual practicing accessibility.
  - Shouldn't be additional work, should really be completing the work that is already being done with inclusive practices.
  - Empower university units to utilize our guides and resources to begin incorporating practices.
  - The key to success is to build accessibility practices into your processes.



# We're building the car, but you're the driver

- We provide the knowledge, resources, and tools - but we need to build awareness of these tools
- We need university members to learn accessibility standards and practices, review their business and operational processes, and begin incorporating accessibility practices into them.
- As a community, we need to change how we are doing things. Technology changes, but digital accessibility practices are always based on the same core user needs.
- This is not about adding work, it's about updating the way we do our work through modern inclusive processes and behaviors.

# Looking forward



# Our vision

A digital landscape in which all members of our community can independently and robustly participate in the activities they want to and UW-Madison is committed to ensuring our digital campus is accessible and free from barriers for all members of the university community.

# How will we get there?

1

Creating shared standards, plans, and understanding

2

Creating community

3

Building on our infrastructure

4

Changing how we add technology into our ecosystem

# It takes all of us

- UW-Madison values the contributions of each person and respects the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities and opinion enrich the university community.
- It takes all of us to achieve the university's mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background.



# Questions?

For additional information or assistance,  
contact us at the [Center for User Experience](#).

