



What are Accessible Learning Materials?

Accessible learning materials are educational materials that are fully usable by all students. To ensure this is possible, both the content and the technology used to deliver and interact with the content need to be accessible, so both must be considered. For example, both an e-book (content) and an e-book reader (delivery system) need to be accessible. The same applies to e-learning systems. A computer used to access the information and the content within an e-learning system needs to be accessible. If only one component is accessible, then the materials will not be accessible to all learners.

The following “short list” of accessibility features has been developed to assist all involved in the consideration, selection, and purchase of digital instructional materials. Note that the list is not comprehensive but provides a starting point for exploring accessibility issues.

Indicators of Accessibility

- Device-agnostic file formats (e.g., accessible HTML, Microsoft Word, PDF, EPUB, etc.)
- Content represented in multiple ways (e.g., video captions, alt text, live text for audio, digital braille, etc.)
- Compatibility with screenreader, refreshable braille, text-to-speech, and human-voice reading software
- Compatibility with assistive technology (AT)
- Text image descriptions that can be voiced
- Navigation alternatives (e.g., keyboard shortcuts/mapping or screen gestures, etc.)
- Location supports such as page numbers and/or progress bars
- Mathematical, scientific, and music symbols, formulas, and notations represented in multiple ways (e.g., explained with text alternatives, MathML)
- If writing is required, keyboard entry is supported by alternatives (e.g., word prediction, on-screen keyboards, voice input, etc.)
- Digital rights management (DRM) must not prevent access to built-in accessibility features or necessary assistive technologies
- e-book content can be voiced and navigated with appropriate delivery systems (e.g., iBooks, EPUB, etc.)

Resources for Checking for Accessibility

- http://aim.cast.org/learn/e-resources/accessibility_resources
- <http://wac.osu.edu/ebook-access-overview/#funct>
- <http://www.web2access.org.uk/>
- <http://diagramcenter.org/index.php>
- <http://webaim.org/>