

Project Overview

As an instructional designer at XYZ University, I work with faculty to create online courses.

The University has a peer review system in place to ensure quality in online and blended courses, but one concern the ADA Compliance Officer and I have is about the importance of being 508 compliant in all our online courses. I know the importance of using a variety of media assets enhances student learning, but we need to ensure they are accessible to everyone.

Recently, the Vice President of Academic Affairs told me that all online and blended courses must meet the 508 compliance requirements.

Acting as the project manager, it's my job to not only learn what these compliance requirements are, but also implement them in all online and blended courses.

Why is accessibility and compliance so important?

Besides just being the right thing to do, Missouri state law requires public four-year and two-year universities to meet Section 508 standards, meaning they must "develop and procure accessible information technology" (<http://at.mo.gov/it-access/info-tech-access.html>).

In addition to legal requirements, the U.S. Department of Education reported in 2016 that 11% of undergraduates have a disability. (<https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=60>).

Lastly, the number of complaints brought by the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education about inaccessibility of online materials at universities has been growing. To meet the needs of all our students, XYZ University must ensure all online courses are accessible.

Project Description

The "ADA/508 Compliance in Online Education at XYZ University" project will work to guarantee all blended and online courses comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Through researching the requirements, then implementing new rules for online education at the University, the project will directly affect undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in online and blended courses, the faculty who teach them, Online Education department staff including the instructional designer, and the ADA Compliance Officer. The project is intended to make certain all online courses are compliant and accessible to all XYZ University students.

This project website includes a summary of the ADA, Section 508, and WCAG 2.0 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) requirements, the solution I've proposed, the research to back it up, and how the solution will be evaluated. You will also find a bibliography and important project documents.