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Aiming 4 Accessibility Conference - University of Guelph June 2010

Students & Assistive Technology

Talking Points

- Focus on students using assistive technology
- ... and the staff that support them
- How accessible is social media?
- Landscape of assistive tech in higher ed.
- Accessible content creation
- Content creators are not developers

Accessibility of Social Media

- Jennison from Adaptech, cool guy!
- In depth study of ~400 self-identified disabled students, Ontario, mean age 29
- Disabilities - 36% learning, 21% chronic, 10% hearing, 8% low vision, 2% blind
- AT Usage – 26% screen reader, 17% dictation, 13% OCR, 12% zoom
- Browsers – 75% IE, 60% FF, 17% Safari

Accessibility of Social Media

- 66% strongly agree that prefer to never disclose disability
 - Privacy, categorization, fear of exclusion
- Though only ~50% agree that inaccessible experience will stop them from returning.
 - Usually no choice!
- Biggest hindrance to blogging/micro: **accessible spellchecking.**
 - Spelling mistakes hurt, fixing them is difficult

Accessibility of Social Media

MOST ACCESSIBLE

- MSN Live
- Facebook
- Youtube
- Yahoo Messenger
- Skype

LEAST ACCESSIBLE

- Digg
- Classmates.com
- Secondlife
- Many less popular services tied for last
 - Disaboom
 - Internshare

Assistive Technologists

- Large survey of “assistive technologists” in Ontario
- 75% self-trained (high), though diploma courses are popular
- Manage average of 2.5 AT labs per school
 - At the library, CSD, some learning commons
 - Half of labs used by 100 students or more

Assistive Technologists

THE LEARNERS

- Blind
- Low Vision
- Learning Disability
 - “Primary Users” at 84% of institutions
- Psychological
- Physical / Mobility
- Brain Injury
- Many others ...

THE TECHNOLOGY

- Kurzweil 3000
- TextHelp R&W
- JAWS
- ZoomText
- Dragon
- Inspiration
- Didn't register: WYNN, WordQ, WindowEyes

Assistive Technologists

- Drivers for Decisions
 - #1 is BSWD funding – Bursary for Students w/ Disabilities (OSAP)
 - AODA Compliance
 - Self-maintained IT in most AT Labs
 - Supporting non-assistive software (Office, IE, etc)
 - Training students, staff in AT
- Windows XP is king. Win7 adoption super low

Accessible Content

- Visually rich learning resources
- Small, even paced chunks
 - Flags and cues to indicate progress
- Default to the simplest language
 - Glossaries
- Good information hierarchy
- Make it easy to review
- Encourage quicklinking, connecting content

Content Creators vs. XML

- Content in XML can be accessible, because it's semantic, transformable, etc.
- Vast majority of "content industry" does not work in the data, use visual design tools
 - Big problem for accessibility, translation
- Adobe InDesign bridges that gap
 - 80% of room familiar with tool, but use other Adobe tools instead

Thank You!

- All material from Wednesday sessions from

<http://www.accessconf.open.uoguelph.ca/>

- @dariusz for feedback