



ACCESS NEWS

Improving Accessibility in PDFs

In this issue, we focus on accessible PDFs.

PDFs are ubiquitous in educational settings, but not all PDFs are created with accessibility in mind. Ensuring that your PDFs are accessible is crucial for supporting all staff and students, especially those who use assistive technology. Creating fully accessible PDFs can be complex and requires more training than can be covered here. However, we can start by understanding some key requirements.

How to Identify an Accessible PDF

The first principle of PDF accessibility is that image-based PDFs are inherently inaccessible. Assistive technology relies on digital text to function, and images lack this essential element.

To determine if a PDF is image-based, try to click or select text within the document. If clicking highlights the entire page rather than specific text, the PDF is image-based. Conversely, if you can select individual pieces of text, the PDF contains digital text. Selectable text, which can be highlighted, copied, and interacted with, is crucial for accessibility.

PDFs created from scanned documents often pose additional barriers. These scanned images can be of poor quality, making the content hard to read. Handwritten annotations, highlights, and underlining in scanned documents are not recognized by assistive technology and can obstruct access to the text.

Whenever possible, use PDFs that were created digitally, such as those exported from Word documents or PowerPoint files. While these PDFs may not be entirely accessible, they are generally more accessible than scanned images.

Improving Accessibility of Image-Based PDFs

If you cannot find a text-based version of an image-based PDF, there are ways to enhance its accessibility. If you are scanning a document, ensure you erase any handwritten notations to improve the scan quality.

For PDFs without selectable text, print it off and use a scanner such as the KIC (Knowledge Imaging Center) scanner in the Learning Resource Center. The library staff can show you how to scan a document using OCR (optical character recognition) which will scan images of text into digital text.

Keep in mind that the quality of OCR results depends on the original document's quality, and the converted content may contain errors. You can use Adobe Acrobat Pro to correct any inaccuracies after conversion; this software is available for free to staff and faculty. Both Microsoft and Adobe products have tools in them for reviewing documents for accessibility that will also tell authors how to make the documents accessible.

By understanding and applying these basic principles, you can make significant strides toward creating and using accessible PDFs in your educational materials.



OUR NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Summer Quarter edition of the Accessibility Newsletter presented to you by the Accessibility Committee. Each quarter, this newsletter will look at a single accessibility concept or skill, aiming to empower staff and faculty with the knowledge and tools to create an inclusive teaching and learning environment. Additionally, this newsletter will contain links to information and services to support an accessible campus.

Your Accessibility Challenge

A fully accessible PDF must also have properly tagged content and a variety of other features that we don't have space to explore here. For now, just focus on avoiding image-based PDFs and re-scanning documents or PDFs that don't have selectable text. Expect more information about PDFs in a future newsletter!

Try reviewing one PDF for accessibility using the tests above. If the PDF is a scanned image, try to find a version that was created from a digital file or to make it accessible by printing it off and rescanning the image with an OCR compatible scanner such as the KIC scanner in the Learning Resource Center.

About the Accessibility Committee

The Clover Park Community College Accessibility Committee, in support of college and state policies, will establish, review, and evaluate collegewide accessibility plans and advise the Student Learning Council in regard to promoting and providing appropriate, effective, and integrated access for students, employees and community members. To that end, the committee will:

- model and facilitate a culture of accessibility for all faculty, staff and students;
- provide training and support to improve the level of accessibility;
- serve as a clearinghouse for accessibility questions, resources, and issues for CPTC.

Accessibility Committee Membership

Co-Chairs

- Geoff Cain – Teaching & Learning Center
- Melissa Medina – Disability Resources for Students

Members

- Stefanie Bosen - Finance and Administration
- Rachael Butler – Workforce Development
- Jessica Carey - Instructor
- Lisa Cutler - Learning Resource Center
- Pearl DeSure - Learning Resource Center
- Austiin Donovan - Teaching and Learning Center
- Betzaida Solorio-Flores - Student
- Brady Hageman - eLearning
- Sidhu Harman - Marketing
- Pamela Jeter – Director IT
- Pam Munizza – Instructor
- Harman Sidhu - Marketing
- Sheli Sledge -- Equity Diversity & Inclusion
- Eric Stokes - Instructor
- Leah Wilkins – Workforce Development

Disability Resources

- [General disability resources](#)
- [Disability resources for students](#)
- [Disability resources for faculty](#)

Events

Free document accessibility webinar from WebAIM

Tuesday, July 23rd at 10:00 am in Zoom

Join George Joeckel, the Online Training Program Manager at WebAIM. Learn tips and tricks to help make sure your documents are usable and readable by people with disabilities.

Register now for the [Accessible Documents Webinar](#)