

# Accessibility for Edtech Across the Campus: Turning a Negative into a Positive

September 29, 2015

- The webcast will begin at the top of the hour.
- There is no audio being broadcast at this time.
- If you need assistance, contact Blackboard Collaborate: 866-388-8674.
- An archive of this webcast will be available on the WCET website next week.





WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies

# **Accessibility for Edtech Across the Campus: Turning a Negative into a Positive**

**September 29**

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- Welcome.
- Thank you Blackboard Collaborate!
- If you have technical issues:
  - Call 866-388-8674
- Use the chat box for questions and information exchange.
- Archive, PowerPoint, and Resources available next week.



Megan Raymond, WCET



# Questions from the Audience

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- If you have a question during the presentation, please add your questions to the chat box. We will monitor the chat box and have time for Q&A at the end of each section.



# Moderator

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- **Russell Poulin**
- *Director, Policy and Analysis,*
- *WCET*



# Presenters

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## Bill Welsh

- *Executive Director, the Office of Disability Services*
- *Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ*



## Marlene Zentz

- *Senior Instructional Designer/Accessibility Specialist,*
- *University of Montana - Missoula*



## Janet Sedgley

- *EITA (Electronic and Info. Tech. Accessibility) Coordinator and Manager, Accessibility Tech. Services*
- *University of Montana - Missoula*



# Outline for Presentation

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- Why is Accessibility a Critical Issue in Higher Education?
- Assessment.
- Policies.
- Web Accessibility.
- Procurement.
- Learning Environments.
- Training.
- The Positive in Proactive.

# Consider the Following

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- What if the technology you use everyday was completely useless to you?
- How would you feel?
- How would you order online products?
- Check email?
- How would you work?
- Your thoughts on this experience?



# Proactive Design for Everyone

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- Accessibility is usually not an institution-wide responsibility, mostly falls to the disability services office.
- Change the discussion from accessibility to design that works for everyone.
- Vision for the future: Proactive design for everyone rather than accommodations.

# Cultural Change to... Everyone Responsible

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- For a **cultural shift** to happen:
  - Highest levels at an institution
  - Training and knowledge must be available and easily obtainable; and
  - Ownership and responsibility fostered throughout the institution
- Getting started with your institutional plan.....

# Strategic Planning for Accessible Technology and Information

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- Most institutions do not have a structured strategic plan or action plan for university-wide adoption of accessibility or universal design.
- **Without** a plan, nothing happens!  
Inaction becomes the **norm**.

# Assessment

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1. Has your institution conducted an accessibility assessment of technology?
2. Are there responsible personnel outside of the disability office?
3. Are trainings conducted on accessible technology?
4. Is accessibility part of the procurement process?

# University of Montana Self Study

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- Months of work leading into the Resolution Agreement and subsequent Self Study.
- Web forms combined with phone calls and emails and departmental visits.
- Met with campus groups from academic officers to administrative assistants group.

# Policies

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Does your institution have a policy for:

- Web accessibility
- Captioning
- Procurement
- Online courses
- Instructional materials

# Building a Policy From the Ground Up

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- Some campuses are very accessible without any policy in place – University of Washington.
- Some campuses took years to get a policy in place – North Carolina State.
- Some of us did it in double-time – University of Montana.

# Starting From Both Directions

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- Infrastructure:
  - Web accessibility
  - Procurement
  - Learning management system
  - Student systems (registration, etc.)
- Instructional Materials:
  - Online course content
  - Documents
  - Captioning and electronic media.



# Web Accessibility

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- Does your Content Management System use accessible templates?
- Are web sites scanned for accessibility university-wide?
- Are web developers and content providers trained?
- Does the institution require reports on web accessibility?

# Web Accessibility Has Multiple Benefits

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- Search engine optimization (SEO).
- Consistency of “look” through accessible templates.
- Deliberate postings.
- Opportunity to “certify” posters.

# Procurement

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- Is accessibility part of the procurement process for technology and information?
- Are vendors questioned about accessibility of products?
- Is there someone in IT who is knowledgeable about accessibility?
- How is technology tested for accessibility?
- Are vendors held accountable?

# Procurement Positives

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- Monitor use of consistent products on campus
- Opportunities for reducing costs:
  - Consolidated purchases
  - Fewer one-off purchases
  - Support and training
- Opportunity to talk with employees about accessibility.
- Increased vendor collaboration.

# Providing Accessible Learning Environments

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- Learning management system use.
- Consistency for students and faculty.
- Onus for the environments is on the technical staff.
- Faculty can focus on their teaching and dialing up content accessibility.

# Accessible Instructional Materials

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- Accessible text-based documents.
- Accessible PowerPoint presentations.
- Accessible multimedia.

# Training

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- Does your institution provide training for web developers, instructional designers, faculty or staff on accessibility?
- Is accessibility included in job descriptions for web developers, instructional designers, instructors?
- Knowledge is power! Most important part of change to culture.

# Training Models at UM

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- Training by topic.
- Training by department.
- “Just in time” training.
- Access Partners.
- Certification.



# Why is it Important? How to get Buy in?

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- Bad publicity and bad press means potential loss of revenue.
- More compatible with emerging technologies such as mobile and hand held devices.
- Reduction in complaints and litigation.
- Commitment to diverse populations.
- Grants and accreditation processes may require accessibility especially for federal grants.
- Universally designing sites and technology works better for everyone, not just individuals with disabilities.

# University of Montana's Experience

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- Focusing on better communication.
- Demystifying what accessibility means.
- Fostering collaboration.
- Providing consistency.
- “We’re all in this together.”

# What Can We Learn?

## Final Thoughts

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1. No longer is separate, but equal acceptable.
2. Have a plan.
3. Have a policy.
4. Training is key.
5. Start somewhere and use these cases as road maps.
6. The Department of Justice, the Office of Civil Rights, the EEOC and now the Congress mean business.

# Questions from the Audience

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- <http://wcet.wiche.edu/>

## WCET Annual Meeting

- November 11-13, Denver, CO
- <http://wcetconference.wiche.edu/>



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Register for upcoming webcasts  
[wcet.wiche.edu/connect/webcasts](http://wcet.wiche.edu/connect/webcasts)



- [Identity Authentication and Proctoring Systems](#) - October 1, 2015
- [WCET Google Hangout: Teaching Competencies for 21st Century Learners](#) - October 6, 2015
- [Out with Old EdTech and in With the New: Learning Relationship Management \(LRM\) Platforms](#) - October 22, 2015

# Additional Information and Resources

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- Access to the resources discussed during this webcast, including the archive, will be available next week.
  - <http://wcet.wiche.edu/connect/webcasts>



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