

## **ETEC 535 - Case Study 1**

### **By: Rica Young**

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It is hard to fathom how an institution as prestigious as Arizona State University can miss a very important aspect such as accessibility when implementing a pilot program. The fact that visually impaired students are disadvantaged when using Kindle DX as the only textbook resource in class clearly shows the school's failure to understand equal access and web accessibility.

Firstly, Section 508 is not new information; it has been in existence for more than a decade. How can a federally-funded institution neglect the law? ASU also has a Disability Resource Center that aids students with disabilities in their academic pursuits. How come they didn't ensure equal access of the Kindle DX pilot program?

Secondly, Sydik (2007) emphasized that "the web is wide-reaching and open to everyone. Shutting out users is not only an issue of discrimination or civil rights but it is against the nature and intent of web communication. The Declaration of Human Rights states: Everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts, and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits" (pp. 9-10).

Finally, Kindle DX provides text-to-speech recognition but the menus are inaccessible to blind students. Thatcher et. al, (2006) noted that "Keyboard navigation of the web page is very important for many users, whether or not they use a screen reader. As a web author or web designer, you can do some simple things to make that process of page navigation much easier for your site visitors, especially those with disabilities" (p. 181).

### **Resources:**

National Federation of the Blind and American Council of the Blind File Discrimination Suit Against Arizona State University (2009). Retrieved from <http://www.nfb.org/nfb/NewsBot.asp?MODE=VIEW&ID=449>

Sydik, J. J. (2007). *Design accessible web sites: Thirty-six keys to creating content for all audiences and platforms*. United States of America: Pragmatic Bookshelf.

Thatcher, J., Burks, M. R., Hielmann, C., Henry, S. L., Kirkpatrick, A., Lauke, P. H., . . . Waddell, C.D. (2006). *Web accessibility: Web standards and regulatory compliance*. New York, NY: Springer-Verlag.

## **ETEC 535 – Case Study 2**

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The article stated that a public entity violates its obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act when it simply responds to individual requests for accommodation on an ad-hoc basis. Chapter 3 of the book entitled “Web Accessibility” noted that this approach is ineffective because retrofitting existing products and services are expensive and may end up unusable. It also suggested that in order for an enterprise (California State University, Long Beach in this case) to successfully implement an accessibility solution, it should set-up an accessibility organization that will handle and support accessibility issues and enforcement. To describe ways that CSULB could have accomplished their commitment to accessibility and identify which university constituents may have been a part of accomplishing the plan, I have outlined/summarized the ideas from the aforementioned book.

### **Accessibility Organization Make-up**

University President or University Chancellor

- has the authority and responsibility to implement change; without such, the implementation of accessible technologies will be difficult
- rewards innovation and discourages nonproductive actions
- arbitrates disputes within and between departments
- commits publicly and provides financial backing

Accessibility Champion

- familiar with accessibility issues and has enough authority and prestige to ensure that everything that needs to be done is done
- pushes solutions when needed
- good grounding in the field and believes in what he is doing

Stakeholder Departments and Employees

- include the different branches of Information Technology Services who are responsible for installing and maintaining adaptive workstations in computer laboratories, purchasing computer software and hardware and designing web pages and course materials
- spread accessibility awareness and concerns throughout CSULB
- provide faculty and staff with resources for creating accessible course materials (i.e., graphs, charts, transparencies, examinations) in a timely, accurate and meaningful manner

### **Accessibility Organization Scope, Goals and Functions**

- educates faculty and staff on accessibility through trainings and a centralized knowledge base
- encourages feedback from students on a continuous basis rather than complaints being the only measure of resolving a problem
- ensures quality of accessibility initiatives by recording milestones (i.e., 100 percent of accessibility-centric faculty and staff trained), monitoring compliance to standards (i.e., consistent template across the university) and assessing goals and objectives periodically
- hires a legal expert knowledgeable on policies that apply to accessibility
- implements external standards (i.e., WCAG 1.0) and internal standards (i.e., style guide) when producing materials and services throughout the university
- represents CSULB in public affairs related to accessibility and in standards group (i.e., Web Standards Group Accessibility Task Force)

## References:

California State University, Long Beach – Docket Number 09-99-2041 (1999). Retrieved from <http://www.icdri.org/legal/lbeach.htm>

Thatcher, J., Burks, M. R., Hielmann, C., Henry, S. L., Kirkpatrick, A., Lauke, P. H., . . . Waddell, C.D. (2006). *Web accessibility: Web standards and regulatory compliance*. New York, NY: Springer-Verlag.