

10 Things All Non-Profits Should Know About Accessible Online Learning

Leah Chang, LCL Group for TechSoup
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Territorial Acknowledgement

I acknowledge with respect and gratitude that I live and work on the unceded, traditional territories of the Hul'q'umi'num' / Halq'eméylem / hə́q̓amíhəm speaking peoples in and around the Lower Mainland and Southern Gulf Islands of British Columbia.

Please share your acknowledgement in the chat!



What are your questions
about accessibility?



Pop them in the chat/Q&A!

Thanks, Community!





Leah Chang Learning

leahchangelearning.com

eLearning consultancy, providing learning technology and instructional design to support non profits achieve educational mandates.

Services:

- Accessibility consultation
- Curriculum design and development
- eLearning products
- Learning technology consultation (LMS)



Clients & projects



LCL's Accessibility Statement

We are committed to removing barriers to online learning. For us, that means designing a learning experience that is optimized for all learners. From the content to the functionality, the entire experience should be accessible. The following informs all our projects:

- Universal design
- Preferred language (i.e., person-first or identity-first)
- Assistive technology
- Neurodiversity
- Allyship: "Nothing about us, without us."

Today, we WILL

We WILL...

1. Answer FAQs about accessibility
2. Define common accessibility terms
3. Identify accessibility tools
4. List accessible formats and delivery methods

We will NOT

1. Discuss website accessibility or accessible web technology (*Sorry, I'm not a web developer!*)
2. Approach accessibility as a checklist (*It's better to bake accessibility into DEI => IDEA*)

1. Boost Accessibility in ALL Online Learning Formats/Delivery Methods

Online Learning Formats

Delivery formats:

- eLearning (asynchronous)
- Blended learning
- Hybrid
- Virtual sessions (synchronous) aka Instructor led or
- Facilitated Learning Online (FLO)



What type of learning does your organization offer?

Who is your learner audience?

E.g. Virtual Instructor-Led Training (VILT)

Support facilitators and instructors to host more accessible sessions:

Instructor materials:

- Train-the-trainer programs (increase Zoom facilitation skills, etc.)
- Facilitator/Instructor guides
- Accessible and inclusive workshop activities and assignments
- PDF/UA handouts for participants



Inclusive interviewing tips

- Schedule the interview so it can allow for more time (if needed).
- Book interviews far enough apart that your schedule allows for extra time during the interview.
 - Candidates may **pause** before answering to process the question and formulate their answers.
 - Allow candidates to **write** down their responses before they answer.
 - Be prepared to **repeat** the question or **rephrase** it.
- Keep the number of interviewers small, but consider having a second interviewer.
 - A second interviewer brings added **diversity of thought** to the interview and selection process.
 - A second interviewer also helps **reduce bias** and make the selection process more objective and reliable.
- Consider asking for assistance and/or training on inclusive interviewing.
 - Assistance can be given in creating and conducting inclusive interviews.
 - Training can also be provided to employers on other aspects of inclusive hiring.
 - **Ready, Willing and Able** offers such services to Canadian businesses.



2. Get Familiar with Web Accessibility Terms

Terms & Examples

Term	Definition	Example
Assistive technology	assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitative devices for people with disabilities and the elderly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Screen reader (Jaws, NVDA)● Keyboard only navigation (no mouse)● Sip & puff device (key of a mouse)● Zoom in/larger font size● CART
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines	w3.org

What's the difference between A, AA, AAA?

A

- base level of conformance
- affects the broadest group of users with the most benefits
- are essential
- some barriers will still exist that impact certain groups of users

AA

- most common target conformance level
- often adopted in regulations or negotiated in legal settlements
- establishes a level of accessibility that works for more users, including those who use assistive technology

AAA

- highest conformance level achievable
- covers the success criteria of all three levels
- not applicable or realistic in all situations

3. Align with Accessibility Laws

ON/BC Accessibility legislation

April 22, 2014

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#)

)

Government is responsible for creating, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards that organizations must follow to make Ontario more accessible and inclusive by 2025.

June 2021, [Accessible B.C. Act](#) becomes law

Government and the public sectors, like schools, police and health organizations will be required to have an updated accessibility plan that includes a process for awareness and public feedback.

2005

2020

2021

2024

Nov. 2, 2020

[AODA Requirement for Ontario Websites](#)

Applies to large private sector organizations, as well as public sector organizations with 1-49 workers, 50+ workers.

[AccessibleBC 2024](#)

Objective to make internet access in B.C. the most accessible in Canada by 2024. Likely enforcement of accessible websites starting in 2024 (minimum standard of WCAG 2.0/AA).

Government	Law
Canada - federal	Accessible Canada Act The Canadian Standard on Web Accessibility, updated in 2013 Minimum: WCAG 2.1 AA (all gov websites & web applications)
Ontario	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Minimum: WCAG 2.1 AA
Quebec	Act to Secure Handicapped Persons in the Exercise of their Rights
Manitoba	Accessible Manitoba Act
Nova Scotia	Accessibility Act
British Columbia	Accessible BC Act (Minimum: WCAG 2.0 AA)
Newfoundland & Labrador New Brunswick, Saskatchewan	n/a Intention to develop accessibility legislation *Note: New Brunswick mandatory bilingualism
USA - federal	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) / Section 508 of Rehabilitation Act Minimum: WCAG 2.1 AA => soon moving to WCAG 2.2

4. Consider prioritizing levels of Accessibility

Learning examples

A

LMS: Rise course

Video with closed captions

AA

LMS: Storyline course
using keyboard shortcuts

Video with closed captions
and transcript (note:
Audience should
determine if CC are hard
coded or optional)

AAA

LMS: n/a

Video: includes closed
captions, transcript,
described video AND ASL
interpretation.

5. Apply Universal Design to all
you do

POUR

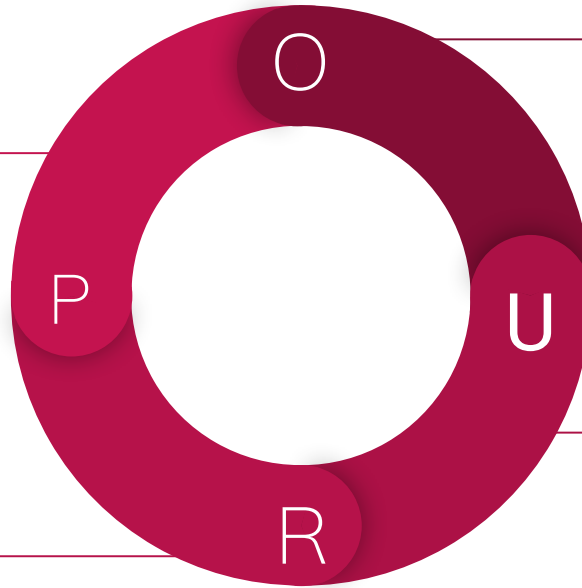
Perceivable

Present the experience in ways that learners/users can perceive it.

Robust

Content can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of users, allowing them to choose technologies and how to access the experience.

Are learners driving their own experience?



Operable

User interface components and navigation must be operable.

Does it work for everyone?

Understandable

Information and the operation of user interface must be understandable.

Are key messages coming across clearly?

P = Perceivable

Perceivable: Accessible colours and fonts

Our brand font: Mulish (free Google font)

Small letter i vs capital letter I vs number 1

Project objective, solution or key point

This slide does not meet AA accessibility requirements but may be useful where a calm slide is required (eg- when taking a break).

Project objective, solution or key point

This slide meets AA accessibility requirements for colour contrast.

Perceivable: Accessible & Inclusive Images

“Just-right” description of alt text (form and function)

Choice of images: stock photography is inclusive

Call-to-action” icons avoid metaphors, are universally understandable

Good vs. Bad Alt Text



Bad: *We're zoomed-in on the face of a brown bear – sometimes known as a grizzly – gazing majestically into the middle distance. Perhaps she's hungry, or has spotted a threat?*

Bad: *bear, brown bear, grizzly, grizzly bear, mammal, carnivore*

Okay: *Brown bear*

Good: *Close-up of a bear's face*

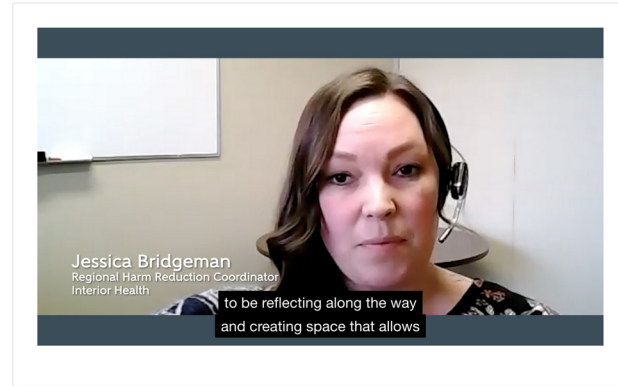
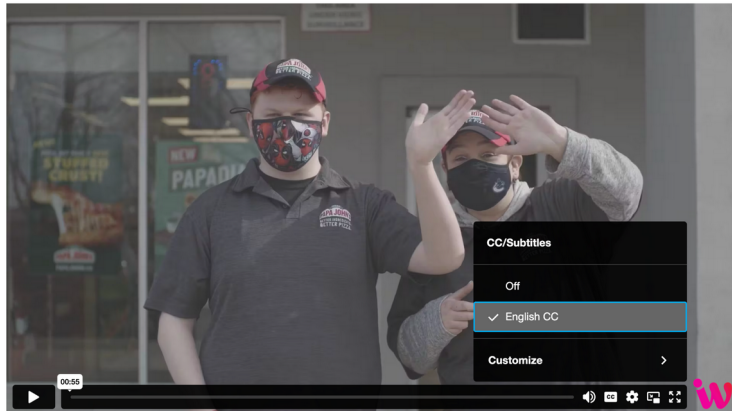
Better: *[Describe image in context of learning]*

Source: <https://supercooldesign.co.uk/blog/how-to-write-good-alt-text>

Perceivable: Accessible Video

All instructional videos used in a course include

- closed captions
- full transcript
- AAA = ASL interpreters



Video transcript

Jessica Bridgeman

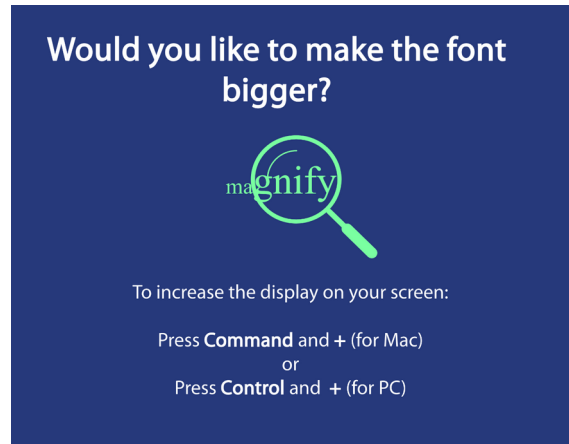
When I think about working with our Indigenous populations, or Métis population, it's super important for me to be reflecting along the way and creating space that allows cultural safety to be led by whoever I'm working with. And that's the thing about cultural safety, is that it's not up to me to decide whether I'm being culturally safe. It's up to me to create a space for who I'm working with to decide that. And I think that's incredibly important. As a white settler – third-generation settler – to Canada, I am here on stolen lands, and it's my responsibility and the responsibility of others to come forward with humility and an openness to learn and, you know, be uncomfortable in those spaces as we started to understand what it means to carry the privilege of that and how we go forth as an ally in this work, in reconciliation. That's what I can say about that.

Videos for neurodiverse audiences:
limit fast-paced editing, consider colour desaturation,
portray speakers head on when speaking, provide
appropriate context

O = Operable

Operable: Accessible courses

- WCAG 2.1 = Storyline (customized with client branding) + LMS
- Keyboard navigation (keyboard shortcuts)
- Taxonomy of open/closed navigation
- E.g. no drag and drop
- Option to listen, read (learner's choice)



To AVOID:

LCL avoids:

- Timed activities
- Closed navigation (back button is always available)
- Forced audio (narration)



U = Understandable

Understandable = Plain Language

- Appropriate reading/grade level of language proficiency (grade 8/9 = 80% of public audience)
 - E.g. Language level checkers: Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, Hemingway App
- Teach all technical terms or jargon in context
- Write content for broadest understanding
 - E.g. Neurodivergent audiences and English language learners: avoid idioms/metaphors

Understandable order/flow/delivery

Learning science, psychology, adult education principles, for example:

- Activation of prior knowledge
- Behaviour change
- Rehearsal opportunities for long-term retention/application
- Performance improvement/development
- Satisfying learners' needs (WIIFM)
- Realistic, timely to consume

R = Robust

Robust Delivery Options

Microlearning vs. eLearning/formal

Video

Interaction via webpage (learner-driven)

Avoid forced audio

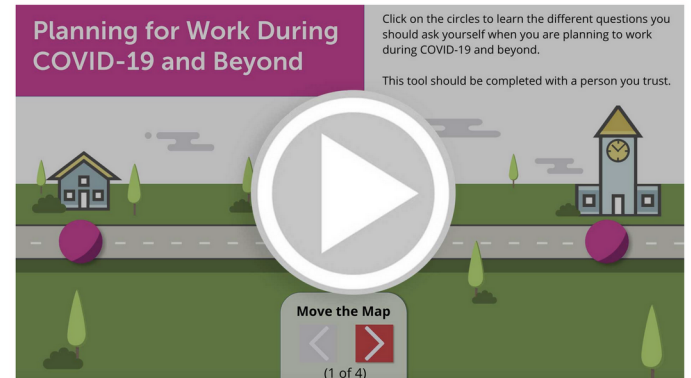
HTML-published Learning Interactions:

<https://www.theinclusiveworkplace.ca/en/find-work/topic/covid-19/article/should-i-work-during-covid-19>

Should TCBC avoid microlearnings/interactions

Planning for Work During Covid-19 and Beyond

A short activity to help you explore if you are ready to work during COVID. Get a list of questions to ask and things to consider.



6. Choose accessible technology

Is your LMS accessible?

Many Learning Management Systems SAY they are WCAG 2.1, but when tested, aren't actually.

It will depend on what you put in it, and how you use it, and what you put into it.

Avoid barriers wherever possible!

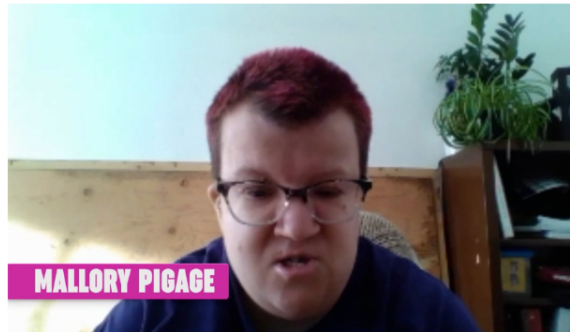


7. Continue engaging your community

Accessibility Advocates Test our Products (Robust)

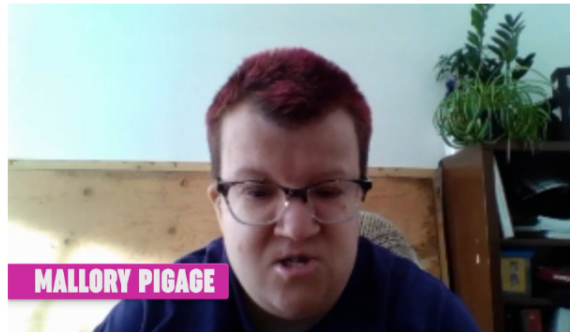
- Conduct an AI and web accessibility check at each phase (template, B1, B2) before involving accessibility testing consultants
- Conduct live accessibility test for build with users of assistive technologies
- Functionality and completion testing

"We work with real people, and real users to get real feedback. It's amazing what the AI checkers miss that can become big roadblocks." -Leah Chang



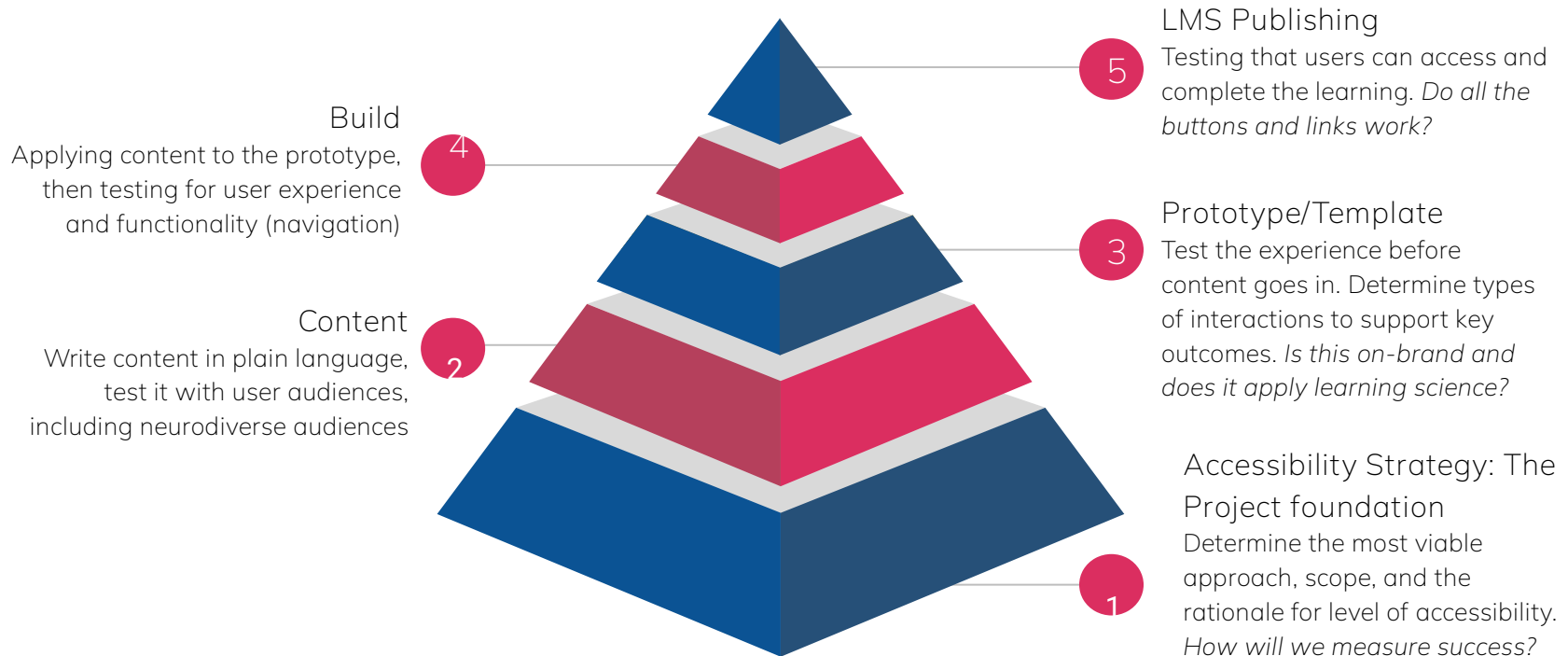
Living experience

- Build collaboration into timeline and project plan (beginning, middle, end)
- Mitigate glitches before production phase
- Ask for feedback content/exp
- View experience from their perspective



8. Build Accessibility into your Projects and Programming

LCL's Approach: Accessible eLearning Projects



POUR + PM

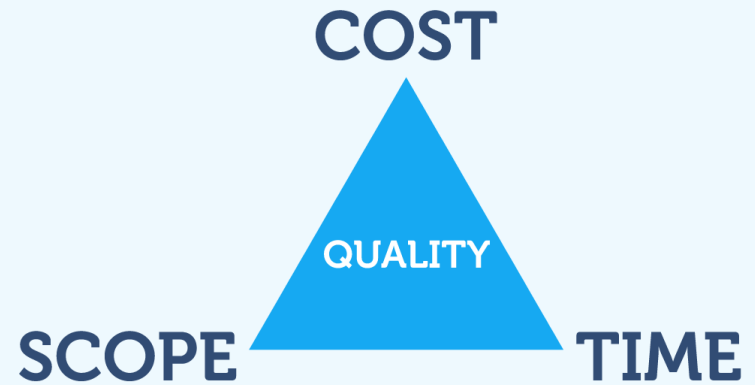
P = How and when will we test that it's perceivable?

O = Does the tech work? Who can test it?

U = Language, content review, brand voice, key messages, level of language

R = Allow for more time to include lived experience

The Project Management Triangle



9. Lean on Free/Low Cost Accessibility Tools & Vendors

Accessibility checkers/vendors



AbleDocs



Hemingway
Editor



web accessibility evaluation tool

10. Build Accessibility into Your Strategic Plan

LCL's Accessibility Statement Sample

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10 Takeaways



What are YOUR actions?

Today's 10 Takeaways + Actions

1. Boost accessibility in ALL online learning delivery formats
2. Get familiar with Web accessibility terms
3. Align with accessibility laws
4. Consider prioritizing levels of accessibility
5. Apply Universal Design to all you do (POUR)
6. Choose accessible technology
7. Continue engaging your community
8. Build accessibility into your projects management
9. Lean on free/low cost accessibility tools & vendors
10. Build accessibility to your strategic plan



Thank you!

Stay in touch: leah@leahchangelearning.com