Project 2: Accessible User Experience (200 pts)

Before you can develop your own accessible digital content, you need to understand web accessibility guidelines and be able to identify and problem-solve accessibility issues of digital texts. This process of identifying issues is sometimes referred to as an *accessibility audit.* That audit is informed by accessibility testing steps and procedures, referred to as *protocols*, which are meant to guide an accessibility audit.

Testing allows professional writers to better understand how users (consumers and readers) experience the documents, software, digital tools, or manufactured products that we design. It allows us to work toward disability justice by centralizing access needs and eliminating barriers for disabled users—a practice that makes content more accessible for everyone.

For the second project, you will read about web accessibility guidelines and develop a customized accessibility protocol that can be used to evaluate both the content and design of digital texts. You will first create a protocol for assessing the accessibility of a website or mobile app, then conduct an accessibility audit of a social media platform. You will present your results in a 2-page report.

Deliverables

1. **Accessibility Assessment Protocol.** Based on accessibility principles (and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines: http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/), you will design a protocol to evaluate the accessibility of digital texts and projects. This often takes the form of a checklist.

   This protocol should comprise a minimum of 15 generic (i.e., adaptable) questions to which specific project-related details can be added. Remember, the protocols you design must be adaptable for most digital projects. The users of these protocols are other accessibility testing administrators seeking models for testing the accessibility of digital projects with real or simulated users.

   Your protocol will be assessed on the following:

   - **Content:** Your protocol should be grounded in the readings about accessibility. It should include both qualitative (rhetorical) and quantitative (technical) aspects of testing. Try not to think about word count; instead, think of the wording of your questions and the effectiveness of other visual cues in your protocols.
   - **Context:** Each protocol must provide space for explaining context: What is the rhetorical situation of these protocols? For whom are they written?
   - **Headings & Subheadings:** Your protocols themselves should be usable and accessible. Use headings and formatting to guide readers through steps and chunk information.
   - **Professional Design:** Your protocols should be clean, legible, and follow four principles of design: contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity.

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2. **Informal Report.** After designing your testing protocol, *you will conduct an accessibility audit on a web or mobile application.* After conducting your audit, you will synthesize and reflect on the results in a 2-page informal report. Reports should include the following sections:

- **Header.** To/From/Date/Subject
- **Introduction.** Introduce the purpose of the report, the major findings, and any action steps.
- **Discussion.** Synthesize and reflect on your results: What design elements were accessible? What accessibility issues emerged? Who might those affect? What considerations should the designers and writers of the web or mobile app considered moving forward?
- **Recommendation(s).** Quickly note any action steps that should be taken to make the web or mobile app more accessible.
- **Appendix.** Include your completed accessibility audit at the end of the report.

Submission Details

Both your accessibility assessment protocol and informal report should be submitted as PDFs. There is no page limit for the protocol, and the report should not exceed two pages (the appendix is not part of the page count). Employ block formatting for the report: single-spaced, no paragraph indents, and a full space between paragraphs.

The Project 2 assessment protocol is due Sunday, October 11th.

The Project 2 informal report is due to Canvas Sunday, October 18th.

Screenshot of a basic web accessibility check of the bsu.edu homepage

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