



Desire2Learn 
Innovative Learning Technology

Accessibility



Why Focus on Accessibility?

- Good for institutions
 - > Provides resources for students and faculties
- Good for students
 - > Complete assignments at own pace
 - > Can learn according to their learning style

What Are Barriers to Accessibility for Vendors?

- Accessibility is a moving target
- Knowledgeable developers and support staff are difficult to find
- Infrequent communication between vendors and users make it difficult to verify and improve solutions

Consortiums that include vendors, disability specialists from clients, and end users offer a solution to these difficulties. Desire2Learn Accessibility Interest Group (AIG) has used such collaboration to initiate major design changes

Accessible Web Design Standards

Are a Work in Progress

- While most countries have legislated accessible web design, it is unclear what “accessible” means and there is little enforcement
- Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) is the most influential government provided resource to meet accessibility legislation (Section 508)
 - However, there is no guidance on how to implement
- World Wide Web Consortium’s (W3C) released Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines (ATAG)
- Because of the ambiguity around accessibility, many vendors pay lip service to it rather than publish their compliance

Desire2Learn AIG is committed to fair and complete reporting given institutions need to have access to compliance reporting

Expertise in Accessible Design Is Difficult to Acquire

- Need for accessible design is a relatively recent advancement
- What “accessible design” means and best practices are still evolving
- Companies are coming to terms with expectations for accessible design
- Desire2Learn AIG was developed in response to clients requests for greater transparency and development
 - Client expertise and insight helps drive Desire2Learn’s accessibility compliance

Accessibility Testing Is Challenging

- Many conduct regular usability sessions, but accessibility testing is more challenging
 - Requires locating and organizing the wide range of user disabilities
 - User input tends to be post-release and hence is a cycle of “fixes” rather than being considered in the initial design
 - Often users report their findings to institutions who then report back to vendors rather than direct communication

Desire2Learn AIG encourages assistive technology users to work with design and quality assurance teams

To Achieve Accessibility, Communities of Interest Must be Developed

- Accessibility is not a project or a fix, but it's a practice and a process
- Developing communities of interest like Desire2Learn's AIG benefits everyone involved
 - > Vendors acquire the necessary skills to compete in a changing market
 - > client participants have the opportunity to share knowledge and network
 - > disabled users can see real improvements and new learning opportunities
 - > all users benefit from clearer interfaces and simpler designs



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