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Novel Approaches to Meet Accessibility Standards

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We Shall Achieve

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Poll Question

What is your level of experience with creating accessible documents?

A. Beginner
B. Intermediate
C. Expert

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Poll Question

What is your university doing to assist faculty create accessible documents?

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UTC's Accessible Information, Materials, and Technology Program

Provides guidance on campus to ensure that information technology, resources, and services are accessible to all students, faculty, and staff at the University.

Encompasses all technology products used to deliver academic programs and services with the goal is to create a vibrant, inclusive campus that is accessible to all students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

As part of that effort, UTC started using Blackboard Ally in the Learning Management System (Canvas).

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Poll Question

Have you ever heard of or used Ally?

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What is Blackboard Ally?

Ally is a tool that:

Automatically increases awareness and provides detailed insight and guidance to instructors on how to improve the accessibility of their content

Improves the overall student experience with access to alternative formats such as Electronic Braille, ePub, HTML, OCRed PDF, tagged PDF, and audio

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Quality Matters Standards Addressed

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General Standard 8: Accessibility and Usability

➤ The course design reflects a commitment to accessibility and usability of all learners.

Specific Standard 8.3

➤ The course provides accessible text and images in files, documents, LMS pages, web pages to meet the needs of diverse learners.

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Accessible Principles that Meet Specific Standard 8.3:

Images and graphics are described via an alt-tag

Tables are set up with headings for columns

Document or HTML titles, headings, etc. are formatted using styles

PDFs that contain text are not merely image scan; any text contained in PDFs is selectable and searchable

Text has sufficient contrast

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Poll Question

Have you ever had a course review that didn't meet expectations for accessibility?

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Ally Identifies and Provides Suggestions to Faculty for Fixing Accessibility issues such as:
Missing alt text on images, graphics and charts
Improperly structured documents
Missing headings on tables
Untagged PDF documents
Missing document language (PDF)
Scanned/non-searchable text in PDF documents
Contrast issues
Missing heading levels and alt text on pages within the LMS
Graphics that may induce seizures

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Ally Provides Faculty and Students the Alternative Format Options for Download:
Electronic Braille
ePub
HTML
OCRed PDF
Tagged PDF
Audio file (mp3)

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Success Rate (1st year of implementation)

The University of Tennessee Chattanooga:	• Turned Ally on in every course on campus (approx. 2,500 courses per term)
The Walker Center for Teaching and Learning:	• Offered faculty training workshops on Ally and promoted its use through emails and other communications
As a result:	• 1,642 documents, images, and html pages loaded in the LMS were fixed to become more accessible
Accessibility Scores:	• averaged 43% before the fixes • increased to an average of 84% after the fixes • with an overall average improvement of 41% for each fix
During the month of November 2019, WCTL hosted an Accessibility contest. As a result:	• 501 documents in 10 courses were fixed, amounting to 30% of the issues fixed that year.

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Success Rate (1st year of implementation)

Blackboard Ally provides institution-wide reporting on the accessibility of course content and Ally usage.

Engagement with Instructor Feedback:	Engagement with Alternative Formats:
• 4,983 launches • 1,642 fixes in 251 courses • Conversion rate of 32.95%	• 21,042 launches • 12,032 downloads in 1,327 courses • Conversion rate of 57.18%

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