

Working hand in hand

A lot of the time IT services are supporting users – that is, students and teaching staff – or work quietly in the background to assure systems and infrastructure are in good shape and fit for purpose. In my own role I rarely have an opportunity to see what happens “on the ground”, in the physical teaching environments. However, recently I was attending a staff training event for Data Protection Champions, and it ended up being an exciting little showcase of how our services work together to make learning and teaching happen. Not just for students ☐

What are Data Protection Champions? These are a group of staff members who commit to staying up to date on current developments across the university on matters intersecting with Data Protection and to help keep information otherwise available on the web current in discussions and work locally. The Community Meetings help to exchange knowledge and ask questions to understand in better detail what processes and procedures are designed to do and to disambiguate the legalese that necessarily accompanies legal and compliance rules and regulations.

In other words, understanding the details is important, and summarising this “second hand” is not always easy. This prompted some champions to reach out to the organiser asking if the event could be recorded.

This was not a Teams meeting. But, it was set at a lecture theatre with Lecture recording facilities. So after a little consideration of alternatives (recording in segments on a mobile phone? recording via Kaltura video recorder from a laptop?) we set to work out what might need to happen to make use of the lecture recording equipment.

- Sound check – oh my. Somehow feedback reverberating in

stereo through the theatre makes for a great alarm clock, but it transpired quite quickly that we were in need of support. A colleague from Digital Spaces Tech attended within minutes – and some troubleshooting later had all the microphones operating normally. Sigh of relief – we can all hear and know this will be captured in the recording.

- Recording – typically recordings are linked to course delivery in our VLE, Learn. And timetabling allows for lectures to be added to the courses automatically. When requesting an ad-hoc recording, this is available to instructors; or can be supported from the Media Service team with a little notice. In our case, notice was very limited, and the support from the service team was invaluable. The lights of the recording equipment turned red – on time for the meeting to start.
- Processing – with the event being a full morning, including a break for coffee and networking, the recording took some time to process on the system. With help from the service team, this time duly recorded using our ticketing system Unidesk, the recording was modified to exclude the break to make this more convenient for champions to review once shared.

Since the event was not associated with a course or programme, and the default of our lecture recordings setup via the VLE did not apply, sharing recordings is not automatic. The system is designed to safeguard teaching activities and keep permissions for processing and sharing details in line with the terms and conditions of service. Data Protection compliance at its best. Staff training, still falls within the remit of teaching, but staff training is not hosted on our VLE Learn, again, in order to comply with the terms and conditions of service for the VLE. On guidance from the Media Service team we requested for the migration of the video to our other media channel, Media Hopper Create. With this being the first interaction on the service the help and support with this

process was incredibly appreciated by the organiser and all involved in the event.

- Migrating – as part of this whole process, I discovered a whole new set of environments that can be logged into, alas, because my account is linked to a playground account, and I was not the owner of the video recording, we took up the kind offer of support from the Media Service team who brought the video into Media Hopper Create, which offers captioning and wider sharing permissions.
- Sharing – as with many of our services, the ability to secure content is shared with the appropriate user groups is really important. Materials can be set to only exist for the video owner (private), made accessible only to users who have been given the link (unlisted) or be made public to all users. In addition, licensing selections assure that users are informed of what is permissible with regards to use of the content and copyright.

The support and efforts across the different teams was a really good reminder of why working in ISG / LTW / DLAM is such a rewarding experience. Sometimes we end up being in the role of our own users, and colleagues come to our rescue and support to make the most of the teaching and training that keeps our service provisions compliant and up to date.

Accessible by design

For many years I have worked as a proof-reader and editor on an assignment basis. It seemed a suitable outlet to my fastidious nature and relentless drive for detail (attributes that I have only marginally been able to temper for polite society since). What it has given me, however, is a deep appreciation of the intricacies of good type setting, clean style guides and accurate referencing.

Fast forward to the present day, I am starting to learn more about the digital footprint all these choices and settings create and which of them support interoperability with assistive technologies. What used to be, to my untrained eye, just a flat surface, a 2-dimensional choice of matching the style to the words for the benefit of the reader, suddenly had 3 dimensions: making the text comprehensible to technology to assist in its easy transformation across media by means of tags and codes and alt text... and with it opening up to a more agile interaction with that all-important source material that was being communicated.

So I have set myself two goals: to collate reference material in support of accessibility that may help in designing documents at the outset with accessibility in mind; and to work on some style sheets that can meaningfully integrate what characteristics might be required for different materials to make them meaningfully accessible in their own context and user groups.

What does it take to annotate an art textbook in digital print? What software best integrates disciplinary challenges like specialist symbols and characters? What etiquette rules should be followed in the landscape of gifs and emoji? How can good editing eliminate additional workflows and processes to create differently accessible materials? Is there really ever going to be a “golden copy”?

Let the journey begin 😊

Accessibility Resources

Government Digital Service – [An accessibility reading list – Accessibility in government \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

TextBox Digital – Designing Accessibly – [University of Kent \(textboxdigital.com\)](#)

Universal Design for Learning Guidelines [UDL: The UDL Guidelines \(cast.org\)](#)

Ally Accessibility Formats [Blackboard Ally: Getting started with alternative accessible formats – Blackboard Help for Students – University of Reading](#)

Guidelines for Assessment Descriptions [NWEA Image Description Guidelines for Assessments](#)

Guide to writing ALT text [What is alternative text? How do I write it for images, charts, and graphs? \(matthewdeeproise.github.io\)](#)

Accessibility Resources Portfolio [Favorite Resources – Inclusive Instructional Design](#)

Visuals and Graphics around Accessibility

Designing for Accessibility Dos and Dont's – <https://accessibility.blog.gov.uk/2016/09/02/dos-and-donts-on-designing-for-accessibility/>

Accessibility standards, compliance legislation and tools

[The Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) \(No. 2\) Accessibility Regulations 2018 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[ADA Accessibility Compliance for College and University Websites | Aha! :: Elliance Blog](#)

[Website Accessibility Conformance Evaluation Methodology \(WCAG-EM\) 1.0 \(w3.org\)](#)

[Evaluating Web Accessibility Overview | Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) | W3C](#)

[Maintaining Accessibility Sustain | Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\) | W3C](#)

Contrast Checker [WebAIM: Contrast Checker](#)

MS Office Accessibility Inspector [Accessibility Inspector for Everyone \(matthewdeeproise.github.io\)](#)

Nvda Screen Reader [NV Access | Download NVDA](#)

Reporting around Accessibility

University of Edinburgh – [Monitoring and Data | The University of Edinburgh](#)

Community

Anthology Accessibility Discussion Board [Accessibility – The Anthology Community](#)

Anthology Ally User Group [Dashboard – Ally User Group](#)

Digital Accessibility at the University of Reading [User stories \(reading.ac.uk\)](#)

AbilityNet [What is Digital Accessibility? | AbilityNet](#)

Champions of Accessibility Network [Introducing the Champions of Accessibility Network | Skyscanner's Travel Blog](#)

UoE Intern view of LaTeX [Lewis Forbes – LaTeX and Accessibility – Information Services Group: Student Employee Blog \(ed.ac.uk\)](#)

Self-help and training materials

Discovering Learning styles [Enter The Learning – Liberated](#)

[Learners \(pressbooks.pub\)](#)

ABC Teaching toolkit [Toolkit for facilitators | The University of Edinburgh](#)

[Make your PowerPoint presentations accessible to people with disabilities – Microsoft Support](#)

University of Edinburgh Resources

[Playlist Details – Global Accessibility Awareness Day – 18 May 2023 – Media Hopper Create](#)

[Creating accessible materials | The University of Edinburgh](#)

[Learning Technology and Accessibility | The University of Edinburgh](#)