



Providing Accessible Format Instructional Materials to College Students with Disabilities

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Ed McCoyd

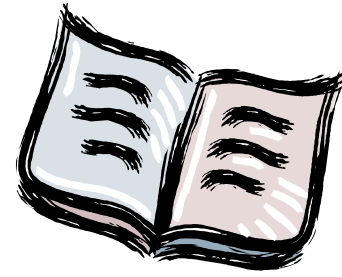
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Requirements for Colleges and Universities



- Under federal law, most colleges are required to provide disabled students with **equal access** to instructional materials in a way that makes them **as effective** for the student as the instructional materials provided to non-disabled students.
- Also, states have their own laws protecting the rights of the disabled and requiring postsecondary institutions to provide accommodations for disabled students.

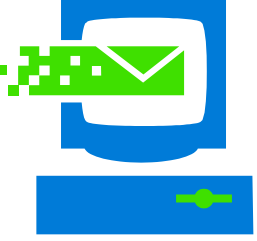


Specialized Format Instructional Materials

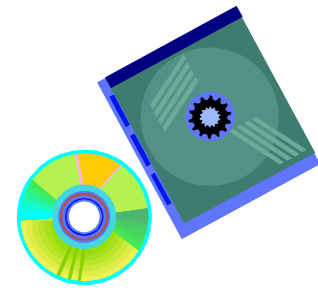


- Braille
- Narrated text in audio
- Digitized text which can be converted by "read-aloud" or "text-to-speech" software into synthetic audio speech
- Enlarged font
- Captioning/transcriptions of audio/video

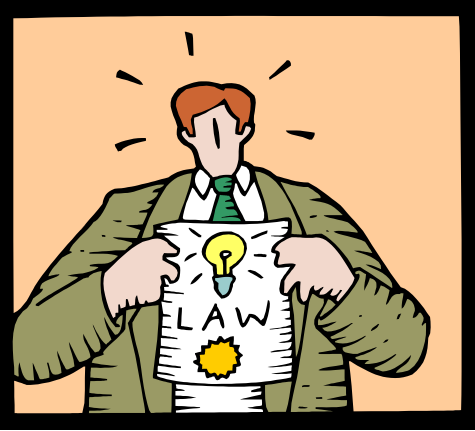




E-text Requirements on Publishers



- To help colleges and universities meet their obligations to provide specialized formats, a number of states have passed statutes requiring publishers to provide the institutions with electronic files of the content of textbooks and other instructional materials.
- Many publishers voluntarily fulfill file requests by colleges in states without legislation as well.



States with Postsecondary E-text Legislation

- Higher Education e-text bills have been passed in Arkansas, California, Kentucky, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, and Washington.
- Legislation has been proposed this year in Georgia, Minnesota, and Oregon.

Use of Publisher-provided E-text

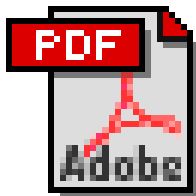
The files are either:



- Used directly by the student, or
- Converted by the college into a specialized format for use by the student (such as where the college contracts with a third party vendor to convert the text into Braille).

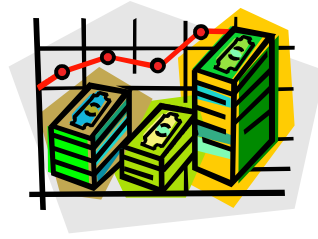
Formats Requested from Publishers

- PDF
- Microsoft Word
- HTML
- ASCII
- XML (e.g., NIMAS)



HTML **ASCII** **XML**

Economies of Scale



- K-12 textbooks are often adopted and purchased by the state or school district on a mass scale.
- College textbooks are selected by individual professors for their own courses, and there is a much wider range of disciplines and courses in Higher Ed, typically resulting in much smaller printings and sales.
- Since XML formats (including NIMAS) are expensive to produce, it is often not economically feasible for college textbook publishers to create them.
- Other formats (Word, etc.) are also costly for publishers to produce.

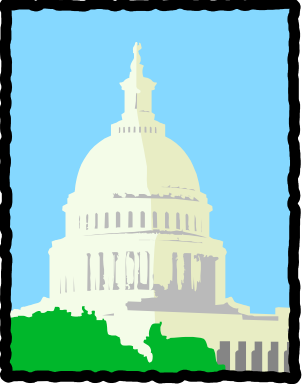
Possible Ways to Address Format Cost Issues

- Third party assistance in creating electronic formats including NIMAS.
- State or federal funding.



Third Party “Authorized Entities”

- Another source of alternate formats.
- Organizations include:
 - Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic (RFB&D)
 - Benetech (Bookshare)
 - American Printing House for the Blind
 - National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped



Chafee Amendment

- 1996 amendment to the Copyright Act for disabilities affecting use of printed works.
- Exempts certain “authorized entities” from the rights of copyright owners with respect to reproducing and distributing copies of “previously-published non-dramatic works” in “specialized formats exclusively for use by blind or other persons with disabilities.”

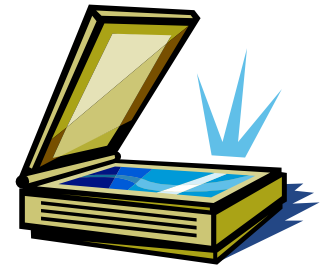
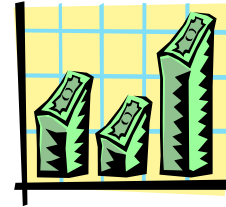


Covered “Specialized Formats”

- Generally limited to those “*exclusively for use by blind or other persons with disabilities*” (defined by reference to NLS eligibility for persons who are unable to read normal printed materials due to blindness, visual disability or other physical limitation).
- Explicitly limited to braille, audio or digital text “*exclusively for use by blind or other persons with disabilities*” (i.e., not “audio” playable on ordinary consumer devices or “digital text” that is ordinarily transmitted over online networks).
- Does not include “large print” format (competitive market exists, fueled by needs of senior citizens).

Other Challenges for Publishers

- Administrative costs.
- Content security.
- Withholding of electronic rights by authors and other contributors.
- Scanning required for older works.



Issues for Colleges/Universities

- Providing a format that meets the student's particular needs.
- Timely receipt of file from publisher.
- Locating the publisher, contact, and request form.
- Redundancy of requests.





Repositories

- California Community Colleges: Alternate Text Production Center (ATPC).
- Kentucky's Postsecondary Textbook Accessibility Act, enacted in 2003, provides for the establishment of a state repository.
- Subscriber services (APH, Bookshare, RFB&D, NLS)
- Some have proposed a national repository for postsecondary materials (like the National Instructional Materials Access Center for K-12).



Thoughts regarding a National Repository:

- Would need to include a range of formats (no “one size fits all”).
- Maybe it should be a lookup service rather than a repository.
- Include commercial component (formats available directly from the publisher).



Accessible Commercial Products

- In the future, it is likely that publishers' instructional materials products will increasingly be developed to meet the needs of both non-disabled and disabled students.
- These products may include specialized content, as well as technical features to assist the student in navigating and reading or listening to the material.



Protecting the Role of Publishers

- Whereas persons with traditional print disabilities (including blindness) comprise less than 1% of the population, students with diverse learning disabilities are a much larger community.
- Non-disabled students may prefer to learn from materials in digital format over time.
- Digital platforms may also include ESL features.



AAP Position:

- When the accessible product becomes available, colleges should leave to the publisher the role of providing the specialized format to the student.
- At that time, the material should be removed from any repository or college disability services office.



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