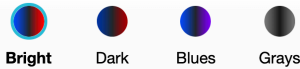


Official Launch of BeeLine Reader



Blackboard Ally Integrates BeeLine Reader to Improve Accessibility of Digital Learning Content for All Students

New alternative format enhances learners' ability to read digital course content efficiently

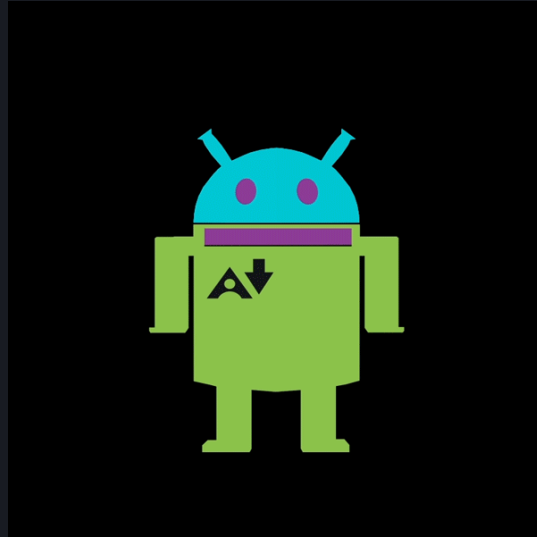
RESTON, VA., March 26, 2020 – Blackboard Inc., a leading education technology company for teaching, learning and student engagement, announced a strategic partnership with BeeLine Reader, a company offering technology that makes reading on screen easier for students of all ages and skill levels. BeeLine Reader's patented technology adds color gradients to digital text to aid visual tracking and improve reading ability and focus. BeeLine Reader is especially helpful for students with learning disabilities, ADHD, or vision loss, and it is now fully integrated as a standard feature within Blackboard's accessibility tool, Blackboard Ally. This integration follows an overwhelmingly positive multi-institution pilot and will allow the millions of students using Blackboard Ally to read digital course content more easily and efficiently.

"We're thrilled to offer BeeLine Reader's unique reading technology to the more than 11 million students who have access to Blackboard Ally," said Nicolaas Matthijs, Product Director for Blackboard Ally. "Our partnership with BeeLine Reader aligns to our mission of empowering learners to choose how they engage with digital course content and helping institutions cultivate inclusive digital learning environments for all learners."

BeeLine Reader is now one of the eight alternative formats available through Blackboard Ally that students can choose to view instructional content. Other formats include mobile-friendly HTML, audio, ePub, electronic Braille, and a language translation version. BeeLine Reader's technology enhances visual focus and decreases the cognitive load associated with reading. Instead of using plain black text, BeeLine Reader applies a subtle color gradient, which wraps from the end of one line to the beginning of the next. This gradient pulls the reader's eyes through the text, enabling easier reading. This research-backed tool exemplifies universal design principles, as it helps readers of all skill levels read more efficiently, but is especially beneficial for English Language Learners and readers with ADHD, dyslexia, or other reading challenges.

"We are excited to partner with Blackboard and enable millions more students to download BeeLine-formatted documents and learn more effectively directly through Blackboard Ally," said Nick Lum, CEO of BeeLine Reader. "BeeLine Reader is used by students of all types – from the learner who is studying late at night and experiencing eye fatigue to the learner who is overwhelmed by a heavy reading load and wants to read faster, to the learner who has ADHD or dyslexia and needs extra support while reading."

"In today's environment, universities aren't looking to meet accessibility standards; they are looking to exceed them and improve the learning experience for all students," said Jamie Axelrod, Director of Disability Resources at Northern Arizona University and Past-President of the Board of Directors at AHEAD. "By consistently expanding its roster of integrations and file formats, with additions like BeeLine Reader, Blackboard Ally is helping our



Introducing: The File Transformer

Inclusive Learning Challenges in Rapid Transition to Remote Learning

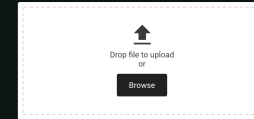
- A sudden increase in digital content introduces more accessibility issues and puts additional strain on content remediation teams **leaving students vulnerable**
- Students may not have consistent access to computers or high-speed internet at home (**more reliant on mobile**)
- Students may have family obligations (child care, chores) and need **flexible options for studying**

How does it work?

1. Student downloads a course file (likely from the LMS)
2. Student goes to <https://ally.ac/covid19/> and uploads the file they want to transform
3. Student selects their desired format and downloads

Engage the **FileTransformer**

Personalize your learning experience by converting your course files into formats that fit your needs, devices, and learning preferences.



Supported file types: Microsoft Word, Powerpoint, PDF, HTML, files

Transform your files to formats that work for you

"File Transformer" allows you to upload a course file and download it in a different format. This way, you can personalize your learning experience to better fit your needs, devices, and learning preferences.

After uploading your file, pick a format that best suits the task or situation you're working in. You can pick and mix formats too.



OCRred PDF

Makes photocopied, scanned documents searchable.



Tagged PDF

Open DOC or PPT files, even if you don't have the software installed. Improves use with assistive technology.



Audio

MP3 version for listening on personal devices, or when you want to take a break from reading.



ePub

For reading and annotating as an e-book on an iPad and other e-book readers.



Electronic braille

BRF version for tactile reading on electronic braille displays.



HTML

Mobile-friendly responsive version for in the browser and on mobile devices.



Beeline Reader

Enhanced version for easier and faster on-screen reading.

Limited Offering

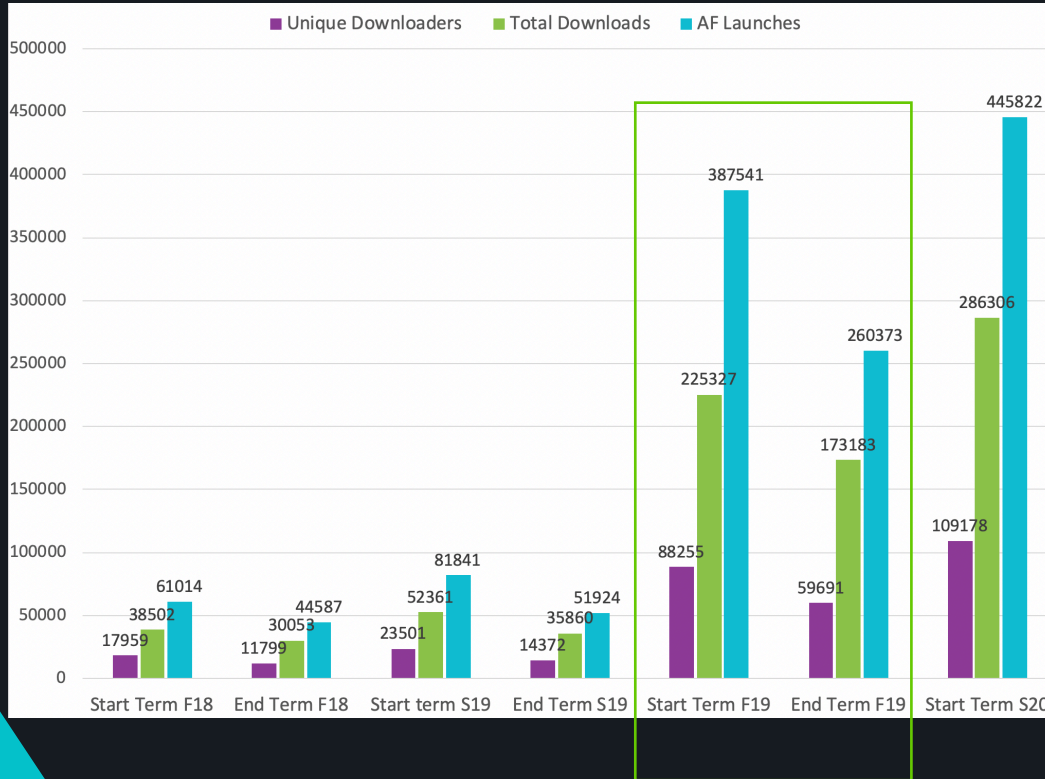
- No LMS integration
- Only 1 file at a time
- A file size limit is imposed (50MBs)
- No Translated Version
- Available for a limited time only

Global Accessibility Awareness Day: May 21st



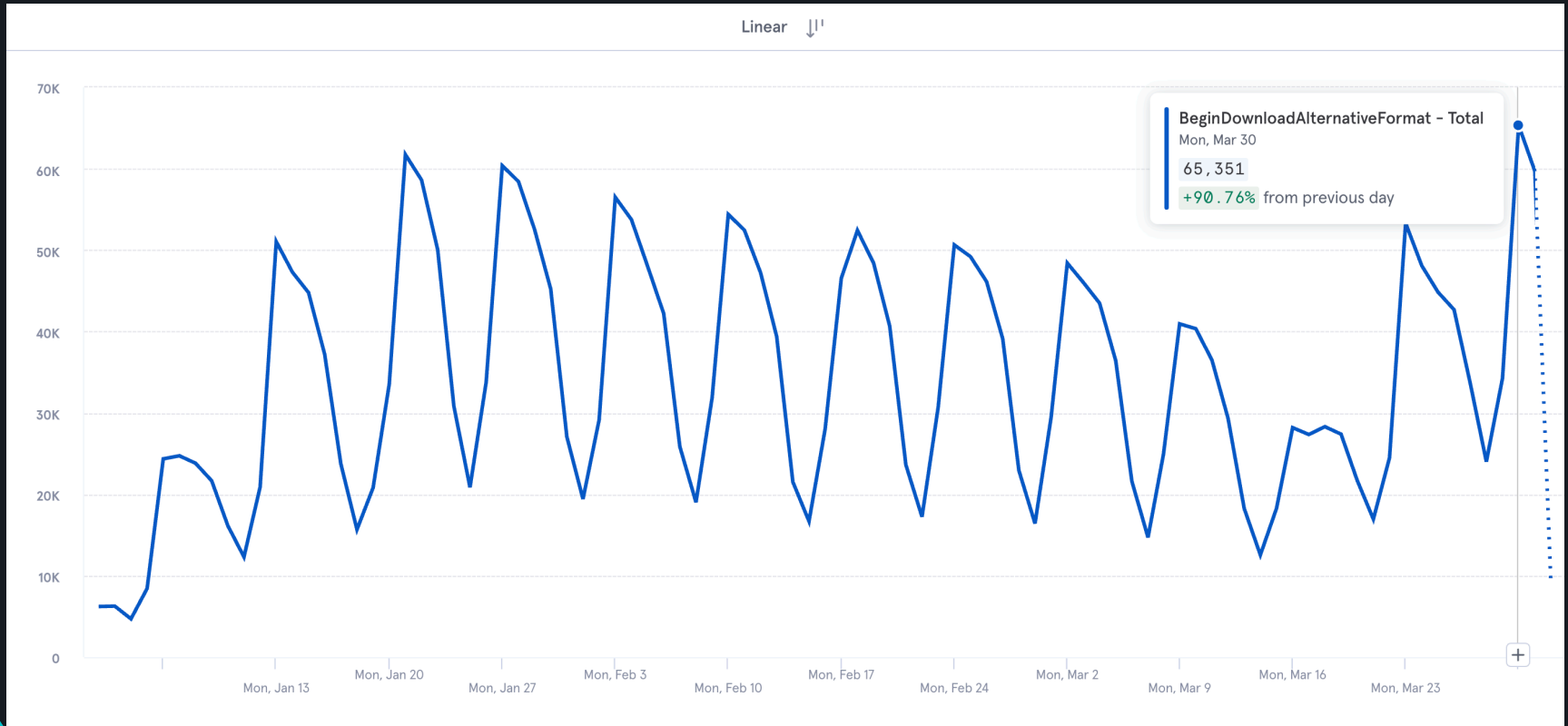
- Global Competition to Fix as many Files as you can through Ally
- Grand Prize Winner receives \$1000 in captioning credits
- Regional Winners

Choose your Format Whitepaper

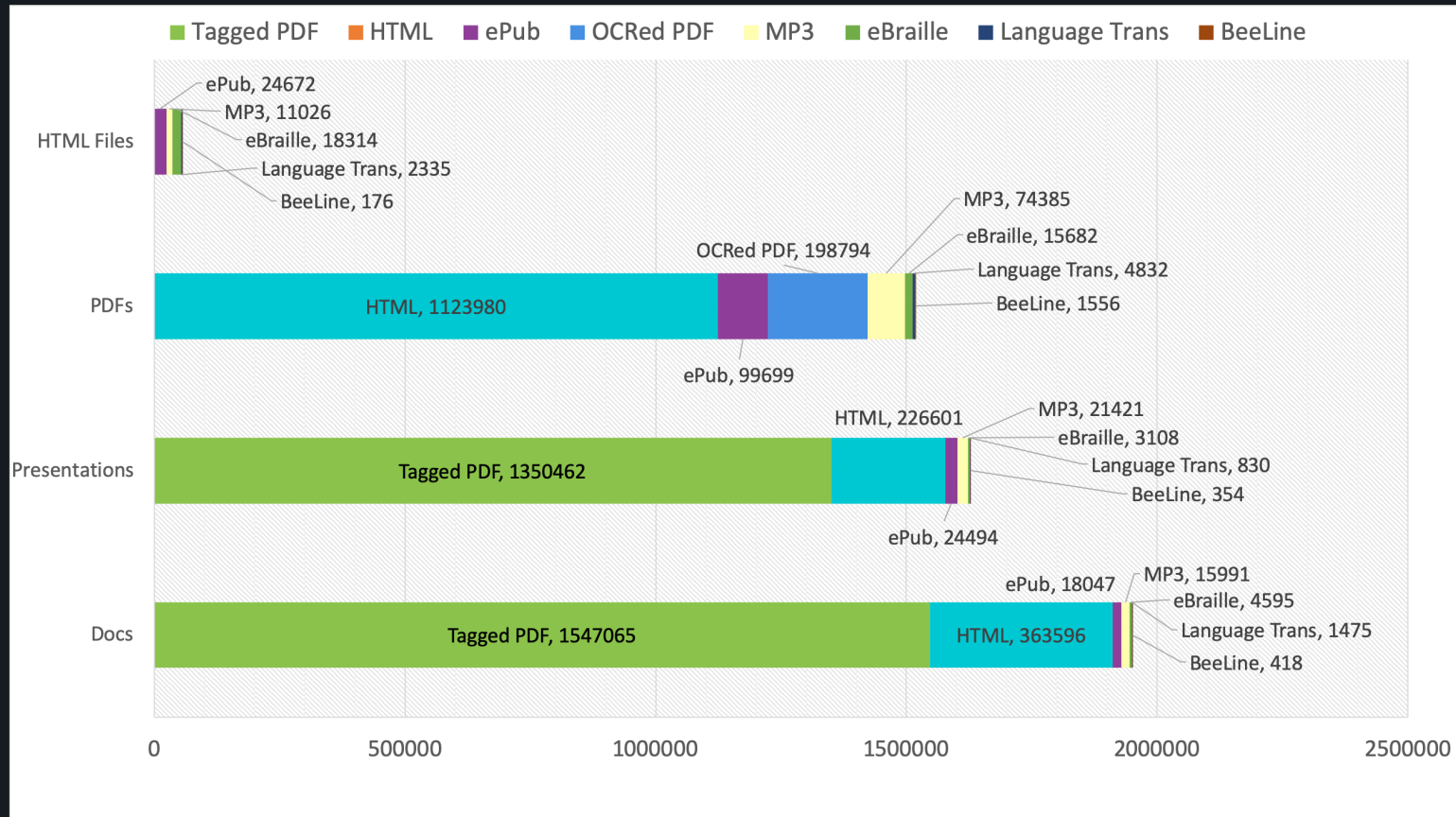


- 2 years: 7M downloads
- F19 Term: start to end
 - 32% decrease in unique users
 - Increase .35 downloads per user
 - 12% increase in conversion rate

Choose your Format Whitepaper



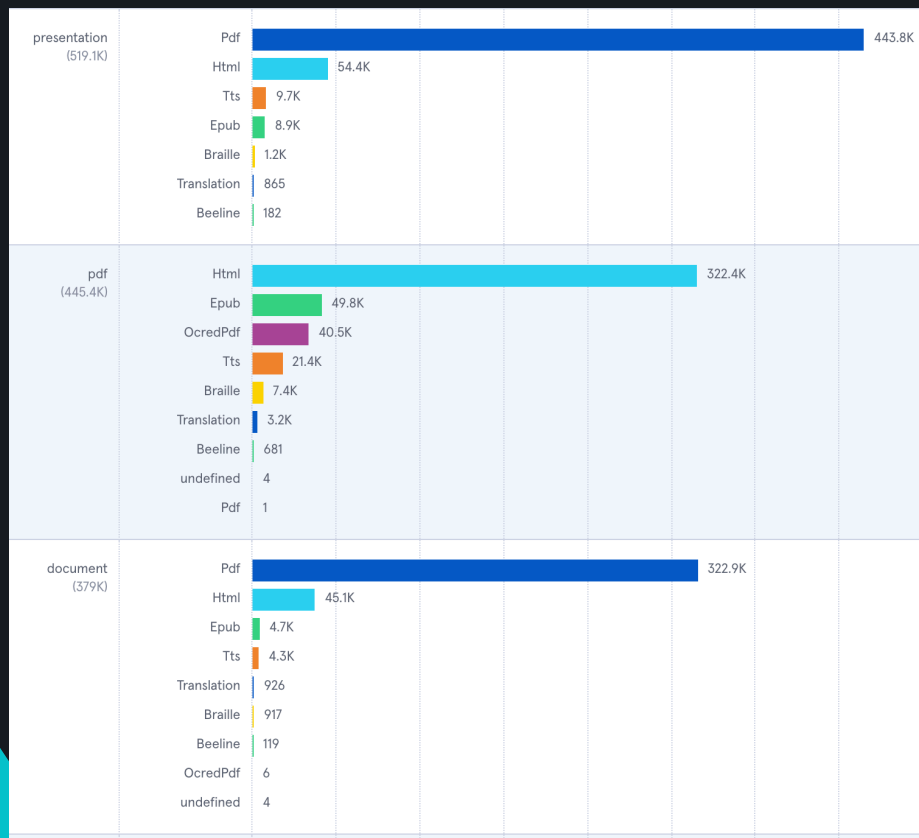
Choose your Format Whitepaper



Choose your Format Whitepaper

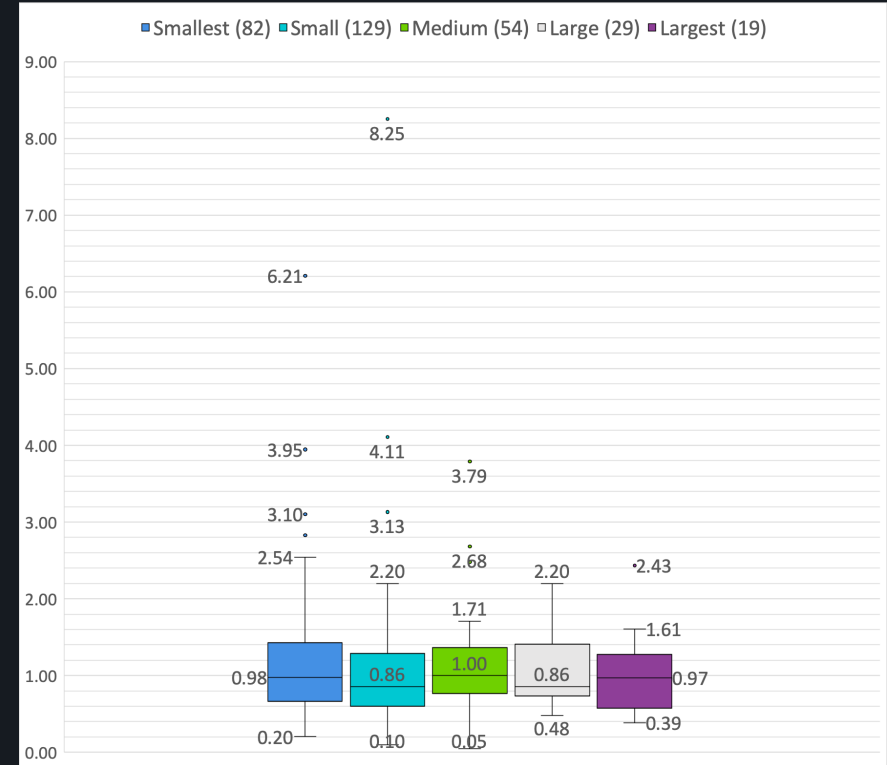
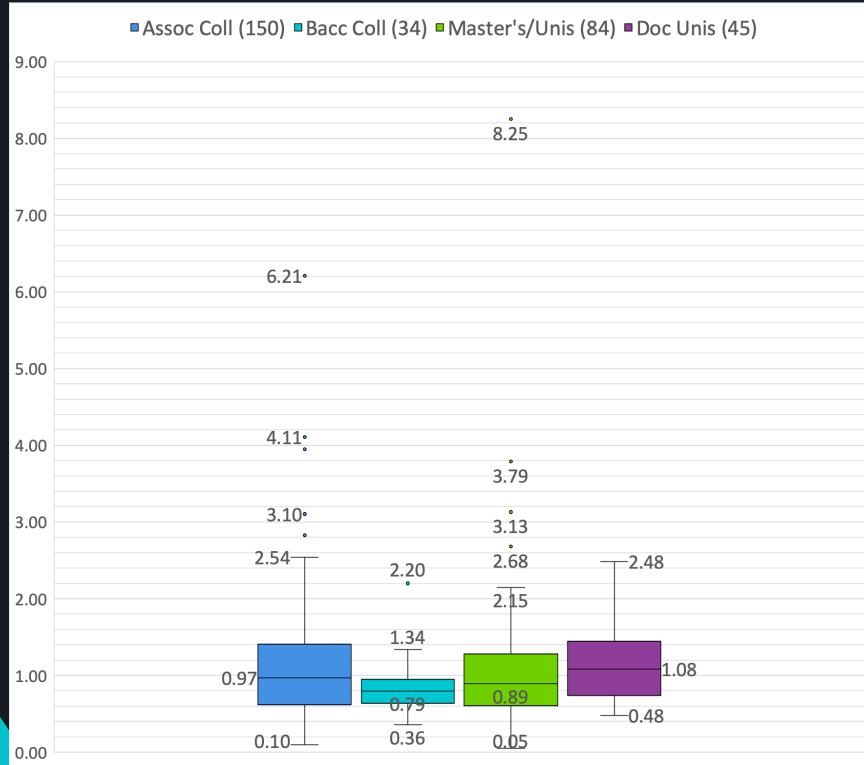
- PDF was most common file type in LMS courses but Docs were downloaded more often as Alternative Formats
- 920,000 Tagged PDF downloads from 5.2M Docs + Pres
- 60K OCRRed PDFs from 765K Scanned PDFs
- 420K HTML files from 9.75M Docs + Pres + PDFs

Choose your Format Whitepaper: Europe



- 55% of all downloads are Tagged PDFs from PowerPoint and Docs
- 3% are OCRRed PDFs
- 31% are HTML files

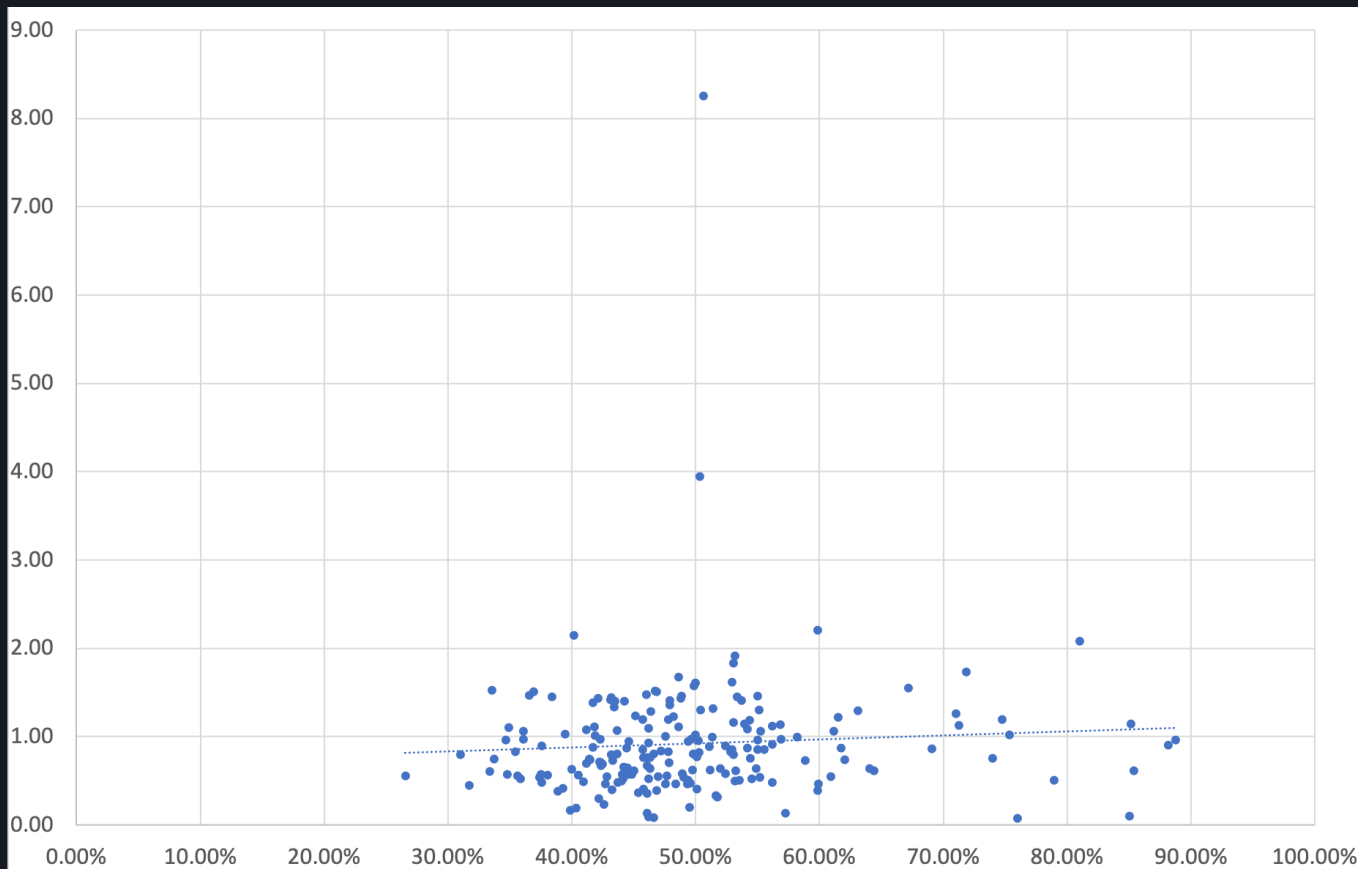
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- Biggest disparity between any two categories .29 downloads (Baccalaureate College had lowest download rate at .79 per FTE)
- Tagged PDF and HTML account for between 89% and 92% of Total Downloads for all categories
- 139/313 institutions exceeded 1 download per FTE;
- 19/313 exceeded 2 downloads per FTE

Downloads per FTE by overall accessibility score



Blackboard



Accessible content is better content