# IAUG 5/25/23

## Introductions

### Keeping Up with Ally events

Ally road map sessions: see user dashboard for announcements of days/ times

* [PDFs, including May Roadmap](https://usergroup.ally.ac/s/office-hours/cfiles/browse/index?fid=104)

[Monthly office hours](https://usergroup.ally.ac/s/office-hours/)- tech questions and direct contact with the Ally product team

* Second Monday
* [Send questions with form](https://forms.office.com/e/fJUWVVEFgg), [link on community site](https://usergroup.ally.ac/content/perma?id=56637)

International Ally User Group next meeting on June 22: see Community Updates section for more details

## Speakers

### University of Aberdeen – Establishing a Course Accessibility Service

Presentation Slides

Sara Preston, Maija Koukkari, Laura Forero, and Jack Murray-Bird

Inclusivity and Accessibility is a pillar of their strategic plan.

Have a digital accessibility working group and policy

Ally has been big help in their journey

#### Inspiration to establish a service

University of Gronigen - eLearning support provided by students

University of Southhampton – Accessibility Allies

Business case to recruit 5 students to be eLearning Support Assistants (eLSAs) – tier 1 support

See slide for timeline on training the eLSAs

Created templates like rubric templates, audit templates, remediation tracker, etc. to prep for pilot

#### Service Details

Four stages (see slides):

1. Accessibility audit
2. Meeting with course coordinator
3. Guidance for creating accessible materials (demos of remediation steps, how to use Ally and MS tool)
4. Remediation

#### Remediation Challenges

* Learning curve...no right way for pacing and workflow—exchange ideas as as team
* 3rd party content – impractical or impossible due to copyright and lack of source material.
* Formatting/templates, hard to get all replaced and updated if used across a program
* Some changes are major and need permission
* Timing between student availability and teaching staff on leave

#### Impact:

Overal aim to raise awareness

Ensure changes are long-lasting even though the eLSAs are hired to help with remediation

Reports and data used to illustrate and create workflows

Connect course coordinators with other team members

#### Future of Service

Now open to all course teams

Scalability and long-term impact

Keep importance of the work and funding for eLSA posts at the forefront

### Questions:

* re: 3rd party content: did you try to work with vendors of those websites (for instance, if it came from an academic journal, the publisher or the database where it's stored) to get accessible versions?
  + we have worked with our library colleagues in working with publishers to make their content accessible but at a strategic level rather than within situations we came across in individual courses
  + we have not attempted to work with 3rd party vendors directly so far but, for example, we have tried to encourage staff to change their practice e.g. not upload PDFs of journal articles to the course but instead link to them appropriately via the reading list.
* Are academic staff taking on any learning from the remediation work that is being done to avoid the same issues in future?
  + the aim was to change or influence the approach by staff to creating online content
* Was this a voluntary, opt-in service for faculty or did some departments mandate participation in the pilot?
  + No mandate from even within the schools/departments that they are aware of, but some courses were volunteered by heads of school but not compulsory, coordinators could choose not to engage
* Did you recruit students with various accessibility needs?
  + Open to all students, not recruiting on that basis, very keen to do panel sessions from students with various accessibility needs
* Have you had student feedback on those modules that you have worked on in the pilot?
  + Part of the roadmap for the future, but have not done that yet for direct feedback. Some students on the panel have given indirect feedback or at least expressed their encouragement for the plan.
* Were you using Adobe accessibility checker and trying to fix tags?
  + Have spent a ton of time tagging PDFs manually, trying to do their best, but sometimes ended up more of a bandaid.

#### Resources from Chat:

* ["accessibility allies" materials](http://generic.wordpress.soton.ac.uk/digital-learning/accessibility-allies/)
* I came across this ["day in the life" info graphic](https://ialabs.ie/ditl-infographic-text/) that I think could be a good format for sharing user stories
* Here's a link to the [archives from the University of Washington's Accessible Technology Serivces Accessible Electronic Documents webinar](https://www.washington.edu/accesstech/get-involved/events/webinars/web20230510/): Helpful re: basics of pdfs and other docs:
* [re: previous presentation and tagging PDFs: [Chad Chelius' Creating Accessible PDFs on LinkedIn Learning](https://www.linkedin.com/learning/creating-accessible-pdfs-14445392/check-pdf-accessibility?autoplay=true&u=85071850)

### Huw Alexander – Ask Me Anything About Alt Text

#### Intro:

20 years in publishing and digital sales and looking after accessibility and describing in publishing. Saw a storm was coming for alt text and long description—he was right. Not many vendors providing service in image description, so he developed a method.

Founder of TextBox and its various services:

* [Described - free](https://www.textboxdigital.com/described-free)
* [searchBOX](https://www.textboxdigital.com/searchboxhome)
* [Aspire](https://www.textboxdigital.com/aspire-home): review service for ebook/publisher accessibility statements

#### Questions:

* What are the common pitfalls when writing alt text—how to avoid?
  + Structural aspect of description is usually missed
  + Alt text is an attempt to visualize—include the structure (the structure of a graph or chart, not just the data)
  + Try to recreate the picture from the text
  + Go from generic to specific—allows user to decide whether to access the rest of the description:
  + focus locus method—logical organization of information
* Is it worth making up a style guide for ALT text? Are there disciplinary pitfalls in creating ALT text for materials in stem or music?
  + Yes. Do. Helps to ensure consistency across your institution and can help outside vendors (like Huw) to write the text the way you want it.
  + STEM is very challenging, required someone with a background in that to really write the alt text
  + Music alt text seems to be a more automated approach
* Huw, how can academics best convey the content of complex figures (graphs, tables etc.)? Many of the materials in our School (GeoSciences) don't just display a simple trend so it seems near-impossible to our colleagues to provide alt text for those.
  + Mass data is a real challenge, things like scatterplots are rarely labeled—always recommend adding data tables, sometimes you have to go back to the original author: what is being conveyed, are the trends being talked about in the text, what was their intention
* Will be interesting to find out recommendations for maths/science such as formula, large tables etc and what alt text is appropriate for those.
* I have been tinkering with my car recently and have been reviewing the schematics. It did get me wondering, how would you describe an image that is complex with many objects of contextual importance?
* Is there any best practice for how to write good ALT text? as it depends so much on the context of the publication.
* Any advice for professional services in uni's to create accessible forms e.g. for mitigating circumstances? Currently ours are a downloadable word doc but all in a table layout
* what is your position on using emojis?
* WCAG spec for ALT text actually does not say anything about about description. It is 'textual alternative for non-text content'. Doesn't talking about description usually confuse things rather than helps? It forces people to overdescribe things that are not relevant.
* Question: Should there be a distinction between alt text and image descriptions?
  + Alt text is really basic. You cannot use bulleted lists or italics or great length
  + Various schools of thought about length—two sentences is a good rule of thumb.
  + One idea is to create an accessibility document or links out to pages that host long descriptions and other descriptions, but can be hard to get the link back right.
  + Simplest idea: basic word doc with logical headings
* is it appropriate to share graph data as the raw table data?
* Describing images for an assessment - where to put the longer desriptions is a real problem! Trying to use the <details> tag to see if that works for screen readers.
* We frequently get questions from engineering faculty on the best way to create alt text for complex figures, graphs, and tables, but we also get questions about how to create alt text for circuit diagrams in a way that doesn't actually give away the answer to related assignment/assessment questions. Any recommendations would be appreciated!
* In describing - how do we take the judgment (evaluation) out of it?
* so with an alt tag are we striving to evoke a visual mental image for the reader? or to provide a non-visual sense of what is communicated?
* Does Huw have any experience of using <detail>? I'm trying it out with a screen reader tomorrow.
* Do you already use AI in alt text creation? For what or why not? Do you see AI taking a greater role as it is developing so quickly?
* I have seen companies use graphic recorders for their events. How would you approach making that accessible?
* Jon L - When I was a history teacher part of the exam was using historical sources which included interpreting images/cartoons. Adding a description for blind students without giving the answer was never easy. Any recommendations?

#### Resources and Comments:

* We have a good example of how to adapt. See the Templates box at the bottom of this page: [Accessibility Subject Guides - University of York](https://subjectguides.york.ac.uk/learning-tech/accessibility)
* Clint Brooks – UAFS: Written music notation is a massive challenge.
* Lilian Joy Uni of York - @Genevieve M Kilmer nwea guidelines: [NWEA IMage Desription Guidelines PDF](https://www.nwea.org/uploads/2022/11/Image-Description-Guidelines-for-Assessments_NWEA_2021.pdf) and shorter version: [Charts, Graphs, and images - U of York](https://xerte.york.ac.uk/play.php?template_id=2036#charts)
* Lara Tompkins - I definitely find it helpful to try and think about the math notation as a narrative I'm trying to convey.
* nna (she/her) - I think twitter have it right with the box that opens and then go back to the image.
* Jen (she/they), Swarthmore College, USA - @Lilian Joy Uni of York didn't realize I'd be learning from you again here (attended a talk you did last year). What a great surprise to have you here and sharing resources!
  + Want to share Frank Elavsky's Chartability here for data visualization: [chartability.fizz.studio](https://chartability.fizz.studio/)
  + I'm enjoying seeing these walk throughs. Thanks, Huw!
* Lilian Joy Uni of York - We need to reengineer the Net for this problem!
* Clint Brooks – UAFS - Prefer HTML to Word
* Matthew Deeprose - [What is alternative text? How do I write it for images, charts, and graphs?](https://matthewdeeprose.github.io/alt-text-images-charts-graphs.html)

## All Other Business

### Community Updates

#### IAUG Meeting – Thursday 22 June, 9 am ET/3 pm GMT

Chris Nixon – Ally for Web at U of Arkansas

Community Discussion of April Panel Topics

[Sign-up form for June Meeting](https://forms.office.com/e/dbQwpZmekX)

#### Ally Office Hours – June 12 (4:00 PM - 5:00 PM GMT)

[Ally office hours](https://usergroup.ally.ac/s/office-hours/) are facilitated by the Product Managers and wider support team. Come and listen to the Anthology staff discuss in detail the latest Ally feature releases and product developments.

If you have a question for the product team, please submit it via the question form in advance of the session. This helps us to give a full answer to your query. Please submit before Friday.

**Meeting Details**

**When:** June 12, 10 am ET / 4 pm GMT

**Location:** [MS Teams](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/ap/t-59584e83/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com%2Fl%2Fmeetup-join%2F19%253Ameeting_M2MwNWU4MDctMzlmMS00Mjc3LTk3OTAtMzdmNGY2MjI2MjY2%2540thread.v2%2F0%3Fcontext%3D%257B%2522Tid%2522%253A%252275853e87-aaca-4625-a00a-5a7ca2fe1a72%2522%252C%2522Oid%2522%253A%2522ef34b67f-b9b2-496f-bd28-8162780df5e3%2522%257D&data=05%7C01%7Cherve.didiot-cook%40anthology.com%7C715d2ecc02b247cdceab08dafe13bd71%7C75853e87aaca4625a00a5a7ca2fe1a72%7C0%7C0%7C638101657975078325%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=MJhmHXkKj3ZlarAe4Ku5%2Fh3lT1nem%2BJTC4tQo1nnCFg%3D&reserved=0)%20or,%20https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.microsoft.com%2Fmicrosoft-teams%2Fjoin-a-meeting&data=05%7C01%7Cherve.didiot-cook%40anthology.com%7C715d2ecc02b247cdceab08dafe13bd71%7C75853e87aaca4625a00a5a7ca2fe1a72%7C0%7C0%7C638101657975234544%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=ID9zBN321II0CjiMJO4zz5x7tYDkrQf305GLk0tVrOw%3D&reserved=0) Meeting ID: 259 546 070 608 , Passcode: aiN5Ng

Other Events:

### Accessibility Summer Camp 2023:

**Accessibility Summer Camp 2023**

This year’s ASC event will take place on **Friday, June 2, 2023, from 8:00 - 4:00 CST**. As a conference participant, you can attend sessions and engage in valuable networking with like-minded professionals.

Visit the [ASC Conference Home Page](https://www.accessibilityict.org/) for more information and to register for free.

**What is Accessibility Summer Camp (ASC)?**

The [Accessibility Summer Camp](https://www.accessibilityict.org/) is a FREE annual conference with the goal of connecting professionals and educators with best practices in accessibility and Universal Design. Over the past few years, the ASC conference has grown to become one of the most popular accessibility conferences in the country. Our mission is to provide accessibility-focused professional development that empowers attendees to create high-quality, accessible learning environments while removing barriers for all individuals who have the desire to learn.