Removing Barriers for Students Using Ally
Agenda

- Introduction to Ally
- Alternative Formats
- Instructor Feedback & Course Accessibility Report
- Demo
- Resources
Introducing Ally

- Identify barriers in your content (*Instructor Feedback & Course Accessibility Report*)
- Provide step-by-step guidance as to how to improve that content (*Instructor Feedback*)
- Help you prioritize what content to remove barriers from first (*Course Accessibility Report*)
- Provide alternate formats of files for greater usability (*Alternative Formats*)

Now available at NDSU!
Why does Ally deserve our attention now?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus is supporting the one</th>
<th>Focus is supporting all</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>Access</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Inclusive Course Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:1 accommodations</td>
<td>Universal Design for Learning (UDL)</td>
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</table>
Diverse 21st Century Learners

Visible disability
Non-traditional students
International students
Parents
Temporary disability
Mobile
First-generation students
Lifestyle
Invisible disability
### Focusing on the Student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction Desires</th>
<th>Environments</th>
<th>Devices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Laptop</td>
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<td>Write it</td>
<td>Personal Vehicle</td>
<td>Phone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotate it</td>
<td>Public Transportation</td>
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<td>Highlight it</td>
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<td>Complete it</td>
<td>Gym</td>
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<td>Speak it</td>
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Accessibility Issues Affect Everyone

Schmutz et al (2017)

• Improved information retention
• Faster speed of task completion
Accessible content is better content.
Let's start with you

What do you know about Ally?

(Poll)

1. I have only just heard of Ally and know very little about it
2. I've heard of Ally and know it is used to create more accessible learning for all learners
3. I've seen a demo of Ally on video
4. I have pretty good idea of what Ally can do
5. I am an Ally ‘superuser’
How does Ally work?

What do faculty experience?

What do students experience?
Workflow

Instructor adds course content to their course

Machine learning algorithms perform a full structural and visual analysis

Content passes through accessibility checklist and is scored

Alternative formats automatically generated

Instructor feedback is provided
Alternative Formats for Files

- Automatically generate a number of alternatives for the faculty’s original
- Formats include:
  - Mobile-friendly HTML
  - OCRd PDF
  - ePub
  - Audio
  - Electronic braille
  - Beeline Reader
  - Translated version

By downloading an alternative format, you agree with the Terms of Use.
Alternative Formats for LMS Course Content

- Automatically generate a number of alternatives for WYSIWYG
- Tagged PDF and HTML are not options
Alternative Formats Benefits

- Provides students options to engage with their course content
- Supports different learner needs, preferences, abilities, and devices
- Offers options for offline use
- Doesn’t change or interrupt existing workflows

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</table>
Instructor Feedback

• Provide feedback to faculty about the accessibility of your content

• Provide guidance on how to fix accessibility issues and generate a change in behavior over time

• Embedded in the context of your course

• Students do not see this*
Instructor Feedback Benefits

- Provides in context feedback to faculty about accessibility of their course content
- Provides guidance on how to fix accessibility issues
- Goal: change in behavior over time
- Raise awareness to many faculty who have not considered content accessibility before
- Meant to help proactively create accessible content
- Fixing content will help Ally to produce better alternative formats for students
- Doesn’t change or interrupt any existing workflows
Course Accessibility Report

- Provides feedback to faculty about the accessibility of your entire course
- Complements the in-context Instructor Feedback
- Helps faculty work through remediation more quickly
- Instructor Feedback can be triggered from the course accessibility report
- Students do not see this*
Course Accessibility Report Benefits

• Shows the overall accessibility of the course, with the option to drill down to specific issues/content items
  • Makes it easier to find issues or content you want to fix

• Provides information to help decide how to prioritize remediation fixes

• Tracks progress once content has been fixed

• Bring awareness as to how much and what type of content is in a course
  • May encourage removal of outdated content
  • Can help with better course design
Here are a few easy fixes to begin with:

- Images missing a description
- Word and PowerPoint files containing text with insufficient color contrast
- Word documents missing headings
- Files with yellow or green gauges next to them

Helpful tip: Use the “Easiest issues to fix” pathway in the Course Accessibility Report to find these issues in your course content
• Blackboard Ally Resources:
  • Join the Ally User Group at https://usergroup.ally.ac/ (if desired)
  • Review the Ally Instructor Package