



The 2017 Accessibility Conference:
**Becoming a Catalyst
for Inclusion**
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The AccessText Network & Publisher PDF Remediation

Transcript from the 2017 Accessibility Conference

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AERO: Wait, there's more!

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Transcripts are available courtesy of [Ai-Media](#) who provided live captioning at the 2017 [Accessibility Conference](#).

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SPEAKER:

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Today we are here with Dawn Evans. She is from the AccessText network. This is her first trip to Canada. Welcome. Dawn is the coordinator of AccessText network.

I have had the pleasure of working with Dawn through obtaining accessible text for students and she was a wealth of knowledge. I hope you will gain something from her and I'm sure she's going to be around this afternoon.

Then we will pass over to Bob Minnery. Anyone who is in the education sector will know of Bob. He has been the manager of AERO since 1989. Thank you Dawn and Bob.

DAWN EVANS:

Thank you for coming. I'm going to talk about what AccessText is. Is my microphone level right? Then I will give you a few resources to use with PDF files you may not have been aware of. If you are struggling with a PDF file, these are a few neat tricks.

The AccessText network was created for the purpose of making the whole process of schools needing to ask publishers for files a much more simple task to accomplish.

When a college student with perceptual disability identifies themselves to the appropriate staff at the college to accommodate their needs, then that person is responsible for determining a reasonable accommodation.

DAWN EVANS:

You're able to go to one website and ask for a file from multiple publishers with just a few clicks. That streamlines it. Instead of figuring out how to go through publishers individually.

The request process is simple. You enter the 13 digit ISBN in the field. Here is an example of a request record. There are only three pieces of required information. You enter a unique anonymous student ID. You're not giving confidential information.

You choose the request type which is typically a publisher file. Then the format requested is obvious. What is in the drop down menu. Most publishers have PDFs to hand out.

Some publishers have epub or doc.

A few statistics on (AccessText Network) ATN. On the left-hand side on the pie chart, the majority of requests, 60% are fulfilled and delivered within the same day that you make the request. That's because publishers have the ability to store a file on the AccessText network for automated delivery. They don't have to lift a finger.

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If you add up all the requests fulfilled within the same day, one day, two days and three days that equals 90% that will be fulfilled in 3 days or less.

On the right-hand side, there's a bar chart showing the number of requests per year. The first full operational year we had was 2010 and we had 20,000 requests that year. It has continued to increase all the way up until 2016, we had 102,000 requests.

More people join AccessText. It's all post secondary schools. More people join and more publishers continue to join which continues to increase our statistics.

A little history...

AccessText is supported by the Association of American publishers. It is managed by AMAC accessibility solutions in Atlanta Georgia. AccessText was launched in 2009. We started with 8 publishers and 400+ post-secondary schools. Those eight publishers and the Association of American publishers helped us figure out what the authorized user membership agreement was going to be. And what the publisher membership agreement should be and how the system should work. It was very much a collaboration and difficult sometimes but we made it work.

From those eight publishers and 478 member schools, there are 31 publishers on the network now.

Everywhere is different. We have a map showing you where everyone is at.

We grant membership to post secondary institutions in the U.S. and Canada that are accredited. We can grant membership to alternate media centers. Members agree that if staff changes, they will notify AccessText of this change within a few days. That is so if someone leaves their job, we can remove them from accessing the system.

Regarding students, the agreement states that you will have documentation of the student's qualified disability on file.

You only provide the file to the student after you have verified proof of purchase. If you request an AccessText file and decide to store it, for possible future use, that if you do find a second or third student that you need to give it to that you put in a simple request for permission to redistribute this file to a second or third student.

If this is something that would be a useful tool for you or someone you know, please let them know. It is free. It is easy to join typically when you admit your application, we get your credentials in the same day. I will take questions.

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DAWN EVANS:

Does the proof of purchase have to be given to AccessText as well? No. Your office can store/handle the proof of purchase in whichever way you deem appropriate. Any other questions about AccessText?

SPEAKER:

How do you request permission to redistribute.

DAWN EVANS: Usually 'publisher file' is an option in the drop-down for 'request type', but for this particular book, Pearson has indicated that they don't have a file available for this title. You can instead choose the 'request type' of 'permission to redistribute a file you already got from them in the past.

SPEAKER:

How long does it take for a 'permission to redistribute request'?

DAWN EVANS:

The permissions approval can be automated by the publisher and in that case it would be instant. Some don't automate, in which case, I would estimate one day.

DAWN EVANS:

AccessText is not open on the K-12 level and that's because we were started in the US. K-12 was covered by NIMAC which is a federally funded organisation and Bob may be able to further address this.

BOB MINNERY:

If it's a K-12 from an Ontario institution, send it to Aero there are other associations like Aero in other provinces.

DAWN EVANS:

I gave them to you but I didn't bring them with me today. We don't have all of the Ontarian yet. I'm here to make sure everyone knows about it.

Now that they are able to request from McGraw-Hill and AccessText, it is 1-3 days so that helps. Let me give you 10 minutes of tips and tricks with PDF. Who has to ever try to work with the

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PDF on acrobat professional to try to fix a problem or experience someone telling them about problems with the PDF that you would love to figure out?

A handful. This will be interesting to some. Maybe all. The PDFs you get from publishers, they started not for the purpose of accessibility but for looking nice and being printed.

These happened to be the file formats the publishers have at hand to be able to fulfil these requests.

For a student with mobility issues, the PDF from the publisher should be just fine because they look at the PDF on the screen and don't need to use text-to-speech on it.

If you have a student using Jaws or NVDA or other advanced assistive technology, you may have to do things to it to make it a more friendly experience.

There are alternatives. You can take the PDF you get from the publisher and run it through optical character recognition software and insert reading order and export whatever format you need from there. That's one option of how to deal with the PDF that is not behaving in a way that you need it to.

If you have a PDF working mostly great but there's a couple of pages that are problematic.

Before I get to that, I want to go over a few simple things that you can do with PDFs to make them more accessible for all. Some of the publisher PDFs will come with page numbers and bookmarks. They provide for enhanced navigation. You probably know this stuff.

If I get this PDF from a publisher and I want to navigate to page 350, type that in and it lands me on the books page 327. This is so you can navigate what page you want using the built-in features in Adobe reader or Acrobat pro or whatever you are using. To get to the right page.

On the left-hand pane, there's a bunch of icons. You have page number to open up panes. Under the page thumbnails, find what should be page number one, the printed page number one.

Page number four. Page 1 is blank. We highlight the last page of front matter which is page xxiii, which is labelled page 23 by Acrobat professional. We hold down shift and click on the first page that selects all the pages in between. Right click. It's called page labels.

You can select your style, in this case it is lowercase roman numerals. It starts on page 1. Then let's try to navigate. Control shift + n is the shortcut to go to a specific page. 350. Then it lands on proper page.

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The other handy navigation tools can provide to students using these PDFs or to yourself is you can bookmark as many headings as you would like.

How to add a bookmark. You highlight the text and press control B or you can click on the icon in the bookmarks pane which says 'add bookmark'. From there, you can drag the bookmark around so it is in the proper order.

That's another simple trick to use.

Let's look at auto tagging. It's a handy tool to have when you're dealing with some reading order issues in a PDF and you don't know what's going on and you're hoping for a quick fix that will fix it all. Many times, it can do it for you.

Say a student comes to you and says this page makes no sense. You look at it and highlight stuff when you see why because it is reading across columns, not down one column then the next. That won't make any sense.

The first step is to delete any tags present and have Acrobat professional auto tag it for you and see if that solves the problem.

To do that, on the left-hand side, there's an icon that looks like a price tag. If you don't have it, then you right click on the grey area in the panes panel and choose tags icon.

You can right click, delete tag and then in the tag options icon in the tags pain, select add tags to document. Then you check to see if the problem went away. In many cases, it will. It did. It's reading down one column and the next. In that process of adding tags, Acrobat was independently looking at every single page and figuring out what is the content on that page.

Any questions?

SPEAKER:

Is there a way of fixing just one tag?

DAWN EVANS:

Yes and I believe my next slide will show that.

SPEAKER:

Does 'adding tags to document' affect the whole document?

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DAWN EVANS:

Yes, When I am using add tag to document, it is affecting the whole document.

What if auto tagging doesn't fix the problem? We have a minor error in this next document that is not fixed by auto tagging.

There are a couple of tools to use to deal with pesky reading order situations that are not responding. In this case, it is that these two little bullets under the figure, they are not reading in the proper order. They are reading from the right-hand side...

Is jumping from here to here and then it is reading the bottom of the right-hand bullet and then it reads the top of the left-hand bullet. There can be all sorts of reading order issues in PDF.

This doesn't respond to auto tagging. There are two places you can fix the reading order. It depends on the PDF and the quality.

This PDF, we have to go to both places to fix it. The first place is using the touch up reading order tool. You can find that tool by clicking on tools and typing reading. Or you can access it by pressing control shift U.

After typing in reading, you click on reading order and it opens up a separate dialogue box labelled touch-up reading order.

This dialogue box turns our cursor into a crosshair and it allows us to select the text that we would like to exist together within a tag.

Let's take that bullet and tag it as text. We are forcing these text objects to be together rather than separate which is causing part of the reading order problem.

Let's take a look at what that looks like in the tags pain. If you want to find something in the tags, you can highlight it, then click on the tag option icon, and click on 'find tag from selection' and you'll see it opens the P tag with the content in it.

There's a figure tag which is always for an image on a page. You can have H1 tags, H2 et cetera. You can have caption tags. I've got a couple of PowerPoint slides on the table tags. Everyone can have that information if you would like it for reference. I can email it to you.

Let's close up the touch-up reading order tool and see what we have accomplished so far. When I click on the first P tag, the content on the right is highlighted. That's mean it's going to read before the content on the left.

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I dragged the second P tag to go before the first P tag. The reading order is now fixed.

With this PDF, there's one more step to fix the reading order. When I turn on the selection tool for text, and I highlight the first list item and I expected them to go to the second list item, it doesn't. The second one is still behind the scenes in this PDF, still after the first one. Or they are still out of order.

The other place you go to fix problems is the order pane. You don't see it in the list, right click and choose order and it will appear. It looks like a Z.

In the order pane, you can see all the content on this page. When you click down through it, you can see what gets highlighted. You can see the numbers on the page. It tells you the order it is being read in.

To fix this, drag it to reverse that reading order so it will be correct.

Now it reads properly.

This is somewhat involved and not going to be something you want to do for every single PDF page. You can and there are companies that will properly tag PDFs for you. Some people prefer a PDF. Depending on the needs, it can be accomplished. It's time-consuming though.

SPEAKER:

Can a PDF be fully accessible?

DAWN EVANS:

Close. With tags, you can specify every element on every page. You can specify the reading order even if it is jumping across the pages. One problem would be contrast. On my experience and I don't know everything, I would say pretty darn close. For some people yes perfect.

DAWN EVANS:

How much of this work is being done by the publisher versus the end user? My experience is that it is all done by the end user. I haven't seen a publisher... I've seen one publisher provide one properly tagged PDF because the company I worked for tagged it for them and then they gave it to a student. It's primarily the end user.

BOB MINNERY:

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There's no pressure on the publisher to provide a completely tagged document at all. What is available to us is the right to do it. From a publisher... If I were a publisher's hat, the argument publishers make... Even as a manager of AERO, there is some validity to their perspective of Tell us what you want us to do once. If we make it accessible, what if someone wants something else.

It's when the technology is finally merged, you will see where I think it is going, I think you're going to see EPUB three is the standard that the book industry service group made up of all the publishers are working towards with the daisy organisation to get to that standard. To answer your question, that's where I think it is going to go into or three years down the line.

You will go, now the publishers have the ability to do what they want to do.

BOB MINNERY:

If it is made by design, if it is done to MP3 standards, it would matter if it is locked because it is inaccessible by design. Some are. Some are not.

DAWN EVANS:

I will wrap up so Bob can talk to you. If you have any other questions for me, feel free to reach me. We have a booth in there so you can visit. If you would like the PowerPoint deck which has more than I talked to you about, grab my card and drop me an email (dawn@gatech.edu). Thank you so much.

(APPLAUSE)

BOB MINNERY:

I will shift gears entirely here. I would be remiss if I didn't say that Dawn and I have been talking on the phone for eight months and I met Dawn for the first time today. Imagine what someone looks like. She looks a lot like I imagined. Self-effacing and pleasant and she's like that on the phone.

I want to do some housekeeping. I'm aware of the time. Two rows of presentations, don't follow kids surgery before lunch. I'm stuck in one of those.

Does everyone know what AERO does? I don't want to talk about unless you already know things. How many people don't know?

Close. AERO is responsible for the production of alternate format material in publicly funded institutions from kindergarten to post doctorate. Regardless of the medium required, AERO's

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mandate is to produce the textbooks for the students that require them and at the postsecondary level, to help the institutions and their obligations to provide alternate format materials.

Who uses AERO on a regular basis? Are you familiar... How many people are from postsecondary institutions? And from elementary secondary institutions? None. Government institutions?

A lot of what I'm going to be talking about may not be germane to those outside the educational sphere. It is to the second half of my discussion. I have three goals today. I want to inspire you. After I'm done, I want you to be able to say I can do that. The other goal as I already do that and I can do it way better than Bob. Third, I need you to stop and ask yourself how do I take advantage of the exhilarated times to benefit me and my gokey. What is a gokey? I made it up on the way here for groups of common interest.

The groups of common interest, we all have them but I think we have a necessity to nurture them.

The provincial skills branch is responsible for the direct operation of five provincial schools and four demonstration skills. We have three English, American Sign Language in Belleville London and Milton and three English language demonstration skills for students who have severe learning disabilities in Belleville London and Milton. We have one English-language provincial school for the blind and visually impaired and net blinded in Bradford. We have a French school for the deaf blind and deaf and Ottawa and a demonstration school for severe learning disabilities in Ottawa.

Here are some numbers. This is how many students we serviced last year. At the provincial skills branch, we serviced 580 students. Over 500 children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, are receiving English and French preschool services. There are over 900 students in 400 English-language publicly funded schools and we have serviced 400 French language students.

AERO specifically responded to 31,000 title requests last year. Of those 31,000, 24,000 were downloaded. 3000 were physical requests that were checked out and we serviced 7000 students.

In 2005, we used fax machines. That leads to the next part of my presentation. I get to thank Gordon Moore. He is responsible for Moore's law. If the observation that was made by the co-founder of Intel. He noticed the number of transistors per square inch on integrated circles doubled every year since their invention. It sounds technical but there's a point to this.

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Moore's law is that computers, machines that run on computers and computing power all become smaller and faster with time as transistors become more efficient. The cost of these higher power computers eventually comes down so much, almost 30% a year. The faster microchips process things, the more efficient a computer becomes. That's obvious to us but how does it... Why are we saying it?

50 years ago is when this law was created. We have seen a seen change of benefits. Mobile devices, smartphones, tablets that wouldn't be possible had microchips not been able to shrink.

To get perspective...

If you take the Volkswagen bug. If it advanced to the same degree as the microchip, the Beetle would go about 300,000 miles an hour, get 200,000 mpg and would cost four cents.

How does this relate to what we're talking about today? With all the exhilaration, the elephant in the room we are trying to deal with is we are not smart enough to capture everything. Dawn is talking about PDF. We will talk about closed captioning. We still need paperclips.

You can't be the expert at everything in this field but the student still needs their material. What are you going to do? That's where you have to stop and go OK, I have to learn to reconnect. You cannot expect your managers or bosses to tell you to do this. This is something that I think has to come from the front line. You know who your gokeys are. You need to invest time to learn more about them and to join them and ask to join you.

Dawn and I worked together because I reached out to her and said "We are AERO and this is what we do in Ontario in Canada." Dawn said "Can we be part of you?" She said that she is getting calls from other institutions that said we want to be part of you too. I'm not saying Canadian universities are now part of ATN because of our conversations but at least it gave her the reference when her manager asks what you're talking about. That's fair.

Likewise, we have Mike at the back from CELA. We work together on a regular basis. I want to tell you what partnerships are and why you think they are important and encourage you to join the ones I mentioned to join the other groups of common interests so you can leverage what they know so you will be able to take advantage of their skill sets.

My goal when I join a group is to be the dumbest guy in the room. I am successful beyond belief.

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I have still been able to contribute something to groups. I emailed the director and said do you know what we do in Canada and he had no idea. To put it in perspective, didn't know how prevalent Google read and write was in Canada. How well it has been marketed and its impact on their development.

Even though Google is a member of the organisation. My gokeys. First publishers. AERO has a stable of six publishers. In 2007, AERO had contact with publishers and they said they will provide material at the postsecondary level on request. That was great. The reason we did that was because from C DIA... A relationship with the postsecondary publishers was so successful that we had Pearson and McGraw-Hill saying if we do that at the postsecondary level and it works well, can we give you our files as we create them at the El sac level. We said yes.

We have reached out to the two big French language publishers as well. Then there are groups like the title providers. CELA, Canadian Equitable Library Association, and AccessText.

These partnerships provide us links that AERO will in our next generation will have read on their site.

We are trying to share with you how you can take advantage of groups that may or may not interest you likewise, there is the Ontario libraries Association. We work together to meet our clients' needs and discussions have also happened with the Ontario libraries Association. They are going to list Aero on their websites. That's free marketing just by reaching out. You can do that.

You have to start nurturing your groups of common interest.

Like AERO, British Columbia, likewise at sea in Halifax. We talk about what our mutual problems, mutual concerns, how do we advocate for clients and likewise, what are you working on. I know Pearce EDI is heavily invested and looking at map and mail.

I always ask what are you doing about stem stuff. That's a hard one. That's one we are going to be responsible to do.

Then we have subject matter experts. By going to visit them, we realised they had created an accessible dashboard. Enlarge the font, change the... It was accessible by a screen reader.

If you are interested, you should patrol the EpubTest group it was founded by the daisy organisation. Part of the EpubTest group was the book industry service group. It is almost every publisher on the planet.

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When we talk about accessibility, they are working to create an EPUB three standard that will be the standard to which publishers will be expected to provide.

Who knows what that will mean? The EpubTest group is asking and soliciting people to test what they are doing. IBM is on this.

It's under the radar but now that you know about it, Google it.

Is anyone part of the Canadian old form?

Seek them out. I am being told I got one minute. Here is my last thought.

What urgent priorities and how can I leverage accelerated times to address them because I know I don't know enough.

SPEAKER:

Thanks Bob and Dawn. You will be around for the rest of the day if anyone has specific questions. As Bob mentioned about accessibility and STEM, we have a lengthy forum this afternoon. It starts at 1 PM. You could take your lunch in. Or you could join after the break and on behalf of all of us, we are grateful you could join us today.

Enjoy lunch everybody.

(APPLAUSE)

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