Resources on the Net:
Accessibility

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Digital Libraries and Web Design

Craven, J. & Brophy, P. (2003). *Non-visual Access to the Digital Library: The Use of Digital Library Interfaces by Blind and Visually Impaired People*. Library and Information Commission Research Report 145, Manchester: Centre for Research in Library and Information Management. Retrieved on April 1, 2005, from http://www.cerlim.ac.uk/projects/nova/index.php

The report states that "Our domain in this project is digital library services, and our concern is that all such services should, in their entirety, be as accessible to blind and visually impaired people as to anyone else. The rapid development of networked information and communications technologies provides opportunities for radical changes in the services which can be delivered to all information users, including those who need to use 'accessible' formats and systems in order to overcome visual or other disability. During experiments carried out as part of the REVIEL project in which blind people accessed a variety of online resources, it became apparent that navigation is a major problem within digital library systems."

Freed, G., Rothberg, M. & Wlodkowski, T. (2003, January). *The Access to PIVoT Project*. Retrieved from The CPB/WGBH National Center for Accessible Media WGBH Educational Foundation website on April 6, 2005, from: http://ncam.wgbh.org/cdrom/guideline/

These guidelines update *Making Educational Software Accessible* (2000). "As in the original document, readers are given: a basic understanding of the needs of users with different disabilities, a summary of various approaches to serve users with different disabilities, specific solutions for designing more accessible software, guidelines with specific checkpoints and detailed techniques for implementation." Additionally, the following can be found: "extensive information on making multimedia presentations accessible to deaf or blind students, examples of writing image descriptions for blind students, solutions for making forms and data tables accessible, information on making electronic and on-line textbooks accessible." Although primarily geared to the education of students with disabilities, these guidelines provide an array of information on tools and software that is relevant to librarians.

Hamblin, Y. (2004, November). *LibPortal Project: Case Sstudies of Portal Implementation in Higher Education Libraries – A Report to the Joint Information Systems Committee.* Retrieved on April 1, 2005, from http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/ Lib Portal Case Studies in HE.pdf

This report completes the work of the LibPortal Project which has reviewed the development of library oriented portals in higher and further education. The Joint Information and Systems Committee (JISC) commissioned a series of case studies as part of this work reported here. The case studies cover three portal suppliers and five English university libraries.The case studies are intended to assist libraries in the decision making process of how to manage their electronic resources, and whether or not a portal meets the requirements of the library. Some refer to issues associated with accessibility.

Mates, B.T. (2000). *Adaptive Technology for the Internet: Making Eelectronic Resources Accessible to All.* Chicago: American Library Association. Available from: http://www.ala.org/ala/products/books/editions/ adaptivetechnology.htm

The aim of this monograph is "to guide information providers in establishing accessible websites and acquiring the hardware and software needed by people with disabilities." Examples of hardware and soft-

ware technologies for libraries are described, including screen readers, Braille screens, voice recognition systems, hearing assistance devices, and HTML coding for web pages. A listing of Library websites that are accessible to those using adaptive technologies is provided.

Schmetzke, A. (2005, March 21) **Web Accessibility Survey Site**. Retrieved on March 24, 2005, from http://library.uwsp.edu/aschmetz/Accessible/websurveys.htm

Originally created to document survey type research on web page accessibility in higher education, this site has recently expanded its scope to include "investigations into the accessibility of all web-based resources found in the educational environment, including online library databases and courseware."

Schmetzke, A. (2001). **Online Distance Education - "Anytime, Anywhere" but Not for Everyone**. *Information Technology and Disabilities*. 7(2). Retrieved on April 1, 2005, from: http://www.rit.edu/ ~easi/ itd/itdv07n2/contents.htm

This article looks at the accessibility of top-level distance-education web pages and provides some answers to the question "why are the web sites of distance-education providers so inaccessible?" Suggests that lack of awareness among the leadership is partially responsible for the many access barriers found at the majority of web sites of distance-education providers.

World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). (1999). **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0**. Retrieved on March 23, 2005, from http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/

These guidelines were prepared by the web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), a sub-committee of the World Wide web Consortium. WAI is the internationally recognized leader in establishing accessibility guidelines for web page authoring.

Library Services

Agada, J. & Dauenheimer.D. Beyond ADA: **Crossing Borders to Understand the Psychosocial Needs of Students with Disabilities**. (2001). Paper presented at the ACRL Tenth National Conference (March 15–18, 2001, Denver, Colorado). Retrieved on April 1, 2005, from: http://ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlevents/dauenheimer.pdf

This paper asserts "the expectations, hopes and visions embodied in disability rights legislation such as the [Americans with Disabilities Act] go beyond compliance with legal statutes. To embrace the spirit of the law, we recommend that academic library staff cross borders to better understand the psychosocial needs of students with disabilities. Scenarios illustrating some non-physical barriers that frustrate information seeking and learning for students with disabilities in academic libraries are described. The paper concludes with recommendations for creating more socially inclusive library service environments."

Coonin, B. (2001, Fall). **Enabling Scientists: Serving Sci-tech Library Users with Disabilities**. *Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship*. Retrieved on April 1, 2005, from http://www.library.ucsb.edu/istl/01-fall/article1.html

Coonin states: "service to library users with disabilities has been the subject of numerous books, articles, and presentations, but it is useful to consider this issue specifically in the context of science libraries for several reasons. In the United States we acknowledge an established need for scientists, but have long overlooked the pool of scientific interest and talent among individuals with disabilities. Sci-tech librarians can play a significant role in the encouragement of scientific talent among library users with disabilities by making the library environment accessible and ensuring as much as possible the independent access to information that is so critical to scientific endeavor. Some of the specific ways librarians in sci-tech libraries can contribute to an accessible electronic library environment include developing basic familiarity with relevant assistive technologies, creating accessible web pages, monitoring accessibility of electronic databases purchased for the library, and by preparing accessible bibliographic instructional activities."

McKnight, S. (2002, January). *Forum on Library Services for People with a Disability.* Academic Libraries (CAUL) Background Paper. Retrieved on April 1, 2005, from: http://www.deakin.edu.au/library/staff/ ForumLibSerDis.htm

McKnight discusses a variety of issues that confront academic library services for those with disabilities and offers some brief recommendations.

Scott, W. (1996). *The Accessible Canadian Library II.* Retrieved from the National Library of Canada on April 1, 2005, from: http://www.collectionscanada.ca/9/10/p10-1000-e.html

This comprehensive guide (104 pages) provides guidelines and various service and facility specifications required to meet the needs of library users with disabilities. It also provides a resource list and an extensive bibliography for further information. Described as a workbook, it is "designed to help Canadian library staff evaluate how they are currently serving their clients with disabilities, and what they can improve. "

Policies and Position Papers

American Library Association. Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies. (2005, February 11). *Library Services for People with Disabilities Policy.* Retrieved on March 23, 2005, from http://www.ala.org/ala/ascla/asclaissues/libraryservices.htm

This policy, drafted by the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA), was approved by the American Library Association Council in 2001. It affirms ALA's commitment to the issue of accessibility, and encourages the use of "strategies based upon the principles of universal design to ensure that library policy, resources and services meet the needs of all people."

Canadian Library Association. (1997, February). *Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities.* Position Statement approved by Executive Council. Retrieved on April 1, 2005, from: http://www.cla.ca/about/disabils.htm

The result of four years of work by a CLA Task Force, this policy provides library guidelines for serving persons with disabilities. The guidelines address planning, budgeting, marketing and promotion, human resources, public services, collections management, adaptive technology and a number of other areas.

Links to *Sites*

Equal Access to Software and Information (EASI). (n.d.). Archives of AXSLIB L@MAELSTROM.ST. JOHNS.EDU. Retrieved on March 24, 2005, from http://maelstrom.stjohns.edu/archives/axslib-l.html

AXSLIB-L is an e-mail discussion group dedicated to accessibility issues in libraries, particularly how to accommodate patrons with disabilities. The group's archives are searchable from January 1999 onwards.

Schmetzke, A. (2005, March 21). *Accessible Webpage Design: Resources.* Retrieved on March 24, 2005, from http://library.uwsp.edu/aschmetz/Accessible/pub_resources.htm

This site was "created to promote awareness about the need for accessible web design and to steer those who wish to learn more about the topic into the right direction." It provides comprehensive listings of organizations, web design standards, accessibility guidelines and design tips. It lists assistive technology hardware and software tools currently used in libraries, with links to vendor sites. A timely bibliography on accessibility issues in universities and university libraries is also featured.

Authors' Note: Text that is enclosed within quotations marks has been taken directly from the document.
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