Accessible Communication for Election Offices

Communicating Trusted Election Information
May 12, 2020
#TrustedInfo2020
Before we get started

• Take notes using the **Participant Guide**

• **Captioned recordings** will be available

• Use the **chat panel** to say hello, chat with other attendees, and participate in breakouts
What we’ll cover today

• Learn the principles of accessible communication and how they increase public trust

• Understand how people with disabilities experience information online

• Establish actionable guidelines for making your website more accessible
Agenda

• Introduction to accessibility (30 min.)
• Breakout: Writing good alt text (15 min.)
• Making content more accessible (15 min.)
• Live demo (10 min.)
• Case study (10 min.)
• Group discussion (10 min.)
What does it mean for something to be accessible? Why is it important?

INTRODUCTION TO ACCESSIBILITY
Who are people with disabilities?
The six disability questions are:

1. Are you deaf, or do you have serious difficulty hearing?

2. Are you blind, or do you have serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses?

3. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions? (5 years old or older)

4. Do you have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs? (5 years old or older)

5. Do you have difficulty dressing or bathing? (5 years old or older)

6. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping? (15 years old or older)
Quick poll!
Estimated that 1 in 4 Americans (25%) have some sort of disability
Disability status among adults 18 & older
Adults with Disabilities: Ethnicity and Race

When it comes to the health of people with disabilities, it’s important to know the health differences among racial and ethnic groups.

Approximate number of adults with a disability by ethnicity and race:

- American Indian/Alaska Native: 3 in 10 have a disability
- Black: 1 in 4 have a disability
- White: 1 in 5 have a disability
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 1 in 6 have a disability
- Hispanic: 1 in 6 have a disability
- Asian: 1 in 10 have a disability
How people with disabilities vote?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registration Method</th>
<th>Disability (%)</th>
<th>No Disability (%)</th>
<th>Disability Gap (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered to vote</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
<td>-1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voted if registered</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
<td>-5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How registered to vote:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At a department of motor vehicles</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>-8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Went to a town hall or county/government registration office</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered by mail</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered at polling place</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filled out form at a registration drive</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At a school, hospital, or on campus</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>-1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered using the Internet or online</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>-4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At a public assistance agency</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>No Disability</td>
<td>Disability Gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interested in the election or not involved in politics</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>-8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent illness or disability</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not eligible to vote</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>-2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not meet registration deadlines</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>-7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My vote would not make a difference</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not know where or how to register</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>-1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty with English</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not meet residency requirements/did not live here long enough</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>-2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reason</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for Not Voting</td>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>No Disability</td>
<td>Disability Gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness or disability (own or family’s)</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interested, felt my vote wouldn’t make a difference</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>-4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation problems</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too busy, conflicting work or school schedule</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>-24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t like candidates or campaign issues</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgot to vote (or send in absentee ballot)</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of town or away from home</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>-7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration problems (i.e. didn’t receive absentee ballot, not registered in current location)</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconvenient hours, polling place or hours or lines too long</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>-2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad weather conditions</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>-1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How voters voted in 2018

- At polling place on ED: 61% No Disability, 53% With Disability
- At polling place before ED: 17% No Disability, 16% With Disability
- By mail before ED: 20% No Disability, 29% With Disability
- By mail on ED: 2% No Disability, 1% With Disability
"Essential for some, useful for all"
How can accessibility build trust?
Local officials have a good start
Accessibility and trust

• Relationship-building

• Accessible information is information someone can and will use

• Transparency
What are ways to think about accessibility?

PRINCIPLES OF ACCESSIBILITY
Principles of accessibility

Perceivable

Operable

Understandable

Robust
Accessibility principles > Accessibility techniques
Perceivable
To make content more perceivable

- Ensure transformability
- Make sure message doesn’t depend on style
- Use semantic markup (<h1>, <ul>, etc.)
- Have alt text for images
- Have labels for forms
- Have captions for videos
To make content more operable

- Make your site usable by keyboard only
- Use a careful heading structure
- Include a “skip navigation” link
- Make page titles descriptive/specifc
- Make link text descriptive (not “click here”)
Understandable
To make content more understandable

• Use plain language

• With complex content, include definitions or a glossary

• Make website functions predictable, obvious, consistent

• Help users avoid and fix errors (e.g., in forms and input)
Robust
To make content more robust

- Avoid HTML validation and parsing errors
- Use markup to facilitate accessibility: forms, form labels, frame titles, etc.
- Speak with your website vendor
What is alt text and how do you write it well?

BREAKOUT
What is alt text?
• What information does the image add?

• If the image contains...
  
  Text -- describe it

  Visual information -- explain it

  Sensory information -- describe it

  Nothing new -- ignore it
• **Avoid noise words...**

  “Photo of...”

  “This is a ...”

  “Picture shows a...”

• **Shoot for 5-15 words**
“An animated simulation showing voters moving realistically through a polling place”
ElectionTools.org is an election official's one-stop-shop to the free tech resources that will transform how they're engaging voters.

The site provides access to the latest field-tested tools, including:

- Collection of civic icons and illustrations
- App to measure how long it takes to vote a ballot
- Simulation tool to allocate resources and minimize voter wait times

Each tool comes with step-by-step instructions, making them easy to use by anyone, regardless of technical ability.

Access the tools at www.electiontools.org.
Your turn! (5 min.)
Report back (5 min.)

Tell us about the alt text you drafted!

What was difficult or easy about your process?

With limited context, what did you use to make your decisions?
How do you move towards more accessible communication?

MAKING YOUR CONTENT MORE ACCESSIBLE
Set goals & expectations

- What you want to accomplish
- Timeline
- Staff and roles
- Budget
Try assistive technology
Power of RFPs
Power of RFPs
Use plain design

Please note, as of March 17, the Inyo County Election's office is closed to all walk-in traffic, until the Covid-19 health emergency has been lifted.

- Election results
- Next election: November 3, 2020
- What’s on the ballot
- Did you get my ballot?
- Where to vote
- Register to vote
- Update your voter registration
We must receive your application no earlier than January 1st of the year in which the election is held and no later than the close of business 11 days before election day. If the deadline falls on a weekend, the last day to submit an application is the preceding Friday. If the deadline falls on a state or federal holiday, the ballot application must be received on the preceding business day.
Don’t rely only on PDFs
If you are using the FPCA to register to vote or update your registration, as well as to request an absentee ballot, your FPCA must be received by the Board by no later than the 21st day before an election.

You may also register to vote using the Board’s voter registration form online here, or you may download a form here. For more information on how to register to vote, visit our website here.

Instead:
You may register to vote online using the Board’s voter registration form. Visit our register to vote website to learn more.
Election Day is March 3, 2020

Ballots for the Republican Party and Democratic Party Presidential Primaries have been mailed! Anyone with Disabilities who need assistance may vote at the County Clerk/Auditor’s Office located at:

EARLY VOTING held February 25 - February 26 from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 PM at:
County Clerk’s Office, 160 North Main Room # 115.

VOTE CENTER on March 3, 2020 from 7 AM to 8 PM at:
County Clerk/Auditor’s Office/160 North Main Room #115.

For questions call:
Add alt text to images

Mobile County Board of Registrars

alt="Mobile County Board of Registrars Group Photo"
Add captions to videos
Filing deadlines for county offices:

Monday, March 2, 2020 through Friday, March 20, 2020 5 p.m.

Non-partisan candidates (click here) for:
- County Supervisor Districts 1, 2, & 5
- County Auditor
- County Sheriff
- Soil & Water Conservation Commission
- Township Trustee

The offices listed above will be on the November 3, 2020 General Election ballot.

Monday, March 2, 2020 through Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 5 p.m.

Partisan candidates (click here)

(i.e. Democrat or Republican) for:
- County Supervisor District 1, 2, & 5
- County Auditor
- County Sheriff

The offices listed above will be on the June 2, 2020 Primary Election ballot, with the nominees listed on the November 3, 2020 General Election ballot.

Wednesday, August 26, 2020 5 p.m.

Candidates (non-partisan) (click here) for:
- Agricultural Extension Council
- Partisan (Democrat or Republican) candidates nominated by convention to fill ballot vacancies for:
  - County Supervisor Districts 1, 2, & 5
  - County Auditor
  - County Sheriff
Publicize voting options
Make contact information prominent
Test with users

Usability testing kit

A collection of guidelines and templates to help you check the usability of election materials

Usability testing is a way to learn how easy or difficult it is for people to use something by observing them actually using it.

The resources provided in this kit can help you systematize the process, produce reliable findings, and generally expand your ability to test voting materials thoroughly with real users — before you launch them out into the world.
Demo: WebAim WAVE
What is WebAim and WAVE?

WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool

WAVE is a suite of evaluation tools that helps authors make their web content more accessible to individuals with disabilities. WAVE can identify many accessibility and Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG) errors, but also facilitates human evaluation of web content. Our philosophy is to focus on issues that we know impact end users, facilitate human evaluation, and to educate about web accessibility.

You can use the online WAVE tool by entering a web page address (URL) in the field above. WAVE Firefox and Chrome extensions are available for testing accessibility directly within your web browser - handy for checking password protected, locally stored, or highly dynamic pages. We also have a WAVE Runner service, subscription WAVE API and a stand-alone WAVE API for easily collecting data on many pages. If you need enterprise-level reporting and tracking of accessibility, WAVE powers the Pope Tech accessibility tool.

WebAim web accessibility in mind

Utah State University
Live WAVE demo
CASE STUDY: VOTING ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (VAAC)
VAAC

- Creation
- Member recruitment

Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC)

Inquire about the availability of documents in accessible formats.

Register to Vote
My Election Information
My District Information
Current Election

Sacramento County Voter Registration & Elections department has established a citizen advisory committee to make recommendations for improving access to voting and election materials. This Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee, or VAAC, is designed to advise and assist in ensuring all voters in Sacramento County can vote independently and privately.

Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee Goals
2019 VAAC Meeting Schedule

For more information on Sacramento County’s Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee, please email VAACinfo@saccounty.net or call Courtney Bailey-Kanelos, VAAC Chair, at (916) 875-6556.

Membership
To become a member of the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee, please complete the VAAC Application and email to VAACinfo@saccounty.net. For information on the desirable qualifications to serve as a member, please read the Call for Members, Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee.
VAAC topics

• Physical accessibility
• Voting equipment
• Website accessibility
• Alternate formats
• Accessible vote-by-mail and county information guide
• Outreach and demonstrations
VAAC – Building trust & collaboration

• Listen to the committee
• Be honest
• Keep your word
• Track action items
• Be transparent
• Be a leader
What are your next steps towards greater accessibility?

GROUP DISCUSSION
Your plans

- What ideas from today resonated?
- What are your next steps?
- Any “a-ha” moments?
Questions for us

● What questions do you have about ideas we covered today?

● Do you have an accessibility question that today’s course didn’t answer?
We’ve covered a lot today

WRAPPING UP
What we covered today

• Learn the principles of accessible communication and how they increase public trust

• Understand how people with disabilities experience information online

• Establish actionable guidelines for making your website more accessible
Communicating Trusted Election Information

Social Media for Voter Engagement
Thursday, May 14th | 2pm EST

Later this summer...
Combating Election Misinformation
Thursday, July 30th | 2pm EST

techandciviclife.org/course/trusted-info/
Free COVID-19 Webinars for Election Officials

• May 19 – June 30
• 2 webinars per week (except June 2)
• 60 minutes each, with plenty of time for Q&A
• Sessions are stand-alone: register for what’s useful to you
• We’ll post the captioned recordings and slides after each webinar

techandciviclife.org/covid-19-webinars/
Evaluation

● How was your experience with today’s course?

● A brief survey is linked in the chat box.

● Please complete the survey now to provide feedback and improve the course for future participants.
THANK YOU!

Email: courses@techandciviclife.org
Twitter: @HelloCTCL
Website: www.techandciviclife.org
#TrustedInfo2020