# Transcript – [Keeping Web Accessibility in Mind](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yx7hdQqf8lE&feature=youtu.be)

## Dr. Cyndi Rowland, WebAIM Director:

Whether you are an administrator, a faculty member, or a web developer you will face issues of accessibility. There are large numbers of individuals with disabilities on your campus, employed at your institution, and in the community at large. In fact, current estimates are that there are over 59 million Americans with disabilities in the U.S. alone. Those who could be blocked from your institutional website include: those with vision impairments (those who are blind, have low vision, or are color blind), those with hearing impairments, those with motor impairments, those who have cognitive impairments, and those with photoepilepsy. In fact, you can also block out those with age-related processes, which can include many of the areas which have already been stated.

Listen to the individual experiences of three students who have difficulties with the Web. Kyle Woodruff: Now days the classes are moving more and more towards the internet. You're able to take entire courses online. And I have tried to stay away from those because I am 90% sure that as a blind individual I will run into problems accessing those sites. I will be using the JAWS screen reader in connection with the Internet. JAWS stands for Job Access with Speech.

## Kyle:

Search for... (Typing)

Computer:

M...u...s...i...c space

Kyle:

Music

## Computer:

N...o...t...e...s space

## Kyle:

Notes

## Kyle:

A screen reader is a program, and there are several out there, allowing me to hear what is being displayed on the screen. I'm using tab and shift-tab to go through the links. One would normally just scroll with the mouse up or down to do that, but I'm not able to do that.

## Computer:

Search results found 34 thousand links...

## Kyle:

34... woah, a lot. So, screen readers are very helpful, but if the Web site is written in a manner that the screen reader cannot access that Web site it does me no good. One of the bad experiences I've had trying to navigate the Internet... There's a class that I needed several forms for and I was not able to access the site with my screen reader. And one of my friends came in and was very generous to download the files from their computer and then take a pencil and we spent three or four hours filling out those forms in pencil. In the past I have avoided using the Internet because of its inaccessibility for myself. As I proceed through school though, teachers and students will use it more and I will need it to be more accessible to me.

## Gordon Richins:

As an individual with quadriplegia that uses a computer both for pleasure and at work, I find it very frustrating to surf the Web, go to different Web pages for different reasons both here at work and at home. I've tried using a mouse and my arm... the fatigue after a few minutes gets to where it's more bother than it's worth. So I use a mouth stick, which works effectively to get around on a computer, but it doesn't help me if I'm on the Internet. When surfing the Web I find it difficult because many Web pages are inaccessible without the use of a mouse, which requires tabbing from link to link to link.

Many of the pages I can get quite a ways into the page. Some pages I'll get to a link or two

and it will just freeze up. Okay, I'm stuck. The educational environment and to an extent

the business environment haven't made it a priority to make the Web accessible to individuals with disabilities.

## Curtis Radford:

(Voice of Jonathan Webb, interpreting for Curtis Radford): If a person refers to me as being disabled, it doesn't offend me. I feel that, yes, I guess, technically I am disabled. I have an inability to hear. However, we're more of a linguistic minority.

## Narrator:

This is where the sound begins.

## Curtis Radford:

Oh, really. I wouldn't have even known that. I would have just been aware of the visual picture but not of the auditory stimulus. So it seems like there is some kind of interaction or swapping that takes place here.

Computer: The O2 goes from high concentration in the alveoli to low concentration and occupies the seats of the bus.

## Curtis Radford:

And then it looks like, I guess this is going into the heart and then it's passing out another section of the heart. That sign is hard to read. I'm guessing that they are speaking as to what is going on, but again I'm unaware as to what they are saying. And I have the responsibility now to assume what I'm being instructed on. There's a lot of guesswork involved in this. As I looked at the program I found it interesting. There was a lot of information there that I was able to read due to the text. There was also a lot of graphic images, and because of those things I was able to assume what was on there. A friend of mine who is hearing was able to tell me that there was spoken information on there. It didn't seem to include everything. There were some important bullets though, I believe, and some of the parts where they had some audio types of instruction. It was more of a puzzle that I had to put the pieces together to try to figure out what it was meaning. I think that the most important thing that's done is that when there is a voice on a video there needs to be captioning. You know, there doesn't need to be this fancy art or these extravagant graphics. It's just that everything that's said, they just need to caption it. We need access to that, and it's just that simple. I don't have any mental problems. I'm not mentally slow. I don't have any disabilities. I can think. I can read. I can write. I can do anything that anyone else can do except for hear. And I want that person to respect me, and I think that that would solve a lot of problems.

## Dr. Cyndi Rowland, WebAIM Director:

People often ask why should I design with accessibility in mind or why should I worry whether our Web sites are accessible? And there are three fundamental reasons why we would want to do this. The first, frankly, is it's the right thing to do. That moral argument, that ethical argument, I believe, will always take the trump card. In our society, we want everyone to be able to participate to the maximum extent that they can, and we don't want to treat others in an unequal fashion. The second reason why we would want to design accessibly is that it's a smart thing to do. It's a smart thing from an economic perspective because we are getting tuition dollars from students that may not be able to participate in classes if we have sites and classes they can come to. It's also the smart thing because accessible design is compatible with emerging technologies.

So, when you have in the future wireless... more and more use of wireless web and of portable handhelds it's going to be those sites that are accessible that will also be compatible with emerging technologies. And the third reason, frankly, is that it's the law. And I know a lot of people don't like to hear that as a reason to do it, but it's true.

We have civil rights legislation, the American's with Disabilities Act. We have the Reauthorized Rehabilitation Act. We have the Telecommunications Act. There are responses out of the Office of Civil Rights and the Department of Education. And taken together they all support the notion that students should have equal access to the information that's on the Web. And they should have equal access to educational opportunities. So, those are the three reasons why people ought to be concerned with accessibility.

As you plan your classes you may prepare a course syllabus, readings, and curriculum. As you plan your departmental web pages you may incorporate policies, application forms, admissions, a catalogue of courses, and faculty profiles. In each instance ask yourself: Is this material accessible to all students, including those with disabilities? More specifically ask yourself: Is my department page and all its' elements accessible? Is my course site fully accessible? If I'm using a course management tool like WebCT or Blackboard, is it accessible? How about the chat program I use, is it accessible? If I post things like PDF files, or PowerPoint presentations, are they accessible? The solutions for making your materials accessible are relatively easy once you have the right information.

To learn more about this important topic visit www.webaim.org or contact the Disability Service Office, or the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Coordinator on your campus. They will be happy to link you with materials to help you **"Keep Accessibility in Mind."**