

CREATING ACCESSIBLE ELEARNING: PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

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Executive Summary

An important part of the eLearning designer or developer's role is ensuring their work is accessible to those who encounter it. The approach to this has begun to shift from focus primarily on technical concerns related to web standards (such as adding captions for audio because the standard requires that to ensure accessibility for those who are deaf or hard of hearing) to interest in the broader idea of universal design for learning (adding those captions because any number of users may have trouble hearing, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as those working in loud environments or using computers that have no sound).

Rather than offer another list of standards and details regarding compliance (which are included in the report's Resources section), interviews were conducted with several working practitioners with special personal interests in accessibility, or with niche concerns perhaps less familiar to readers. The report includes some comments from end users as well.

Interviewees talked about their more philosophical interests—beyond just working to comply with standards—and shared experiences regarding common misconceptions and mistakes they encounter in regards to accessibility.

Several themes came through across interviews:

- Learn as much as you can about your audience, and include them in your processes as much as possible.
- Focus less on making work accessible to one person and more on making it accessible to anyone who encounters it, on whatever device they may be using.
- Begin with the end in mind. It's much easier than going in after the fact and "making" a course accessible, often through the use of less-desirable solutions. Beginning from a plan for making learning experiences available to all makes the task much less daunting and helps to ensure a better experience for everyone.
- Advocate for learners, both current and future.
- Understand that challenges, such as visual impairments, occur on a spectrum.
- Adjust your design process. Make it part of your workflow. It does not have to be a daunting, scary undertaking.

To download the full report, click here: <http://elgd.co/research-acc19>