CASE STUDY:

CHICO STATE UNIVERSITY

Changing the Accessibility Mindset with Kaltura REACH and Blackboard Ally
Accessibility is a vital concern for educators today, especially in the California State University system. But making content accessible is a daunting challenge. “Things of that magnitude, people don’t know how to break into manageable chunks,” says David J. Rowe, Director of Distributed Learning Technologies at Chico State University. How could Chico State automate their accessibility efforts so that accessibility stopped being a laborious afterthought, and started becoming part of the campus culture?

THE INSTITUTION

Chico State was founded in 1887, making it the second oldest campus in the California State University system. With over 17,000 students from 46 countries, 37 states, and 2 US territories, the school has an incredibly diverse population. A top-10 regional public university in the West since U.S. News and World Reports started ratings in 1998, Chico State is firmly committed to ensuring the best possible education—for all its students.

THE CHALLENGE

In 2004, Executive Order No. 926 laid out the requirements for disability support and accommodation for the entire California State University system. Lawsuits from both within and outside of the university system have made accessibility issues an incredibly important focus. However, making content fully accessible presented some big challenges. There was no way to inventory all the content available, so no one even knew the size of the problem. “The LMS was often referred to as ‘The Wild West,’” says Rowe. Professors could upload anything and no one would even know. While there were many tools available, they were band-aids at best, only partially helping make content accessible. But fixing the problems would have to be done within a constrained budget.

An assessment of their video content revealed 1.3 terabytes of video that would need to be captioned and managed. They would need a new video management solution, one capable of integrating with their LMS, streaming, recording from webcams, and providing automated processes for captioning all that video to the 99% accuracy required to meet accessibility guidelines.

At a Glance

- Student uploaded video: 832 GB
- Faculty/course owned video: 498 GB
- 30 of 1007 faculty manage 312 GB, or 62%!
- Registrar Gradebook retention policy: 5 years
- OATS remediation team: 2 staff, 13 ½ time student assistants
- 122 videos captioned in 3 months
  - In 2016: 1 video/month
  - In 2017: 9 videos/week
THE SOLUTION

Chico State decided to start increasing its accessibility by breaking the task into more manageable chunks and tackled video first. As a Blackboard Learn campus, Chico State chose to use its integration with Kaltura to first assess and then remedy accessibility problems. A suite of Kaltura video management tools provided everything the University would need, including the Kaltura Application Framework integration with Blackboard Learn and MediaSpace for video management, CaptureSpace for video capture, the YouTube connector for distributing content onto additional platforms, and REACH for automated captioning. Video uploaded into Kaltura would automatically be submitted for captioning using the human transcription necessary for the 99% accuracy required by accessibility guidelines. Since captions were automatically handled within the Kaltura platform, faculty would not have to worry about attaching resulting captions to files or managing the videos—everything was automatically handled by the system.

Once Chico State had started to get a handle on making video addressable, it opened up the door to a more comprehensive approach to accessibility. Using the Blackboard Ally dashboard, they built a solution that could ensure that other instructor uploaded course content was also analyzed in order to provide feedback to help instructors make their materials as accessible as possible.
The Results

Before the Kaltura and Blackboard Ally solutions were implemented, faculty were solely responsible for remediating any content they uploaded. There was no inventory of what content was available, no indicator of who needed help, and no way to measure how much progress had been made. The combination of REACH and Blackboard Ally built a new workflow. Now, when users upload content into Blackboard Learn or Kaltura, the system automatically checks whether the content is easily accessible and offers advice and help to bring that content up to the requirements. Video gets captioned, text documents get adjusted, and if anyone needs aid, they are connected to the Jeremy Olguin and the Office of Accessible Technology and Services with their 12 content remediators. Chico State has connected faculty, technology, and accessibility experts into a single streamlined solution. Faculty no longer have to remember any of the steps; the system automatically walks them through every step of the process to ensure content is automatically made accessible every time.

“We happened to start with video,” says Rowe. “We needed a user-based solution that automated the process for them. The video piece built from Kaltura and REACH spawned into a Blackboard Ally workflow piece, which is helping build our campuswide content inventory.”

Conclusion

Now, Chico State has found itself in the position of being a leader. Other schools are approaching it looking for guidance. Its cutting-edge accessibility workflow is changing the way the entire school thinks about accessibility, ensuring that it’s always at the front of mind as content is created and uploaded. The result is a campus that is far more welcoming and supportive of all students.
ABOUT KALTURA

With the mission to power any video experience, Kaltura has emerged as the fastest growing video platform. Kaltura is deployed globally in thousands of educational institutions, enterprises, media companies, and service providers and engages hundreds of millions of viewers at school, at work, and at home.

About Blackboard

Our mission is to partner with the global education community to enable learner and institutional success, leveraging innovative technologies and services. With an unmatched understanding of the world of the learner, the most comprehensive student-success solutions, and the greatest capacity for innovation, Blackboard is education’s partner in change.

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