**Technology Consultation Project**

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We conducted a quick technology consultation with 5 faculty members and 3 non-teaching staff members who deal with technology. We asked two quantitative and three qualitative questions.

For faculty:

1. On a cale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being never and 10 being very often), how often do you use each of the following computer technologies when preparing course materials?

2. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being not at all familiar and 10 being very familiar), how familiar are you with features that make these more accessible to students with disabilities?

3. List those features that you are familiar with that can make these technologies accessible to students with disabilities.

4. How did you learn about the accessibility features of these technologies/ think faculty learn about accessibility features of technology?

5. How would you like to be informed about the accessibility features of such technologies?

For non-teaching staff:

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being never and 10 being very often), how often do you think that faculty use each of the following computer technologies when preparing course materials?

2. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being not at all familiar and 10 being very familiar), how familiar do you think that faculty are with features that make these more accessible to students with disabilities?

3. List those features with which you think that faculty are familiar that can make these technologies more accessible to students with disabilities.

4. How do you think that faculty learn about accessibility features of technology?

5. How do you think faculty would like to be informed about the accessibility features of such technologies?

Because of the small sample sizes we could not conduct any formal data analyses. Therefore, the results are only available in raw format:



**Responses for Technology Consultation Project**

**Question 3: List those features that you are familiar with that can make these technologies accessible to students with disabilities/ List those features with which you think that faculty are familiar that can make these technologies more accessible to students with disabilities.**

**Faculty**

***Participant 101***

* Word - Accessibility checker
* PowerPoint - Accessibility checker
* Excel – n/a
* Adobe Acrobat - Screen magnifiers, speech-to-text, etc.
* Google Docs - Screen readers, voice typing
* Zoom – n/a
* TEAMS – n/a
* YouTube - Screen readers

***Participant 102***

* Word – n/a
* PowerPoint – n/a
* Excel – n/a
* Adobe Acrobat – n/a
* Google Docs - n/a
* Zoom – n/a
* TEAMS – n/a
* YouTube – Closed captioning

***Participant 103***

* Word – labeling images with Alt text
* PowerPoint – labeling images with Alt text
* Excel – Proper table titles and axis labels
* Adobe Acrobat – Do not know
* Google Docs - Do not know
* Zoom – Do not know
* TEAMS – Nothing
* YouTube – Nothing

***Participant 105***

* Word – Font type (e.g. sans serif), font size, assisted reader, highlighting and colour coding as you read the document, voice recorder
* PowerPoint – Font type, font size, highlighting and colour coding as you read, flexible navigation (going back and forth)
* Excel – Font type and size, colour coding
* Adobe Acrobat – Font type, font size, assisted reader, highlighting and colour coding as you read the document
* Google Docs - Font type, font size, assisted reader, highlighting and colour coding as you read the document, voice recorder
* Zoom – Transcript, closed captions, reactions and raised hand, recording possibility, ai companion
* TEAMS – Transcript, raised hand, recording possibility
* YouTube – Transcript, closed captions, flexibility of navigation (stopping, rewinding, moving forward), different speeds of playback

***Participant 107:***

* Word – Changing the font; changing the size of the font; changing the paper or font colour; text to voice; spell check; grammar check
* PowerPoint – Change the font; change the size of the font; change the paper or font colour; spell check; grammar check
* Excel – n/a
* Adobe Acrobat – n/a
* Google Docs - n/a
* Zoom – Adjust volume of a call, adjust size of participants (to focus on the speaker), record for playback, block yourself or others for better attention
* TEAMS – Adjust volume of a call, adjust size of participants (to focus on the speaker), record for playback, block yourself or others for better attention
* YouTube – Adjust speed of playback, use closed captioning, adjust size of the screen, ability to re-watch as often as needed

**Staff**

***Participant 104:***

* Word – Font type and size
* PowerPoint – Font type and size, visuals, sound
* Excel – n/a
* Adobe Acrobat – Highlighting
* Google Docs - Sharing file, live reviewing/editing
* Zoom – Closed captioning
* TEAMS – Reminder alerts, live captions, download transcript of teams meeting
* YouTube – closed captioning, playback speed

***Participant 106:***

* Word – *Accessibility Checker*: Helps identify and fix accessibility issues in documents; *Text-to-speech* (Read Aloud): Allows users to listen to the content of the document; *Alt Text for images and objects*: Provides text alternatives for non-text content.
* PowerPoint – *Accessibility Checker*: Similar to Word, it helps identify and correct accessibility issues in presentations; *Closed captions for videos*: Supports the addition of captions for videos embedded in presentations; *Reading order pane:* Ensures content is logically ordered for screen readers.
* Excel – *Accessibility Checker:* Assists in finding and fixing potential accessibility issues in spreadsheets; *Alt Text for charts and images*: Offers the ability to add descriptive text to visual content; *Table headers*: Facilitates the use of table headers to improve navigation and understanding of table data.
* Adobe Acrobat – *Create accessible PDFs*: Tools to ensure PDFs are accessible, including options for tags, alt text, and readable order; *Read out loud:* A text-to-speech tool that reads the text in the PDF aloud; *Reflow view:* Adjusts the document's text to fit the screen size, improving readability for users with visual impairments.
* Google Docs - *Screen reader support*: Compatibility with screen readers for navigating and reading documents; *Voice typing:* Allows users to dictate text into documents; *Braille support*: Provides support for Braille displays.
* Zoom – *Closed captioning:* Offers the option for closed captions during meetings, either manually added or through a third-party service; *Screen reader support:* Compatible with screen readers for easier navigation; *Keyboard shortcuts:* Facilitates navigation and control without the need for a mouse.
* TEAMS – *Immersive reader:* Improves readability by adjusting text spacing, font size, and background color; *Live captions*: Provides real-time captioning during meetings; *Screen reader support:* Ensures compatibility with screen readers for navigation and content reading.
* YouTube – *Closed captions*: Enables the addition of captions to videos for the hearing impaired; *Transcripts:* Automatically generates a text transcript of video content; *Adjustable playback speed*: Allows users to change the video playback speed for easier comprehension.

**Question 4: How did you learn about the accessibility features of these technologies/ think faculty learn about accessibility features of technology?**

**Faculty**

***Participant 101:*** Google and YouTube (personal research), however I have never had the opportunity to really apply them.

***Participant 102***: Personal usage

***Participant 103***: By using them

***Participant 105***: By exploring the platforms and by exchanging with colleagues and students.

***Participant 107:*** Trial and error

**Staff**

***Participant 104:*** From the students themselves; UDL community of practice participation or other learning technologies in education communities (i.e., SALTISE)

***Participant 106:*** Faculty can learn about the accessibility features of various technologies through several avenues, which can be both formal and informal. Ensuring that educators are well-versed in these features not only enhances their ability to support all students but also aligns with inclusive teaching practices. Here are some key ways faculty might learn about these features:

* Professional Development Workshops and Training
* Online Courses and Webinars
* Guides and Tutorials from Software Providers
* Peer Sharing and Learning Communities
* Accessibility and IT Support Teams
* Conferences and Seminars
* Self-initiated Learning
* Institutional Policies and Training Requirements

**Question 5: How would you like to be informed about the accessibility features of such technologies/ how do you think faculty would like to be informed about the accessibility features of such technologies?**

**Faculty**

***Participant 101:*** Informational videos. Just being aware that they exist is enough, but we cannot research or use features that we do not even know exist!

***Participant 102***: A single document summarizing all the features of all the technology.

***Participant 103:*** In a document or as an audio tutorial

***Participant 105:*** I would love to have a handout or some quick information sheet about the features of the platforms. They are not explicitly advertised and more often than not, we only find them because there is a need for them. If would be nice to offer as many accessibility features de fact for all students.

***Participant 107***: I am not sure. Maybe distribute a comprehensive list of what the technologies can do. Then, if we have questions, arrange a drop in time to be shown the technology.

**Staff**

***Participant 104:*** I don’t know … it seems it’s always the same teachers interested in educational technologies or active learning or UDL … how to reach those teachers that don’t attend these things but would still benefit is a challenge unless there are workshops with some sort of incentive (i.e. release time).

***Participant 106:*** Faculty members likely prefer to be informed about the accessibility features of technologies in ways that are both convenient and practical, allowing them to seamlessly integrate these features into their teaching practices. Here are some methods that might resonate well with faculty preferences:

* **Short, Practical Workshops:** Interactive workshops that are concise and focus on practical applications of accessibility features in educational technologies can be very effective. These sessions should offer hands-on experiences that allow faculty to practice using the features in real-world teaching scenarios.

* **On-Demand Online Training Resources:** Access to online tutorials, videos, and guides that faculty can explore at their own pace would be highly beneficial. This allows them to learn and revisit the content as needed, fitting their learning into their schedules.

* **Regular Updates via Email or Newsletters:** Brief, informative updates or newsletters sent via email can keep faculty informed about the latest accessibility features, tips, and best practices without overwhelming them with information.

* **Incorporation into Existing Faculty Development Programs:** Integrating accessibility training into existing professional development programs ensures that learning about accessibility becomes a standard part of faculty development, rather than an additional requirement.

* **Peer-Led Learning Sessions:** Opportunities for faculty to learn from their peers through informal sharing sessions, presentations, or discussions can be very appealing. This peer-led approach can highlight practical insights and strategies that have been effective in real teaching contexts.

* **Accessible and Searchable Online Repository:** An online repository or knowledge base where faculty can quickly find information on specific accessibility features, troubleshooting tips, and how-to guides would be a valuable resource. This should be easily searchable and well-organized. We could create a section into the Faculty Hub website to host this content.

* **Integration into Course Design and LMS Training:** Including accessibility training as part of the course design process and learning management system (LMS) training ensures that faculty consider accessibility from the outset of their course planning.

* **Direct Support and Consultation Services:** Availability of direct support from IT or accessibility specialists who can offer personalized advice, answer questions, and help faculty implement accessibility features in their courses could be particularly helpful.

N.B. \* = Staff