Tech Snacks: Accessibility Guidelines & Yuja Panorama

The Department of Education has released a new set of accessibility guidelines that will affect any form of web content being used at our institution, including Canvas, Northern's website, library resources, mobile apps, and plenty more. Let's take a look at the process of these changes, examples of making web content more accessible, and how to use Yuja Panorama as a supplemental tool for the upcoming accessibility shifts.

Meeting Department of Education Guidelines

While these changes are coming directly from the Department of Education, under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, their standards were adopted from the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C, the web's governing body) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

Shifting to these new guidelines will be a campus-wide effort and take a lot of work, but there are a few smaller steps we can start taking to make this transition easier:

- **Create a list of web content items that are currently being used in and outside of the classroom for students.** Canvas documents, videos, program pages, etc.
- **Review list items and assess which areas may need improvement.** Not all of your web content items will need improvement, so let's identify those.
- **Work with LMS and website administrators to get feedback on list items.** Administrators can then assist with updating necessary webpages, documents, videos, etc.

Examples of Accessibility Checkpoints

There are many ways to make your courses, webpages, videos, etc. more accessible, some of which you might already be doing. Below are some examples of ways to enhance your accessibility and inclusivity within online spaces. Keep in mind that these examples can also provide awareness of accessibility barriers in online spaces:

Basic Accessibility Checkpoints:

- Provide alt-text for all non-text elements. This includes images, graphical representations of text (including symbols), image map regions, tables, animations/GIFs, sounds, video.
- Ensure that all information conveyed with color is also available without color. For example, when using red marks in grade markups, also provide text explanations.
- Clearly identify changes in the natural language of a document's text and any text equivalents (e.g., captions).
- Use the clearest and simplest language appropriate for a site's content.

More Advanced Checkpoints:

- Ensure that foreground and background color combinations provide sufficient contrast when viewed by someone having color deficits or when viewed on a black and white screen.
- When an appropriate markup language exists, use markup rather than images to convey information.

- Use navigation mechanisms in a consistent manner.
- Use header elements to convey document structure and use them according to specification. You can check your documents using a screen reader within the LMS.

Using Yuja Panorama as an Accessibility Tool

With Yuja Panorama being implemented in Canvas, there are many ways to utilize its capabilities within the LMS, but even outside of it on any webpage you might be using. What is Yuja Panorama and how will it help with this process?

YuJa Panorama

YuJa Panorama is an accessibility software that will be embedded into the Canvas LMS. Both faculty and students can utilize Panorama's features to ensure course content is accessible. Some of the key features include:

- **Inline Document Remediation:** resolves document issues on the spot
- **Visual Accessibility Gauge:** provides both a color and visual shape representation of the content's accessibility
- **Review Accessibility Reports:** instructors and administrators have a variety of reports to help measure the level of accessibility and track trends over time
- **Generate Accessible Alternatives:** Panorama can convert a variety of file formats into accessible alternatives, including PDF, PowerPoint, Excel, Word, HTML, images, and more.
- **Browser Extension:** YuJa Panorama allows users to install a browser extension that they can use on websites outside of the LMS to make the content more accessible.