Creating an accessible learning environment
Enabling all students to succeed
Challenges in the student lifecycle

- Students
- Instructors
- Institutions

- Recruiting
- Admissions
- Financial aid
- Registration
- Courses
- Student services
- Graduation

- Student services
Student challenges

Explicit alternative format requests

Long delays on receiving requested formats

Excludes many students

Closely related to quality and usability
Instructor challenges

- Lack of awareness of what to do
- Lack of understanding on how it can affect students
- Lack of guidance on how to improve accessibility
Institutional challenges

No insight into how institution is doing

Multiple stakeholders

Manual remediation workflow

Lawsuits because of legal requirements
Accessibility in the eLearning Student Lifecycle

1. Recruiting
2. Admissions
3. Courses
4. Financial aid
5. Registration
6. Student services
7. Graduation
Digital course content
Making course content accessible
Accessibility in the LMS

The Learning Management System is an important player in this.

Committed to providing Ally to everyone, including non-Blackboard products
Workflow

Instructor adds course content to course site
Introduction

Biologists are often asked what the definition of a species is. Before dealing with this question it is important to consider the differences between what a species is and how species come into being. The ‘what’ question deals with the main subject of this essay, how do you define a species. The ‘how’ question deals with processes and mechanisms.

I would like to write about this part first, partly because it is the really contentious and interesting part of the question and partly to clear up any misunderstanding between definitions (what) and mechanisms (how).

Species, at their most abstract, can be thought of individual historical entities. This is to say, like the most basic story outline, they have a beginning, middle and an end. Or, if you prefer, a birth, lifespan and a death. Just as all people do. So species, like people, exist at certain times and certain places.

Birth of species

How the birth of species occurs is a question of mechanism(s) that I will not go into in any much detail, but the key image to have is the notion of a single homogeneous population (group of individuals) that eventually gives rise to two distinct populations that can no longer combine their genetic material to give rise to more of their kind.

The most widely accepted method by which this can come about is the subdivision of the single population into two subpopulations by the appearance of a geographic barrier (a mountain range, a river) that can no longer exchange genes. As time passes then the genetic makeup of the two subpopulations could evolve enough to generate sufficient differences that would mean they are no longer two subpopulations, but are in fact different species. It should be clear that at least some time has to pass for enough
Machine learning algorithms

Full structural and visual analysis to learn semantics of document

Identify headings, heading structure, paragraphs, footers, tables, lists, mathematical formulas, etc.
Alternative accessible versions

Semantic HTML
High quality semantic html version of the content

Other Alternative Formats
ePub, audio, electronic braille, etc
Instructor feedback

Provide feedback to instructors about accessibility of their course content

Provide guidance on how to fix accessibility issues

Aims to generate change in behavior over time
Institutional report

Provide detailed understanding of how institution is doing

Helps identify where problem areas are, what to focus on, who to target, etc.
Alternative accessible versions
Automatically checks for accessibility issues and generates alternative accessible formats.

Instructor feedback
Guides instructors on how to improve the accessibility of their course content and alters future behavior.

Institutional report
Provides detailed data and insights to help further improve course content accessibility at the institution.
Included in Ally license

- LMS integration
- Technical integration support
- Report orientation and admin training
- SLA & Support
- Use of 3rd party services (OCR, Audio)
2017 WCET Outstanding Work Award Winner

Exceptionally creative, technology-based solutions to contemporary challenges in higher education.
Partnership and planning

Financial aid
Registration
Graduation
Student services
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http://usergroup.ally.ac