Do You See Us? We Can Hear You:

Unpacking the realities of the blind experience at CU Boulder.

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Why Do This?

- CU and the Department of Justice
- Accessibility and Usability Lab
- Kevin’s Story
The Research Question

What are the experiences of low vision/blind students across the academic, digital, social, and physical environments at CU Boulder?
Results from Low Vision and Blind Students

- Data synthesized into 2 first person narratives of 2 composite blind characters.
- The narratives include data from all student interviews, participant observation, and the experiences of the researchers as low vision and blind students and staff.
- Allowed the research team to further mask the identities of low vision/blind students, include more data in the final report, and bring the audience phenomenologically closer to the essence of the experiences of the blind students.
Key Findings

- Discrimination, both overt and unintended, is still encountered on campus.
- Lack of communication amongst the different entities across campus.
- Lack of training for individuals in this space.
Digital Accessibility Training Efforts at CU

- Revamp of the Campus-wide Digital Accessibility Training.
- Moving into more accessible medium - Canvas
- Focus on content creators, which encompasses a vast majority of individuals with digital responsibilities on campus (from creating emails to developing a web presence).
- Greater focus on social justice aspect (i.e. the individual’s experience rather than just the legal role and standards)
  - Helping content creators understand how to do something as well as why they need to do it.
- Interactive and action-focused (what can I do?).
AUL Resources

Individuals on campus indicate desire to make content accessible, but do not know how.

Created resources to help them learn more.

Self Study Resources
- https://www.colorado.edu/accessibility/aul/selfstudy
AUL Resources Continued

3 levels of targeted expertise

1. Videos
   - Demonstrate blind and low vision users using assistive technology
   - Examples of problematic and successful interactions

2. Articles
   - Describe accessibility concepts
   - Provide links to videos and database

3. Database
   - Describes issues we come across when testing from the user’s perspective
   - Provide links to WCAG
   - Offer further explanation through links to articles and videos when available

Current Goals
- Continue to expand and update content
- Integrate into training and outreach
Activity: How do you define “accessibility?”

- Pair up or group up with those sitting next to you.
- Aim for 3-5 people per group
- Come up with 1-2 concise definitions of the word(s) accessible/accessibility.
  - What does it mean in the work that you do?
Final Thoughts, Questions, Etc.?