

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.
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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.?

