Presenter text to accompany Quick Talk PowerPoint presentation   
“Digital Accessibility in Open Educational Resources Across the Curriculum”

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## Page 1/Slide 1: Digital Accessibility in Open Educational Resources Across the Curriculum

**Presenter Talk:**

Hi, my name is Amy Wolfe. I am the Accessibility Librarian at the City University of New York (CUNY) Central Office of Library Services and an Open Educational Resources Developer at Brooklyn College CUNY. I’m glad to be here with you and to share information on how to spread accessibility across the curriculum using OER.

When Robert Uhren and I met virtually to discuss doing our quick talks, I saw one of his slides which mentioned using “OER as an opportunity to start conversations regarding digital accessibility.” When I saw that slide I knew exactly why he and I were placed together for this breakout session.

You see I believe Open Educational Resources, OERs, are a great way to increase digital accessibility worldwide.

Shifting courses online provides us with a great opportunity to build in accessibility from the beginning.

And since students are both the consumers and producers of knowledge, accessibility principles should be embed in our teaching and OERs.

## Page 2/Slide 2: What is the web’s value?

**Presenter Talk:**

Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web and the Director of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) has talked about how “the social value of the web is that it enables human communication, commerce and **Emphasis mine- opportunities *to share knowledge***”.

The internet is the new public square where ideas, information and education take place.

## Page 3/Slide 3: OER Movement Beliefs

**Presenter Talk:**

The worldwide OER movement is rooted in the belief that it is a human right to have access to high-quality education.

This is not just about cost savings and easy access to openly licensed content; it’s about participation and co-creation.

Quote from the OER Commons

“OER offer opportunities for systemic change in teaching and learning content through engaging educators in new participatory processes and effective technologies for engaging with learning.” [*OER Commons*](https://www.oercommons.org/about)

I would like to add that OERs also offer great opportunities to teach about and spread knowledge about accessibility worldwide even when the topic of the OER is not related specifically to accessibility.

## Page 4/Slide 4: OER in times of COVID

**Presenter Talk:**

While COVID was not an issue when I proposed this talk, its existence now and how it effects education cannot be ignored.

In response to the massive disruption of education due to the Covid-19 pandemic affecting 1.57 billion learners in 191 countries, UNESCO has issued a Call to support learning and knowledge sharing through Open Educational Resources (OER) worldwide.

They recognize the paradigm shift which COVID has ushered in.

Because of this it is really a good time to push OER and get buy-in from stakeholders on your campuses.

## Page 5/Slide 5: Internet, OER and Accessibility

**Presenter Talk:**

The internet is the new public square where ideas, information and education are taking place.

OERs are now part of this new public square.

Using OERs to learn and teach about accessibility, introducing accessibility considerations and topics into all subjects being taught can lead to increased accessibility world-wide.

By teaching students to always consider accessibility, their knowledge of accessibility will increase, which they can take with them out into the world.

And since you are using an OER to teach these issues, and OERs are by their nature share-able and open, your accessibility lessons will be available to so many.

The regular teaching of accessibility, making accessibility considerations something everyone thinks about in their various fields each and every day will lead to increased accessibility universally.

## Page 6/Slide 6: Faculty Anxiety

**Presenter Talk:**

As people who are involved in accessibility in education, we know that getting faculty and administrators to buy into accessibility sometimes causes anxiety.

Faculty worry that making something accessible is just too much work and they aren’t experts and they think unless it’s perfect there is no reason to even try.

## Page 7/Slide 7: How to Allay Faculty Fears?

**Presenter Talk:**

So how do you allay faculty fears about incorporating accessibility?

A way I’ve gone at it is to talk about how **variety** is an aspect of accessibility.

Variety is an easy aspect for faculty to grab onto and translate into an academic framework.

Variety in OER means being multimodal. It means creating multimodal projects.

The University of Illinois’ Center for Academic Success described multimodal projects as

“*Multimodal projects are simply projects that have multiple “modes” of communicating a message. For example, while traditional papers typically only have one mode (text), a multimodal project would include a combination of text, images, motion, or audio.”*

So ask professors to think about projects and assignments that can use new modalities.

Support them to use their imagination and not get stuck in the loop of “we’ve never done it that way”.

## Page 8/Slide 8: Multimodal Ideas

**Presenter Talk:**

If professors need specific examples you can share these ideas:

1. Think about how the **topic** of an assignment can incorporate **accessibility.**
   1. Maybe create a mapping project tied to the accessibility of a space, be it physical or digital.
   2. In a programming class maybe have students create apps tied to accessibility like the NaviLens app which the MTA just unveiled that is supposed to help blind and visually impaired NYers navigate the MTA buses.
2. Think about how a project or assignment can teach a subject unrelated to accessibility at the same time it adds to increased **accessibility**.
   1. Maybe a cloud based transcription project, where students transcribe archival work on your course’s subject. The students learn about the topic while making it accessible to others.
3. Think about how an assignment can be broken up into parts where students have **options** and **variety** in what they are required to do and create.
   1. Maybe break-down an interview project into parts where one person can be responsible for providing **captions** or audio descriptions.
   2. Maybe if you have a class note-taker, you could rotate the role as a way of creating a shared set of notes that all students can access.
4. Think about how different aspects of technologies can be incorporated into an assignment to increase **accessibility**.

## Page 9/Slide 9: Get inspired

**Presenter Talk:**

I’ve gathered together some examples of projects which incorporate aspects of accessibility to help inspire you and by extension those you work with to spread accessibility across the curriculum using OER.

There are so many great and interesting ways to incorporate accessibility into OERs, these are just a few examples.

## Page 10/Slide 10: Mapping: ESRI Subway Accessibility Maps:

**Presenter Talk:**

Here are examples of where the **topic of accessibility** was part of the projects.

The ESRI subway accessibility maps, created in 2017 by a Mike Amodeo for the Center for Independence of the Disabled in NY (CIDNY).

The maps in this project illustrate information about accessible subway stations in New York City in relation to both poverty and population density for people with disabilities.

What type of topic and relationship can you think about having students’ map?

*Slide 11: PowerPoint recorded tour of project site ESRI subway accessibility map:*In the PowerPoint presentation there was a recorded tour of site. This is what presenter said during tour:

This first map shows 2 types of information overlaid.

You can see the percentage of disabled people who live in poverty by the different colors and then the subway lines in those areas were investigated for their accessibility and plotted on the map.

The second map is concerned with data about accessibility of subway stations in relation to the proportion of the population with a disability in that specific geographic area.

Both maps have a legend you access by clicking on the double arrows. You can zoom in and see which stations are accessible and which subway lines stop at the station which are accessible. It really is a great tool.

## Page 11/Slide 12: Mapping: ArcGIS Audubon Society Birdability Project

**Presenter Talk:**

This second mapping project where the **topic of accessibility** was part of the project itself is the “Birdability Mapping Project”.

This project was inspired by the Birdability program created by Virginia Rose, a board member of Travis Audubon Society. Her project started in 2018 and it sought to create a movement to make birding more inclusive and accessible.

Ms. Rose said “The Lack of accessibility information should not be a barrier to those who want to get outside. But information on how accessible parks, hiking trails, and birding locations are frequently incomplete or non-existent, making it difficult for people who experience accessibility challenges to find places to bird.”

The Audubon’s project seeks to identify accessible birding sites nationwide so people with mobility challenges can quickly, safely and easily get outside and experience the joy of nature.

Is there some way students could help out in this project? Maybe an environmental course could participate in this project. Or maybe it will inspire a different type of map project.

*Slide 13: PowerPoint recorded tour of project site ArcGIS Audubon Society Birdability:*In the PowerPoint presentation there was a recorded tour of site. This is what presenter said during tour:

**Presenter Talk:**

As you can see this project covers the entire united states.

When you click on the button to submit a birdability review you are taken to a survey with various questions.

This map was created by the Audubon society using arcGIS.

Users are asked to plot the location of the birding site and then answer various questions which are important to help make parts and the outdoors more accessible. What is the parking like, the trails, the surfaces, how many steps, if any, what about obstructed viewing?

## Page 12/ Slide 14: Describe It -Making Art Accessible Online

**Presenter Talk:**

The third project I’m going to discuss demonstrates how you can use a project or assignment to teach a subject unrelated to accessibility while also adding to increased **accessibility**.

As you know, another very important principle of accessibility is making images and graphics visible to all users by adding **alternative text** or **alt-text** to imagesand then these descriptions are read aloud by assistive technology.

This project I’m going to show you, **Describe It,** was created using the cloud-based public scholarship platform Zooniverse which was created to help with academic research.

As they describe their platform, volunteers working on projects in the Zooniverse platform are “able to study authentic objects of interest gathered by researchers, like images of faraway galaxies, historical records and diaries, or videos of animals in their natural habitats. By answering simple questions about them, [volunteers] help contribute to everyone's understanding of our world, our history, our Universe, and more.”

*Slide 15: PowerPoint recorded tour of project site Describe It:*In the PowerPoint presentation there was a recorded tour of site. This is what presenter said during tour:

**Presenter Talk:**

A great people-powered project which helps make art accessible is called **Describe It,** aproject created by The Frick Collection, the Frick Art Reference Library and a Brooklyn College CUNY alumni Sara Schwartz.

In **Describe It**, online volunteers write alt-text for works of art from the Lbrary's Photoarchive collection.

The library collects 3 write-ups per item and then they are reviewed and combined to create alt-text for the item.

The site is really well laid out. There is a Tutorial, which walks you through how to do the work. They show you how to describe a simple image, how to deal with a more complex images etc.

This project would be great for so many different students to take a part of.

Art students could participate.

Museum and library studies courses could participate.

Website design course could use this as a lesson.

## Page 13/ Slide 16: Contribute captions, subtitles and translations

**Presenter Talk:**

The fourth type of project I want to show you has to do with captioning, subtitling and translating videos.

Whether students are creating videos for an assignment or professors are recording their live lectures for students to watch later and posting on their OER providing and/or creating captions for videos is an important aspect of accessibility.

Amara is a project of the Participatory Culture Foundation (PCF), a nonprofit.

Amara Public, their free editor, is intuitive and easy to learn.

*Slide 17: PowerPoint recorded tour of project site Amara:*In the PowerPoint presentation there was a recorded tour of site. This is what presenter said during tour:

**Presenter Talk:**

The amara mission is:

“Foster a media ecosystem that enables everyone to benefit from online video content. Content that can enrich lives, but is not currently available to those who cannot hear or understand the language of the video. [They] believe a participatory and inclusive world leads to a more understanding and caring society.”

The amara site is well laid out and provides trainings for users.

They walk you through the differences between the free public version and the cost private version.

All users have to create an account to work on the site, not to view.

When you click “begin” you are taken to a screen where you can add your own videos to caption or

You can go to their initiative “Amplify Voices of Change”, which as they describe as “amplifying today’s critical voices of change that are leading us toward a more equitable, sustainable and accessible world.”

Their most recent project had to do with the US election and helping citizens exercise their right to vote.

They were subtitling videos on “How To Vote” in States which were the most difficult to vote in during the pandemic.

The site walks you through 3 different ways you can help

Translate and review videos

Share translated videos (on your OER)

Volunteer to help reach local voters

They also tell you the languages they are in most need of.

This page for the South Carolina video shows you the languages where the subtitles are incomplete and where they are complete and can be shared.

They also have a robust volunteer section which you can explore and see which topics match or could be used in a course.

They have teams on Art, European Culture, Ted videos, the Macarthur Foundation

Users apply to be a part of a team and when accepted they can begin transcribing.

Amara free public subtitling is a great resource and can be incorporated into a variety of courses and OER.

## Page 14/ Slide 18 Closing Thoughts

**Presenter Talk:**

So in closing,

Learning about accessibility within OERs, learning about accessibility by creating accessible content within OERs, becoming aware of how accessibility issues can lead to increased accessibility world-wide.

By incorporating accessibility into all subjects and teaching students to always consider accessibility, by making accessibility considerations something everyone thinks about in their various fields each and every day will lead to increased accessibility universally.

Be inspired   
Not deterred  
By the chance to add accessibility.

Thank you.

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