

# Equity in the Classroom: Ensuring Open Educational Resources (OER) Are Accessible to Everyone

 RedShelf





# Hello. It's Nice to Meet You!



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- With RedShelf since 2017
- 20+ years in design & software development
- 15 years at the DoD ensuring Sec 508 Compliance
- DHS Certified Trusted Tester

# Our Goals for Today's Session

- Explore the accessibility and affordability of OER as part of your digital strategy
- Learn how digital accessibility impacts OER and faculty-created course materials
- Discuss key roles in the adoption and/or creation of OER on your campus
- Introduce tools for creating and validating born accessible OER
- Identify OER sources and best practices



# Why Open Educational Resources (OER)?





# A Digital Strategy **for the Future**

- **More than 25 million students** have been impacted by COVID-19 pandemic
- A **proactive approach** for accessibility in digital course materials and OER is necessary
- US Department of Education issued a warning in March - **ADA compliance is not optional**



# Bridging the Gap

- **Affordability** // 7 in 10 students don't purchase a physical textbook because it's too expensive
- **Accessibility** // 1.5 Million undergraduates in the US qualify for specialized accessibility support, including accommodations



**Affordable, accessible digital course materials can help bridge the gap – especially in the new normal of online learning**





# OER 101





## OER Defined

- **Open Educational Resources (OER)** are free and openly licensed educational materials that can be used for teaching, learning, research, and other purposes to engage in the **5R activities**:



**Retain**



**Reuse**



**Revise**



**Remix**



**Redistribute**



# The Impact of OER

- OER adoptions continue to grow in the new era of digital learning
- Many campuses have affordability mandates for a percentage of OER course materials
- Values of the OER community are deeply linked with academic freedom



**3 million  
students**  
are currently using  
OpenStax



# OER **Advantages**



**Accessible**



**Scalable**



**Supplemental**



**Customizable**



**Affordable**

# OER Challenges



**Accessibility  
Barriers**



**Content  
Quality**



**Resources**



**IP &  
Copyrights**



**Mandates**

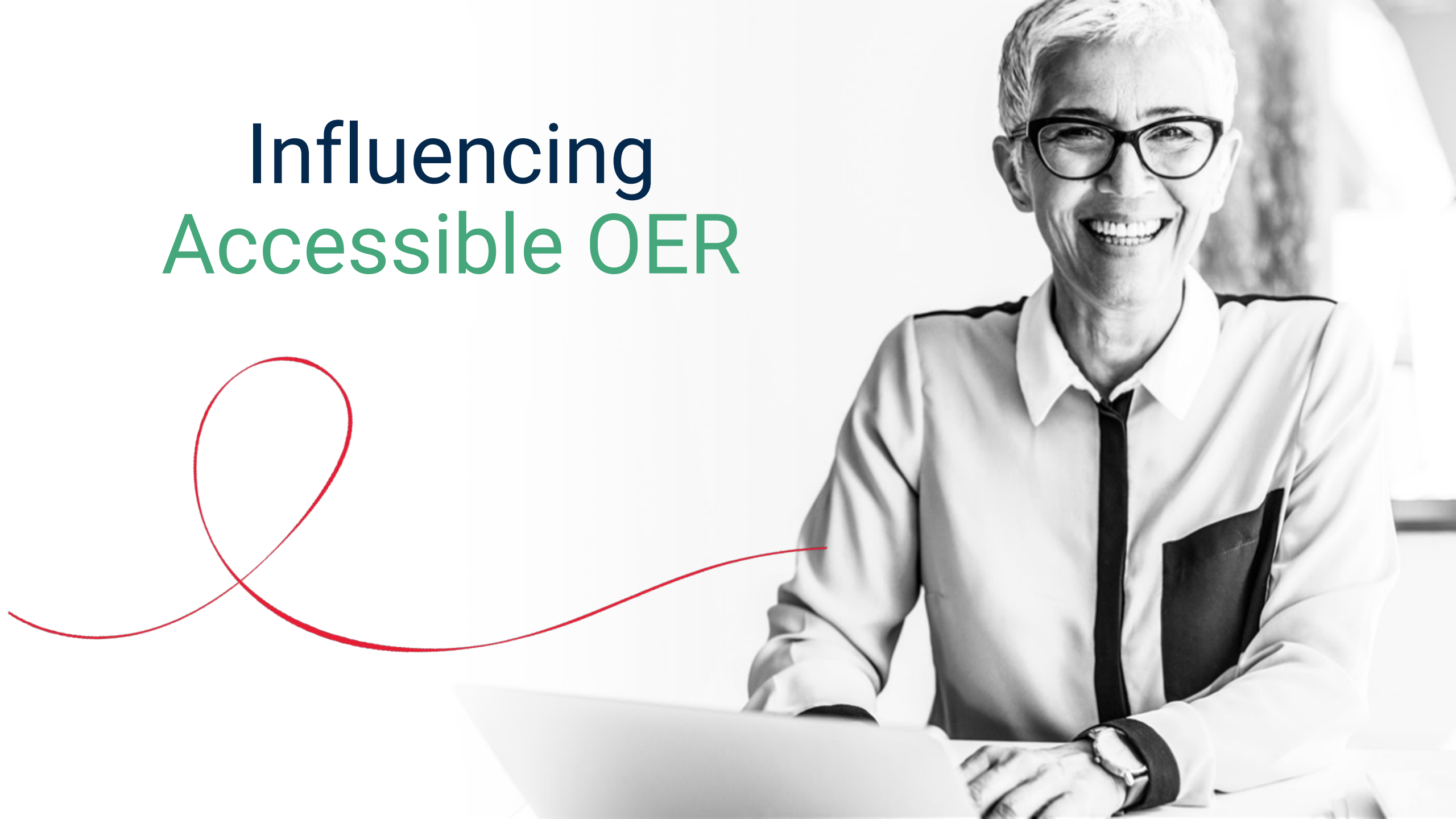


What does  
it take to ensure  
**accessible OER**  
on your  
campus?

In simple terms, it's a combination of **three things**:

- influencers making **accessible choices**
- creating OER in an **accessible format**
- combined with **accessible delivery**

# Influencing Accessible OER





# Who Are Our Influencers?



**Professors  
& Faculty**



**Authors &  
Designers**



**Accessibility  
Offices**

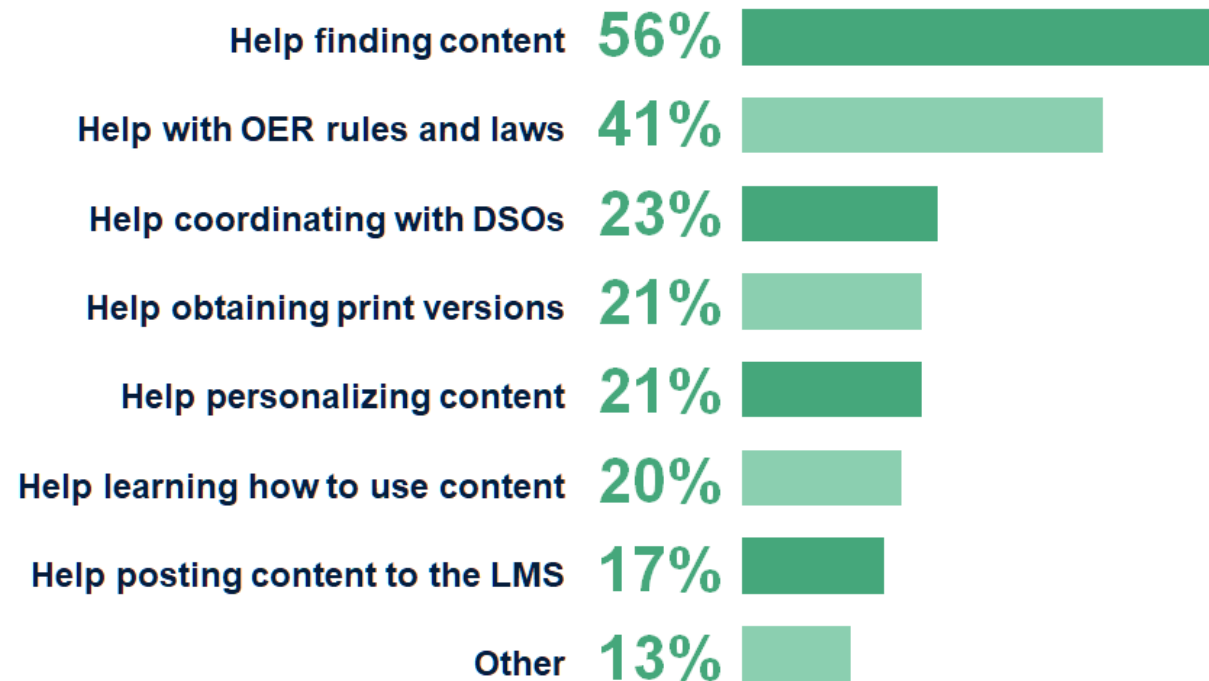


**Bookstore  
Managers**

# Navigating OER

- Studies have found that faculty are looking for OER support in a variety of areas

## Assistance needed by faculty to implement OER in courses





# Professors & Faculty

- **Are you ensuring you're adopting accessible OER?**
  - Adopting accessible OER typically means less requests for accommodations
  - Students who would benefit from accommodations but aren't registered with the accessibility office will also have a better experience with accessible content
- **Are you creating your own course materials or supplementing traditional publisher content with OER?**
  - Consult with your accessibility office or on-campus instructional designers, to verify the accessibility of the content



# Authors & Designers

- **Are you authoring effective, accessible OER?**
  - Design materials for the widest possible audience to meet the needs of learners with different abilities
- **Are you considering all the standards?**
  - Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a guiding framework
  - Knowledge of accessibility standards (WGAG 2.1) & tools
  - Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric
- **Need help?**
  - Connect with your campus accessibility office for support



# Accessibility Offices

- **Are you working with other influencers to contribute to the creation and validation of OER?**
  - Work with faculty, authors and designers to validate custom OER
- **Are you maintaining a library of accommodation files for inaccessible OER materials?**
  - OER accommodation files are also available via RedShelf
- **Are you connecting with your bookstore manager to collaborate on OER adoptions?**
  - Open communication from the beginning can reduce the need for accommodations



# Bookstore Managers

- **Are faculty using custom course materials?**
  - Ask if they've verified the accessibility the materials
  - If they don't know how, ask them to connect with the accessibility office
- **Are faculty requesting adoptions from commercial OER materials or courseware?**
  - Ask their materials or courses are accessible
- **Are you connected to your Accessibility Office?**
  - A relationship will help ensure all students have the same experience using any digital course materials





# Ensuring Accessible OER





# What Format is Best?

## **EPUB**

is “born accessible”  
digital content built using  
the same technologies  
that built the web

- Developed for the digital publishing industry
- Compatible with assistive technologies (AT)
- Reflowable, easy to use on any size screen or orientation
- Governed by standards to ensure an equal reading experience
- Becoming the most popular option for accessible course materials

# What Tools **are Available?**

- [Word to EPUB](#) - create an EPUB from a Word document!
- [Ace by DAISY](#) - free, open-source tool designed to check the accessibility of EPUB files
- [Open Author](#) - one of the largest OER databases to help build your materials
- [Infusion](#) - javascript framework for creating accessible web-based resources suitable for instruction







# Delivering Accessible OER



# Accessible **Delivery**

- Our eReader platform was built with an accessibility first mindset and has many tools to support diverse learners



**Text-to-speech controls**  
that allow  
adjustment of the  
voice and speed



**Screen reader**  
friendly with tools  
such as JAWS,  
NVDA, VoiceOver  
and Narrator



**Keyboard shortcuts**  
to help navigate  
and perform  
tasks without a  
mouse



**Personalized View**  
allows for visual  
adjustments  
inside the book



**Kurzweil  
Read the Web**  
compatible

# Accessible **Delivery** (continued)

- Our platform supports the ingestion of OER, as well as custom campus-created content
- Often paired with traditional publisher textbooks as supplemental materials



Highlight text & take notes



Define unfamiliar words



Create flashcards



Build study guides



Print select pages



Have text read aloud



Generate citations  
(APA, MLA, & Chicago-Style)



Engage students



# Additional Resources





## Additional Resources

- [Boise State University](#) - very robust OER program, offers OER Lunch and Learns open to everyone
- [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\) Framework](#)
- [Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric](#) – eight key standards for course design
- [Inclusive Learning Design Handbook](#) - a free resource for OER creators
- [Create an Open Textbook](#) by EDUCAUSE
- [Open Professionals Education Network \(OPEN\)](#) helps users find openly licensed media elements to use within courses

# Additional **Resources** (continued)

- [OER Commons](#) - public digital library of open educational resources
- [Creative Commons](#) - resources to maximize the benefits of open education
- [OpenStax](#) - openly licensed, peer reviewed college textbooks
- [Lumen Learning](#) - customizable OER courseware
- [MIT's OpenCourseWare](#) - free and open materials from thousands of MIT courses, covering the entire MIT curriculum
- [Merlot](#) - curated online learning, support, and tools for OER

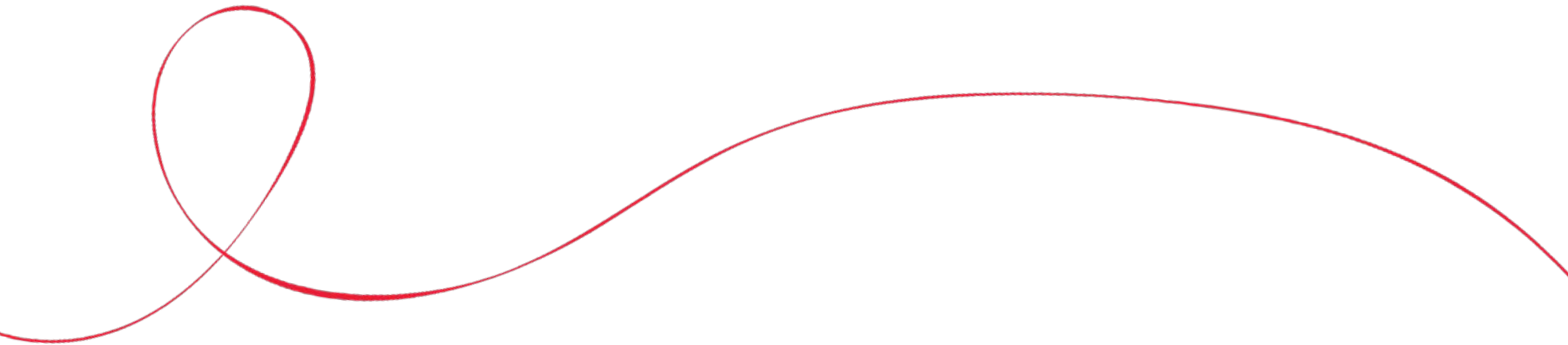
# Key Takeaways

- Accessibility and affordability should go hand-in-hand when developing a digital strategy
- OER should be held to the same accessibility standards as traditional materials
- You're not alone! Working together is the best way to adopt the most accessible materials
- There are many tools and resources available to create and validate your OER choices
- **Let us know if we can help!**





# Q&A



# Thank You

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