

Improving your experience accessing online resources

Session Transcript

HOSSAM KASSEM: So again, my name's Hossam Kassem. I'm one of the librarians at the OU library. I'm joined here by my colleague Geraldine or Geri, who will be helping us on the chat, answering questions as they come. This session is about improving your experience accessing online resources. While this might be more relevant to students with disability, but other students who don't have any disability might find it good in order to improve their use of online resources and improve their experience of using online resources.

OK, so the learning outcomes we are hoping that you will get at the end of the session is making you aware of the different full text formats which the library has access through our suppliers and the accessibility of each of these formats; be aware of some of the adjustments that you can use in order to improve your experience accessing online resources, and finally, for those who have print disability, show you quickly how to use SensusAccess, which is a service you can have through the library which will allow you to convert files from one format to another accessible one.

So at this stage, I have a quick poll here just to see your experience so far. I've just started a poll in the middle of the screen here. If you can, tell us about your experience so far accessing the online sources. Do you find it difficult? What issues do you have with it? If you can, write your answer in the poll there, and the answers will not be shown. It's just for us to see how things are. Yes, Susie, and I'll show you how that is done.

Would anyone like to share their experience accessing the resources or share with us what they have so far? Someone said here I haven't studied online before. Previous sessions was too fast, limited access, difficult studying online, OK, I am so tired

OK, So for how to study online, this session is not particularly about how to study online or how to do distance learning. However, the library does have materials on how to assist you studying online. So if you use the library search for that to find some books or materials on how to study online, and also the being an OU student would be of great help to you in order to see how you can do distance learning through online university.

OK, so I'm going now to move on. I'm just going to hide this poll there and move to the next slide. So what are the advantages of using online resources or studying online? First of all, there are some materials that are only available in an online format, such as blogs. Some journals are only available in electronic format, so are some books, as well. Being able to access them online also is of great importance because you can access the resources anytime, anywhere. All you need is an internet connected device, and that's it. You can download then articles or open web pages and read through them.

Yes, we are going to cover SensusAccess, if that's what you're asking about Suzie. And also, using electronic texts such as e-books or e-journals allows you to manipulate them. So you can increase the text size. You can change the background colour. And also, if they are



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created in an accessible way, you can use them with screen readers. So basically, if you use JAWS, or if you use Adobe Acrobat's reading facility, the actual system will read the information for you. It's really useful for those who have print disabilities or have some visual impairment. It does help them with that.

So when we talk about accessibility, what do we mean by that? It's basically making any product or service accessible to everyone, whether they have a disability or not. So if you are producing your website, you need to make sure that people of all types can read it, even those who have a disability. Just bear in mind, whenever someone creates something, if they want it accessible, they have to make sure that they structure it in a certain way so that all the people can use it. So if we talk about a website, they need to make sure that they have headings. They structure it if they use images, they put image description, and so on.

And there are different types of electronic files. Some of them are images. Some of them are PDFs. Some of them are HTML and EPUBs. And the library resources cover all of these types of materials, and also it has videos and audios. So as a student, any student, you should be able to access these formats if they are made accessible.

Now we're going to speak about the features of each one of those. So images-- and here we're not talking about pictures of something. We're talking about a scan of a document. The image is of one of the least accessible formats. It's basically just a picture or an image of a text. And this is often used with old historical materials.

The problem with these-- screen readers cannot read them. Text-to-speech software can't see them because they just see a blank page. An example of this is historical newspapers the Times Digital Archive is basically someone took a picture of the document and put it there. That's it. Sometimes you might be able to convert these text images into an accessible format using software such as SensusAccess, and we will show you an example of that, converting your file into an audio in the next few slides.

Any questions so far? No? OK.

PDFs-- the accessibility of the PDF files vary depending on how the PDF was created. If it was created properly and accessibly, you should be able to do different things-- bookmark the PDF, change the text size, change the background colour, and change the text colour, as well, change the contrast of the PDF, file reflow. So when we say "reflow," imagine if you have a journal article that is written in column format. So you have two columns on each page. If you reflow it, Adobe should be able to put all the text in the whole page without having the columns option. And also, if it's created accessibly, you should be able to use Adobe Acrobat to read it.

I'm going to demonstrate that to you now. What you need to do is first of all, you have to download the PDF into your computer. You can't just open it on a web page. You have to



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download it, then open through Adobe PDF. And what I'm going to do now is share my screen once I've opened the PDF file. Just give me a second.

If you bear with me for a second, I'm just-- optimise screen is open unfortunately.

OK, so what I'm going to do now is I'm going to show the new screen. And please let me and Geri know if you can't see the PDF document. So you should all be able to see a PDF document, the screen should change. Yes, you can see it. Good.

OK, so basically this is a PDF file, I'm just going to minimise this screen here. This is a PDF file that is made in an accessible format. And what I mean by that-- for example, you can see that the PDF is written in two columns format. If I reflow it, basically all I need to do, if the system allows me, I would go to the View option and go to Zoom and click the Reflow option and see what will happen now. Basically, it converted it into a single column format. So this is one of the features a good PDF file should allow you to do.

Another thing you can do with it-- I'm using a Mac here. So this might vary, and it might be in the Edit section. If you go to the Preferences, there is the accessibility option, under the categories there is the accessibility option. And if you activate the replace document colour here, then you can manipulate the background colour and the document text colour. So for example, if I want to change the background into black and the text into yellow, if I press on OK, you will see that it converted the background into black and the text into yellow. This might be good for people who have a problem reading on a white background and they want a darker one, so you could manipulate the colour to whatever you want within reason.

Another option would be if I remove that and just hit back to normal. So again, going back to the white background and the black text. I can also change the contrast again by going to Preferences, Accessibility, and use high contrast colour. So green text on a black.

I believe there was a question there. Yes, Suzie, it might be. So that's two features there.

If I go back again, and if I suppose I want to change the preferences again, I just remove everything. So I went back to normal at the moment. I mean, normally, if you have a PDF file open, it might be on 100% size. A good PDF should allow you to increase up to 200 or more, and you should still be able to see the edges, so there is no text going behind the screen on either side. That's one of the features.

Now one good thing which I am going to show you now-- I said a good accessible PDF should allow you to reflow, but also it should allow you to make Adobe read for you. And this feature is available under View. If you go to Read Aloud and activate Read Aloud. And I'm going to make you listen to it in a second now. It says incorrect structure. This file worked on a Windows computer. But I'm having an issue with it on a Mac. However, I should be able to make it treat for you some text.



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So I have activated the feature. If I go back, and I'm going to disconnect my headphone for a second just to get you to listen to what it's going to say. So if you're going to hear me now so the computer microphone. If I say activate, I'm just going back to-- I've tested it earlier, and it worked, so I'm hoping that--

AUDIO PLAYBACK: Blank. Culturally sensitive research approaches-- an African-American perspective. This article contributes to discussions about culturally sensitive research and approaches in qualitative research. The author argues that the use of culturally sensitive research approaches in research focusing on African-Americans can use the cultural knowledge and experiences of researchers and their participants in the design of the research as well as in the collection and interpretation of data. The author presents a rationale for the use of culturally sensitive research approaches for African-Americans.

HOSSAM KASSEM: OK, I have stopped it now. It was to show you the feature. I'm going back now to the screen just to continue with the slides.

So how many of you actually use this feature in Adobe Acrobat or knew about this feature. If you can, tell us about this. And this is a freely available service if the PDF is in an accessible format. So you don't have to go and subscribe to JAW. There are other software that might be available for free. And I think Geri can help us with some free software here. She probably knows about this. A good many.

OK, so this is the feature that can help you. But the issue with this software-- the PDF, or the publishers of the PDF should have created it in an accessible of the format for you to be able to use it. And the problem with this is the service varies. There's no one standard.

OK, good. So going to the next slide, now we're going to talk about HTML. HTML, if it's a text HTML, it's one of it's the most accessible formats, especially if it's done properly in terms of the structure having headings and main headings or sub-headings. However, when they start putting mathematical equations or pictures, the quality of the accessibility will vary depending on whether the creators of the HTML file have used accessibility features such as image description, or if they are using audio, that they have put subtitles and transcripts. But it's one of the best accessible formats when used properly. Accessible pages can be personalised. So you should be able to change the background colour, or the font colour, or the font size, and some browsers may have accessibility features.

There is a website called My Computer My Way and if you open the slides which we have made available, if you click on the link or Google My Computer My Way, they give you guidance on how to make websites accessible. And I'm just going to show you one thing. I'm hoping that I have installed that feature on Chrome. Let me just see, first of all, open Chrome.

Oh I haven't done it. I haven't downloaded Chrome, unfortunately. But there are some extensions which you can add to Chrome and similar to Microsoft Internet Explorer which will



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allow to change the background colour, the contrast, and make it more accessible. And also you can increase or decrease the size.

OK, and finally, one of the formats which you might come across from the library is something called EPUBs. This is a type of file which is used in ebooks normally. And if you come across any EPUB format, you often have to open it either with the software that is produced by the provider of the ebook or via something called Adobe Digital Editions. You have to instal it. It's free. And then you create an ID, and basically it works like a bookshelf.

They are one of the good accessible formats. However, that comes with a caveat, because some of the publishers embed into files some management features. So for example, you can only download it for five days. After that, you lose access to it. You have to re-download it again.

So it depends on the software, also, which they provide. So if you are using it with Adobe Digital Editions, it's good. If you have to use it via a software produced by the publishers, their accessibility my vary depending on what they provided.

The RNIB provide a guide on how to use Adobe Digital Editions, how to use the best feature of Adobe Digital Editions. It might not be the most recent-- it might not cover the most recent guidelines or software, but Google that and try to see the features, because they are-- it's still a good guide.

OK, so we've covered four formats of the e-content. So I'm going to show you a slide that I'm not sure everyone can manage it properly. And we have probably to produce it in a text format. And basically this is the table of the different types of electronic files and their accessibility. And it shows that the most accessible format is the HTML, in terms of navigation, magnification, reflow, et cetera, et cetera, and text-to-speech, or use with screen readers. And for the others, EPUBs, or PDF, the accessibility will vary depending on the software you use, depending on how the publisher has created it.

Any questions so far? I think Katherine and another person-- no question, OK.

OK, so if we move on to SensusAccess, this is a software the OU subscribes to. And it sits on the lab website, and I'll show you where it is. Basically, it's an automated service. It's a self-service which allows you to convert files from one format to another.

So for example, if you have an image file, or we have a PDF that is basically an image, or a web document, you can convert it into braille or MP3 or other formats. The accessibility conversion-- so you can convert something from an image PDF into a tagged PDF, which then would be read by a text-to-speech, or you can convert it into a Word document, which is more accessible than an image file.

And the quality of how SensusAccess produces some, it's quality will depend on the quality of the original file. So if the image is an old journal article that's barely visible, it wouldn't give



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you a good quality . But On the other hand, if it's a high quality print, the outcome will be better.

It can't make tables, figures, and notation more accessible than it already is. It is available from the library website. And you can use it to convert module material. So for example, if you are on a Moodle page, and you want to convert it into something, into MP4 or something, you can use that.

And this software is licenced to be used by those who have print disabilities, such as students or staff. But also it can be used by their helpers. So if someone is helping you in your study, and you wanted them to convert the file for you, they can do it on your behalf.

Yes, SensusAccess will convert the file into something probably into a PDF document which she can later use with Adobe Reader if she wants. And I'm going to show you SensusAccess. And for that, I have to share, again, with you my screen.

Yes, Melanie, and again, with the caveat that it's only for users who have print disability. So what I'm going to do now, and please let me know if you can't see my screen, I'm going to share with you my browser. I wonder if you can see the browser now. OK, so what I'm going to do is I'm going to actually convert a file for you into an MP3 document.

So all you need to do-- and if you can't see my screen, if you go to the OU library website, so it's www.open.ac.uk/library, and I'm hoping Geraldine can give you the link as well. If you go to the Help and Support section of the library and disabled user support. So under the support for library services, there's disabled user support. And you should be able to see one of the topics there is called convert files with SensusAccess. And if you click on the file, it converts the file with SensusAccess.

And what I'm going to do-- I'm going to convert a PDF file into an MP3 format. So you need to read the conditions here on the page. And if you need some instruction on promotional video there is one by the people who created SensusAccess with a transcript available. And if you scroll further down, you can choose the type of format you want to convert. So if it's a file, say it's an image, or a website, or a text-- if it's a text, you can type the text here or cut it and paste it and then upload it.

So what I'm going to do is I'm going to convert the file. And I'm going to choose this file. I have saved the PDF document on my desktop. So it's an article about chocolate consumption. So I'm going to upload that.

I have selected the file. I'll then select the Upload option. I think there's-- OK, I'm going to choose another file here just because it seems that there is an illegal character. Upload-- so when I press Upload, it gave me the second step. So it's asking me what format I want to convert it to. So it was a PDF. And I'm going to convert it into MP3 audio.



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And the next step is it's asking me what language do I want, and here it's not going to translate from one language to other. It's basically telling you what language the document is in. So if it's in English, you choose English. If it's in another language, you choose that language.

And the speed-- you can decide whether you want a slow speed or fast or normal. That will depend on your needs. I'm going to keep it normal at the moment.

And then finally, it's going to ask for my email address. And basically, what will happen, the conversion is not instant. The system will convert it for you, then within about 10 to 15 minutes, it will send you the document by email. OK, so I've asked to send it to my university email. And I'm clicking Submit now.

And here it's giving me the details-- the file name, what format it is, where it's going to send it once it's done, what format I want, the language, and so on. All I have to do is now wait for it to come to my email. But in the meantime, while we're waiting for that, I'm going back to the presentation.

Sorry, Suzie. Yes I just said, Suzie, there will be a recording available for you to view it. And if there's something you want me to go over it again, just let me know. Tamara, you don't have to download the software. It's actually a web-based service. So you just upload the file. They convert it for you and then send it back to you. And Suzie, the recording will have a transcript to go with it.

OK, so just going back to the presentation while we're waiting for the email to arrive from SensusAccess. And then I'll let you listen to part of the conversion. So moving on to the next slide.

So what things do you need to look out for in electronic documents? If a full-text is a PDF, and you want other formats, just go right on the website. So if it's a database, check it out. They may offer it in HTML format. Or they may have it as a text. For example, Safari Books Online has a function, which allows you to see some of the e-books in HTML. The default view is a PDF.

Also some databases have accessibility model which you can activate, such as Ebook Central. It has a link to accessibility mode and will allow you to change the full text into a text. And then you can use it with a screen reader. Some databases have its own built-in screen reader, such as EBSCO-- Academic Search Complete, which you can then activate that feature. If you have questions about these, and you can't figure out how to do the service of Safari or Ebook Central or EBSCO, you can contact the library, and someone will help you.

I am just waiting as Geraldine is answering some questions. Excuse me. OK.



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So most of our library resources are accessible via different devices, as long as you have internet and a device that can access the internet, you can use our resources. So you can use it on mobile. You can use it on tablets, or laptops, or desktops. However, the experience will vary depending on the device you use. And there isn't one rule that can make it easy for across all devices. It's basically, if you are used to your own device, probably you would have already figured it to make sure that it's accessible to you.

Our resources are primarily to be read online. Some of them are downloadable if they are available in a PDF or EPUB. There are some external tools which you can use in order to improve your experience accessing online resources. As I said, My Computer My Way basically is a website that provides guidance on how to change your web browsers to make it more accessibility-friendly. And there are some collections of tools, for example, ATbar. It's a cross-browser toolbar which allows you to put some colour overlays to improve and change the font size. There's DnA Matters, which I believe Geri has already talked about in answering some questions. Also University of Kent has some productivity tools and assistive technology which you can also visit and see.

There are some individual tools such as Grammarly, which basically is a spelling and grammar check. And you can use NVDA. It's a free screen reader. So if you don't want to pay subscription for JAW or you want to try other softwares, you can try NVDA, and you can just put it on a USB stick and make it run through that.

So I've just received the email from SensusAccess telling me that the file is ready to use. And basically the file will come. They will send you several links for you to use. Either you can open the file which was sent on the website, or you can download the MP3. And there are other options.

But what I'm going to do-- I want just to listen to it through a web page link. And I'm going to get you to listen to that.

I am just putting it in a page. OK, so I'm going to remove my mic again and get you to listen to it, if you bear with me for a second. So I'm going to run the file now. So it's downloading.

[AUDIO PLAYBACK]

- "Culturally Sensitive Research Approaches-- An African-American Perspective," by Linda C. Tillman. This article contributes to discussions about culturally sensitive research approaches in qualitative research. The author argues that the use of culturally sensitive research approaches in research focusing on African-Americans can use the cultural knowledge and experiences of researchers and their participants in the design of the research as well as in the collection and interpretation of data. The author pre--

[END PLAYBACK]



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HOSSAM KASSEM: So you could see what's happened SensusAccess have converted the PDF file into an MP3 format. And if you just try it on your computer, on the website, on a web browser, or you could download it into your device and listen to it whenever you want. Any questions so far?

We're almost done. I'm just going to go through a couple of slides. So the next slide-- if you need any help, there's lots of OU support. So you can use the Open University Students Association guidance it's available under the Accessibility tab. You can contact us at the library help desk, and our staff and librarians have good knowledge, and they can help you overcome some problems.

Also we have a supported search facility for our students who have disability, and we can do a search on their behalf for their projects if that's necessary. There's the OU Computing Helpdesk, which you can contact. And there is a Student Support Team. And there are links behind on the slides, which you can link to these pages, if you want. Now

This is the last of-- that's the final slide. If you have any questions, please do ask us. Also, there's an evaluation form, which is basically the last slide. You can see here there is a link to a form. We would be grateful if you could fill the form and give us some feedback on the session. This is the second time we've done this session. I would be interested to see your view on it and if we can improve it in any way. And also there is a chance of winning 20 pounds Amazon voucher once a month.

And at this stage, I'm going to stop recording. But we will wait for a few more minutes to answer any questions.



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