

Inclusive by Design: Creating Accessible Library Events

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<https://tinyurl.com/eventsa11y>



Introductions

Austin Deneau

Accessibility & User Experience Specialist,
Michigan State University Libraries

ad@msu.edu

Heidi Schroeder

Accessibility Coordinator & Liaison to MSU's
Resource Center for Persons with
Disabilities,
Michigan State University Libraries

hschroed@msu.edu

Background

Accessibility @ MSU Libraries - History

- Accessibility core value of libraries
- Accessibility efforts at MSU Libraries increased in 2015
 - Accessibility plans & annual reviews
 - Purchasing procedures - accessibility
 - Accessibility liaisons
- MSU Libraries Strategic Plan: <https://lib.msu.edu/strategic-plan>
 - Vision: “The Libraries promote equal access to information and spaces for all. We lead meaningful initiatives in **accessibility**, diversity, equity, and inclusion.”
 - Inclusivity Core Value: “We provide welcoming spaces where everyone can work, discover, and create. We advance **accessibility**, diversity, equity, and inclusion in our workplace and in the services and resources we provide.”

Accessibility Roles & Positions @ MSU Libraries

- Accessibility Coordinator, 2015 (became primary position in 2018)
- Libraries' Accessibility Working Group, 2015-2024
- Accessibility student employees, 2016
- Librarian secondaries, 2018 & 2023
- Accessibility & user experience specialist, 2023

Accessibility initiatives @ MSU Libraries

- Collections/e-resources/vendors
- Big Ten Library Accessibility Group / Library Accessibility Alliance
- Remediation
- OER accessibility

Accessibility initiatives @ MSU Libraries cont.

- Accessibility training
- Testing
- UX/Website integration
- Building/physical space
- Services
- Accessibility into other library units/areas
 - Events accessibility one area of focus this year

Process

Why?

- How could we create more inclusive and accessible events?
- Lack of a university-wide accessible events policy
- What easy proactive measures could we implement to improve accessibility?
- What are our legal obligations under ADA and other laws?

Events @ MSU Libraries

- Cultural events open to campus community and public
 - book talks, films, panel discussions, Science Festival, Comics Forum, etc.
- Workshops
 - Endnote, GIS, Digital Scholarship Lab, makerspace, etc.
- Events for library staff
 - Teas/potlucks, deans forums, retirement parties, etc.
- Green Room rentals by MSU departments - usually closed-door events only for them

Events @ MSU Libraries cont.

- Finals week events
- Development events
 - exhibit receptions, fall open house, retiree breakfast
- Co-hosted events only for MSU students
 - New student orientation, Admitted Students Day, etc.
- Special Collections pop-ups
- Faculty Authors Reception
- Conferences
 - Digital Library Federation, AgNiC, etc.

Research/Process

- University resources
- External resources
 - Other universities, ADA resources, advocacy organizations, etc.
- Research Process
 - Meet with stakeholders
 - Synthesize findings
 - Next steps/action items
- Training @ MSUL

ADA/Legal Requirements

- **Effective Communication**
 - The ADA requires that organizations communicate effectively with people who have disabilities
- **Reasonable Modifications**
 - Make reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures where needed to make sure that a person with a disability can access programs, services, or activities.
- **Ensure building and facilities accessibility**

- **Anti-discrimination**
 - Also a part of: Section 504, Michigan Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act, etc.

Best Practices & Workflows

Promotion

- Ensure your promotional materials are accessible
- Provide all relevant information about the event
 - Describe event activities so participants can gauge what accommodations they may need
- Use multiple mediums
 - Social media platforms, email, print, etc.
- Follow print/digital accessibility guidelines
 - Avoid images of text (popular in emails and social media), alternative text, color contrast, text size, video captions, etc.
- List proactive accommodations
- Expand representation of people with disabilities in promotional material photos
- All materials should have an accessibility accommodation statement

Accessibility Accommodation Statement (Tagline)

- MSUL's statement
 - “If you have questions about accessibility or need to request accommodations, please email lib.dl.accessibility@msu.edu.”
- Ensure the statement is on all promotional materials and registration pages
- Content
 - State that accessibility accommodations can be made
 - Provide contact information for accommodation requests
 - Relevant email and phone number
 - Optional:
 - Mention your commitment to accessibility
 - Encourage people with disabilities to attend
 - Soft/desired deadline

Event Accessibility Coordinator

- Point person to respond to and implement accommodation requests
- Proactively considers accessibility features and accommodations
- Typically the event host for smaller events (we have accessibility unit)
- Can be a dedicated person for large or complex events

Proactive Accommodations

- Reduce the likelihood of chaotic last minute accommodation requests
- For larger events or events with a known audience where accommodations will likely be needed
- Advertise this information on event materials
- Consider an accommodation budget, if possible

Accommodation Requests

- Respond to the request as soon as possible
- It may take some communication to define their requests
- Give precedence to their preferred accommodation
 - Multiple accommodation options may fit their needs
- Work with your ADA coordinator before denying any requests
 - It may be possible to offer alternative accommodations from what was asked

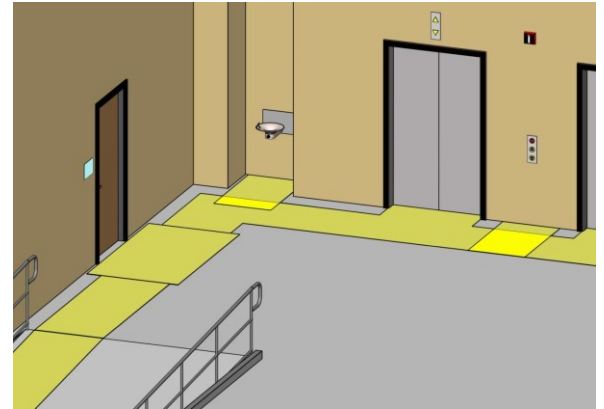
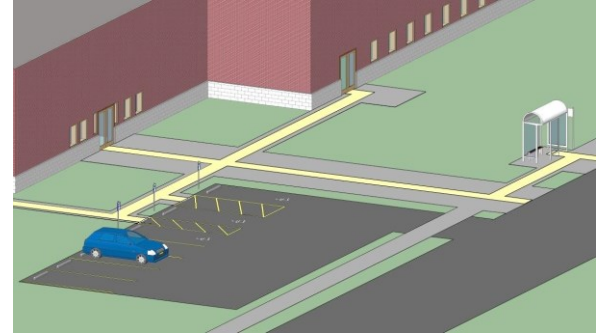
- Don't forget about event speakers/presenters and volunteers

Technology

- Remote and hybrid events
- Microphone etiquette
- Screens and projectors
 - Are they visible from all locations? Is there glare?
- Use automatic captions
 - Available in Zoom, Teams, PowerPoint, and Google Slides
 - Not a replacement for CART or ASL
- Consider recording the event

Venue

- Parking/Transportation
- Path of Travel
- Room Layout & Set-up
 - Entrances
 - Signage/Wayfinding
 - Aisles
 - Seating: variety of types/sizes, wheels/stationary
 - Placement/sight lines of presenters, screens, etc.
 - Microphones
 - Stage/Podium Accessibility
- Restrooms



Other considerations

- **Date/time selection**
 - Avoid scheduling events on major religious holidays
 - Consider attendees schedules', busier times in your library, when parking may be most available, etc.
- **Food/Dietary needs**
 - Be prepared to accommodate dietary restrictions and allergies.
 - Provide a range of food - include vegan/vegetarian, dairy/gluten free, etc.
 - Ensure food/drinks are clearly labeled & avoid cross contamination
 - Avoid common food allergens (peanuts, etc)
- **Service Animals**
 - Consider floor space & toileting space

Common Accessibility Accommodations

CART & ASL

- Two common accommodation types for Deaf / Hard of Hearing
- CART: Communication Access Realtime Translation
- ASL: American Sign Language
- MSU Libraries Procedures
 - Annual budget allocation, work with business office
 - List of CART & ASL providers
 - CART & ASL available upon request, not proactively (usually)
 - Most requests come to accessibility team, event coordinator may go directly to business office
- Auto captions are better than no captions
 - But are NOT a replacement for ASL or CART request

Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs)

- Devices that improve sound transmission for people who are hard of hearing
- Works in combination with hearing aids, cochlear implants, or other personal sound amplifiers (like headphones)
- Requires an Assistive Listening System (ALS)
 - Room specific transmitter installed with the AV equipment
 - FM, Infrared, Hearing Loop (t-coil), etc.
 - Portable/personal transmitter



Event Materials & Activities

- Be prepared to provide event materials early and in alternative formats
 - Before the event/presentation begins
 - Digitally
 - Large print
- Consider possible alternative for the event's activities
 - Having a plan reduces the burden of last minute accommodation requests

Sensory Accommodations

- Notify participants if event will have flashing lights or loud sounds
- Motion sickness (includes simulation motion)
 - VR and other multimedia
- If possible provide a quiet break space

- Chemical Sensitivity
 - Avoid strong fragrances and consider what cleaning products are used at the venue
 - Request that participants refrain from wearing scented products

Takeaways

1

Choose an accessible venue.

2

Ensure accessible event promotion and registration.

3

Make it easy to request accommodations.

4

Be prepared for accommodation requests.

5

Think about how your event's activities and materials will be used by people with disabilities, and what modifications may be needed.

Resources

Accessible Events Resources

- [MSUL Events accessibility checklist](#)
- [MSU ADA office events accessibility document \(Word Document\)](#)
- Other Resources
 - [American Bar Association - Accessibility](#)
 - [ADA National Network - Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible](#)
 - [Cornell University - Accessible Event Planning](#)
 - [University of Wisconsin–Madison - Guide to Handling an Accommodation Request](#)

Thank you!

Questions?