

What the WATF?!

Using a Web Accessibility Task Force to Construct a Collaborative Framework for Digital Accessibility

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West Chester University
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AGENDA

Session Outline

- History of Our WATF: Turning Point 1
- Community Engagement: Turning Point 2
- Assessment: Turning Point 3
- Next Steps



History of the WATForce

From Building the "Accessibility Megazord" to Forging a Path Forward to April 2026! Or 2027! Or 2028!

- April 2024: Final Regulations Published
- August 2024:
 - WATForce Exploratory Committee Formed
 - Consituencies and Representatives Identified
- September 2024:
 - Identify Covered Digital Assets University-wide
 - Assess Current Practices, Available Tools and Identify Gaps and Needs
- October 2024:
 - Find Support for Implementation
 - Develop a Resource Library
 - Establish Regular Meetings
 - Develop Communication Strategy



History of the WATForce, continued

From Building the "Accessibility Megazord" to Forging a Path Forward to April 2026! Or 2027! Or 2028!

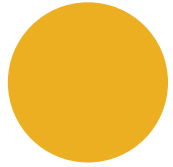
- October 2024 (continued)
 - Benchmarking Digital Accessibility Policies
 - Identify and Adopt a Maturity Model
- November 2024:
 - Assess Progress against Maturity Model Milestones
 - Find Support for Implementation
- December 2024:
 - Meet with DS Peers to Discuss their Process
 - Find Support for Implementation
 - Identify Unrepresented Areas
 - Identify and Recruit Additional Members
- January 2025:
 - Implement Peer Suggestions
 - Find VP Support for Implementation
 - Submit Needs Memo to Senior Leadership
 - Meet with Senior Leadership Team



History of the WATForce, part III

From Building the "Accessibility Megazord" to Forging a Path Forward to April 2026! Or 2027! Or 2028!

- March 2025: VP Support Secured!
- April 2025: One Year to Compliance! ...Or so we thought!
- April 2027: ?!?



Turning Point #1: VP-Level Support

Bringing legitimacy and authority to the initiative

BEFORE	AFTER
A committee of volunteers working without a mandate	An official task force organized under the VP for Access, Compliance, and Engagement
Communication to the university community came from an unrecognized group	Official communications with considerable weight and recognizable brand
Suggestions and recommendations	Momentum towards creating an official policy
Difficulty conveying the gravity of the situation	An ally in cabinet meetings, open forum to communicate the policy and the requirements



Getting the Word Out

Communicating accessibility to the university community

- Email (with VP and/or Provost signature)
- Shared Inbox
- [WATF](#) and [TLC](#) website
- Open Forums for Q&A
- Department visits

Communication
channels

- Faculty
- Staff
- Students

Who we needed to
reach



Building a differentiated training model

Meeting people where they are, across roles and modalities



1-1 Consults



Asynchronous Workshops



Department Meetings



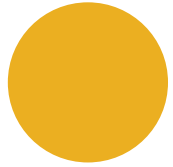
Mandatory Training



Live Workshops



CESW Pilot



Digital Accessibility Foundations

Homepage

Digital Accessibility Foundations

Welcome to A11y Training! ▾

Welcome to Digital Accessibility Foundations, Amberlynn! This optional training program is designed to help faculty learn the concepts and skills needed to make course materials compliant with the accessibility standards currently prescribed by federal law.

In the [Digital Accessibility Basics unit](#), we'll cover the "what" and "why" of digital accessibility, and you'll be able to complete a series of mini-quizzes that will assess how well you can recall those details. Once you've earned a perfect score on each of the mini-quizzes, you'll earn your **Digital Accessibility Basics badge** and gain access to the [Practicing Digital Accessibility unit](#). In this advanced unit, you can earn your **Digital Accessibility Practitioner certificate** by creating new, accessible Word documents & PowerPoint slides; remediating an inaccessible document; and cleaning up auto-generated captions.

This training is self-paced, with opportunities to get feedback on assignments. You can complete the modules for each unit in any order. If you're comfortable with Microsoft Office, you can expect completing both units to take about two hours, but we encourage you to spend as much time as you need with the content, especially if any of the concepts are new to you.

[Get Started](#)

Need Help? ▾

Questions about content

Contact us at TLC@wcupa.edu, and someone will get back to you within 24 hours during the work week. If you need to speak to someone live, use the [TLC Bookings page](#) to set up a consultation.

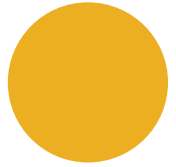
Technical Issues

Submit a [ServiceNow ticket](#) to contact the Help Desk.

Announcements ▾

There are no announcements to display.

[Create an announcement](#)



Digital Accessibility Foundations: Getting Started

Getting Started

What is Digital Accessibility?

Digital accessibility refers to the practice of making digital content (such as emails, files, and websites) usable by everyone, including people who use [assistive technology](#) to access and interact with digital content. At West Chester University, we're committed to making our digital content accessible, so that everyone has the opportunity to access our information and resources.

Digital Accessibility Topics

We're going to walk you through the need-to-know details for creating accessible digital content, including what accessibility standards are important for you, why these standards are important, and how to meet them. Each topic ends with a two question mini-quiz. We recommend starting with heading structure and using the links at the bottom of each topic page to use through the material, but you're welcome to visit the topic pages in any order you prefer.

7 Core Accessibility Practices

1. [Heading Structure](#)
2. [Lists \(and Comprehensible Text\)](#)
3. [Descriptive Links](#)
4. [Color Contrast](#)
5. [Alternative Text](#)
6. [Tables](#)
7. [Video & Audio](#)

Tech Tools

1. [Accessibility Checkers](#)
2. [PDF Accessibility](#)



Digital Accessibility Foundations: Completing the Unit

How to Complete This Unit

How to Complete This Unit

Complete the two question mini-quiz for each of the following nine accessibility topics. That is nine (9) mini-quizzes in total. Each quiz is linked from its explanation page as well as below:

1. [Heading Structure Mini-Quiz](#)
2. [Lists & Comprehensible Text Mini-Quiz](#)
3. [Descriptive Links Mini-Quiz](#)
4. [Color Contrast Mini-Quiz](#)
5. [Alternative Text Mini-Quiz](#)
6. [Tables Mini-Quiz](#)
7. [Video & Audio Mini-Quiz](#)
8. [Accessibility Checkers Mini-Quiz](#)
9. [PDF Accessibility Mini-Quiz](#)



Turning Point #2: Enter YuJa Panorama

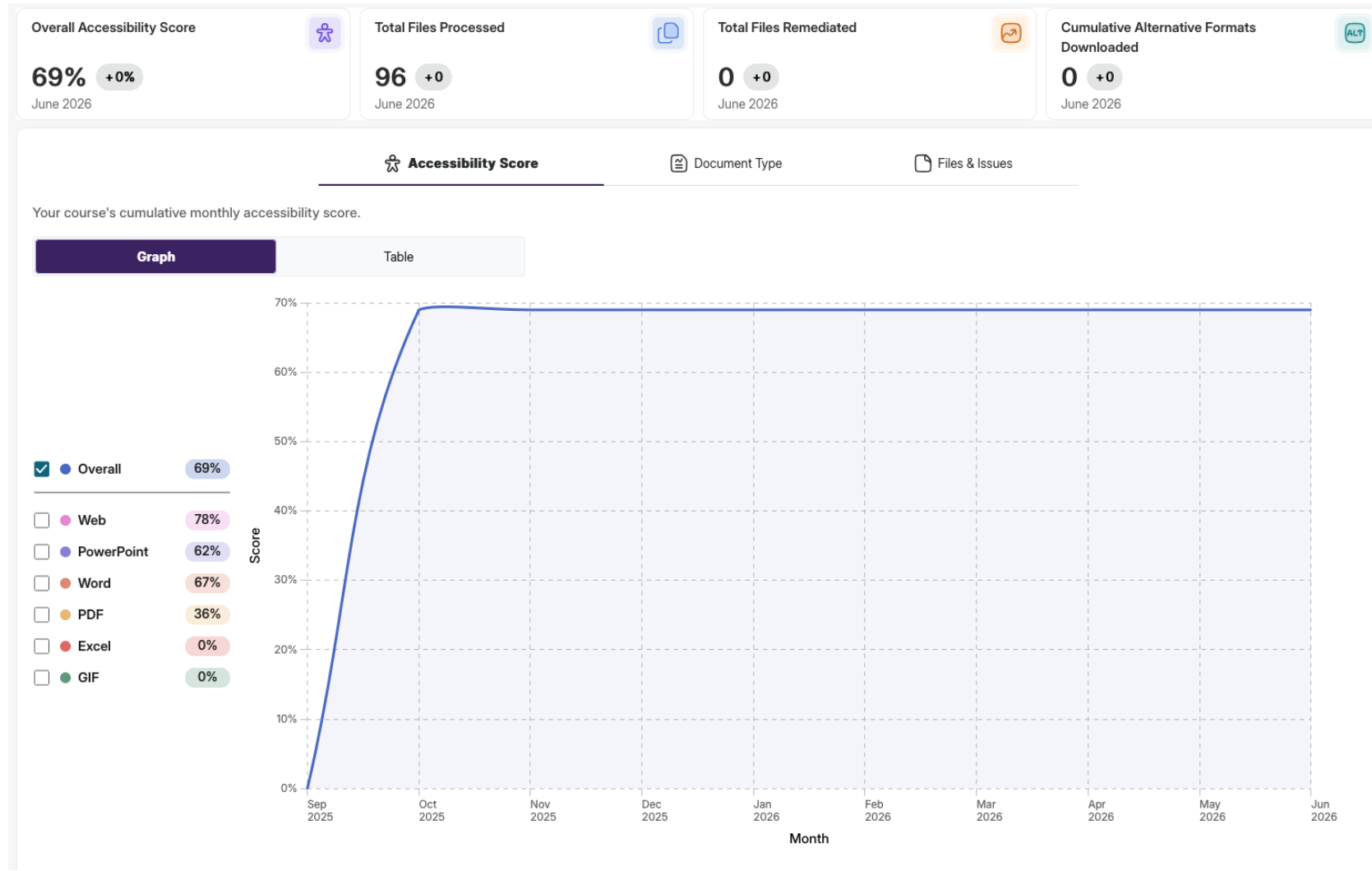
System-wide, automated LMS accessibility auditing

BEFORE	AFTER
Relying on existing native accessibility checkers	YuJa able to check and in some cases, repair a variety of documents. Challenge: New tool, more training.
Manual checking was time-consuming and difficult to scale due to learning curve	Thorough checking. Challenge: panic, fatigue, and focus on “accessibility score”
Accessibility felt abstract to faculty and staff	Inaccessible content became more visible due to visual flags in the course
Training started with awareness	Shift from awareness to action. Challenge: maintaining awareness of <i>why</i> action is needed



Turning Point #2: Enter YuJa Panorama, continued

System-wide, automated LMS accessibility auditing



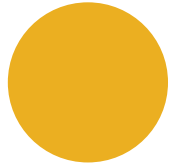


ASSESSMENT

How did the task force both succeed and fall short in its goal of meeting the compliance deadline of April 2026?

What lessons did the web accessibility task force learn from its work?

What happened when the compliance deadline was delayed by a year (just days before the deadline)?



SUCCESSSES AND SHORT-COMINGS

Taking stock of the WATF's progress

Successes	Shortcomings
VP-level sponsor	Preventing panic
Policy	Measuring progress
Website	A one-stop hub for accessibility
Automated LMS checker	Central pool of student workers for remediation
Training for all	Mandatory faculty training
Hiring a temporary Accessibility Specialist	Permanent staff position for digital accessibility
College of Education and Social Work pilot	Accessibility liaisons in every unit



LESSONS LEARNED

Takeaways from two years of the WATF experience

1 Talk to other schools and experts

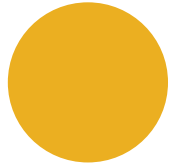
4 Develop a variety of training options

2 Be thoughtful about structure

5 Decentralize responsibility

3 Plan your communications

6 Beware of products that promise too much



Turning Point #3: April 26, 2026

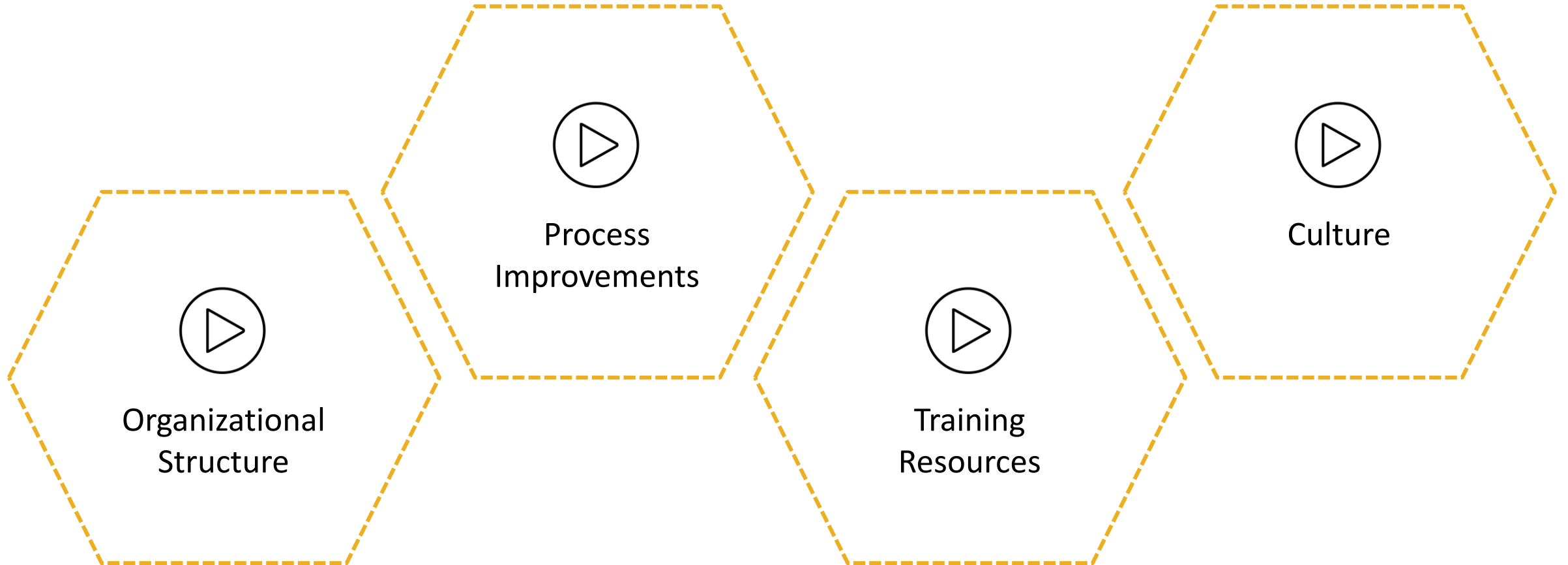
Compliance deadline postponed

BEFORE	AFTER
All digital communications and course content will be accessible by Summer 2026.	Emailed the university community to communicate new deadline and expectations, signed by VP of Access, Compliance and Engagement; Provost; and VP/CIO.
Robust training and support resources available.	"The goal is steady, manageable progress over time rather than last-minute remediation."
The deadline was approaching...	"Throughout the summer and fall, faculty should continue to make a good faith effort toward digital content compliance."
...and then it was postponed by a year (April 2027).	"...mass communications, forms, resources, and webpages...with an internal goal of full compliance by December 31, 2026."



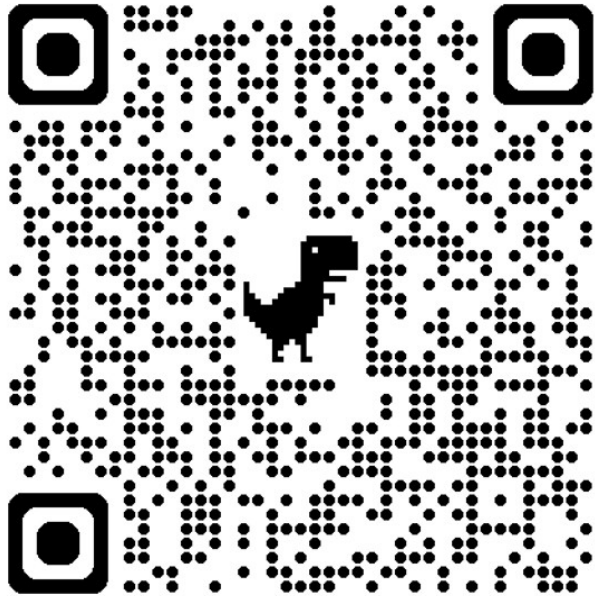
NEXT STEPS

Moving the WATF forward in 2026-27





EVALUATION FORM



tiny.cc/8zu1101

Please complete the session evaluation
Your feedback is important!

THANK YOU!

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