

Title: **Just Another Tick in the Box! Defining accessibility in e-learning**

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Abstract:

This short paper critiques the current accessible e-learning paradigm, looking at developments in both culture and technology and considers whether accessibility 'standards' are creating an underpinning tick box culture which undermines both support for disabled students and development and innovation in e-learning. The paper will discuss web and e-learning accessibility initiatives on both a national and international level identifying potential and actual impacts on a variety of services, such as education and the public sector.

Furthermore, this presentation will discuss the rise in 'testing technology', in terms of automated testing software and the rise in 'web accessibility' consultants and the methods they employ and ask the question 'are they part of the problem or part of the solution?'.

Having highlighted reservations over current approaches to accessibility standards the paper will describe how the authors' holistic model can help to reconcile the tensions between WAI's checklist approach and the manual testing approach advocated by others.

Finally the authors propose to discuss how the holistic model can be integrated into existing CPD and Standards frameworks in UK higher Education.

The presentation builds on the authors' work published in the *Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology*, their critique of WAI guidelines and outline of a framework for Web accessibility presented at the W4A workshop at the WWW 2005 conference in May 2005 and a paper on 'A holistic framework for e-learning accessibility' presented at ALT-C 2005.

Session Learning Outcomes

- Have an understanding of developments in e-learning and accessibility
- Be given a model for the development of 'accessible' e-learning materials
- Discussed how standards in this area impinge on CPD and Staff Development

Session Outline

- Defining accessible in terms of HE and e-learning
- Analysis of accessibility standards in terms of learning
- Discussion about how abstract technical models can be integrated in to staff development

Session Activities

- Presentation outlining current accessibility paradigm and proposed model (10 minutes)
- Questions (5 minutes)
- Discussion about integration of models and Accessible e-learning standards into CPD and staff development 20 minutes
- Summary (5 minutes)

References

Kelly, B., Phipps, L. and Swift, E (2004) Developing A Holistic Approach For E-Learning Accessibility, Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology , Vol. 30, Issue 3.

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