

## One accessible textbook platform for all universities

USA – AMAC Accessibility Solutions

### SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The AccessText Network (ATN) is the world's first publisher network portal linking U.S. universities to 92 percent of the U. S. post-secondary publishers. The mission of ATN, founded in 2009 as a collaborative project of AMAC Accessibility Solutions and the Association of American Publishers (AAP), is to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to textbooks in an accessible format and timely manner while also reducing costs and providing accessibility content transparency. In the United States, 92 percent of all college textbooks are part of the ATN.

### QUOTE:

*"The AccessText Network is a major step towards educational equality for students with disabilities, and towards the day when all instructional materials are fully accessible."*

—Mr. Christopher M. Lee, Ph.D., Director, AMAC

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Currently, ATN is managing over 60 to 70% of U.S. university and college requests for digital files, and has over 20,000 files stored for immediate download.
- There is no membership fee; ATN services are freely available.
- ATN expected to exceed 100,000 requests for digital files by the end of 2015, an increase of 7% over last year, compared to 22,000 requests received in 2010.

### PROBLEMS TARGETED

In the past, there was little coordination among universities or publishers to make getting accessible textbooks cost-effective, efficient, and timely. Notably, there was no single on-line portal or collaboration among competitive textbook publishers to facilitate an easy way to search for textbooks in digital formats. In addition, most electronic commercial textbook files are locked down with Digital Rights Management, a class of copyright protection technologies used by hardware and software manufacturers, publishers, copyright holders, and many others; therefore, students using assistive technology to read the files could not access them. Across universities, efforts to secure publisher copyright approvals were time consuming and duplicative.

## SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

With just a few clicks, Disability Service Provider (DSP) members at U.S. universities and colleges can request textbooks for their students who are eligible to receive alternative formats (DOC, EPUB, PDF, Rich Text Format, Text or XML). Publishers process these requests, and the DSP is notified by email when the publisher file is ready for download. The turnaround time for getting publisher files is usually less than three days; and over 60% of file requests are filled in a day. If a file is not available, a publisher may grant permission to scan. Once the university receives the publisher file, DSP members use it to prepare an accessible format (Braille, audio, large print, e-text). The university can provide this file to other eligible students by requesting publisher permission to redistribute. DSP members now rapidly acquire publisher files or permission to scan books, determine whether another university has already created an alternate format that is available for licensing, and determine whether they or individual students can acquire digital versions from publishers.

## OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

The future growth and development of ATN and its Document Accessibility Profiler are excellent in the United States as the service continues to grow by a rate of 7% or more each year. The perspective for growth of ATN-like services in other countries is certainly possible, as the service is replicable and scalable as a business model for others to explore.

Photo: Yes

Life story: Yes

## CONTACT

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tags: universities and higher education, ICT, products and services