

WebAIM Training Helps Make Emails, Documents Readable For Everyone | CPD Blog

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Imagine that an email from your boss has landed in your inbox. The subject line is *MANDATORY! Please attend!* The body of the email says only, “See attached.” The attachment is a pdf file named “invitation.” But when you open it, though everyone around you can read it, you can’t.

Scenes like this unfold every day for people who are blind, who require screen magnification or who are unable to use a mouse. They may rely on assistive technology like a screen reader to read files to them, but the information is harder to understand—and sometimes completely unreadable—if it isn’t created in an accessible way.

[WebAIM](#), located in the Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University, is nearly one year into a new effort to help ensure everyone in the office can read their email. [Online training](#) for document accessibility is now open to organizations everywhere, and so far, more than 840 people have learned how to help ensure that everyone in the organization can do their jobs.

The document training also ties in well with WebAIM’s web accessibility mission, said Jonathan Whiting, a senior training and development officer.

“A big part of it, especially in education and government, is that a lot of websites have documents,” he said. A lot of websites link to pdf and Word files. Sometimes those documents contain the bulk of the organization’s online content.

WebAIM’s self-directed online training rolls out one training module per week for four weeks, with exercises that require two to four hours of work per module. “That’s a good pace,” said George Joeckel, who specializes in delivering training and evaluation services at WebAIM. Participants can access the content for a total of 60 days.

“It’s designed to be completely independent study,” Joeckel said. “That was one of the things that we wanted, to make the cost as reasonable as possible so the largest amount of people could take it.” They can also work it into their own schedules as they see fit. If they have questions, WebAIM will answer them.

WebAIM also makes the course available for free for one person from an organization, so they can try it out before they invest in training for their whole team.

The feedback so far has been overwhelmingly positive. Participants have been mostly from education and government, but people from private businesses have also taken the training.

To find out more, contact [Jonathan Whiting](#) or visit the [WebAIM website](#).