Accessibility in an Online Environment

How Accessibility challenges impact Records Management in the age of public access and citizen self-service.
Focus of our Presentation Today

- Why does Accessibility Matter to you as Records Managers?
- The Role of Digital Experiences and Content in Accessibility Conversations
- Proactive Measures for Improving Accessibility
Today’s Presenters

Phyllis Elin, PhD
CEO, Knowledge Preservation

Michael Thomas
SLED Sales Director, Konica Minolta
The US Median Age is Digital Native

38.9 years of age

(born on in after 1985)
They Likely don’t recall the Mac from 1984
They do love their iPhones, though.
Digital Portals are the new Town Hall

As the digital native generation has come of age, government agencies have had to adapt to a new reality where digital portals and online services have become the primary means of engagement with citizens. These digital platforms have effectively replaced the traditional "town hall" model, serving as the central hub for information, services, and civic participation.
The Priority of Accessibility is Increasing
Widgets alone may not be enough

- The core website code & violations remain legally exposed
- Overlay Solutions lack manual testing and remediation
- Overlays affect users existing assistive tools
- Overlays often do not work well for mobile devices

For more information on this topic, please visit: https://www.accessibility.works/blog/avoid-accessibility-overlay-tools-toolbar-plugins/
Inclusivity Matters. A lot.

- Enhanced Civic Engagement & Participation
- Improved Access to Services
- Promotion of Transparency and Accountability
- Legal Compliance & Litigation Avoidance
- Reducing Risk & Negative Feedback
ADA Accessibility Lawsuit Tracker: Final Numbers for March 2024

- **427** March 2024 Lawsuits Filed
- **81** March 2024 Defendants with a previous ADA digital lawsuit
- **101** March 2024 Defendants sued while using a 3rd party accessibility related control (widget)

The usablenet research team monitors and documents all digital accessibility-related lawsuits filed each month.

Dramatic Increases in Citizen Self-Service

40% of Citizens
Used digital channels to interact with government agencies before the pandemic

68% of Citizens
Used digital channels to interact with government agencies during and after the pandemic

+70% Increase In Usage
of Digital Channels since the Pandemic Began

(Source: Deloitte)
Dramatic Increases in Citizen Self-Service

40% of Citizens Used digital channels to interact with government agencies before the pandemic.

68% of Citizens Used digital channels to interact with government agencies during and after the pandemic.

+70% Increase In Usage of Digital Channels since the Pandemic Began.

(Source: Deloitte)
Digitization is Essential to Efficiency

01 Improved Accessibility
Digitizing hard copy content makes information readily accessible to citizens, employees, and other stakeholders anytime, anywhere. This accessibility is particularly important for individuals with disabilities who may rely on screen readers or other assistive technologies to access information.

02 Cost Savings
Maintaining and managing physical records can be costly due to storage space requirements, printing, and distribution expenses. Digitization reduces these costs by eliminating the need for physical storage space and streamlining document retrieval processes.

03 Compliance with Regulations
Many government agencies are required to comply with regulations related to document retention, privacy, and accessibility. Digitizing hard copy content can help ensure compliance with these regulations by providing better control over document management processes and facilitating auditing and reporting.
There has been a noticeable trend toward the adoption of Public Records Request Management Software Solutions in recent years. According to GovTech, the use of such solutions has been steadily increasing as government agencies seek more efficient ways to handle public records requests.
Public sector agencies must adhere to digital accessibility standards such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to ensure that information released through software solutions is accessible to individuals with disabilities. This includes considerations for screen reader compatibility, keyboard navigation, alternative text for images, and other accessibility features.
Accessibility Standards around Scanned Images

Documents released through Public Records Request tools should be provided in accessible formats, such as HTML or accessible PDFs. Non-accessible formats like scanned images or non-tagged PDFs can present barriers to users with disabilities who rely on assistive technologies.
The Information Governance Imperative

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Compliance and Legal Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Data Security and Privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Records Retention and Disposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Transparency and Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Risk Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Avoiding ROT is more important than ever

Critical factors highlighting the importance of managing ROT (Redundant, Trivial, and Obsolete) Information include:

- Data Volume and Complexity
- Data Security and Compliance
- Decision-Making and Analytics
Help Educate your Staff on the Importance of Accessibility

**Compliance and Risk Mitigation**

By understanding accessibility requirements and best practices, staff can ensure that records are created, managed, and released in compliance with relevant regulations like the ADA and Section 508. This reduces legal liability and ensures equal access to information for all users.

**Improved User Experience**

Educating staff on accessibility principles helps them create records that are inclusive and user-friendly for individuals with disabilities. This can lead to improved user satisfaction and engagement, as well as a more positive perception of the organization’s commitment to accessibility and inclusion.

**Efficiency and Effectiveness**

Staff who are knowledgeable about accessibility in records management can implement best practices from the outset, reducing the need for costly remediation efforts later. They can also streamline processes and workflows to ensure that accessible records are created and maintained efficiently, saving time and resources in the long run.

Resources Include:
- Section 508.gov
- Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)
Ensure that your Records Schedules Identify Public-Facing Content

01 Review existing records to identify public-facing content.

02 Engage stakeholders to understand the types and purposes of public-facing records.

03 Document different types of public-facing content, including formats and sources.

04 Consult records management policies to align schedules with classification and management practices.

05 Include metadata and keywords to identify public-facing content effectively.

06 Consider accessibility requirements when identifying and managing public-facing records.

07 Regularly review and update schedules to reflect changes in public-facing content.
Seek to Limit the Number of Public Facing Portals

- **Consistency:** Fewer portals ensure consistent branding and messaging.
- **Simplified Access:** Users find information more quickly with fewer portals.
- **Cost Efficiency:** Managing fewer portals saves resources and overhead costs.
- **Data Integration:** Fewer portals facilitate better data sharing and analysis.
- **Enhanced Security:** Limiting portals reduces the risk of cyber threats and vulnerabilities.
- **Compliance and Governance:** Managing fewer portals simplifies compliance and governance efforts.
Ensure your portals are accessible by default

Accessibility must be baked into the entire product lifecycle from design, development, testing and iteration.

- WCAG, ADA, & Section 508 compliant
- Periodically tested and audited to ensure compliance with regulations
- Recognize that there is potential beyond what your current software can offer
- Prioritize digitization projects based on impact
- Invest in modern Intelligent Automation systems with AI capabilities
- Develop content portals promoting accessibility and self-service
- Ensure Compliance and Retention are part of your strategy
- Create a culture of ongoing training and support for staff
Involve yourself in the Digital Transformation Roadmap

01 Engage with stakeholders - Engage with stakeholders from relevant departments.

02 Advocate for accessibility - Advocate for accessibility and records management in the roadmap.

03 Provide expertise - Provide expertise on records management best practices.

04 Promote staff training - Promote staff training on accessibility and records management.

05 Monitor and provide feedback - Monitor implementation and provide feedback as needed
KM IIM Digital Transformation Insights

Intelligent Information Management
Hyper-Automated Focused Solutions

Intelligent Content Solutions
- Content Management
- Document Management
- Case Management
- Records Management
- Information Governance

Intelligent Automation
- Workflow Automation
- Intelligent Document Processing (IDP)
- Robotic Process Automation (RPA)
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Generative AI

Business Process Outsourcing
- Backfile Scanning
- Day Forward Scanning
- Digital Mail as a Service (DMaaS)
- Invoice Capture as a Service (ICaaS)
THANK YOU