

LMS e-Learning Implementation Podcast Transcript #7 *e-Learning Accessibility For Training Managers and Human Resource Professionals, Part 4*

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Mary Kay Lofurno: Welcome to the next segment of e-Learning Accessibility for training managers and human resource professionals, which is part of the [Syberworks e-Learning Podcast Series](#). My name is Mary Kay Lofurno, and I am the Marketing Director here at [Syberworks](#), and I am your host today. In the [first segment](#) of our miniseries, we provided some background on the American Disabilities Act, Section 508, and an introduction to the W3C Accessibility Guidelines. In the [second segment](#), we discussed the W3C's Level One Accessibility Checkpoints; in the [third segment](#) we covered the W3C's Level Two Accessibility Checkpoints; and in today's podcast we will be focusing on the W3C's Level Three Accessibility Checkpoints.

Throughout our miniseries I will be talking with Al Lemieux, Senior e-Learning Developer here at [Syberworks](#), and frequent contributor to the [Online Training Content Journal Blog](#) about [e-Learning](#) and [accessibility](#). Good afternoon, Al, how's it going?

Al Lemieux: Great.

Mary Kay: OK, let's get started. For Level Three, in the General Requirements section, it says, "Specify the expansion of each abbreviation or acronym in a document where it first occurs."

Al: Anytime you use the ABBR or ACRONYM tag, you need to put in a title attribute that defines the abbreviation or acronym.

Mary Kay: All right. The next one says, "Identify the primary natural language of a document." This one sounds pretty self-explanatory, but just so it's clear, what do they mean by "primary language?"

Al: This is in the HTML tag and XHTML 1.1. Use the LANG attribute to set the language of a page on your site. Usually it's LANG = EN for English.

Mary Kay: OK, on to the next one. "Create a logical tab order through links, form controls, and objects." Again, this one sounds like common sense, but why is it important?

Al: Some disabled users don't use a mouse at all to navigate; they navigate through keyboard access only. To facilitate better movement through a navigation menu on a page, the tab index and access key attributes can be used to find keyboard access to those items. For example, a menu that has ten items can have tab indexes that range from one to ten. The user can then simply type the number one on the keypad to activate the first item in the list. Tab index is also useful for navigating within a form. Likewise any link that can be given an access key attribute, which allows the user to access the link by any key on the keyboard.

Mary Kay: OK, the next one is about keyboard shortcuts, and it is always a popular topic on the [Online Training Content Journal Blog](#). "Provide keyboard shortcuts to important links, including those in client-side image maps, form controls, in groups of form controls." Where can someone find a list of keyboard shortcuts?

AI: Well actually, the keyboard shortcuts are not listed anywhere. They are created by the developer. When the screen reader reads the links to the user, it will identify the access keys associated with the links. Then the user can type a desired key and the link will be activated.

Mary Kay: OK, what about this one? “Until user agents, including assistive technologies, render adjacent links distinctively, include non-link printable characters, surrounded by spaces, between adjacent links.”

AI: Well this is also known as “skip navigation.” Let’s say I have a menu with 20 links, and immediately following that, there is a link to your contact information. Instead of having the user laboriously go through all 20 links before getting to the contact link, you can provide a skip navigation link that bypasses the 20 links and goes directly to the contact link. The problem with skip navigation is that it is visible even to the unimpaired user. There are ways to hide it using the Visibility property in [CSS](#). The model for skip navigation is the same as for anchored links; there would be a link to the top of this page that reads “skip navigation” and have a link to #contact. Next to the contact link, there would be a tag with a named anchor, possibly “skip.” The link at the top of the page goes to the contact link.

Mary Kay: Again, this one makes a lot of sense, but it is probably not done often. “Provide information so that users may receive documents according to their preferences, e.g., language, content, type, etc.”

AI: Wherever possible, alternative content should be offered to the user to meet their preferences. For example, a French version of your PH for French viewers. This also refers to interchangeability offered by the STYLE tag, to alter the presentation according to usage, such as screen, handheld, and print.

Mary Kay: All right, on to the next one. “Provide navigation bars to highlight and give access to the navigation mechanism.”

AI: This already echoes what has been said about good navigation practices: consistency is key.

Mary Kay: OK, what about, “Group related links, identify the group for user agents, and until user agents do so, provide a way to bypass the group?”

AI: Again, this refers to skip navigation.

Mary Kay: OK, the next one says, “If search functions are provided, enable different types of searches for different skill levels and preferences”

AI: This refers to a robust search engine. Think of Google for a moment. If you enter a term and you misspell it, Google doesn’t tell you that it can’t find any results. It offers you a suggested spelling, and returns the results that are based on that spelling. Also, if language is an issue, your search functionality should be able to interpret common terms and return results based on that interpretation. Essentially, the search feature, if you use one, has to be flexible and account for user error and preference.

Mary Kay: On to the next one. “Place distinguishing information at the beginning of headings, paragraphs, lists, etc.” This is another one, it sounds like common sense but...

AI: Yes, this goes back to the use of HEADER tags for headings. No mystery there.

Mary Kay: OK. The next is, “Provide information about document collections, i.e., documents comprising of multiple pages.” Is this like metadata for document collections?

AI: No, this is about using a LINK tag to inform the user of documents within a group. For example, you might navigate to a page within a table of contents. There may be a link tag that refers to the first chapter, another that

refers to the glossary, and another that refers to the index. Some screen readers can pick up these links and present them as navigation options.

Mary Kay: Oh, I get it. The last three in the general category seem intuitive, “Provide a means to skip over multi-line ASCII art. Supplement text with [graphic](#) or auditory presentations where they will facilitate comprehension of the page. Create a style of presentation that is consistent across pages.”

AI: ASCII art, isn't it cute?

Mary Kay: Uh-huh.

AI: If you do use it, use skip navigation for a user to bypass it, otherwise the screen reader will read every character that makes up that cute little elf. Supplementing text with [graphic](#) or [audio](#) for presentation to help facilitate comprehension has already been discussed. Whoever creates the content must consider all audiences, including the impaired user. I don't think I have to elucidate the last rule, that's pretty much a given. Think of a magazine. A magazine has a linear presentation of information. We expect to be able to read the information in a magazine in a certain, predictable way. The same principles that guide the design decisions for a magazine should translate to the web, with an emphasis on predictability and consistency.

Mary Kay: All right, on to using Level Three requirements for images and image maps. “Until user agents render text equivalents for client-side image map links, provide redundant text links for each active region of the client-side image map.”

AI: This, again, is referring to the use of text-based links in addition to the links for the images. If a user has their images turned off and there are no text links, they won't be able to navigate that image map.

Mary Kay: Sounds good. What about Level Three requirements for tables?

AI: Tables should have a summary attribute which describes the table. There is a recommendation here to use the ABBR attribute on TH tags, so future screen readers can quickly read through rows and columns. Finally, table layouts should be consistent and easy to read.

Mary Kay: Lastly, what about Level Three requirements for forms?

AI: Some legacy screen readers expect to see information in text input fields in order to read them correctly. Also, if you are using an image as a submit button, provide an <ALT> attribute to describe that button.

Mary Kay: Wow, AI, this is awesome, awesome information. I know you have to go, so that's all for today. Remember that all the links and resources mentioned today will be available in the transcript for this podcast, located at www.Syberworks.com/elearning_podcast.htm page in the [Media Center](#) on the [SyberWorks](#) web site.

In the [next segment](#) of our miniseries on e-Learning Accessibility for Training Managers and Human Resource Professionals, we will be talking about Flash accessibility. Until then, this is Mary Kay Kay Lefurno and...

AI: AI Lemieux, from [SyberWorks](#). Have a great month!

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