

ATI Weekly Newsletter

Week of 4/28/08

Welcome to the 1st edition of the Accessible Technology Initiative weekly newsletter. Published by the ATI staff at the CSU Chancellor's Office, this is a short update on ATI activities for the broad ATI community of the CSU system.

General ATI News:

Coming soon...CSU ATI Community Website. Is there an e-mail from one of the ATI community of practice (COP) listservs that you can't seem to locate? Is there a document that you have created on your campus that you would like to share with the ATI community? Soon, the ATI will be launching a website that will serve as a permanent, one-stop collaboration tool for the CSU campuses regarding web accessibility, procurement, and instructional materials. The site will be located at <http://ati.calstate.edu>. The primary function of the website will be for sharing best practices and documentation. It will be the most happening place to go for ATI news, articles, and discussions. It will feature announcements, interactive discussion boards, surveys, and document archives. For example, updates like the newsletter you are reading now will be posted on the new site. After a careful selection process, the ATI has selected Moodle as its platform for this website. Moodle is a learning management system designed to create online learning communities. Two of the most important factors that went into selecting Moodle as the platform for the new website were its accessibility and availability of tools to enable collaboration. Currently, we are working on configuring the layout, look, and feel, and should have it up by early summer. Stay tuned for forthcoming information on how to sign up and participate in the site.

Center for Accessible Media (CAM) News:

The CSU Center for Accessible Media is a systemwide database and clearinghouse for curricular reading materials that have been converted into accessible formats for use by students with disabilities. The primary goals of the project include (1) improving timeliness of access to materials, (2) reducing the need for in-house creation or conversion of materials, (3) improving efficiency for alternate media programs, and (4) increasing publisher compliance with requests for accessible electronic materials. CAM currently lists approximately 9,000 holdings that are available to Disability Services programs across the CSU system and has facilitated the sharing of nearly 2,000 titles since launch.

In March, the Chancellor's Office brought on a half-time graduate student from CSU Long Beach to provide database and web programming services for CAM. Over the last month, the CAM Director and Programmer have been focused on completing a thorough inventory, audit, and documentation effort for the current CAM site as well as remediating several minor functional or

accessibility issues. Beginning in May, CAM activities will center on the development of several new features. Among the early features to be added include streamlined data entry procedures, support for additional media formats, and the launch of a CAM public site that will allow CSU Faculty to search CAM holdings as part of the textbook adoption process. Other features will follow later in the year as CAM continues efforts to increase the availability of accessible curricular reading materials for students with disabilities.

Web Accessibility News:

From the listserv: Dr. Curtis Clark (Pomona) was kind enough to share his campus AccVerify instruction guide with the community; it is at <http://www.csupomona.edu/~ehelp/web/hisoftware/>. Peter Mosinskis (Channel Islands) had requested this to help update his own campus instructions. With the new ATI Moodle site, we'll be able to provide a convenient "home" for information like this. (Article below.)

Access to Instructional Materials News:

The CO is looking at several options for captioning needs. A Media Work Group has been evaluating the audio mining product DocSoft. A few schools have purchased the product and are examining implementation plans that would benefit other schools. Captioning companies are also meeting with our staff to discuss system-wide solutions. The procurement department of the CO is exploring methods for providing cost savings to all campuses.

The ATI IM team has prepared a template for the first year instructional materials report. That report will be sent to all campuses by May 1, 2008. The template will help you know what data is needed to provide comprehensive, yet consistent information about the IM progress on each campus. Those reports are due in June.

508 Procurement News:

We have added some new web pages to the procurement part of the ATI website:
"How to make a 508 Determination" that list common electronic and information technology (E&IT) items and what section of a voluntary product accessibility Template (VPAT) apply.
"How to search for a Voluntary Product Evaluation Template (VPAT)" that provides instructions on how to search or request voluntary product accessibility template (VPAT) from vendors.
Both pages are view at:
http://www.calstate.edu/Accessibility/EIT_Procurement/

ATI Training News:

The training strategy for the CSU in the areas of instructional materials, web sites, and procurement is under development by the ATI Training Task Force led by Jean Wells of the Chancellor's office. Members of the Task Force include Dr. Brett Christi of Sonoma State, Melissa Repa of Sacramento State,

Mary Fran Breiling of San Jose State, Trey Duffy and Mary Shaffer of San Luis Obispo, Riley Quarles of Humboldt State, and Penny Peterson of CSU Long Beach.

The Task Force has is completing the task of establishing training goals and objectives that will define the strategies for a delivering scalable and comprehensive training programs. In addition, an Awareness Campaign for campuses is also under development. Training needs are being identified by examining programs and resources that are currently available and determining what training needs to be repurposed or developed. The evaluation includes training both outside programs and those developed and used within the CSU system.

Sacramento State has contributed \$40,000 toward training goals. The EnACT program has contributed \$15,000 toward 10 training modules. San Jose is offering financial and production help in the area of web accessibility training. The Chancellor's Office is also offering about 2/3rds of the financial backing. A large part of these contributions will go to individuals who will prepare training programs. The platform for the delivery of training programs will be created and supported by the Chancellor's Office.

The process will take a considerable amount of time to develop in order for it to be sustainable over many years, but training will be delivered as soon as it is available. All campuses have been asked to report what training they have developed for accessibility so that it can be considered for part of the system-wide training program. If your campus has not reported this information, please contact Jean Wells at 562-951-4244.

General Accessible Technology News:

The US Distance Learning Association has just awarded Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania professors Dr. Samuel Slike and Pamela Berman with its 2008 International Distance Learning Award for their use of Wimba to offer courses specifically designed for deaf and hard of hearing students. The award, Best Practices for Distance Learning Programming – Online Technology in Higher Education, was presented this in conjunction with the 2008 National Conference in St. Louis, Missouri. The full story is here: <http://www.wimba.com/products/accessibility/> (Sent to us by Kathy Fernandes)