

ATI Newsletter, Vol. 1, Issue 9

October 31, 2008

Regional Meetings

Three out of six Regional Meetings have been held, completing the schedule for Southern California. Three Regional Meetings in Northern California remain.

In San Marcos, Best Practice presentations focused on faculty involvement in promoting accessibility in the classroom and building up infrastructure for web accessibility. OpenSpace discussions included budgeting for ATI, open captioning, and faculty issues, among others.

In Fullerton, Best Practice presentations were made on a faculty in residence program, an ATI/ADA website and web accessibility training. OpenSpace discussions were held on how to prioritize captioning, how to handle inaccessible LMS, cross-campus collaboration for web developers and more.

At Northridge, Best Practice presentations covered conducting assessments of accessibility involvement of faculty, web accessibility templates for faculty and a checklist for accessible procurement. OpenSpace sessions covered faculty research opportunities, a demonstration of the VPAT database, and low hanging fruit.

Special thanks are due to Linda Scott of San Marcos, Jim Powell of Fullerton and Sue Cullen of Northridge for their leadership in planning and organizing the Regional Meetings on their campuses.

The full presentations of Best Practices and the notes from all the Open Space sessions will be available on the ATI website very soon.

The remaining Regional Conferences are:

San Jose State Monday, Nov. 3

CSU Sacramento Tuesday, Nov. 18

CSU Fresno Friday, Dec. 5

For more information and to register, go to
<http://www.calstate.edu/accessibility/events/RegMtgs.shtml>

ATI Leadership Councils being formed

The ATI is forming Leadership Councils to play a central role in the implementation phase of the ATI. A Council will be established for ATI overall, web accessibility, instructional materials accessibility, 508 procurement and Professional Development. Each Leadership Council will include ATI staff and consultants, experts and respected authorities from campuses and from outside the CSU, and campus ATI coordinators. The Leadership Councils will define, validate and sustain ATI recommended practices, standards, tools and resources. The Leadership Councils will review all proposals submitted by the ATI staff, campuses and outside resources to determine consensus and direction. The result will be a standards-based approach to ATI implementation that can be followed and measured with reliability. The Leadership Councils, coordinated by ATI core staff, will meet regularly to prioritize goals and objectives for the year, review progress, provide research and support and measure success. The ATI is soliciting nominations for members of the Leadership Councils, either self-nominations or from others. For more information and for a nomination form, contact Deborah Kaplan, dkaplan@calstate.edu.

Final version of VPAT db in beta-test now – will be public by Nov. 15

The VPAT database is in its final beta-test now, with selected individuals from the campuses acting as reviewers. It will be launched on November 15, and at that point it will be available to anyone within the CSU system who is in a position to need to review a VPAT or who can add a VPAT. Users will be required to log on with a password. If you would like to be signed up as a user, please contact Sam Ogami, sogami@calstate.edu.

CalWAC scholarships now available for CSU employees

This year's California Web Accessibility Conference (CalWAC) will take place on the CSU Long Beach campus from January 12-14. This conference is highly recommended for a very concentrated and high quality immersion in web accessibility, whether you are a beginner or expert. CalWAC offers a comprehensive series of Web and IT accessibility courses for corporate and institutional Web developers, IT managers and specialists, programmers and policy developers; in short, anyone who needs to know about current best practices and techniques in accessible IT. Early Bird registration is available until Dec. 12, 2008 with different prices, depending how much of the conference will be attended. THE ATI IS MAKING A \$200 SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE TO ALL CSU EMPLOYEES. The online registration form will automatically apply the scholarship if you indicate you are a CSU employee.

What's next for professional development and training resources

The Professional Development Leadership Council comprised of 14 representatives from the CSU's has been hard at work for 9 months establishing a plan and platform to deliver training resources to the CSU. The Professional Development for Accessible Technology web site will be part of the Teaching Commons of the Center for Distributed Learning. The launch of the first phase of this site is expected by January 2009 and will provide campuses with direct links to training resources created by CSU campuses. This includes face-to-face, self-paced, and some modularized training for documents, multimedia, web sites, purchasing technology, promotional materials, and other resources.

This site will always be under construction as we continue to provide resources. The next phase of development will begin in January 2009 when more scalable training will start being constructed over the next year by campus developers. Additionally, training outside the CSU will be reviewed and added to the smorgasbord of resources as time permits. Many of you have contributed resources from a survey conducted in Spring 2008, but if you have more materials to contribute to these resources, please contact Jean Wells at jwells@calstate.edu.

iTunes U Coded Memo Update

An updated Coded Memo regarding iTunes U was issued on Wednesday, October 29, 2008. It provides an update on the status of accessibility of iTunes U, which can be described as much better but still not complete, and it commends Apple for its cooperation with the CSU to address the accessibility problems in a collaborative way. The pilot projects, which were mandated in a prior coded memo regarding iTunes U, are no longer required for a campus to move ahead in adopting iTunes U. Campuses are free to proceed as they determine is best, and are particularly advised to prepare a plan for the adoption of iTunes U to make sure that transcripts are available for audio files that can be found on iTunes U and to establish a method for dealing with the remaining accessibility issues. The ATI will continue to advise campuses about iTunes U accessibility, especially in light of Apple's agreement with the National Federation of the Blind and the state of Massachusetts to make iTunes U completely accessible by January 1, 2009. The coded memo can be found at <http://www.calstate.edu/acadaff/codedmemos/index.shtml>

RFP for Master Enabling Agreement for Learning Management Systems

An RFP for a system-wide Master Enabling Agreement for Learning Management Systems has been issued. In essence, this is a second opportunity for the LMS companies whose products didn't pass muster with the first RFP that was issued last winter, including Blackboard, Web CT, and Desire 2 Learn. The RFP review team is almost the same in composition as for the first RFP, and the review criteria will be the same. An outside accessibility evaluation company will be used to conduct the accessibility review because the CSU accessibility reviewers are not available this time. The fact that lack of accessibility was a key factor in the low rankings of the companies that did not succeed in the first RFP round appears to have made a difference. Blackboard, in particular, has made a serious effort to address accessibility concerns. The decision about which companies will be added to the Master Enabling Agreement will be made in the first quarter of the calendar year.

Target Settlement Webcast Archive is available

On October 20, the ATI hosted a one-hour webcast about the Target web accessibility legal settlement. The webcast featured presentations from Larry Paradis, Executive Director of Disability Rights Advocates, the law firm that brought the lawsuit against Target and Jim Thatcher, a private consultant web accessibility expert and presenter at CalWAC. An archive of the webcast is available for viewing at <http://www.calstate.edu/accessibility/events/targetsettlementwebcast.shtml> Be sure to turn the captions on when you view it. There is no audio recording.

Moodle Communication Site Launch

The ATI Community will soon have a new communication tool to share information, view archives of conversation threads, find out about upcoming events, store commonly used documents, and prepare for meetings. Using Moodle, the ATI team has developed a site that will be available to all people on the CSU campuses who are involved in ATI implementation. Unlike the ATI website at calstate.edu, it will not be open to the public. It will be launched in phases, beginning with the Procurement area and the ATI general landing page. Additional areas for Instructional Materials and Web Accessibility will be added. We expect to launch the first stage by mid November.

Lynda.com Web Accessibility training – spread the word!

The CSU has provided professional development sessions from Lynda.com for web accessibility available to all faculty and staff who access the training from a campus IP address. The link to those training materials can be found at <http://www.calstate.edu/accessibility/tutorials/lynda/>
Please let others know about it.

Zenith Digital TV Converter Box Wins 'Easy To Use' Praise From Advocates for Americans With Disabilities

WASHINGTON, Oct 15, 2008 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- The Zenith DTT 901 digital TV converter box is the perfect choice for Americans with disabilities, according to leading disability advocates. Easy-to-use functions designed to make new digital television (DTV) broadcasts more accessible for those with visual impairments and those who rely on closed captioning for entertainment and information are the key reasons the American Association of People with Disabilities, the Hearing Loss Association of America, the WGBH National Center for Accessible Media, and the American Council of the Blind are each praising the Zenith DTT901 converter box for design choices that make the product easier for all Americans to connect and use.

With only four months remaining until the end of analog TV broadcasts from full-power TV stations, TV viewers who rely on over-the-air reception now need to make decisions about how they will transition from analog to digital reception. An ideal solution is the new Zenith DTT901 digital TV converter box, one of the industry's most popular low-cost ways to keep an old TV running while enjoying the benefits of a better picture and more channel choices.

From <http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story/zenith-digital-tv-converter-box/story.aspx?guid=%7B40CF601B-5F49-45E9-B729-6EBB6721142A%7D&dist=hppr>

Maine group gets \$3.1 million from science foundation

By [Kelley Bouchard](#) *Portland Press Herald Staff Writer* October 27, 2008 02:53 PM

A team based at the University of Southern Maine has received a \$3.1 million grant from the National Science Foundation to promote careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics among students with disabilities.

The five-year grant will fund the development of an alliance involving USM and several Maine community colleges and high schools that will provide support and training to teachers and students.

The Eastern Alliance in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics will hold its first meeting this afternoon at Portland High School. The alliance includes Portland, Deering, Casco Bay and Bonny Eagle high schools, as well as Southern Maine and Central Maine community colleges.

The alliance is expected to serve about 500 students during the life of the grant, according to USM officials. The alliance will develop coordinated, multi-disciplinary experiences to encourage students with disabilities to pursue careers in science and technology. The experiences will include college-level preparatory classes; summer technology camps for high school students; undergraduate research scholarships for college students; and mentoring opportunities with working scientists.

The alliance also will evaluate institutional structures and resources to identify and clear obstacles to these careers. Starting in January, it will offer workshops for teachers on how equipment and classroom materials can be modified to support students with disabilities.

From: <http://news.maintoday.com/updates/034823.html>