

## New Americans with Disabilities Act Digital Accessibility Rule

To our Big Ten Academic Alliance colleagues:

On April 24, 2024, the Department of Justice (DOJ) published the Americans with Disabilities Act's new digital accessibility rule: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability; Accessibility of Web Information and Services of State and Local Government Entities [[federalregister.gov](https://www.federalregister.gov)]. This rule requires public universities to ensure their programs, services, and activities offered through digital tools, including web and mobile applications, are accessible. Depending on their size, universities will have two or three years to comply. [ADA.gov](https://www.ada.gov) contains an overview factsheet about the new rule.

### Why this new rule?

- DOJ has consistently noted that public universities' websites and digital tools must be accessible.
- Universities have become increasingly reliant on technology, whether for learning, working, or transactions like reserving library books or paying for parking. This rule clarifies the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines at level 2.1 AA \[w3.org\]](https://www.w3.org) is the current digital accessibility standard.
- Technology offers the benefits of ease of use and privacy. The new rule ensures these same benefits to disabled individuals through accessing the same information, engaging in the same interactions, and conducting the same transactions the technology affords to nondisabled individuals.

### What is the new rule's impact?

- Technology must be readily accessible to and usable by disabled individuals. Generally, universities may no longer rely on alternate versions or other workarounds to address barriers created by inaccessible technology.
- Since anyone can create digital content, such as electronic documents, universities will need a cross-campus effort beyond information technology teams to comply. Training will be essential, along with resources to identify which tools currently do not comply. Barriers will need to be remediated and ongoing maintenance will be crucial as digital tools evolve. Universities should anticipate a [financial cost \[PDF\]](#) to adhere to the new federal requirement.



## What should I do now?

Carefully review the new rule and raise awareness within your institution. The rule takes effect soon, so there is limited time to review your institution's digital accessibility policy and determine the next steps to ensure your institution complies.

## How can I get more information?

The Big Ten ADA Coordinators Group (ADAC), Information Technology Accessibility Group (ITAG), and Library Accessibility Group can assist with providing information and guidance to comply or operationalize the new rule.

The following webinars will be offered. Mark the date and attend!

- About the New Rule (ADAC): June 28, 1pm – 2pm CST
- Operationalizing the New Rule: (ITAG): date to be announced
- Library and Learning Technologies: (Library): date to be announced
- Question and Answer Panel: date to be announced

Accessibility is a shared responsibility of everyone at your institution. It takes all of us to ensure websites, documents, digital tools, and other electronic content are readily usable by all. Thank you for your attention to this new rule.

Sincerely yours,

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**Enjie Hall** (Minnesota), **Scott Lissner** (Ohio State), **Ruben Mota** (Wisconsin), and **Cara Reader** (Indiana) on behalf of the BTAA ADA Coordinators

**Emily Baker** (Chicago), **Jane Berliss-Vincent** (Michigan), and **Kathy Braidic** (Ohio State) on behalf of the BTAA Information Technology Accessibility Group

**Frank Sweis** (Northwestern) on behalf of the BTAA Library Accessibility Group

**Charles Collick** (Rutgers) on behalf of the BTAA Learning Technology Leaders Group