Engaging People with Disabilities: Barriers & Best Practices

Sheryl Burgstahler
sherylb@uw.edu

W

2 Units in Accessible Technology Services

IT Accessibility Team
- 1984–
- Funded by UW

DO-IT Center
- USA, 1992–
  Supported with federal, state, corporate, private funds
- DO-IT Japan, 2007–
- Center on UD in Education, 1999–

DO·IT

Disabilities
Opportunities
Internetworking
Technology

Access Computing

Basic approaches

- When we are working with students, we promote
  SELF DETERMINATION

- When we are working with faculty, staff, institutions, technology companies, we promote
  UNIVERSAL DESIGN (UD)

In an "inclusive" environment everyone

- who meets requirements, with or without accommodations, is encouraged to participate
- feels welcome
- is fully engaged in accessible & inclusive environments & activities

Common/expensive accommodations for online courses

- Making inaccessible documents accessible, mainly reformatting PDF files

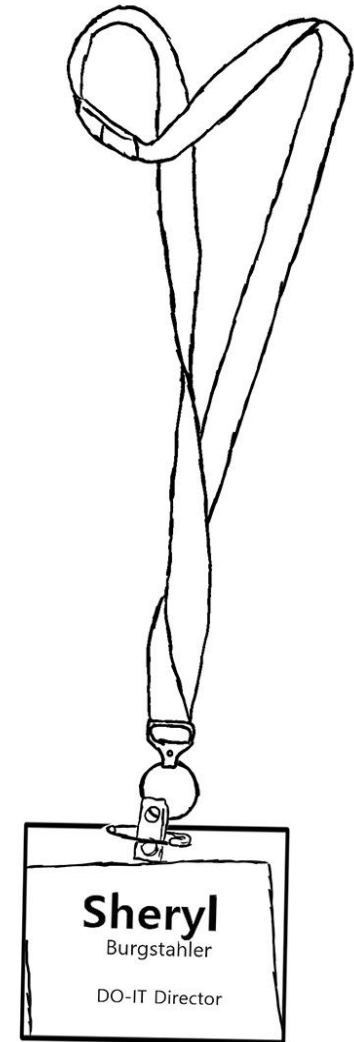- Captioning videos

Access Computing

Universal design (UD) =

"the design of products & environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design."
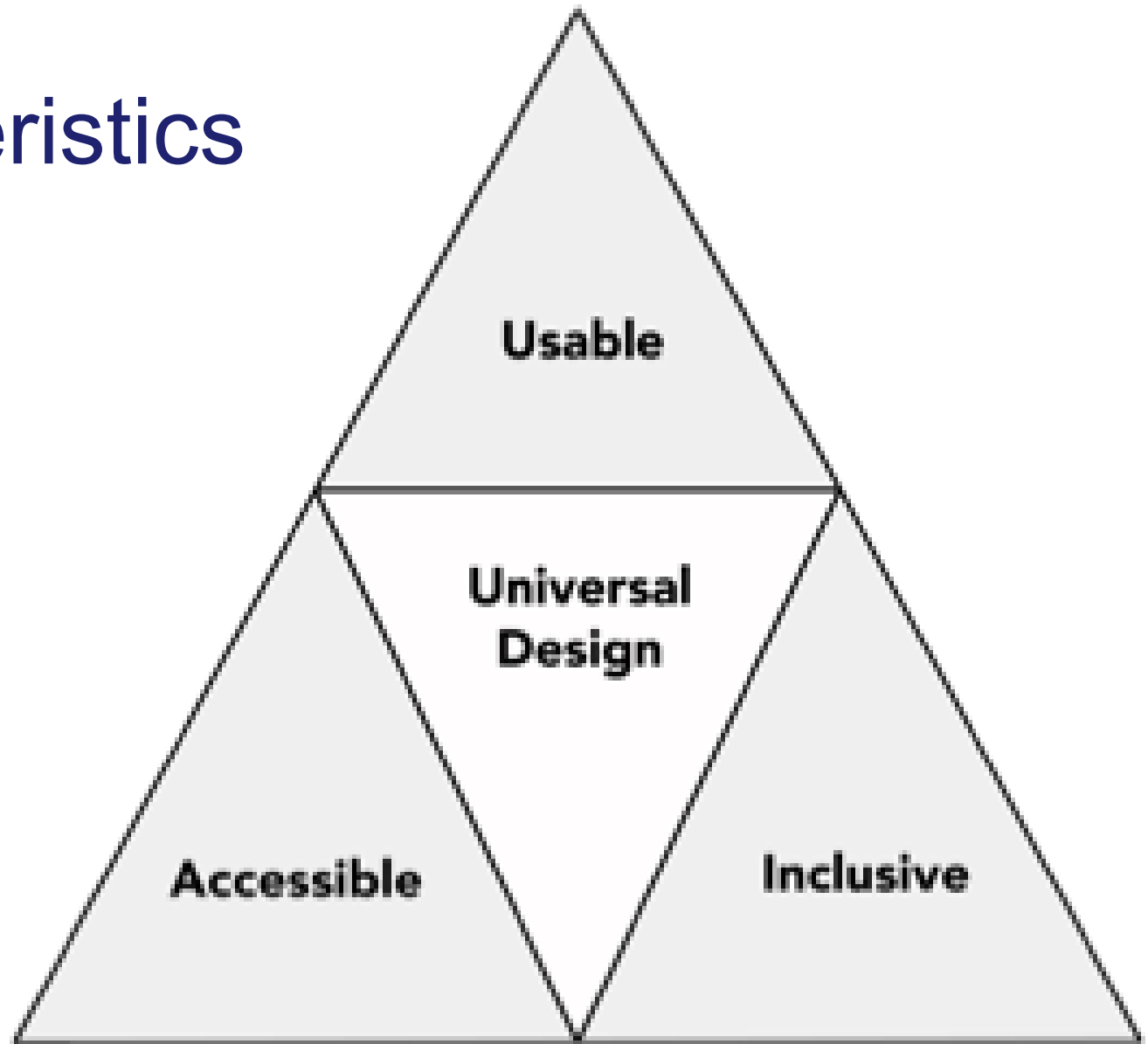
The Center for Universal Design
www.design.ncsu.edu/cud

Characteristics of UD
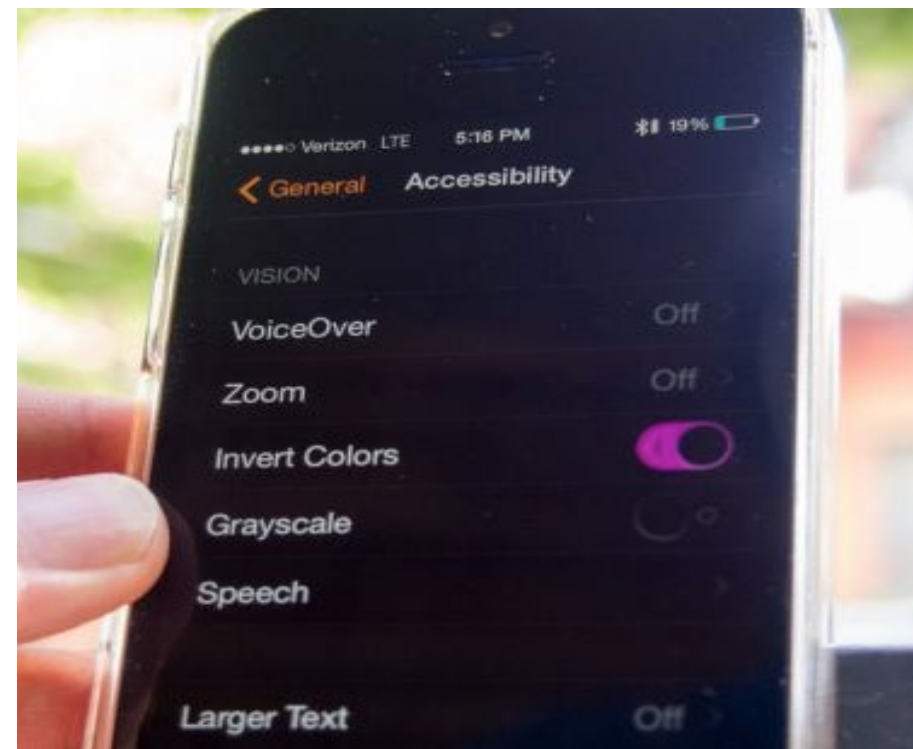
Ramp The Curbs

RAMP THE CURBS
GET ME OFF THE STREET

CO-ED

MEE

Forging a stream of humanity, this silent protester carries his campaign on his back. His goal: to end high-rise sidewalks. (photo by grant haller)
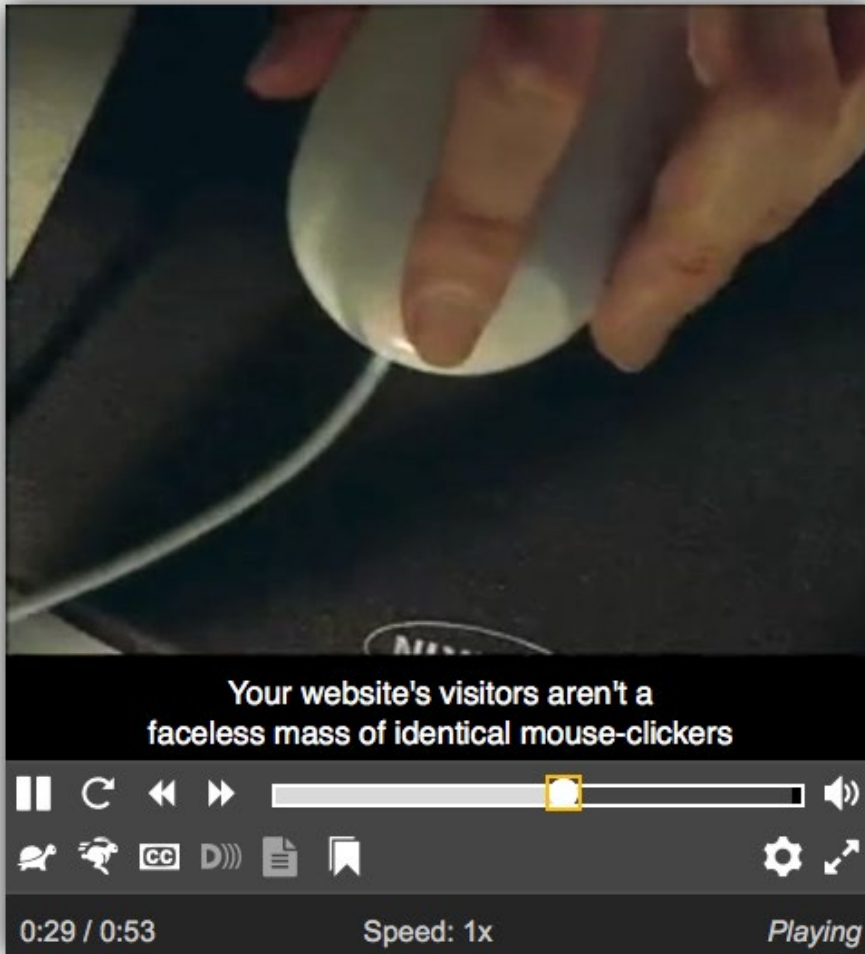
UD of physical spaces

"The Daily"
UW

1970

UD of technology

- builds in accessibility features

- ensures compatibility with assistive technology

Beneficiaries of captions on videos…People who:

Your website's visitors aren't a faceless mass of identical mouse-clickers

0:29 / 0:53   Speed: 1x   Playing

- are unable to hear the audio

- are English learners

- are in a noisy or noiseless location

- have slow Internet connections

- want to know the spelling of words

- need to find content quickly

3 sets of principles underpin UDHE guidance for all aspects of education

UD

WCAG   UDL
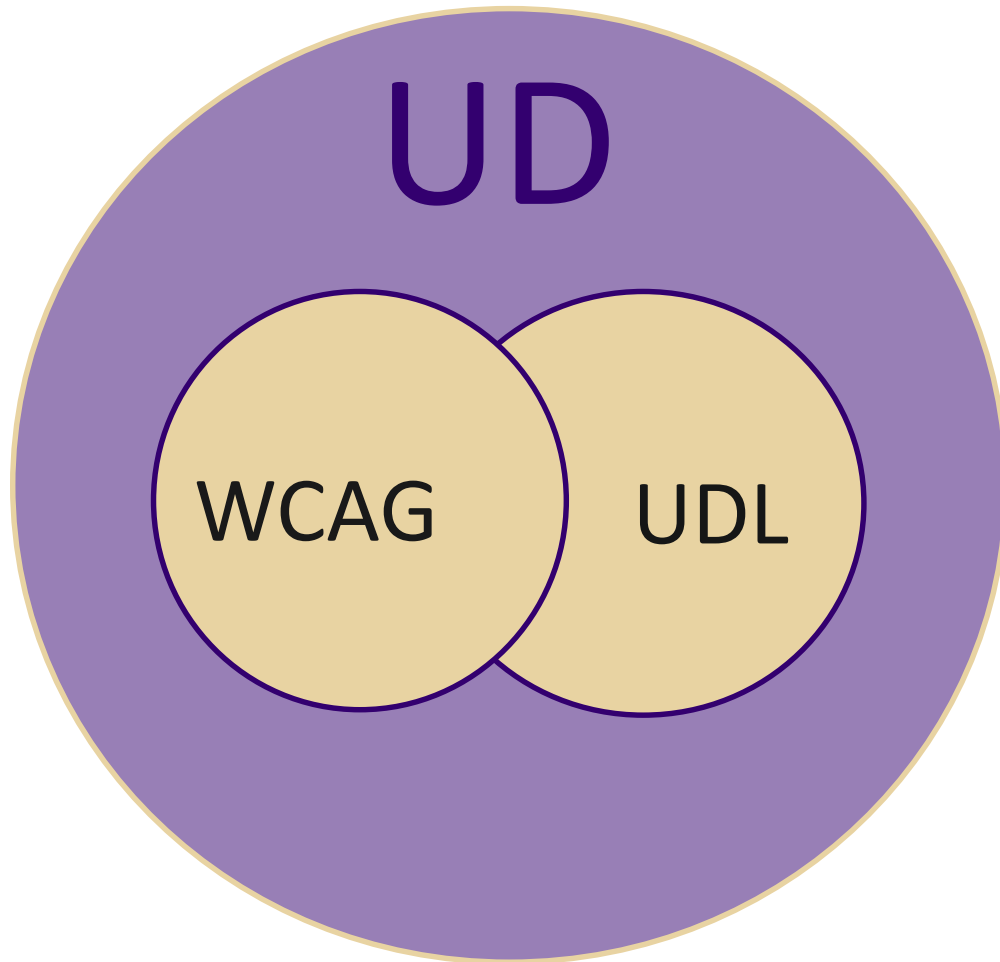
- 7 Universal Design

- 3 Universal Design for Learning

- 4 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

Access Computing

In a nutshell,

1. Provide multiple ways for participants to learn & to demonstrate what they have learned.
2. Provide multiple ways to engage.
3. Ensure all technologies, facilities, services, resources, & strategies are accessible to individuals with a wide variety of disabilities.

Access **Cyberlearning** — 20 Tips for Teaching an Accessible Online Course

By Sheryl Burgstahler, Ph.D.

I taught the first online learning course at the University of Washington in 1995. My co-instructor was Dr. Norm Coombs, who was, at the time, a professor at the Rochester Institute of Technology. We designed the course to be accessible to anyone, including students who were blind, deaf, or had physical disabilities.

- With references
- Additional video & tutorial
- Developed from literature review & reports from online instructors & students

Course materials

- Use text-based written materials; avoid PDFs, especially scanned images
- Structure headings, lists
- Provide descriptive text for hyperlinks & images
- Use large fonts, plain backgrounds
- Caption videos

Instructional methods

- Make instructions & expectations clear
- Provide options for communicating, learning, & demonstrating learning
- Provide options for demonstrating learning
- Use plain English, spell out acronyms, define jargon

An attitude; a framework, goal, process—UD:

- Values diversity, equity, & inclusion
- Promotes best practices
- Does not lower standards
- Is proactive
- Can be implemented incrementally
- Benefits everyone
- Minimizes the need for accommodations

Resources

- *Center for Universal Design in Education*   uw.edu/doit/cude

20% book discount with code INLEHE

20 Tips for Teaching an AccessibleOnline Course

- *AccessINCLUDES*
  uw.edu/doit/programs/accessincludes

- Email sherylb@uw.edu to join the UDHE online community of practice