

**Accessibility for All #2:
Practical Tips for Creating Access in Archives
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*Seeing Accessibly: A Review Tool for Taking Small
Steps to Improve Accessibility in Your Archives*

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Making Conference Presentations Accessible

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Providing Physical Accessibility in Your Archives

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Tips for Web and Document Accessibility

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Seeing Accessibly

**Top 20 Look List:
A Review Tool for Taking Small Steps
to Improve Accessibility
in Your Archives**

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1. Have you read the following recently?

- *SAA Code of Ethics for Archivists*
- *SAA Core Values of Archivists*
- *Best Practices for Working with Archives Employees with Physical Disabilities*
- *Best Practices for Working with Archives Researchers with Physical Disabilities*

1. Have you read the following recently? (cont.)

- Revisit.
- At heart human issues.

2. Look at your public entry.

- Well marked?
- Well lit?
- Sheltered?
- Accessible parking spaces designated?
- Curb cuts close to entrance?

2. Look at your public entry (cont.)

- Path clear of obstacles?
- Ramp or sloping path?
- Railing?
- Automatic or power-assist front door?
- Wide enough?—36 to 42 inches.

3. Look at the access for patrons and employees to your public spaces.

- Directions clearly marked?
- ADA compliant elevator?
- Door lock within seated reach?
- Braille markings on controls and information panel?

3. Look at the access for patrons and employees to your public spaces (cont.)

- Emergency phone?
- Tripping hazards removed?
- Accessible security checkpoints and procedures?
- Accessible coatroom with lockers?
- Accessible restroom available?

4. Check your doors.

- Easy to open or heavy and difficult?
- Glass window in the entrance door?
- All glass doors marked for safety?
- Entry phone?
- Door closure adjusted for delay?
- Levers or pull handles?

5. Look at your floors.

- Slippery surfaces?
- Loose mats or carpets?
- All carpets firm and flat?
- Contrasting color between walls and floors?
- Dangling wires or other wiring hazards?
- Fix unstable flooring to help everyone.

6. Look at the layout and furniture in your research room.

- All spaces negotiable for wheelchairs?
- Aisles wide enough?—36 to 42 inches.
- Clear sight lines?
- Room obstacle and clutter free?
- Service desk accessible?

6. Look at the layout and furniture in your research room (cont.)

- Separate area for conferring?
- Chairs with sturdy arms and good support?
- Worktable accommodate wheelchair?
 - ADA regulation: <http://www.ada.gov/>
- Use coasters or casters.

6. Look at the layout and furniture in your research room (cont.)

- Table chairs adjustable with appropriate casters?
- Bookshelves, magazine and brochure displays, and handouts within reach for all? – 48 inches.
- Extra outlets?
- Designated quiet area?
- Eliminate physical barriers.

7. Look at your exhibit areas.

- Exhibits negotiable for wheelchairs?
- Can everyone see?
- Braille or audio options?
- Labels in accessible fonts, color, and contrast?
- Item labels at easy to read height and size?

8. Look at your work and storage areas.

- Aisles wide enough?—36 to 42 inches.
- Aisles obstacle free?
- Anything hanging off shelves?
- Power cords in aisles?
- Any dangling wires?
- Are staff spaces an obstacle course?

8. Look at your work and storage areas (cont.)

- Items should fit shelves.
- Nothing blocking aisles.
- Wide aisles are best.

9. Look at your conference/meeting rooms and presentation options.

- Can room be navigated in a wheelchair?
- Conference table accommodate a wheelchair?
- Room well-lit and quiet?
- Microphone available?

9. Look at your conference/meeting rooms and presentation options (cont.)

- On-screen presentations clear, simple, large print and high-contrast?
- Presentations available in alternative ways?
- Set up for meetings by telephone?

10. Consider ergonomic issues for all staff and patrons.

- Workstations modified as needed?
- Can adaptive equipment and furniture be added?
- Consider desks, chairs, lighting, and computer assists.
- Electrical outlets and light switches reached sitting and standing?

10. Consider ergonomic issues for all staff and patrons (cont.)

- Specialized software
- Larger monitors
- Keyboard placement
- Oversized keyboards

11. Have you tested your sound, fire, security and alarm systems with the needs of differently-abled staff and researchers in mind?

- Both visible and audible fire alarms?
- Alarm box within seated reach?
- Staff and patrons who are differently-abled clearly included in emergency/evacuation plans?

11. Have you tested your sound, fire, security and alarm systems with the needs of differently-abled staff and researchers in mind? (cont.)

- Designated meeting place?
- Employees trained to assist all patrons and colleagues in emergency?
- Sought advice from fire department, police department or institutional safety department?
 - Costs nothing; gains much.

12. Look at your informational signs.

- Simple and clear?
- Include universally recognized icons?
- Clear, appropriately coded floor plans?
- Signs and handouts in accessible fonts, color, and contrast?
 - Costs little; benefits more.
- Height and size for easy reading for all?
- Audio and/or Braille options?

13. Use your public access computer with only one hand and with one eye covered.

- Easy to maneuver controls?
- Easily see what's on screen?
- Enlarged text feature?
- Free open source screen readers installed and available?

13. Use your public access computer with only one hand and with one eye covered (cont.)

- Screen adapters, adaptive keyboards, keyboard overlays, or voice input available?
- Trackball, touch pad, or touch screen available?
- Comfortable for someone seated in wheelchair?
- Person always nearby and available to help?

14. Look at your website.

- Simple, easy to navigate, clear, and direct?
- Easy to search?
- Font large enough or easy to change?
- Good contrast between text and background?
- Alternative formats available?

14. Look at your website (cont.)

- Distracting “bells and whistles” eliminated?
- Information re: resources and services for special users clearly articulated and linked online?

15. Look at your informational documents and other printed materials.

- Font clear and large for easy reading?
- Enough white space?
- Good contrast between text and background?
- Sentences short and clear?
- Visuals that help?
- Aural or Braille options?

16. Listen to your archives voice message.

- Spoken slowly and clearly?
- Options or specific instructions for support to physically or virtually access archives?
- Name, number and email address of an actual person?

17. Are basic accessibility tools at hand for staff and researchers?

- Create an “accessibility” toolbox.
- In “Sadie’s Bag”: magnifiers, reading glasses, book props, page turners, pencils with large grips, hand-held recorder and player, flash drives, and task lights.

18. Have you discovered the principles of Universal Design?

- Discovered the Center for Universal Design?

<http://www.ncsu.edu/project/design-projects/udi/>

18. Have you discovered the principles of Universal Design? (cont.)

- 7 Universal Design principles
- Framework for design of “products and environments usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.”

18. Have you discovered the principles of Universal Design? (cont.)

1. Equitable Use
2. Flexibility in Use
3. Simple and Intuitive Use
4. Perceptible Information
5. Tolerance for Error
6. Low Physical Effort
7. Adequate Size and Space for Approach and Use

19. Have you invited colleagues and researchers who are differently-abled to participate in space, program or web site assessment and design?

- Invited those with diverse abilities to evaluate?
 - A collaborative and multi-dimensional approach = many perspectives and benefits all users.

**19. Have you invited colleagues and researchers who are differently-abled to participate in space, program or web site assessment and design?
(cont.)**

- Remember: Technology “may either enhance or impede one’s abilities to access information.” (Copeland, p. 233)
- Real people with real experiences mean real solutions.

**19. Have you invited colleagues and researchers who are differently-abled to participate in space, program or web site assessment and design?
(cont.)**

- Visit: DO-IT Center at the University of Washington:

<http://www.washington.edu/doi/>

- DO-IT = Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology

20. Are respect, inclusion, cooperation and compassion hallmarks of your archives?

- Accessibility issues known to all?
- Accessibility part of training?
- Policies accommodate employees who are differently-abled?

20. Are respect, inclusion, cooperation and compassion hallmarks of your archives? (cont.)

- ADA regulations and “reasonable accommodations”:
 - Flexible hours, working from home, longer and more frequent breaks, and work-sharing.

20. Are respect, inclusion, cooperation and compassion hallmarks of your archives? (cont.)

- Colleagues readily available for staff and patrons?
- Assistance available and freely offered?
- If assistive technology available, can all staff use?

20. Are respect, inclusion, cooperation and compassion hallmarks of your archives? (cont.)

- Assistance tailored to the user point of view?
- Know the legislative and/or legal requirements?
- Accessibility sustainability built into policies, budget planning, and all review processes?

20. Are respect, inclusion, cooperation and compassion hallmarks of your archives? (cont.)

- Basic human kindness
- Create a welcoming environment
- Always offer assistance
- Access, security, safety, assistance equally available to all colleagues and patrons.

Finally, in the context of your own institution, what has been left out?

- Can't be fixed: money, architecture, etc.?
- Workarounds?

SAA AMRT/RMRT Joint Working Group on
Accessibility in Archives and Records
Management web site:

[http://www2.archivists.org/groups/amrtrmrt-
working-group-on-accessibility](http://www2.archivists.org/groups/amrtrmrt-working-group-on-accessibility)