Accessible by (Universal) Design

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My awareness of the importance of accessibility in libraries (and my motivation for editing this issue of *Library Technology Reports*) began when I was a reference and instruction librarian at Ohio University, an institution with a strong commitment to accessibility for its large community of disabled patrons. This ethic then solidified when I was E-learning librarian at UC Berkeley between 2008 and 2010, where I had the opportunity to work closely with a colleague and disability advocate Lucy Greco on an e-textbook accessibility initiative. Lucy, who has been blind from birth, transformed my understanding of the word access. She helped me perceive that not only should librarians understand the need for accessible spaces and services, we have the power to advocate for this ethic among vendors and in wider society.[1]

All it takes to become an accessibility advocate is basic awareness and a commitment to fostering universal design in your organization. It is my hope that this issue of *Library Technology Reports* has contributed to your understanding of the fundamentals of accessible practice in libraries, and moreover, that it has empowered you to begin putting this knowledge into practice in the following ways:

- **Standards.** Build actionable knowledge into accessibility best practices and standards, as well as meaningful awareness of the disabled user experience.

- **Spaces and services.** Offer an appropriate range of assistive and adaptive technology tools to serve the needs of the community of disabled patrons, and encourage patron awareness of the library options that are available to them.
- **Devices.** Connect disabled readers with mobile devices and e-books that reflect good accessibility design and information architecture.
- **Websites.** Design accessible library websites that facilitate information discovery by patrons who use assistive or adaptive technologies.
- **Collections.** Build accessible collections of online content (e-books, e-journals) and subscription search and discovery tools (databases, OPACs).

As one of the few public agencies charged with recognizing the access rights of all, libraries—and librarians—can and should steer ourselves in a more universally usable direction by committing to accessibility in our sites, collections, services, and spaces.

Note

1. Char Booth, "E-texts for All (Even Lucy): Ebooks and Accessibility," *Library Journal* 135, no. 13 (August 2010): 26–27, www.libraryjournal.com/lj/communityacademiclibraries/886230-419/e-texts_for_all_even_lucy.html.csp.