City of Los Angeles Uses CommonLook® to Improve Document Accessibility

Challenge

The City of Los Angeles and the district of Los Angeles / Long Beach, is home to over 18 million people. It is the policy of the City of Los Angeles that documents, web sites, social media channels and other communication vehicles should be provided in accessible formats and seamlessly integrate the needs of persons with disabilities.

Spurred on by a legal injunction a few years ago and its own policies, the City took steps to comply with the legislation governing accessible communications for people with disabilities, including the WCAG 2.0 AA standard. Given that the City administration includes 27 departments, all of whom have online documents and other communications materials, this was no small task.

The first challenge was to ensure the accessibility of new PDF documents being created. Concurrent assessments were conducted of thousands of existing documents for accessibility remediation purposes. A decision was also taken at the time to focus the initial effort on departments that provided emergency preparedness information. There was agreement that this was vital information and an appropriate place to start. Converting one key silo of information, made the opening phase of the project more manageable in size.

Solution

The individuals tasked with finding a solution that would address the City's document accessibility needs, soon discovered CommonLook software. The City purchased sufficient software licenses to equip most of the departments. Using the software, each department received a report on their PDF accessibility requirements. Departmental staff used the software tools to remediate and upgrade the relevant documents, as part of a major effort to comply with the legislation.

Today, Richard Ray, ADA Technology Access Coordinator in the City's Department on Disability continues to oversee the continued use of

City of Los Angeles

INDUSTRY

- Government

CHALLENGES

- Large multi-departmental organization builds capability to meet PDF document accessibility requirements
- Perform accessibility remediation on a large volume of existing documents
- Ensure new PDF documents are accessible
- Train City staff in accessibility document software and practices

RESULTS

- Long-term solution helps the City comply with accessibility legislation and address departmental communications needs
- Onsite software, and training enables City to scale up the availability of accessible PDF documents
- Ongoing access to accessibility remediation services available to meet demand and address complex documents

CommonLook tools while varying the number of software licenses to meet their requirements.

Mr. Ray cites "training" as a key factor in the successful implementation of the software tools and in document remediation generally. CommonLook trained City personnel in the use of the software and in document remediation practices. Currently, Mr. Ray estimates that hundreds of documents are being remediated each week using CommonLook software. The City also has the option of outsourcing particularly difficult documents to CommonLook for remediation.

Results

Partnering with CommonLook, has enabled the City of Los Angeles to meet their objectives regarding document accessibility. They have crafted a solution blending CommonLook software, training of City personnel, and when the need arises, remediation services. It makes sense to contract out to have "difficult" documents remediated. This approach gives the City a cost effective and "right sized" solution that has proven itself over time.

Tallying the Benefits

• Blend of onsite software, and accessibility remediation services, empowered internal teams, while adding scalability and expertise

• Improved accessibility remediation team productivity through training on software

• Faster remediation project completion with the assistance of outsourced services

• PDF documents are remediated as required, regardless of volume, document length or complexity

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