

Purdue University Calumet Improves Web Accessibility with Compliance Sheriff



Compliance Sheriff
By Cyxtera

Background

Located in Hammond, Indiana, near downtown Chicago, Purdue Calumet is an academically comprehensive regional university and part of the internationally respected Purdue University system.

Purdue University's web accessibility policy applies to websites, multi-media, learning management systems, documents delivered online, software and applications. To reach its compliance objectives – equal access and equal opportunity – Purdue Calumet required a comprehensive, automated compliance solution.

The Challenge

To serve over 10,000 students annually, the Purdue Calumet campus' online presence includes over 200 WordPress sites with more than 300 content editors. Access to a site is granted on request, with the requirement that editors meet with the University Relations team to learn how to use WordPress and how to comply with the web accessibility policy guidelines. Content contributors are determined by each department and have varying skillsets; some are clerical staff, some more specialized and others student workers.

Pamela Riesmeyer, Web Accessibility Coordinator for Purdue Calumet said, "With the many content contributors such as professors, TAs, web developers, etc. adding to our website, we were challenged with finding a way to educate them about our web accessibility policy, to monitor their work for compliance, and to remediate thousands of existing web pages alongside new issues. All while documenting the process."

"The procedure began by manually evaluating websites for accessibility. We would then meet with content editors to explain what was wrong, why it was an issue and how to fix the problems. We used a worksheet for each reviewed page to document compliance based on the Section 508 checkpoints. Initially, we provided these worksheets to the editors, but they were overwhelmed. We then created a summary document to point out problem areas, but that was also overwhelming to our editors. The manual process took too long and wasn't helpful for the editors because they didn't always understand the problems or how to fix them."

As a result, Purdue Calumet chose to look for a comprehensive, automated compliance solution for auditing and reporting against its web accessibility goals.

Quick Facts:

Organization

Purdue University Calumet is an academically comprehensive regional university and part of the internationally respected Purdue University system

Industry

Higher Education

Challenges

Automate the manual procedure of web accessibility across all online content

Solution

Compliance Sheriff

Benefits

- Automated compliance validation for websites, multi-media, learning management systems, online documents, software and applications
- Able to easily benchmark compliance against policy guidelines; prioritize issues for remediation; and document evidence of these efforts
- See measureable improvement in the accessibility of online content

Requirements

The university outlined a number of key requirements central to the automated web compliance solution. Riesmeyer continued, “We needed an easy to understand interface that was not intimidating or overly technical so it could be adopted with a minimal learning curve. We also wanted to provide a solution that would explain the accessibility violation to the content editor and show them how to remediate it. This would help us to improve web accessibility over time.”

To that point, the solution would need to document web accessibility progress by tracking each site, comparing it against others and reporting on it.

Finding the Right Solution

Riesmeyer’s team began researching automated web accessibility solutions. After speaking with a number of other schools and investigating solutions through online demos, Compliance Sheriff was selected because of its capabilities, pricing model and outstanding support.

Compliance Sheriff scans web properties and documents against more than 172 accessibility checks such as images, forms, and dynamic content interactions, plus 17 Alt text quality checks. Both structured and unstructured content is verified for accessibility – webinars, university videos, multi-media presentations; all of it is covered. It provides automated reporting to determine whether the information on any web property complies with internal university web accessibility policies alongside Section 508, and WCAG 2.0 standards.

Deployment, Training and Adoption

The Purdue Calumet web accessibility team worked with support to install Compliance Sheriff. The software was up and running in only a few hours. “Our web server administrator had Compliance Sheriff installed and in test mode before our kick-off call,” said Riesmeyer.

“We were able to use Compliance Sheriff immediately, but we decided to take our time introducing it to our editors. We knew they would be intrigued by it and we could then take the opportunity to meet with them about web accessibility, using the software as an incentive.”

Purdue Calumet’s accessibility team initially employed the default settings to scan each website for compliance. Next, customized checkpoints and scan setting were created to align with the school’s terminology.

As part of the roll-out, Cyxtera provided one-on-one training as well as group sessions. Riesmeyer said, “These sessions educated the University Relations team on how the software works to ensure we were getting the most out of it. The sessions provided valuable insight into how to use the software and ways to customize the checkpoints and reports to fit our needs.”

Benefits of Compliance Sheriff

Compliance Sheriff now automates web accessibility compliance across the Purdue Calumet campus' websites, multi-media, learning management systems, and online documents and applications. The benefits include being able to benchmark compliance against policy guidelines, prioritize issues for remediation, as well as document these efforts.

Riesmeyer continued, "We are now able to better track our progress against our web accessibility policy to ensure we meet our targets. The reports provided by Compliance Sheriff also help to document our on-going efforts to achieve web accessibility should this be requested by someone internally at the university, or externally in the event a complaint is ever filed."

Manual evaluations are still part of the validation process, but the Purdue Calumet team uses Compliance Sheriff to better determine the sites most in need of remediation." Doing this helps us establish priorities to focus our efforts. It not only saves my team time and resources, but also allows content contributors to solve their own web accessibility issues."

Compliance Sheriff has also played a big role in helping content editors understand and fix web accessibility issues on their sites. They simply click on a scan result link to see the page and exact location of the error, as well as information on how to fix it. Riesmeyer said, "It helps to take the sting out of the critique. Editors now take immediate corrective action and accessibility scores are increasing dramatically – sometimes overnight."

Learn more at www.compliancesheriff.com



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