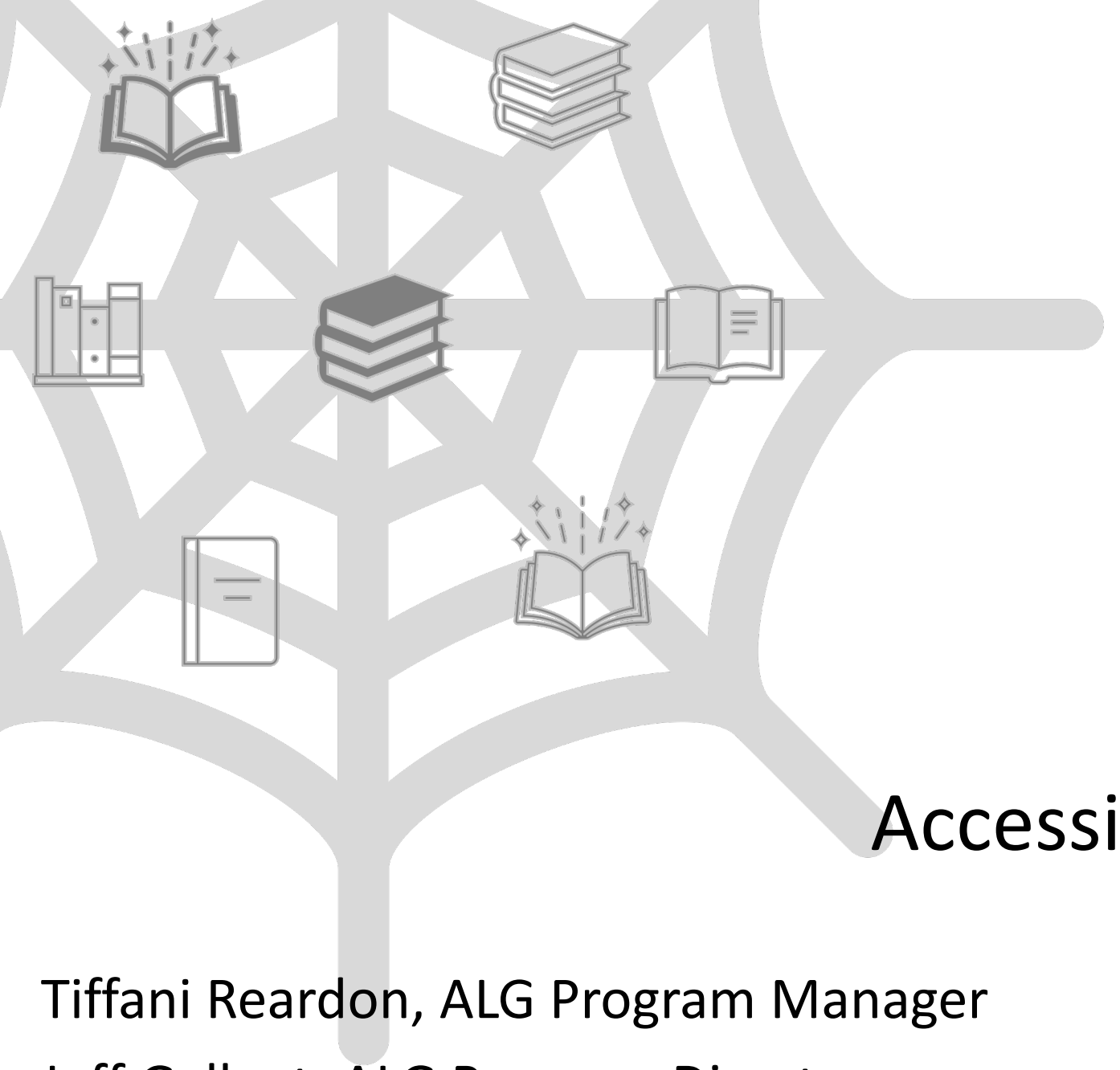


Into the Digi-Verse

Bringing Everyone into Accessibility and Inclusive Design

Tiffani Reardon, ALG Program Manager

Jeff Gallant, ALG Program Director

Accessibility at ALG: 2014-2016

- The first grants were anticipated to be adoption-only: they weren't
- Created a repository and needed to address accessibility
- Original plan: Educate on accessibility with AMAC (now CIDI) at each Kickoff Meeting
- Allowed faculty and staff the freedom to plan projects their way
- Mixed results: ALG had to fix many things behind the scenes after materials were submitted

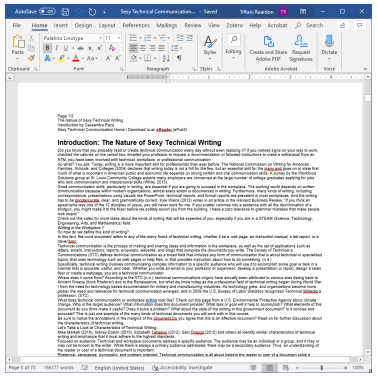
We Knew About UC Berkeley…

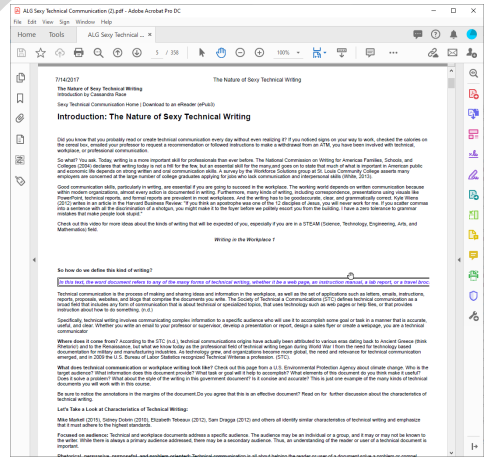
- 2016: UC Berkeley, through iTunes U, provided over 20,000 video and audio files for educational use
- The Department of Justice directed them to make all files accessible to comply with Section 508 and ADA
- Retrofitting these materials was so expensive that UC Berkeley deleted the files and stopped providing access
- Denying access would be *the opposite* of ALG's overall strategy

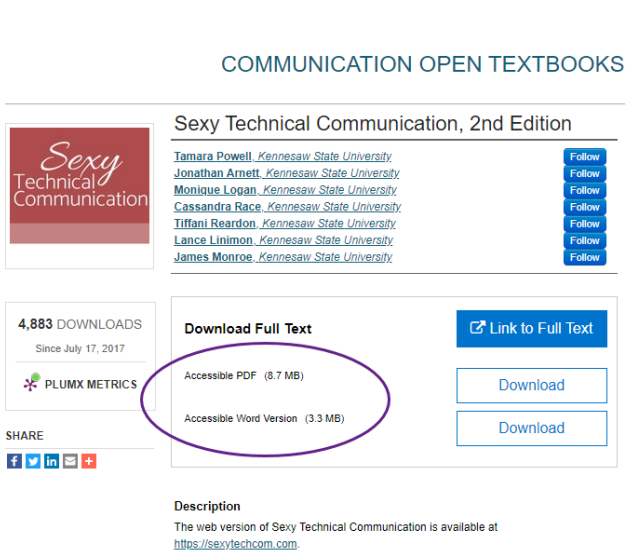
Accessibility at ALG: 2016-2020

Focused on system partnerships. Partnered with AMAC/CIDI, which provided:

- Basic screen readability for all files considered "textbooks"
- Conversions post-publication without edits
  - Tiny text
  - No heading structure
  - Remnant web elements
- More accessible than not, *but we can do better!*







The Dominant Accessibility Narrative *Then*…

Reactive

- Legal compliance for students with disabilities
- Retro-fit existing materials only when a student is identified

Negative

- Unreasonable accessibility knowledge expectations
- Limited tutorials and support, designed and worded for experts

"Accessibility is a **legal** thing.
We should leave it to the experts."

Two Shifts in the Narrative

Education is starting to look at accessibility differently!

From Reactive to Proactive

Instead of reacting to an unexpected legal need,

educators are now proactively designing for student access and success across the board.

The idea is to reach all students, regardless of ability, in engaging and accessible ways.

"Accessibility is **inclusion**. We need to do whatever we can to include all students."

From Reactive to Proactive: ALG's Approach in 2020

- Search for an Instructional Designer in 2019; Tiffani hired in February 2020
- Playing catch-up with retroactive accessibility efforts
  - In-house Instructional Design
  - University of North Georgia Press
  - Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation
- Releasing training materials for proactive accessible development
  - Tutorials designed for the OER developer
  - Training implemented at grants kick-offs
- Implementing new requirement on grants that new materials must be developed with a defined set of accessibility standards in mind

From Negative to Positive

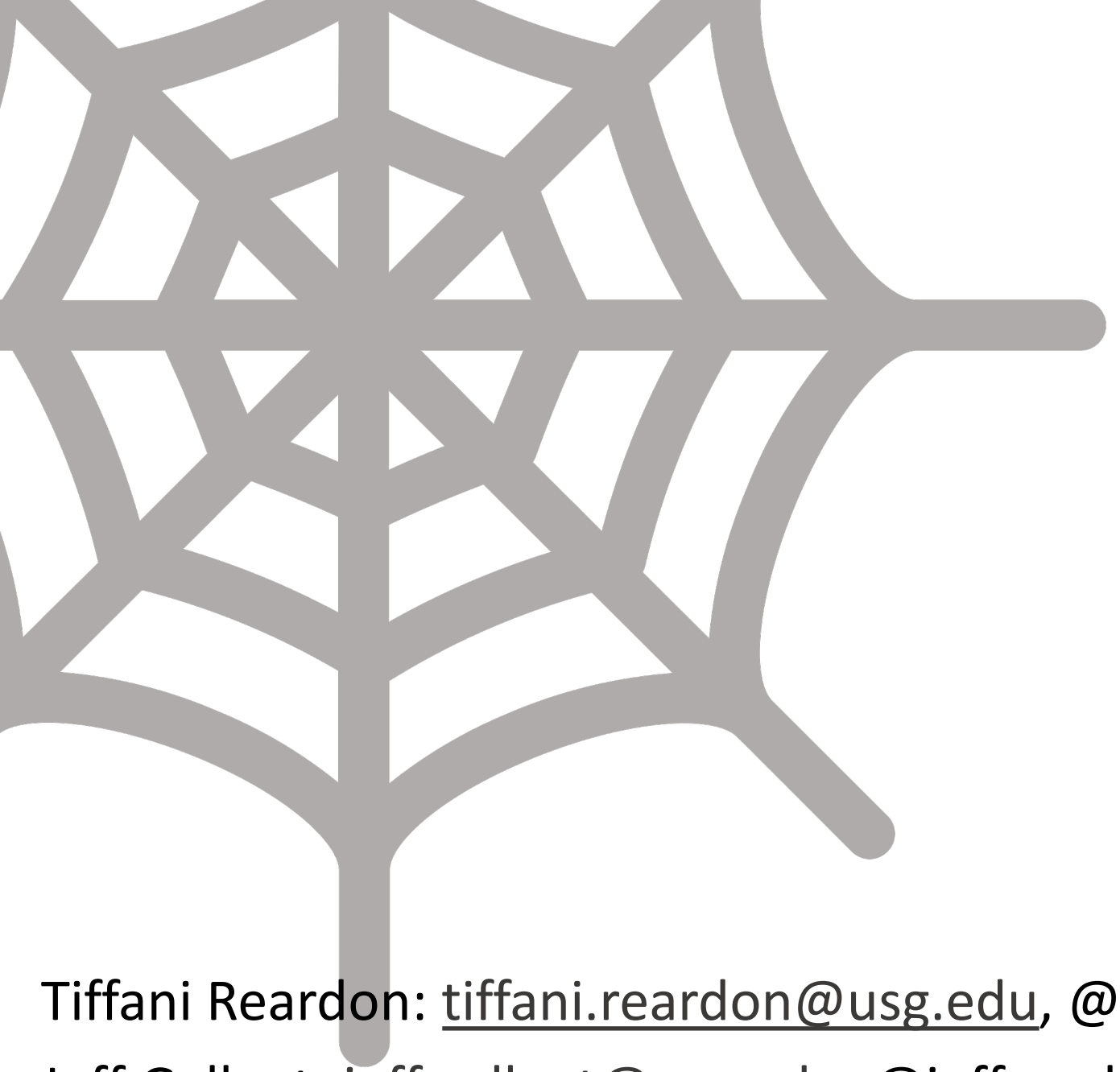
Instead of relying on the threat of a lawsuit to motivate teachers and librarians to become experts in accessibility,

institutions are starting to implement support for accessible development including instructional design, training, and more.

The idea is to help instructors make a good-faith effort of accessibility, often citing research on its impact on student success.

From Negative to Positive: ALG's Approach

- Providing grantees with information on why accessibility is important—without the focus of legal necessity—through CIDI
  - Explaining visible and invisible disabilities and the accessibility features those students might need
  - Showing videos of how students use assistive technology to better understand the guidelines
- Creating (and sharing openly) resources designed specifically for faculty and librarians making accessible OER
  - Emphasizing the absolutely necessary accessibility features over more obscure ones
  - Delivering in plain English with easy-to-follow tutorials



Questions?

Thank you for joining us!

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