

The UW System Learning Environment and Accessibility

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Lingo

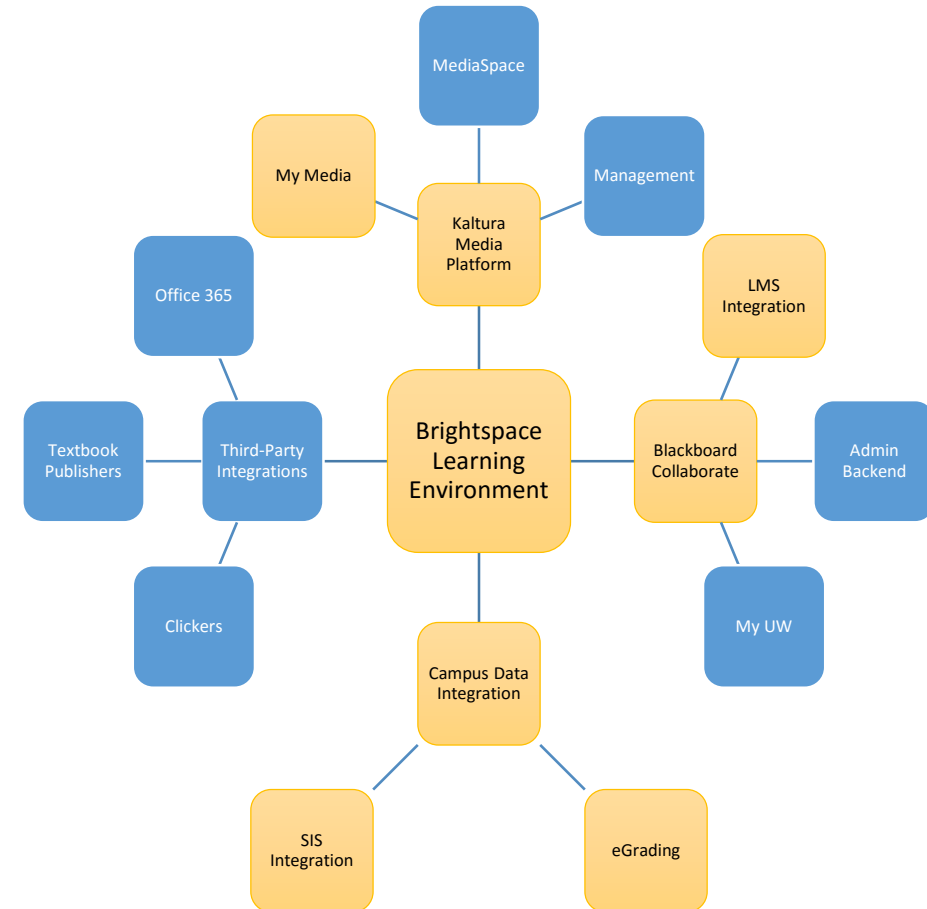
- D2L – the name of the company. D2L developed the software we use for our learning management system.
- Brightspace – the name of the learning management system we use as a foundation for online learning activities.
- Online Learning Environment – a term used to describe the entirety of tools offered for online courses. The LMS is part of our online learning environment, along with a host of other tools.
- D2L@UWM – the brand for the online learning environment at UWM.
- Learn@UW – the brand for the online learning environment for all of UW System.

Background

- From 2002-2004, Desire2Learn (the vendor) was chosen through a systemwide RFP process to provide their learning management system product to replace previous tools.
 - One campus hosts the tool, and each campus can configure it to taste.
 - Done during a time of rapid tool evolution and fierce competition.
 - Accessibility was in-mind when the tool was chosen. At the time, UW System Administration was actively working to make universal design and section 508 compliance part of campus culture in the Learning Technology space, in a time when the Learning Technology space was emerging.

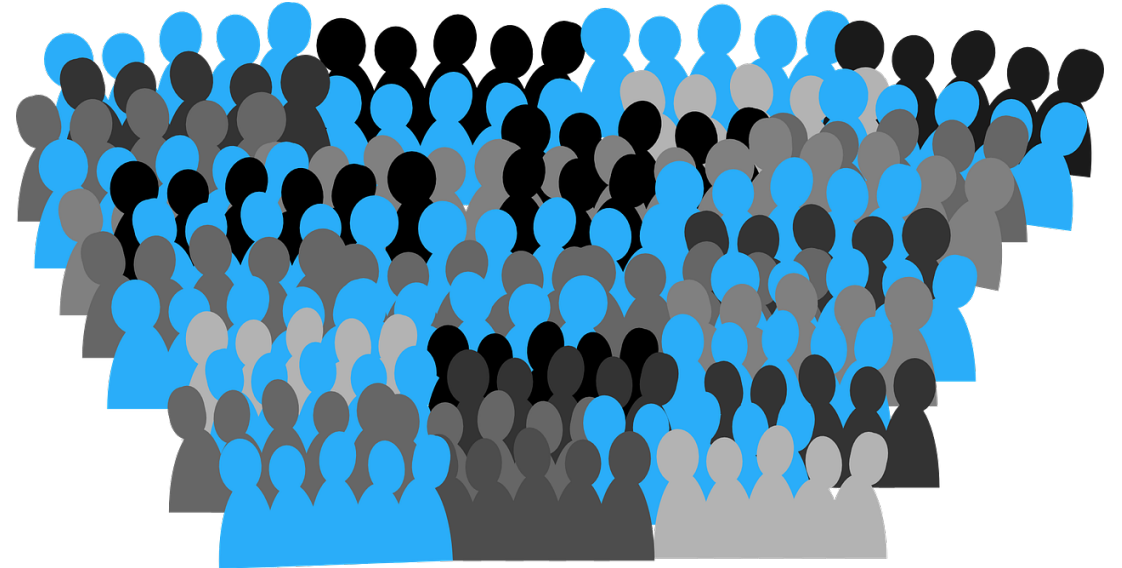
Introducing the Learn@UW Online Learning Environment (Branded D2L@UWM)

- D2L@UWM is a number of components (making the online learning environment)
 - Brightspace Learning Environment
 - Kaltura Media Platform
 - Blackboard Collaborate
 - Campus Data Integrations
- Core platform was vetted for accessibility.
- Brightspace allows the inclusion of other tools. Third-party tools must be vetted independently, as needed.



How D2L@UWM Is Used

- 95%+ Instructor Use
- 2,500 Course Websites comprised of > 3,000 sections
- Effectively 100% of Student Use
- More than 800 online or hybrid courses
 - Hybrid (Blended) = 20-80% online
 - Online = More than 80% online
- More than 90% use D2L course websites for delivering content and news



D2L's Business Activities Towards Accessibility

- Modern practices include:
 - Publishing of VPATs, WCAG checklists
 - Actively maintaining documentation on how to best use the platform for various needs
 - Feedback from D2L Community, Product Ideas Exchange
 - Clear publishing of changes, fixes and known issues in release notes.
 - Publicly available resources for creating accessible courses, and content templates
 - Workshops and presentations for education and outreach
 - Integrating accessible practices into Brightspace clearly, with notes on best practices

Integrated D2L Tools and Features – Part 1

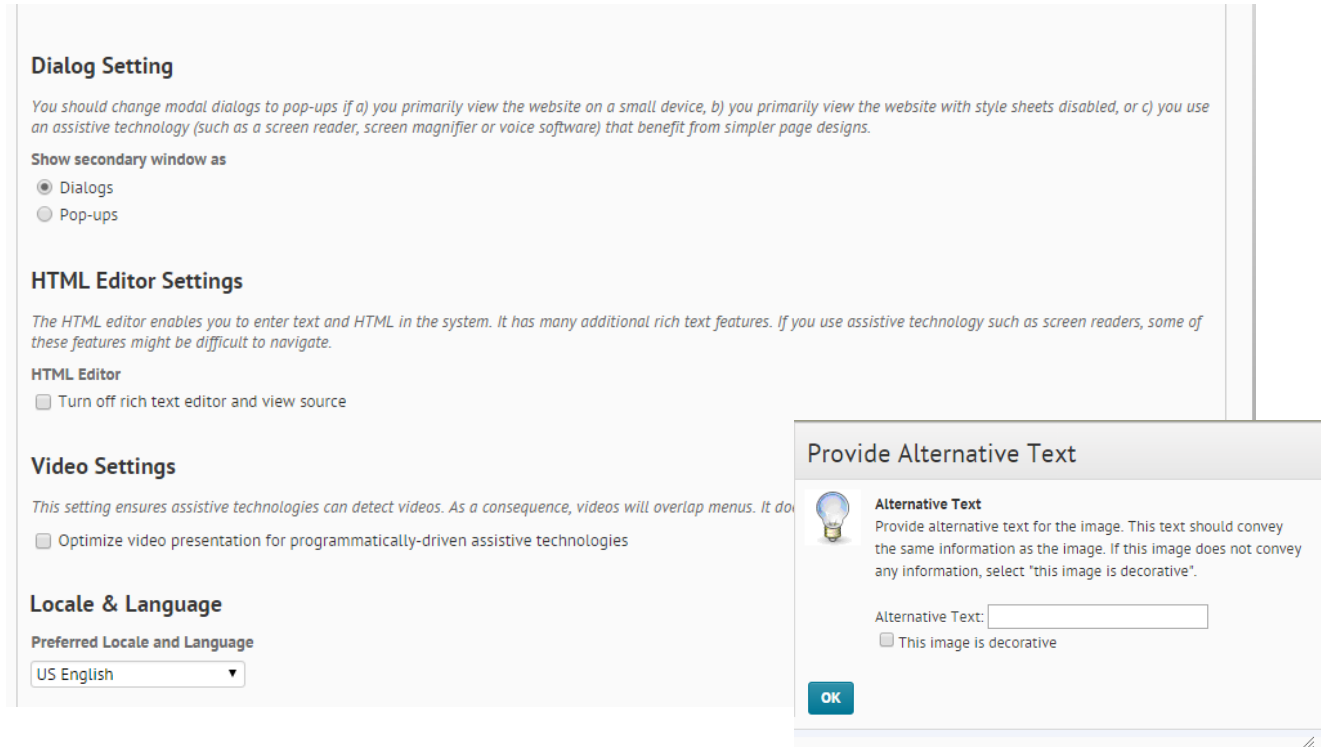
The screenshot shows the D2L LMS homepage for a user named David (Security) Delgado. The page includes a navigation bar, a 'My Courses' section with filters for Term and Department, and a 'Last 20 Accessed Courses' list. Several accessibility tool pop-ups are overlaid on the page:

- Heading List:** A dialog box listing page headings such as 'Navigation : 2', 'UW-Milwaukee : 2', 'My Courses : 2', 'Last 20 Accessed Courses : 2', 'Need help using D2L? : 2', 'Students : 2', and 'Instructors : 2'. It includes a 'Move To Heading' button.
- Links List:** A dialog box listing links like 'Skip to main content', 'My Home', and 'Manage Navigation & Themes'. It includes a 'Move To Link' button and options for 'Sort Links' (In Tab Order, Alphabetically).
- Select a Form Field:** A dialog box listing various form fields and buttons, such as 'Select a course... Button', 'Message alerts Button', 'Update alerts - You have new alerts Button', 'Subscription alerts Button', 'David (Security) Delgado Button', 'Admin Tools Button', 'Forumrequired Combo box -- Choose a Forum --', 'Titlerequired Edit', 'Insert Stuff Button', 'Insert Image Button', 'Insert Quicklink Button', 'More Insert actions. Button', 'Format Combo box Paragraph', 'Show All Components Button', 'Unlabeled1 Edit', 'Check Spelling Button', 'HTML Source Editor Button', 'Preview Button', 'Toggle Fullscreen Button', and 'Options: Allow anonymous posts check box not checked'.

- Headings and markup for all elements
 - Forms and headings properly tagged
- ARIA queues used (a technology to define controls and interaction types common in applications)
- Proper use of descriptive link names.

Integrated D2L Tools and Features – Part 2

- Clear descriptions of accessibility concerns, best practices and tips throughout the software



The image shows a screenshot of the D2L settings interface and an overlaid dialog box. The settings interface is divided into several sections:

- Dialog Setting**: A section with a descriptive paragraph and two radio button options: "Dialogs" (selected) and "Pop-ups".
- HTML Editor Settings**: A section with a descriptive paragraph and one checkbox option: "Turn off rich text editor and view source".
- Video Settings**: A section with a descriptive paragraph and one checkbox option: "Optimize video presentation for programmatically-driven assistive technologies".
- Locale & Language**: A section with a dropdown menu currently set to "US English".

The overlaid dialog box is titled "Provide Alternative Text" and contains the following elements:

- A lightbulb icon next to the heading "Alternative Text".
- Instructional text: "Provide alternative text for the image. This text should convey the same information as the image. If this image does not convey any information, select 'this image is decorative'."
- A text input field labeled "Alternative Text:".
- A checkbox option: "This image is decorative".
- An "OK" button at the bottom.

Upcoming Changes to Accessibility

- The following significant changes are expected with the upgrade coming to D2L over the Summer:
 - Built-in support for dyslexic-friendly typeface
 - Additional support for caption files for videos directly uploaded to courses
 - While this is strongly discouraged, it provides another way to generate necessary captions



What Does the Future Hold?

- Participating in the future development of instructor certification of basic accessibility and universal design practices
- Working with Kaltura, Learn@UW Utility and other stakeholders in UW System Accessibility Grant
- Eventually integrate accessibility assessment of third-party textbook publishers
- Actively working with instructors with disabilities to resolve issues
- Reviewing introductory D2L workshop to re-enforce accessibility awareness and best practices
- Investigating the options for remediating accessibility issues from within the LMS

Questions and Answers