

# Western Kentucky University

Western Kentucky University Ensures Accessibility with HiSoftware Compliance Sheriff®



## Quick Facts

### Organization

- The “Spirit of WKU” drives the campus community to make the university a better place to learn and excel WKU is committed to ensuring its web sites are accessible to the widest possible audience including students, staff, and faculty
- More than 21,100 students on four campuses

### Industry

- Higher Education

### Challenges

- Ensure all the different entities of WKU provide electronic content that is completely accessible.

### Solution

- HiSoftware Compliance Sheriff®

### Benefits

- Helped WKU to audit their websites, library electronic content and course delivery system
- Plays a crucial role in WKU’s effort to attain completely accessible content
- The campus community uses the software to create content that is much more accessible

## Background

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is a public university in Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA. It was founded by the Commonwealth of Kentucky in 1906, though its roots reach back a quarter-century earlier. WKU has a student body of over 21,000 students.

WKU is in the midst of a transformation - physical, intellectual, cultural and economic - and is becoming a Leading American University with International Reach. Whether in a neighboring community or in a distant country, WKU faculty and students are engaged in relevant applied research that provides solutions to real problems.

WKU is home to many highly ranked and nationally-recognized academic programs such as Journalism and Broadcasting, Education, Engineering, Business and an award-winning speech and debate team. With steady enrollment growth for 15 consecutive years, more than 21,100 students grace campuses in Bowling Green, Glasgow, Owensboro and the Elizabethtown area.

WKU prepares students of all backgrounds to be productive, engaged, and socially responsible citizen-leaders of a global society. The University provides research, service and lifelong learning opportunities for its students, faculty, and other constituents. WKU enriches the quality of life for those within its reach.



## Introduction

The “Spirit of WKU” drives the campus community to make the university a better place to learn and excel. The latest innovations in technology have provided a wonderful opportunity to learn from the internet and various electronic media. WKU is committed to ensuring its web sites are accessible to the widest possible audience including students, staff, and faculty. WKU campus community continually works on improving accessibility by following all recommended guidelines outlined in Section 508 of the

Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 and various other guidelines like WCAG.

## The Challenge

WKU hosts a large number of websites and provides electronic content through various vendors. WKU also provides various degrees and courses through the Distance Learning division. The main challenge was to ensure all these different entities of WKU provide electronic content that is completely accessible.

WKU is committed to ensuring electronic content is completely accessible. Huda Melky, the Equal Opportunity Director and ADA Coordinator for Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action/University ADA Services at WKU, is the main force behind the commitment. Her responsibilities include monitoring the University's compliance with federal, state and local legislation governing nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action. She is well versed in disability issues and has served as Chair, and is currently a member, of the Higher Education ADA Task Force.

The University, under the guidance of Melky, laid out initial plans in 2008 to create a dedicated accessibility team of personnel from various departments to work together to achieve complete Web accessibility. Committed to providing the best experience, WKU restricted and revamped the Web services and included accessibility as an important parameter while designing the Web services from the ground up.

As part of this program, the team at WKU began working with HiSoftware, now part of Cryptzone, in 2008 and has used their automated solution HiSoftware Compliance Sheriff since then to ensure Web accessibility across the board.

## Meeting Compliance Needs Across Multiple Content Delivery Platforms

The three main entities from WKU that provide electronic content are the IT, Libraries, and Distance Learning divisions. The electronic content ranges from websites, course content and electronic resources through various vendors. It is very important for WKU to ensure that all this content is accessible.

## Web Content

Western Kentucky University revamped all Web services which includes the websites across all campuses. WKU deprecated all the old websites and asked the campus community to create each and every single website on the new content management system that WKU acquired. WKU was committed to providing the best experience to all the audiences and this is what has led the University to start from ground up. It was very important to ensure that the new content is accessible. The campus community was thoroughly trained in creating accessible content and was encouraged to attend various workshops provided by the University.

## Libraries

WKU has numerous contracts with a number of electronic content vendors to provide various electronic text books, searchable databases and other material to help students and the campus community access the latest developments in the areas of their interest. The content is provided as webpages, PDF files, Microsoft Office documents etc. The WKU Libraries are committed to providing content that is accessible and works very closely with the vendors to ensure that the content is accessible. WKU has trained personnel to ensure that library content is accessible at all times.

## Distance Learning

WKU delivers numerous courses to the students and the campus community through a course assignment system. WKU is also committed to ensuring the content created and provided through this delivery system is accessible at all times. The faculty are trained in creating accessible content and encouraged to run various accessibility checks before the content is delivered to the students and the community.

WKU conducted comprehensive research to identify the right software to ensure the accessibility of all this digital content. WKU spoke to various other universities across the country in the process of finding the best software and finally committed to the Compliance Sheriff product.

The university started with AccVerify, a predecessor of the Compliance Sheriff solution now in use. WKU used the AccVerify solution

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Compliance Sheriff provides very intuitive and human readable audit result views, which can be configured to suit various audiences. The views provided by Compliance Sheriff are very effective in explaining and understanding the real accessibility issues with the content.

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to audit all the websites against accessibility standards to achieve highly accessible Web content. After the Web services revamp, WKU conducted further research on new versions of accessibility software. Looking at the supported features and advantages of using HiSoftware Compliance Sheriff, WKU signed a new contract to use Cryptzone's solution to continue meet their accessibility needs.

### Deployment, Training and Adoption

WKU has created a dedicated team under the leadership of Melky and other departmental directors to achieve a very highly accessible environment. The WKU IT department created a dedicated server to host Compliance Sheriff so that the campus community can use the software to create content that is much more accessible. The accessibility team is very highly trained and completely understands the requirements and expectations to comply with various accessibility laws. Compliance Sheriff plays a very crucial role in maintaining the software and training for the WKU community and has always been very active in WKU's effort to attain complete accessibility. WKU uses Compliance Sheriff to audit websites, library vendor content and course material provided to the students and campus community.

Compliance Sheriff provides very intuitive and human readable audit result views, which can be configured to suit various audiences. The views provided by Compliance Sheriff are very effective in explaining and understanding the real accessibility issues with the content. Being in human readable format, the views make it easier for anyone to understand what needs to be done to overcome any accessibility issues.

### Results of Using Compliance Sheriff

The university found that Compliance Sheriff comes with numerous improvements and supports various other accessibility standards and laws compared to other software solutions. Compliance Sheriff provides a very clean and organized interface which makes it easier to navigate. The dashboard section provides easy access to the most important views that show the accessibility results of an audit. In addition, the

scans section provides a log of what has been run and the results, allows scans to be scheduled and offers a grouping feature to run batch scan.

Scans can be run against multiple checkpoints including WCAG 2 Levels A-AAA to Section 508. The scan results are presented in an easy to understand interface. Compliance Sheriff can also audit Microsoft Office and PDF documents for accessibility. This is crucial since most of the library's electronic content is provided as documents. The scan results are very easy to understand and help the users to concentrate on addressing a specific issue at a time.

Cryptzone products have helped WKU to audit the websites, library electronic content and course delivery system and thus played a crucial role in WKU's effort to attain completely accessible content. The audit results are very detailed and perform a very good job at making the user understand the accessibility issues and providing a detailed set of instructions to help the user work with the issue.

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