

Make the Most of your Ally Data

Tracking Progress, Measuring Impact, and Designing Strategy

What's in this document?

Explore five different tools for tracking your accessibility progress and designing your strategy using your Ally data.

[Overall Score](#)

[Issue-Level](#)

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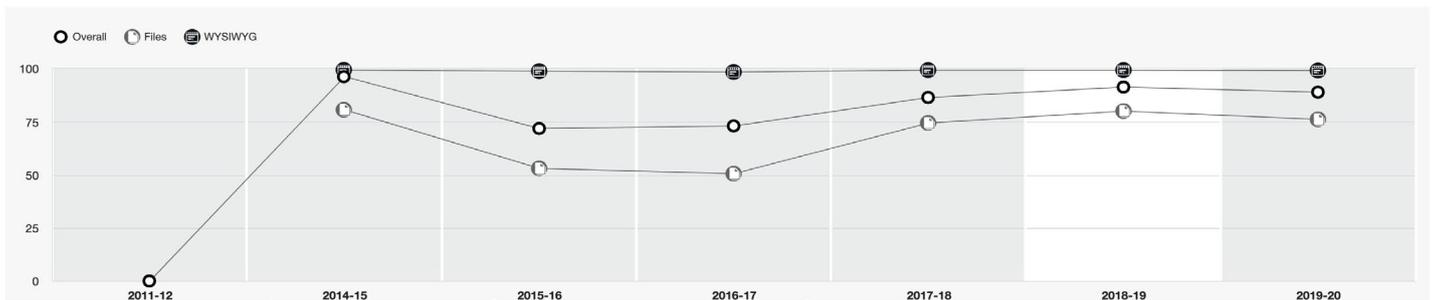
[Usage Data](#)

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Overall Score

Accessibility score

By academic year ▼



From the “Overview” tab of your Institutional Report, the “Accessibility Score” line graph represents the average accessibility score of all the courses within that time period. The course score is calculated by averaging the accessibility scores of all the content items in that course evaluated by Ally. While issue severity affects the score of individual files, when course scores are averaged to generate the overall score, courses are not weighted by the size of the course or the amount of content in a course.

The “Overall” score includes all the content in the courses, the “Files Score” includes only the uploaded files in the courses, and the “WYSIWYG Score” includes only the content authored using the WYSIWYG tools in the courses. You will likely see a fairly significant discrepancy between the Files Score and the WYSIWYG Score because the HTML content tends to have less severe accessibility issues compared to PDF documents. Note: Images embedded in HTML content are scored as Files and do not affect the WYSIWYG Score.

Terms Filter

If you have “Terms” enabled in your LMS, you can filter the “Accessibility Score” line graph to view your progress term by term. The order of the terms in the line graph will reflect how they have been configured in your LMS. A term includes the average accessibility score of all the courses in your LMS labeled with that particular term. Because like-terms over multiple years (eg ‘Fall 2018’ and ‘Fall 2019’) share a similar collection of courses and content items, comparing like-terms can be a consistent way to measure improvement across courses. By referring to the “Total Courses” and “Total Content Created” donut charts below the line graph, you can evaluate the relative level of consistency of the comparison (eg if the ‘Fall 2019’ term includes many more courses or many more content items than the ‘Fall 2018’ term, changes in overall score may be attributed to the influx of new courses/content rather than changes in the existing courses/content).

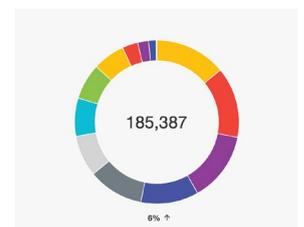
By academic year
 By term
 By month

2018-19 ▼

Total courses



Total content created





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Academic Year/Month

Filtering the “Accessibility Score” by academic year or month allows you to view the overall accessibility score of content by the date added to the LMS. Where “Terms” allows you to see the overall score of content associated with specific terms, “Years” and “Months” provides insight into how content creation behaviors are changing over time. As with the “Terms” filter, you should consult the breakdown of content types in the donut chart because changes in content type or the amount of content added in a given time period will impact the accessibility score averages.

Issue-Level



From the Institutional Report, you can also measure progress at the issue level, which will provide you with a more granular view of your progress than the overall score. Remember that when looking at the “Accessibility Issues” bar charts, you are still viewing issues within the term/year/month filter set above. **Hovering over the bar graph for a particular issue, you can view the total number of files with that issue out of the total number of files that could be affected by that issue within the given timer period or term.**

By looking at the percentage of files with a particular issue, you can measure your actual progress in percentage points, even if the amount of content fluctuates between the terms or time periods being compared. Five issues you might focus on are:

- Document: The document is scanned but not OCRed
- Document: The document is untagged
- Image: The image does not have a description
- Document: The document does not have any headings
- Document: The document has contrast issues

If you’re curious how your institution’s data across these five issues compare to global averages, refer to the [Blackboard Ally data study](#), which analyzed a sample of 21 million course files. The findings from this data study have generally served as a consistent benchmark for the prevalence of these five issues in LMS courses.

By clicking on an issue represented in the bar graphs, you can also view the number of times that issue appears in individual courses, beginning with the course with the most occurrences of the issue.



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Course-Level

Navigating back to the top of your Institutional Report, you can access the “Courses” tab to view your accessibility data at the course-level.

From the “Courses” tab, you can scroll the list of courses or search for an individual course. If you have “Terms” configured in your LMS, **make sure you set the appropriate term in the filter when searching for an individual course.**

From the Courses list view, you can see the course ID and name, number of students enrolled, total files checked by Ally, and the course score. When you select an individual course, you can view the content breakdown, overall score, file score, WYSIWYG score, and accessibility issues bar graphs.

To compare progress in the same course across multiple terms, apply the course name or ID in the search field and adjust your Term filter accordingly. You can manually record the data points you want or use the “Course CSV Export” (pictured above). The “Course CSV” will provide a list of all the content items in the course checked by Ally, the score of each content item, and any accessibility issues affecting the content item. **By comparing the course reports CSV exports of the same course across two or more terms, you can view progress on specific course files, view new files have been added to the course, and track progress on specific issues.** A full explanation of the header rows of the Course CSV export can be found on the [Blackboard Ally Help Site](#).

Usage Data

The third tab at the top of your Institutional Report allows you to view an Excel spreadsheet of your Ally “Usage Data” which includes user engagement with the Alternative Formats and Instructor Feedback.

Once you’ve downloaded your usage report, the first sheet includes your “Alternative Format Launches.” Four additional sheets can be accessed via the tabs at the bottom of the report: “Alternative Format Weekly,” “Instructor Feedback Launches,” “Instructor Feedback Weekly,” and “Data.” Both ‘Launches’ tabs include the overall usage during the selected time period, and both ‘Weekly’ tabs include usage week to week during the selected time period. **Typically, weekly usage of Alternative Formats resembles overall LMS usage**, where downloads are highest at the start of a term, sharply decline during a holiday break, and then spike at the end of a term. Weekly usage of the Instructor Feedback tends to be highest during the weeks leading up to a term as instructors prepare their courses, and declines during the term as instructors grow busy with their teaching.

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Conversion Rate

The “Alternative Formats Launches” and “Instructor Feedback Launches” include a “conversion rate” that refers to the percentage at which:

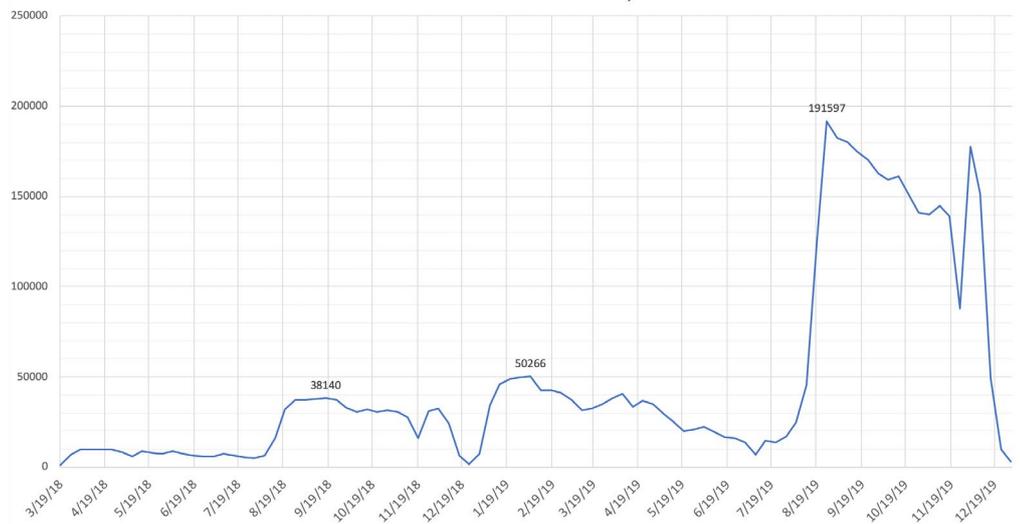
- Users proceeded to download an alternative format after clicking the alternative format icon
- Users proceeded to attempt to fix a file through the instructor feedback window after clicking an accessibility indicator.

Conversion rate can provide insight into how well your users understand and take action with the Ally tools. An institution just getting started with Ally may see a relatively low conversion rate, as users initially explore the new icons in their courses. As users mature in their understanding, you might expect the conversion rate to increase, as they move from exploring to taking action, either by downloading a format or attempting to fix a file. A conversion rate that does not improve over time may be a signal that additional messaging or support is necessary to help users understand the purpose and value of the tools. **Across all Ally users during the Fall 2019 term, the conversion rate for alternative format downloads was 60% and the conversion rate for files altered through the instructor feedback was 41%.** Note: Your usage data will only reflect file fixes that happen directly through the Ally feedback window. Files that are replaced through the LMS will not be reflected in your usage data, so a low conversion rate for for instructor feedback is not necessarily an indicator that instructors are not fixing their files.

Course IDs

The two launches tabs also include the course names and IDs, which should be consistent with the course names and IDs in the Course-level reports and throughout the Institutional Report. You can use the Course-level usage to see which courses have the most usage, and craft strategic messaging campaigns, such as reaching out to faculty who have been fixing files to identify “champions.” (See [Grand Valley State Case study](#) for an example of using course IDs to message faculty). Note: For privacy reasons, Ally does not store any user names, so to identify faculty with usage, you would need to cross-reference the course name with an existing campus document. **You can also correlate the course IDs in your instructor feedback usage data with progress on accessibility issues at the course level,** but remember, not all fixes will be reflected in the usage data if they happened outside the Ally feedback panel.

Alternative Format Downloads - Ally North America



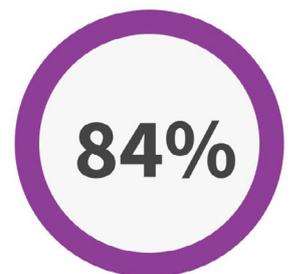
Fall 2019 Conversion and Success Stats - Ally North America



Alternative Formats Conversion Rate



Instructor Feedback Conversion Rate



File Fixing Success Rate

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Deeper Analysis: File Types Downloaded, File Types Fixed, and File Fixing Success

You can use the “Data” sheet tab to dig deeper into your usage data. If you want to see which types of files are being downloaded as Alternative Formats or which types of files are being altered through the Instructor Feedback, you can refer to Column M. During the Fall 2019 term, for example, Word Documents were the most common file type downloaded as an Alternative Format, and images were the most common file type fixed through the Instructor Feedback. You can also check whether or not an attempt to fix a file through the Instructor Feedback resulted in an improved score. Column O provides the accessibility score of the file before attempting a fix, while Column P provides a score of the file after attempting to fix the file, so you can calculate which files had the highest increase in score. Column Q presents this information in binary form, where 1 means the score improved and 0 means the score stayed the same or decreased. **Across all Ally users in Fall 2019, 84% of attempts to fix a file through the Instructor Feedback resulted in an improved score**, but note that success rate varies by file type. If you’re finding a low success rate with certain file types, this might be a signal to provide some training or create some support resources to help faculty improve their rate of success.

CSV Export

From the “Overview” tab of your Institutional Report, you can export a zip file that includes four CSV files (three if your institution does not use terms): **Courses, Months, Years, and Terms** (when available). Periodic CSV exports can be a useful way to generate point-in-time snapshots of your accessibility data as well as generate custom data visualizations using tools like Tableau.



By term ▼

You can find a complete description of the column headers for the CSV files on the Ally help site [Course Report CSV](#).

The “Courses” CSV will be the largest of the four files, and will include a list of all the courses in your Institutional Report. With the complete list of courses and associated terms, you can use the CSV to analyze changes in the accessibility score, files, and issues of the same course across multiple terms.

Depending on your LMS and the configuration of your institutional hierarchy, you may also be able to use the Courses CSV to view courses by department, college, or other codes in your hierarchy. If you do not see any department codes, you can still potentially use the Courses CSV export to generate department-level scores by merging the Ally data with another document at your institution that contains the course names or IDs by department. You can also merge the data in the Courses CSV with data in your Usage Report by mapping the course IDs using an Excel function like VLOOKUP.

Expand your Analysis

With insights into content breakdowns, content accessibility, and usage from Ally, you can correlate these data points with other areas of accessibility and instructional design research. A few areas you might consider exploring:

- **Track your content remediation efforts:** If you’re using a centralized remediation team to support faculty fix files, track the time it takes to remediate documents and improve the overall score of courses. Refer to the [Fresno State Case Study](#) to see how they tracked course remediation progress as well as the [Gaston College podcast](#).
- **Distribute surveys to students and faculty:** Use surveys to correlate your users’ experiences and understandings of the tools, and correlate results with usage data. Find sample surveys in the [Communications and Adoption Toolkit](#).
- **Measure the impact on student success:** Analyze student pass rates or grades in courses before and after making them more accessible and enabling the alternative formats for potential longitudinal insights into the impact of Ally and accessibility on student success.