



# Stepping Stones to Getting Started in Accessibility

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# Outline



- Background
- Opportunities in Higher Education
- Teach Access & Study Away
- AccessU
- Accessibility Internet Rally (AIR)
- Accessibility Mentoring Program
- How to get involved



# Background

- The pathway to a career in accessibility is shifting from informal self-taught to more formal education and certifications
  - Emerging experts often find taking the next step difficult
  - Teach Access, Knowbility and Accessible Community are working to provide a path to build accessibility skills
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# Opportunities in Higher Education

- Only 50% of more than 300 institutions surveyed were teaching accessibility (Shinohara, et al, 2018)
- According to a PEAT survey of top tech companies, 60% said it was 'difficult' or 'very difficult' to find job candidates with accessibility skills
- Teach Access is working to close this Accessible Technology Skills Gap

# What is Teach Access?

- Nonprofit collaboration between higher ed, industry, and disability advocacy organizations
- Working to infuse basic accessibility concepts and skills into the higher ed curriculum
- Goal is to reach 1 million students by 2030

# Teach Access Study Away Program

- An immersive, experiential learning program where students are directly engaged with accessibility experts in industry
- Happens in person (2018 & 2019) and virtually (2021 & 2022)
- Several students have secured internships and jobs through this experience
- Future plans include expansion to other cities and more refined pipelines to connect students and industry

# What is Knowbility?

- Nonprofit pioneer founded in 1999 to address digital equity
- **Mission:** Create an inclusive digital world for people with disabilities.
- Three related sets of programs:
  - **Awareness** – including the award winning Accessibility Internet Rally (AIR), service at W3C on standards making working groups, etc.
  - **Education** – AccessU accessibility skills training conference, K12 Access Summit, webinars
  - **Accessibility Services** – fee for service consulting, training to institutions



# Access U

- Convenes May 9 – 13
- Teaches practical skills across 4 tracks
  - Coding/Testing
  - Design/UX
  - Content
  - Policy/Management



# Accessibility Internet Rally (AIR)

## Knowbility's origin story – annual competition

- Nonprofit organizations and artists apply to participate
- Teams of web professionals register to compete
- Accessibility training for all participants
- Teams/NPOs are matched
- Mentors assigned to each Team/NPO pair
- 6 – 8 weeks of work / submission / judging

**Celebrate outcomes!**

# What is Accessible Community?

- **Mission:** Nurture disability-inclusive communities by helping:
  - Small organizations become accessible,
  - People with disabilities find accessible organizations,
  - Emerging experts grow their experience.
- Tools, resources, and programs
  - Ta11y.org
  - Accessibility Mentoring Program
  - Accessible Escape Room
  - Socia11y.org (coming this summer)

# Accessibility Mentoring Program

- 6-month intervals starting in January and July
- Mentors and Protégés meet 1-2 times a month
- Designed to maximize impact with bounded time commitment
- Partners:
  - Deque
  - Level Access
  - Pearson
  - TPGi
- Contributors:
  - Knowbility
  - Tetralogical

# How to get involved

- [Study Away](#)  
[teachaccess.org/initiatives/study-away](https://teachaccess.org/initiatives/study-away)
- [AccessU](#)  
[knowbility.org/programs/accessu-2022](https://knowbility.org/programs/accessu-2022)
- [Accessibility Internet Rally \(AIR\)](#)  
[knowbility.org/programs/air](https://knowbility.org/programs/air)
- [Accessibility Mentoring Program](#)  
[accessiblecommunity.org/mentoring](https://accessiblecommunity.org/mentoring)

# Questions?

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# References and Resources

- [Who Teaches Accessibility, Shinohara et al \(2018\)](https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3159450.3159484) at <https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3159450.3159484>
- [The Accessible Technology Skills Gap, PEAT \(2016\)](https://www.peatworks.org/policy-workforce-development/the-accessible-technology-skills-gap/) at <https://www.peatworks.org/policy-workforce-development/the-accessible-technology-skills-gap/>
- [Introduction to Web Accessibility](https://www.edx.org/course/web-accessibility-introduction) - free online course from WAI/W3C at <https://www.edx.org/course/web-accessibility-introduction>
- [Web Accessibility Initiative](http://www.w3.org/wai) - Free resources to support a digital accessibility practice at <http://www.w3.org/wai>
- [Ta11y.org](http://Ta11y.org) – Free tool from Accessible Community to walk novices through an accessibility evaluation