

# Guide: A Less-Stress Path to Accessible Canvas Courses

## Introduction

At Cidi Labs, we recognize accessibility work as a **journey, not a destination**. While “True North” in accessibility work remains the same—that accessible courses are good for all learners—each institution is on a unique path to creating and delivering quality, accessible learning experiences for their learners.

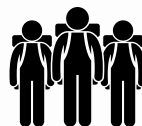
When it comes to current accessibility work, your institution’s focus may be ensuring all courses are Title II compliant, or perhaps you’re gearing up for a specific portion of your journey, such as tackling all those untagged PDFs across courses.

Regardless of your next desired destination, our hope is to share some practical guidance that enables you to take an easier, less-stress path on your journey to more accessible Canvas courses. We’ve broken down the complex accessibility journey into **five key segments** to simplify your trek. Let’s embark!

## KEY STRATEGIES



Survey the Landscape



Lighten the Load



Gain Momentum



Admire your Progress



Move Forward with Focus



As with all journeys, bringing along the right “equipment” can make all the difference. **Cidi Labs tools** not only *individually* help you along in your accessibility work—together they result in a powerful combination that supports every step of the accessibility journey, no matter what your current location is or what your next destination might be or how many obstacles you anticipate facing.



## Survey the Landscape

Just as it's helpful to know how rocky a terrain may be before hiking or how congested the traffic is on your route ahead, when it comes to an accessibility journey, you want as much information as possible upfront about the work that lies ahead so you can plan and prepare for success.

**Surveying the accessibility landscape** gives you that information so you can map your best route. To properly survey the landscape, it helps to have access to a good **vantage point**: the ability to easily gather and aggregate data about your Canvas courses to understand how accessible they are. An accessibility vantage point can give you the data you need to:

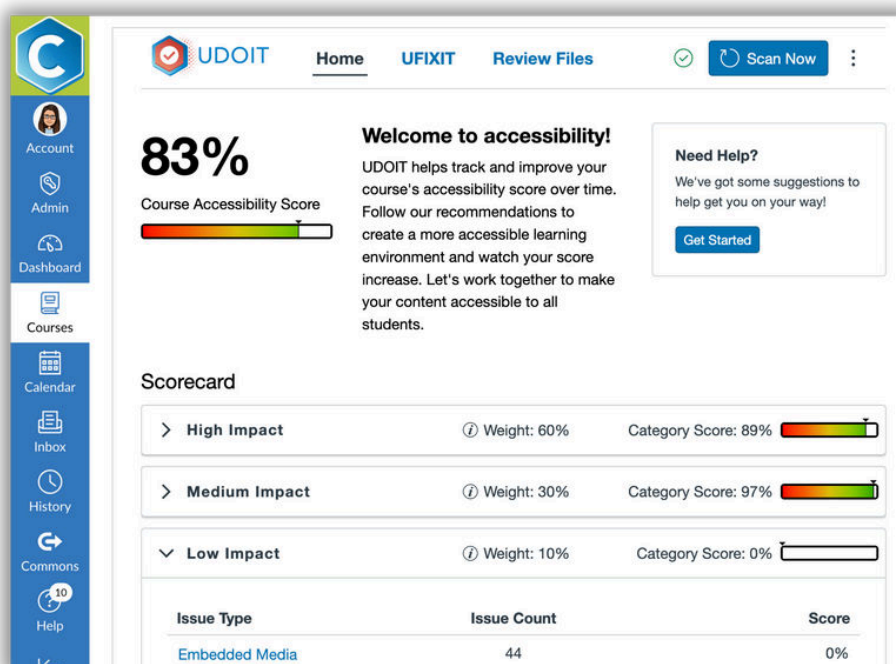
**Assess the state of accessibility across courses:** Use the aggregated data to determine the scale of accessibility issues across courses and identify common accessibility issues.

**Identify potential obstacles:** Some accessibility issues require more complex solutions. Having meaningful data about the types of issues across your courses allows you to recognize potential obstacles and plan for how to overcome them with existing or new resources.

**Determine training needs.** Support educators and designers with data-informed training, equipping them to remediate issues that will make a big impact on their course accessibility.



With **UDOIT Advantage's** accessibility scorecard functionality, you'll have the vantage point you need to understand the accessibility landscape at your institution. The scorecard is configurable, allowing institutions to group issue types into meaningful categories (e.g., high, medium, low impact) and to assign a weight to each of those categories. Available at both the account and course level, the scorecard provides a total score, and also allows users to drill down to see how issue categories (such as images, links, tables, captions, etc.) are affecting the accessibility score.





## Lighten the Load

Have you ever, at some point on a trip, realized that you took way more than you needed, making your travels more cumbersome? Lightening your load can have a big impact on your ability to effectively make progress toward your destination—and the same is true when embarking on an accessibility journey.

**Clear course “baggage”:** All of the unused, unneeded, perhaps duplicative (or triplicative!) files and content in a course is not only cluttering up your Canvas courses, it could be weighing down your accessibility efforts. You don’t want to waste precious time and resources remediating content that students will never see - that’s like carrying a bunch of bulky things you’ll never even use on your trip!

**Distribute the workload efficiently:** On a backpacking trip, you wouldn’t have one person carry all the heavy things, no matter how strong they were, right? Similarly, sharing the workload and responsibility for course accessibility can make for a more manageable lift. Connecting support resources with individual accessibility tasks can boost the collaborative effort and empower educators and designers to improve course accessibility—no matter their level of expertise.



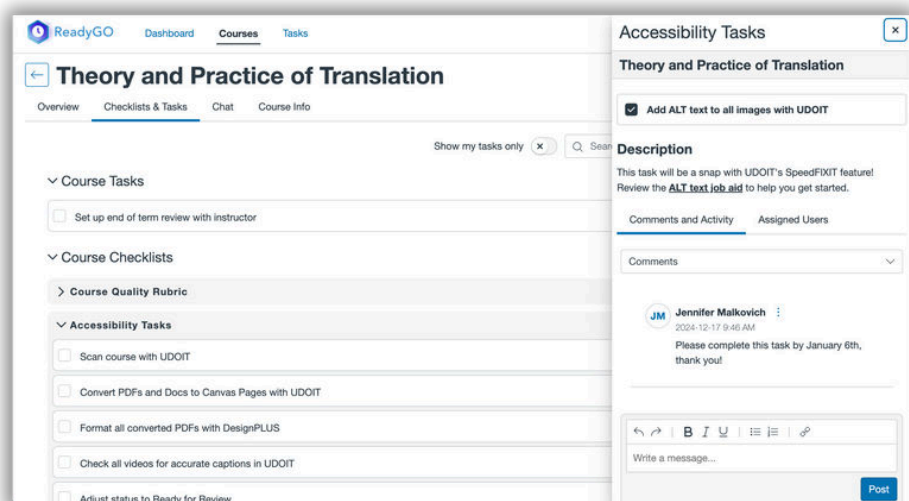
### Clear Course “Baggage” and Distribute the Workload

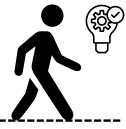
Our new version of **ReadyGO** puts insightful data from Canvas *and* Cidi Labs tools at your fingertips, allowing you to **find the courses that have the most unused files and content**.

Then, **TidyUP** allows you to quickly **identify and delete unused files and content** from your Canvas courses to avoid wasting time focusing on accessibility issues in content that’s not even used!

Plus, our accessibility assistant, **UDOIT Advantage**, allows you to exclude unused content and files from your accessibility score, helping you prioritize accessibility in the Canvas content students will actually interact with!

**ReadyGO’s** integrated task management and communication capabilities help you effectively distribute the accessibility workload. You can define a work scope with shared checklists, assign the appropriate users to the task, and link support resources to empower all users to tackle the remediation process.





## Gain Momentum

All that preparation—from surveying the landscape and lightening the load—makes the experience much smoother and allows you to really gain momentum as you continue on the accessibility journey. And just like other journeys, once you’re en route, you’re focused on making progress and constantly learning at each turn, all contributing to an ever-important sense of momentum.

Think of how you grow familiar with a route when you’ve driven it more than once and it requires less cognitive focus—maybe you no longer rely on the GPS or you know your favorite stops along the way. In the same way, when you’re actively working toward an accessibility goal, the process and learning experience can really serve you in building momentum for the current leg of the journey *and* in the future.

**Learn while doing:** When you learn about accessibility issues while fixing them, the immediate practice helps solidify the learning. Plus, pairing accessibility *work* with accessibility *learning* really generates momentum by encouraging instructors and designers to use accessible course design practices going forward—ultimately reducing future accessibility issues!

**Work by issue type or group:** Familiarity with portions of a journey requires less cognitive effort. Apply this concept to accessibility remediation and gain momentum by working through accessibility fixes in groups! Tackling all instances of alternative text issues in one sitting reduces the cognitive load involved and really speeds up the process.



**UDOIT Advantage** is designed for just this purpose: to help streamline the accessibility remediation process and give users the momentum they need. The home screen categorizes issues into impact levels and groups similar issues together so users can apply fixes efficiently. Plus, UDOIT supports learning along the way with embedded accessibility guidance and an intuitive user experience.

**83%**  
Course Accessibility Score

**Welcome to accessibility!**  
UDOIT helps track and improve your course's accessibility score over time. Follow our recommendations to create a more accessible learning environment and watch your score increase. Let's work together to make your content accessible to all students.

**Need Help?**  
We've got some suggestions to help get you on your way!  
[Get Started](#)

**Scorecard**

Issue Type	Issue Count	Score
Page Headings	69	96%
Video Captions	83	94%
Links	89	92%
MS Word	2	81%
Images	220	76%
PDF	30	69%
Color	167	64%

**High Impact** (Weight: 60%) Category Score: 89%

**Medium Impact** (Weight: 30%) Category Score: 97%

**Low Impact** (Weight: 10%) Category Score: 0%



## Admire your Progress

When you've gained momentum on your journey, it can feel so encouraging—and so can stopping to admire progress at each milestone to really see how far you've come!

It's no different with accessibility. **Checking progress toward your accessibility goals** comes with so many benefits:

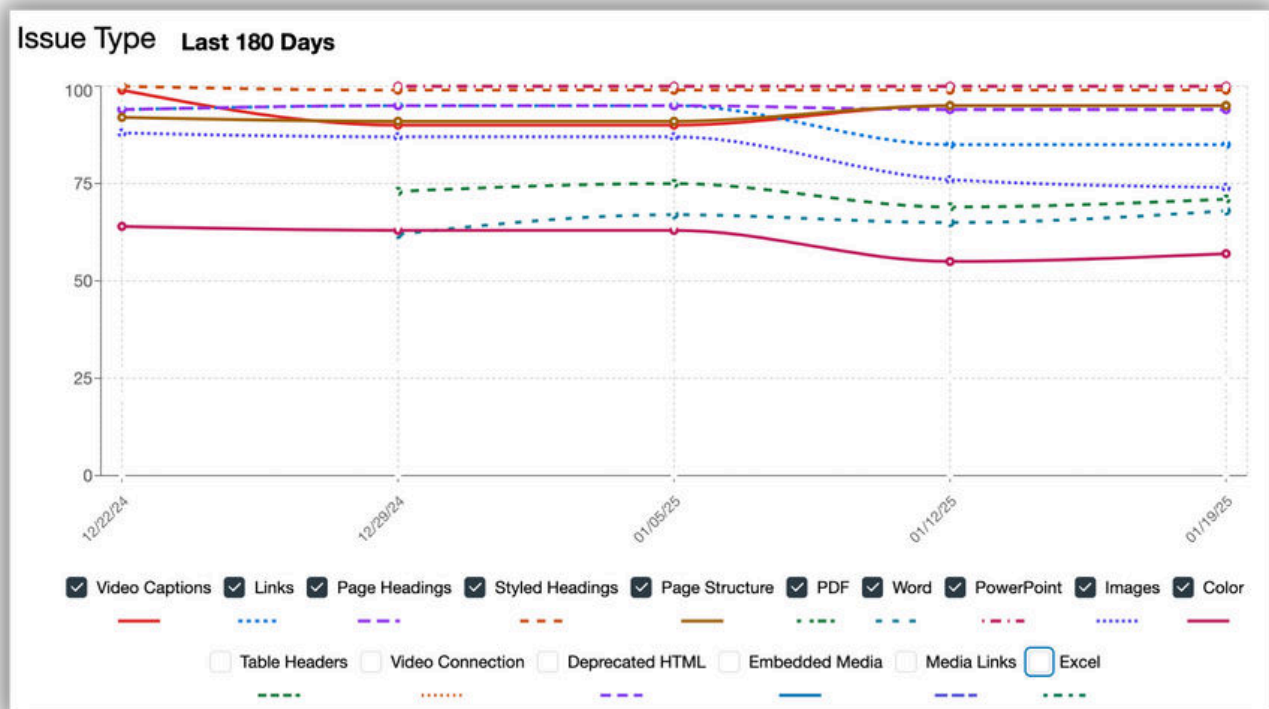
**Milestone documentation:** Whether for compliance procedures or for understanding the work completed, it's helpful to track where you started and how far you've come.

**Opportunity to celebrate:** Looking back allows you to see how much more accessible your courses are for learners and celebrate the camaraderie involved from sharing that load and working as a team to deliver better learning experiences for students!

**Inform your continuous improvement efforts:** Pausing and reflecting on your progress and the process to get there helps you prepare to embark on your next leg of the journey.



The **UDOIT Advantage Admin** tool now features historical reports, giving you the data you need to admire and document your progress over time and at important milestones.





## Move Forward with Focus

### Create courses that are Accessible by Design!

You know well that an accessibility journey is an ongoing one where you'll set your next destination and keep progressing. Leveraging lessons learned makes for a smoother, less-stress experience in your next leg of the journey.

**Design for Accessibility:** Leverage the knowledge gained from the tailored trainings and remediation process to design courses that are accessible right from the start. Accessibility shouldn't be an afterthought—making it an integral component of course design helps smooth the journey from day one.

**Share valuable experience:** It's always great having tips and resources from those who have experience on a particular journey. Creating templates designed with accessibility best practices or developing a culture for educators to share their course items helps scale accessibility know-how and best practices.



It's easy to create courses that are accessible by design with **DesignPLUS**—our must-have, time-saving toolset for every course designer and educator creating courses in Canvas. With DesignPLUS, you can rapidly build and style high-quality courses that make learning engaging AND accessible for all students—right from initial design. Say farewell to clunky template distribution, since creating AND distributing accessible templates is super simple with DesignPLUS. And with features like converting a table to columns with a single-selection and other easy-to-use accessibility and usability checkers, DesignPLUS makes your accessibility journey so much smoother—and fun!

The screenshot displays the DesignPLUS interface within a Canvas course editor. On the left is a navigation sidebar with icons for Account, Admin, Dashboard, Courses, Calendar, Inbox, History, and Commons. The main editor area shows a page titled "The Importance of Accessibility" with a rich text editor containing instructional text and a list of links: "here", "more", and "this link". A red callout box labeled "Link Text Error Content" highlights these links. On the right, the DesignPLUS Link Checker tool is active, displaying a message: "Links should make sense out of context. Links should be descriptive of the content they're linking to, such as 'Class Schedule' rather than 'schedule.html' or 'click here'." Below this message, three links are listed with red error indicators: "here", "more", and "this link", each with a tooltip that says "Use more descriptive link text."