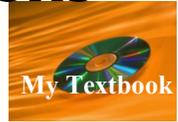


# Frequently Asked Questions

## Alternate Media



### ♦ WHAT IS ALTERNATE MEDIA?

#### Definition

Alternate Media is an alternative medium of presentation of material different from the original format. It's a different form of the same information. (If you have listened to an audio book, you are using alternate media. If you have ever read sub-titles or used closed captioning on your television, you are using alternate media.)



#### Purpose

### ♦ WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF ALTERNATE MEDIA?

Alternate media allows access to those people who cannot, due to a sensory or processing disability (sometimes called a print disability), use the original or standard materials as presented.

#### Legal Issues

### WHAT ARE THE LEGAL ISSUES ?

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) in 1996, did a state-wide review of California Community Colleges with the focus on how colleges were meeting the print and computer accessibility of visually impaired students. (Supported under Title II and Section 504).

In January of 1998, the OCR recommended that the State Chancellor's Office improve access for visually impaired students. Highlights of the recommendations include: providing textbooks, instructional materials and other printed information in alternate media formats such as Braille, large print, or electronic text (e-text).

These materials need to be provided in a timely and efficient manner.

Federal Law: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) as amended (ADAA), Section 508

State Law: Title 5, AB 422

**IN EFFECT, THE OCR STATES: "[T]HE ISSUE IS NOT WHETHER A STUDENT WITH THE DISABILITY IF MERELY PROVIDED ACCESS, BUT THE ISSUE IS RATHER THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE COMMUNICATION IS ACTUALLY AS EFFECTIVE AS THAT PROVIDED TO OTHERS."**

### What Does All This Mean?

- ◆ **WHAT DOES THE LAW MEAN IN PRACTICE?**  
In practice, the law means that alternate media must be delivered to the student in a timely manner. Identifying textbooks and instructional materials early assists DSPS in meeting this delivery timeline. Another area important to the process is accuracy of translation. This is done through various software programs. Faculty that provide materials to students need to give the student clear, clean copies and hopefully in an electronic format. A final area of impact for alternate media is the manner and type of medium that is appropriate to the significance of the message and the individual's abilities to understand the message.
- ◆ **ALTERNATE MEDIA CAN TAKEN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS AND FORMATS.**  
Most common are e-text, enlarged print, and Braille. Other forms include tactile graphics, audio files, closed captioning, descriptive narration and accessible web sites.
- ◆ **ALTERNATE MEDIA DEFINITIONS**

### Definitions



- ◆ **E-TEXT**—a data file that can be accessed by a word processor.
- ◆ **Enlarged Print**—print that has been resized to at least 14 to 18 points, headings to 22 points. Copy machines that enlarge would be 140% TO 149% and printed on 11x17 paper.
- ◆ **Braille**—a tactile written language that can be a manual transcription using a Braille or an electronic transcription using specific adaptive software.
- ◆ **Tactile Graphics**—graphic images that are simplified and use lines and texture to convey information. These can include p.i.a.f. (pictures in a flash) which uses special “heated” or “toasted” paper to produce raised images or manually by transcribers drawing in reverse on thin aluminum to create a raised/textured design. (Puff paints have been used as well.)
- ◆ **Audio Files**—audio recordings like “books on tape” that allow the user to hear the text, generally an mp3 file (also called text-to-speech-TTS) These can also take the format of text or a computer accessed file that can be viewed as well a heard, sometimes called scan and read software. Specialized software is also used called screen-readers.
- ◆ **Closed Captioning**—text transcript of spoken or audio portion of movies, videos, television, DVD's and other spoken multi-media. Text is put together with pictures to “sync” with the dialog and actions.
- ◆ **Descriptive Narration**—describes, by a narrator, pauses in the dialogue of a video or movie. It can describe costumes, actions, and scenery. This is done mostly by voiceover comments or can be included within a closed caption format.
- ◆ **Web Accessibility**—specific design elements that allow web pages to be read by screen readers. Good design of these elements allow for enhanced visual processing as well. (The use of alt tags would be an example.)