



# NIMAS Development and Technical Assistance Center

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### **AAP (Association of American Publishers)**

The Association of American Publishers (AAP) is the largest trade association of publishing companies in the United States. Its members are principally book and academic publishers.

<http://www.publishers.org/>

### **Accessibility**

In the context of technology, accessibility most commonly refers to providing access for all people to web environments, including people with disabilities. Designing sites for the way that screen readers, text browsers, and other adaptive technologies interact with the web; choosing contrasting colors for readability, and providing alternative text tags for graphics are examples of making web sites more accessible.

### **AEP (Association of Educational Publishers)**

The Association of Educational Publishers (AEP) is a national, non-profit professional organization for publishers of educational materials.

<http://www.edpress.org/>

### **AFB (American Foundation for the Blind)**

The American Foundation for the Blind is a non-profit organization that expands possibilities for people with visual impairments. AFB has been advocating for the rights of people who are blind or visually impaired for more than 80 years.

<http://www.afb.org/>

### **ALT Tag (Alternative Text)**

An alt tag is a brief description of a single image designed to be read by a screenreader as an alternative to that image. Alt tags are approximately 4–10 words long and state the type of image and a brief summary of it; when possible the alt tag expresses the purpose of the image as well. Alt tag text does not interpret an image (i.e., *smiling*, not *happy*). A producer's note (prodnote) or long description (LD) is used to provide a full or comprehensive description of an image, chart, or graph.

### **AMPs (Accessible Media Producers)**

Accessible media producers (AMPs) produce braille, audio, digital text, or large print formats of print instructional materials exclusively for use by blind or other persons with print disabilities. Accessible media producers are eligible to download files directly from the NIMAC as agents of authorized users.

### **ASCII**

Unformatted text with each letter represented by a number conforming to a standard developed by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to define how computers write and read characters.

### **ANSI (American National Standards Institute)**

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is a private, non-profit organization (501(c)3) that administers and coordinates the U.S. voluntary standardization and conformity assessment system. The Institute's mission is to enhance both the global competitiveness of U.S. business and the U.S. quality of life by promoting and facilitating voluntary consensus standards and conformity assessment systems and safeguarding their integrity.

<http://www.ansi.org/>

## **ANSI/NISO Z39.86**

This standard defines the format and content of an electronic file set that comprises a digital talking book (DTB) and establishes a limited set of requirements for DTB playback devices. It uses established and new specifications to delineate the structure of DTBs whose content can range from XML text only, to text with corresponding spoken audio, to audio with little or no text. DTBs are designed to make print material accessible and navigable for blind or otherwise print-disabled persons. The ANSI/NISO Z39.86 standard is also known as "DAISY 3."

<http://www.niso.org/standards/resources/Z39-86-2002.html>

## **APH (American Printing House for the Blind)**

American Printing House for the Blind (APH) is the world's largest non-profit organization creating educational, workplace, and independent living products and services for people who are visually impaired.

<http://www.aph.org/>

## **ATIA (Assistive Technology Industry Association)**

The Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) is a non-profit membership organization of manufacturers, sellers, and providers of technology-based assistive devices and/or services.

<http://www.atia.org/>

## **Attribute**

A value associated with an HTML, XHTML, or XML element, consisting of a name and an associated (textual) value.

## **Authorized Entity**

Authorized entities are referred to in the Chafee Amendment of 1996 and are defined therein as—"authorized entity" means a non-profit organization or a governmental agency that has a primary mission to provide specialized services relating to training, education, or adaptive reading or information access needs of blind or other persons with disabilities."

## **Authorized User**

An authorized user is an agent of a coordinating agency with access to the NIMAC database who may download NIMAS-conformant files in accordance with established agreements.

## **BANA (Braille Authority of North America)**

The Braille Authority of North America (BANA) promotes and facilitates the uses, teaching, and production of braille.

<http://www.brailleauthority.org/>

## **Blind or Other Persons with Print Disabilities**

IDEA includes a definition of students who may be provided with accessible textbooks created with NIMAS files from the NIMAC. That definition used within the legislation is—"Blind or other persons with print disabilities," which means children served under IDEA and who may qualify in accordance with the act entitled "An Act to Provide Books for the Adult Blind," approved March 31, 1931 (2 U.S.C. 135a; 46 Stat. 1487) to receive books and other publications produced in specialized formats." This means that eligible students must qualify under both IDEA and the 1931 Act, which is administered by the Library of Congress.

## **BRF (Digital Braille)**

A BRF file type, also known as a braille intermediate format file, uses Grade II Braille and can be used with common braille devices or braille printers.

## **CAST (Center for Applied Special Technology)**

CAST is a non-profit organization that works to expand learning opportunities for all individuals, especially those with disabilities, through the research and development of innovative, technology-based educational resources and strategies. The NIMAS Development and Technical Assistance centers are housed at CAST in Wakefield, MA.

<http://www.cast.org/>

## **Chafee Amendment**

A 1996 Copyright Law Amendment allowing “authorized entities to reproduce or distribute copies or phonorecords of previously published nondramatic literary works in specialized formats exclusively for use by blind or other persons with disabilities.”

<http://www.loc.gov/nls/reference/factsheets/copyright.html>

## **Coordinating Agencies**

Coordinating agencies are those state and local educational agencies that have chosen to coordinate with the NIMAC by directing publishers to provide NIMAS-conformant files to the NIMAC.

## **Coordination Agreement**

An agreement between the NIMAC and authorized representatives of educational agencies that have chosen to coordinate with the NIMAC. Authorized representatives must submit a signed coordination agreement to the Repository in order to name Authorized Users and to obtain NIMAS filesets.

<http://nimac.us/coordinagreemntfinal1130.doc>

## **CSS (Cascading Style Sheet)**

A cascading style sheet (CSS) provides the capacity to separate the layout and style of a web page from the data or information that is its content. Styles such as fonts, font sizes, and margins can be specified in one place. The rendering agent of the web page(s) gathers style elements from this one master list, with identified styles cascading throughout the page(s) or site(s).

## **DAISY (Digital Accessible Information SYstem)**

DAISY is often used to refer to a standard for producing accessible and navigable multimedia documents. In current practice, these documents are Digital Talking Books, digital text books, or a combination of synchronized audio and text books.

## **DAISY Consortium**

The DAISY Consortium was formed for the purpose of establishing the International Standard for the production, exchange, and use of the next generation of Digital Talking Books (DTBs). The DAISY Consortium is made up of organizations throughout the world who serve persons who are blind or print disabled. The object of the DAISY Consortium is to improve access to all kinds of information for blind and print-disabled people.

<http://www.daisy.org/>

## **Digital Text**

See [e-text](#).

## **DocBook**

“DocBook provides a system for writing structured documents using SGML or XML. It is particularly well-suited to books and papers about computer hardware and software, though it is by no means limited to them. In short, DocBook is an easy-to-understand and widely used DTD.

Dozens of organizations use DocBook for millions of pages of documentation, in various print and online formats, worldwide” (Norm Walsh).

### **DPI (Dots Per Inch)**

A standard measurement for the resolution of images. Images in NIMAS filesets should be 300 dpi.

### **DRM (Digital Rights Management)**

Digital Rights Management systems are authorizing technologies implemented by rights holders and/or publishers to limit the distribution and use of proprietary content. Examples of DRM systems are—encryption (securing content as a locked file requiring a hardware or software-based "key" for unlocking), watermarking (the imprinting of identifying information on digital files), fingerprinting (the association of specific user data with a particular file or collection of files). DRM systems can employ one or all of these approaches.

### **DTD (Document Type Definition)**

This is a formal definition of a discrete set of XML tags, usually targeted at a particular type of application. For example, the Document Type Definition for the Digital Talking Book would define tags for things one finds in a book, e.g., chapter, paragraph, footnote, jacket, etc.

### **DTB (Digital Talking Book)**

A Digital Talking Book is envisioned to be, in its fullest implementation, a group of digitally encoded files containing an audio portion recorded in human speech; the full text of the work in electronic form, marked with the tags of a descriptive mark-up language; and a linking file that synchronizes text and audio portions. In a digital talking book, a reader has random access to book sections via a table of contents. The digitization of books intended for persons with disabilities provides opportunities to increase the quality and availability of information to print-disabled persons.

### **DTBook**

DTBook is an XML element set (dtbook.dtd) that defines mark-up for the textual content of a DTB (Digital Talking Book).

### **Dublin Core**

The Dublin Core (dc:) is a set of metadata established by The Dublin Core Metadata Initiative in order to promote the adoption of interoperable metadata standards and vocabularies. The Dublin Core metadata provides a consistent and uniform means of describing resources in order to enable more intelligent information discovery systems. The 15 elements of the Dublin Core metadata standard provide a simple element set for describing a wide range of resources.

<http://dublincore.org/>

### **E-Book (Electronic Book)**

An electronic version of a book that can be retrieved by and read via a computer.

### **Element**

An element is any identifiable object within a document, for example, a character, word, image, paragraph, or spreadsheet cell. In XML, an element refers to a pair of tags and their content, or an "empty" tag—one that requires no closing tag or content.

### **E-Text (Electronic Text)**

A book, article, or other published material that can be retrieved by and read via a computer.

## **FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education)**

Special education and related services provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge mandated by IDEA.

## **Grade II Braille/Contracted Braille**

Braille characters are much larger than their printed equivalents, and the standard 11" x 11.5" (28 cm x 30 cm) page size used for braille has room for only 25 lines of 43 characters. To reduce space and to increase potential reading speed, virtually all braille books are transcribed in what is known as Grade II Braille or Contracted Braille, which uses a system of contractions to reduce space and potentially speed the process of reading.

## **HTML (HyperText Markup Language)**

HTML is the *lingua franca* for publishing hypertext on the World Wide Web. It is a non-proprietary format based on SGML, and can be created and processed by a wide range of tools from simple to complex. HTML uses tags such as "<h1>" and "</h1>" to structure text into headings, paragraphs, lists, links, etc.

## **IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)**

Recently reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act in 2004, IDEA is a federal law governing the rights of children with disabilities to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in what is termed a least restrictive environment (LRE). <http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html>

## **IDPF (International Digital Publishing Forum)**

The International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF), formerly known as OeBps, is a trade and standards organization dedicated to the development and promotion of electronic publishing. <http://www.idpf.org/>

## **IRCBVI (Instructional Resource Centers for the Blind and Visually Impaired)**

Instructional Resource Centers for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IRCBVI) are nonprofit organizations or governmental agencies that have a primary mission to provide specialized services relating to training, education, or adaptive reading or information access needs of blind or other persons with disabilities in local school districts or special school settings. Additional services are often provided. These centers and their respective representatives are considered authorized entities by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) for the production and delivery of alternate-format textbooks and instructional materials to students who are blind or have low vision.

<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=58&TopicID=255&DocumentID=2964>

## **JPG (also JPEG; Joint Photographic Experts Group)**

A graphics file format that allows users to compress images into smaller sizes for faster download. Compressed JPG files often have fewer details than non-compressed images and can look pixilated when enlarged.

## **LEA (Local Education Agency)**

A local educational agency (LEA) is a public board of education or other public entity legally authorized for either administrative control or direction of publicly funded schools, including school corporations and state-operated schools.

### **LRE (Least Restrictive Environment)**

A Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) refers to educational settings and means, in effect, that each identified child with special needs, to the maximum extent possible, shall be educated with children who are not disabled.

### **LUA (Limitation of Use Agreement)**

A legal agreement between authorized users and the NIMAC ensuring that NIMAS filesets will be converted for the exclusive purpose of producing accessible instructional materials for blind or other persons with print disabilities in elementary and secondary schools, as defined in section 674(e)(3) of IDEA.

[www.nimac.us/LUAFinal1130.doc](http://www.nimac.us/LUAFinal1130.doc)

### **MathML (Mathematical Mark-up Language)**

An XML-based language used to display mathematical content.

### **Metadata**

Metadata is information that refers to one or more other pieces of information that can exist as separate physical forms (data about data). Any description can be considered metadata. Examples include library catalog information, encoded text file headers, and driver's license data. In the information technology world the term is often used to indicate data which refers to digital resources available across a network.

### **MIME (Multipurpose Internet Mail Extension)**

MIMEs are standard format extensions used to support the attaching of non-text files to standard Internet mail messages. Non-text files include graphics, spreadsheets, formatted word-processor documents, and sound files. The MIME standard specifies the type of file being sent and the method that should be used to turn it back into its original form.

### **NASDSE (National Association of State Directors of Special Education)**

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) is a services-focused organization formed to help state agencies promote and support specially designed instruction and related services for children and youth with disabilities. NASDSE's activities are intended to provide professional support to its members and others interested in special education and to promote the vision that all students can achieve high levels of learning.

<http://www.nasdse.org/>

### **Nemeth Braille Code**

A standard coding structure in Braille used to denote mathematical and scientific notation.

### **NFF (National File Format Technical Panel)**

A subgroup of the National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum at CAST, the NFF Technical Panel was charged with providing the Secretary of Education with a set of technical specifications to facilitate the efficient delivery of accessible instructional materials, a timeline for the implementation of those proposed standards, and a process for assessing the success of standards implementation.

### **NIMAC (National Instructional Materials Access Center)**

The National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) is a central national repository established at the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) to store and to maintain NIMAS file sets. It features an automated system for allowing publishers to deposit NIMAS-conformant files within the repository. Files are checked to confirm that they are valid NIMAS-conformant files and then cataloged in a web-based database. Those who have been authorized for access have

user identifications and passwords. These authorized users may search the NIMAC database and directly download the file(s) they need to convert into accessible instructional materials for those students who are in elementary and secondary schools and have qualifying disabilities.  
<http://www.nimac.us/>

### **NIMAS (National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard)**

NIMAS refers to a technical standard used to produce XML-based source files. From these well-structured source files, accessible, student-ready alternate-format versions of textbooks and core materials (e.g., Braille, e-text, Digital Talking Book, large print, etc.) can subsequently be created and distributed to qualified students with print disabilities. NIMAS files are not student-ready versions. IDEA 2004, P.L. 108-446, establishes the NIMAS as a national standard and requires states and local districts to adopt the NIMAS for providing textbooks and instructional materials to students who are blind or print-disabled.

<http://nimas.cast.org/>

### **NIMAS-Conformant Files**

NIMAS-conformant source files are XML files valid to the NIMAS technical specification that can be used to create accessible specialized formats (e.g., Braille, audio, digital, large print, etc.) of print-based instructional materials. A complete NIMAS-conformant set of files includes XML content files, a package file, images, and a PDF file of the source content's title page (or whichever page contains ISBN and copyright information).

### **NISO**

The National Information Standards Organization (NISO), a United States committee organized in conjunction with the internationally known DAISY Consortium, is working on a specification for Digital Talking Books (DTBs). This will serve as the next generation of information technology for persons who are blind and print disabled. At the heart of this specification is an XML DTD that incorporates the elements of structure needed to provide access to information. The specification defines how textual information can be synchronized with digitally recorded human speech through Synchronized Multimedia Integration Language (SMIL), a recommendation of the W3C. The specification identifies six classes of books that have varying amounts of text mixed with audio. Most significantly, one class of book contains only text with no recorded human speech. Access to such information would be through synthetic speech, refreshable braille, or dynamically generated large print.

<http://www.niso.org/>

### **NNC (NIMAS/NIMAC Coordinator)**

A primary contact for NIMAS/NIMAC-related queries and information dissemination. Each state or territory has or will designate one NNC to coordinate these activities within that state or territory.

### **OCR (Optical Character Reader)**

Optical character readers are devices that can optically analyze a printed text, recognize its letters or other characters, and store this information as a computer text file. OCRs are usually limited to recognizing the styles and sizes of type for which they are programmed.

### **OSEP (Office of Special Education Programs)**

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is maintained by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) of the U.S. Department of Education. OSEP provides leadership and financial support to assist states and local districts in improving results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities (ages birth through 21). OSEP also administers the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html>

## **OSERS (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services)**

An office within the U.S. Department of Education, OSERS supports programs that help educate children and youth with disabilities, provides for the rehabilitation of youth and adults with disabilities, and supports research to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/index.html>

## **Package File**

A package file describes a publication. It identifies all other files in the publication and provides descriptive and access information about them. A NIMAS-conformant file set must include a conforming package file using the file extension OPF.

## **PDF (Portable Document Format)**

Portable Document Format. A universal computer file type used to exchange and view documents on any computer that has the free Adobe Acrobat Reader or free Foxit Reader software installed.

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

[http://www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf/rd\\_intro.php](http://www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf/rd_intro.php)

## **PNG (Portable Network Graphics)**

A graphics file format that allows users to compress images into smaller sizes for faster download without loss of detail.

## **Print Instructional Materials**

IDEA 2004 indicates that the term "print instructional materials" includes printed textbooks and related printed core materials that are written and published primarily for use in elementary school and secondary school instruction and are required by a SEA or LEA for use by students in a classroom.

## **Producer's Note (<prodnote>)**

Information added to a DAISY Digital Talking Book or NIMAS fileset by the producing entity that is commonly used to provide descriptions of visual elements such as images, charts, graphs, etc.; supply operating instructions; or describe differences between a print book and its audio version. Traditionally, this has been called a transcriber's note, a reader's note, or an editor's note. Multiple production notes may be used if different versions are needed for different media (i.e., large print, Braille, or print). Some text-to-speech or audio players speak <prodnote> content rather than alternative text.

## **Related Print Core Materials**

(Definition is in review.)

## **SEA (State Education Agency)**

An SEA is an agency primarily responsible for the supervision of a state's or territory's public elementary and secondary schools.

## **SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language)**

A method for organizing and tagging elements within a document. SGML itself does not specify any particular formatting; rather, it specifies the rules for tagging elements. These tags can then be interpreted to format elements in different ways.

## **SMIL (Synchronized Multimedia Integration Language)**

The Synchronized Multimedia Integration Language (SMIL) is written as an XML application and is currently a W3C recommendation. Simply put, it enables authors to specify what content

should be presented at what time. Authors can control the precise moment that a sentence is spoken and can ensure that the speech coincides with the display of an image appearing on-screen.

### **SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics)**

SVG is a language for describing two-dimensional graphics and graphical applications in XML, as developed under the W3C process. SVG is the preferred format for images included in NIMAS filesets.

### **Tactile Graphics**

Tactile graphics are images designed to be touched rather than seen.

### **Tag**

A descriptive mark-up component delimiting the start and end (including its generic identifier and any attributes) of an element.

### **TEI (Text Encoding Initiative)**

Initially launched in 1987, the TEI is an international and interdisciplinary standard that helps libraries, museums, publishers, and individual scholars represent all kinds of literary and linguistic texts for online research and teaching using an encoding scheme that is maximally expressive and minimally obsolescent.

<http://www.tei-c.org/>

### **Textbook**

(Definition is in review.)

### **UDL (Universal Design for Learning)**

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a theory of learning and teaching based on neuroanatomy and functional neuroimaging research techniques. UDL resists a one-size-fits-all approach to education and posits instead that teachers, educators, and instructional materials should effectively respond to individual differences inherent within a learning environment. Across learning goals, methods, materials, and assessments, Universal Design for Learning encourages offering—

- *Multiple means of representation* to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge,
- *Multiple means of expression* to provide learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know, and
- *Multiple means of engagement* to tap into learners' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn.

Using UDL principles in a classroom removes obstacles to curriculum access and provides students with alternative methods to demonstrate what they know. It acknowledges that there is more than one way to learn and respects individual learning style differences.

<http://www.cast.org/research/udl/index.html>

### **W3C (World Wide Web Consortium)**

The W3C is an international consortium founded in 1994. Its mission is to promote the evolution and ensure the interoperability of the World Wide Web. Working with the global community, the Consortium produces specifications and reference software for free use around the world. The World Wide Web Consortium established the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) in 1997. Changing the Web's underlying protocols, applications and, most importantly, the way content is developed, can significantly improve access to the Web by people with disabilities. The WAI has working groups developing comprehensive and unified sets of accessibility guidelines for content accessibility, browser accessibility, and authoring tool accessibility.

<http://www.w3.org/>

### **Wiki**

A particular type of web site that allows collaborative authoring and editing of the content of that web site.

### **XML (EXtensible Markup Language)**

XML is a universal format for structured documents and data on the Web. It is a set of rules, guidelines, and conventions for designing text formats for data in a way that produces files that are easy to generate and read (by a computer), that are unambiguous, and that avoid common pitfalls such as lack of extensibility, lack of support for internationalization/localization, and platform-dependency. Like HTML, XML makes use of tags (terms bracketed by "<" and ">") and attributes (of the form name="value"), but while HTML specifies what each tag and attribute means (and often how the content between them will look in a browser), XML uses tags only to delimit pieces of data and leaves the interpretation of the data completely to the application that reads it. The separation of content and its presentation is a primary advantage of XML.