



# Blackboard Ally

Key Roadmap Priorities

Blackboard®

Ally relies heavily on User Centered design principles. Feature design is based on the outcome of UX research, usability testing and other UX activities organized through the Ally User Group and is therefore subject to change.

# Ally Roadmap Principles

- Ally aims to be important part of the accessibility ecosystem
- Make accessibility more manageable and scalable
- Touch as much of the student lifecycle as possible
- Leverage more accessible content for increased student retention and success
- Catalyst for Universal Design for Learning

# Priority #1

- Baseline commitment
  - Uptime
  - Performant
  - Reliable
  - Quality

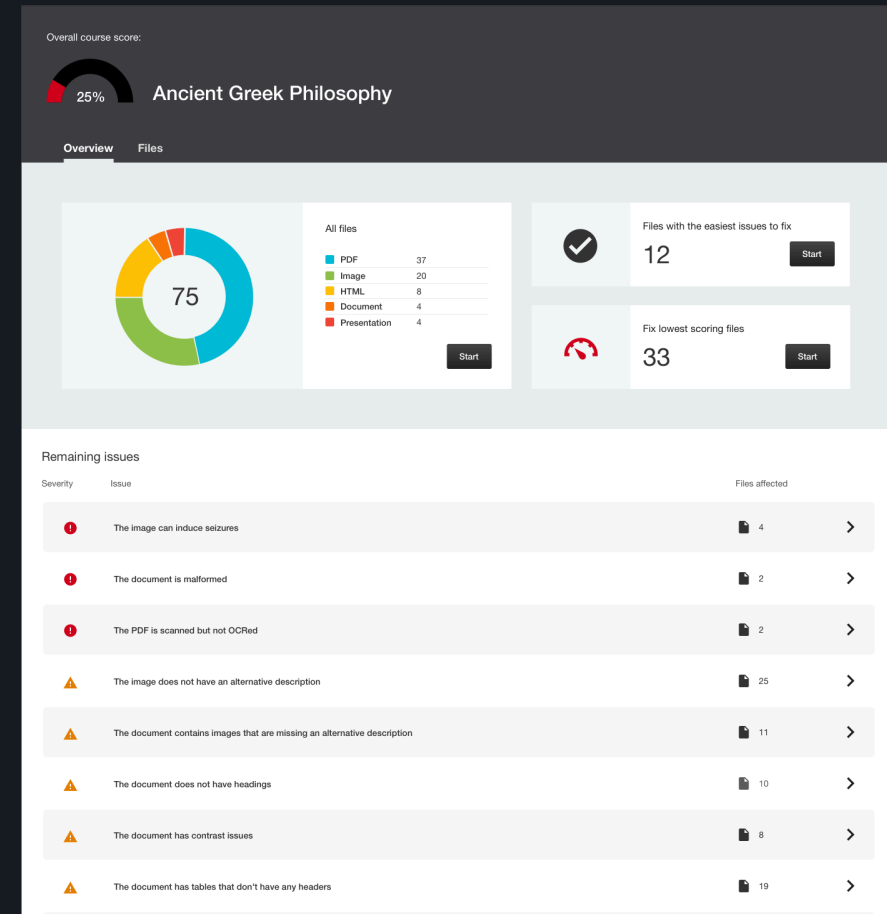


# Pillar 1: Ally for LMS

Overview of released functionality is available at  
[https://help.blackboard.com/Ally/Ally for LMS/Release Notes](https://help.blackboard.com/Ally/Ally_for_LMS/Release_Notes)

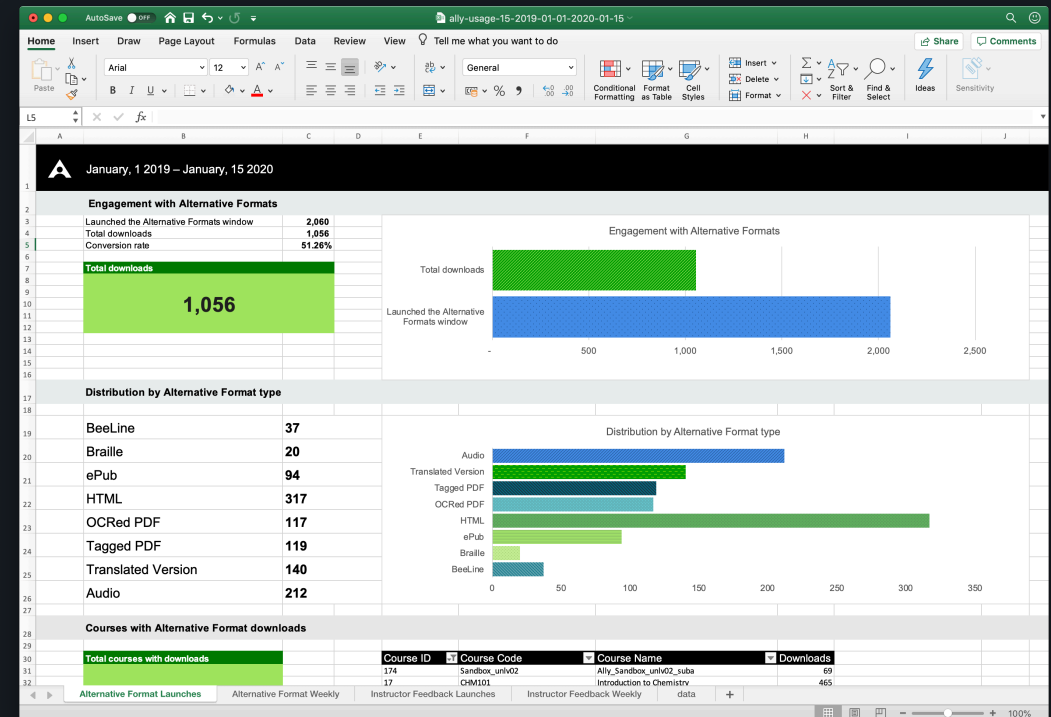
# Course accessibility report (Completed - Ally 1.34)

- Instructor-facing course content accessibility report
- Provides summary at course level
- Helps with prioritization
- Work through remediation more quickly



# Usage reporting (Completed - Ally 1.37)

- Ally captures detailed usage data
  - Alternative formats usage
  - Instructor feedback usage
- Expose usage data in institutional report



# Feature flags (Completed - Ally 1.37)

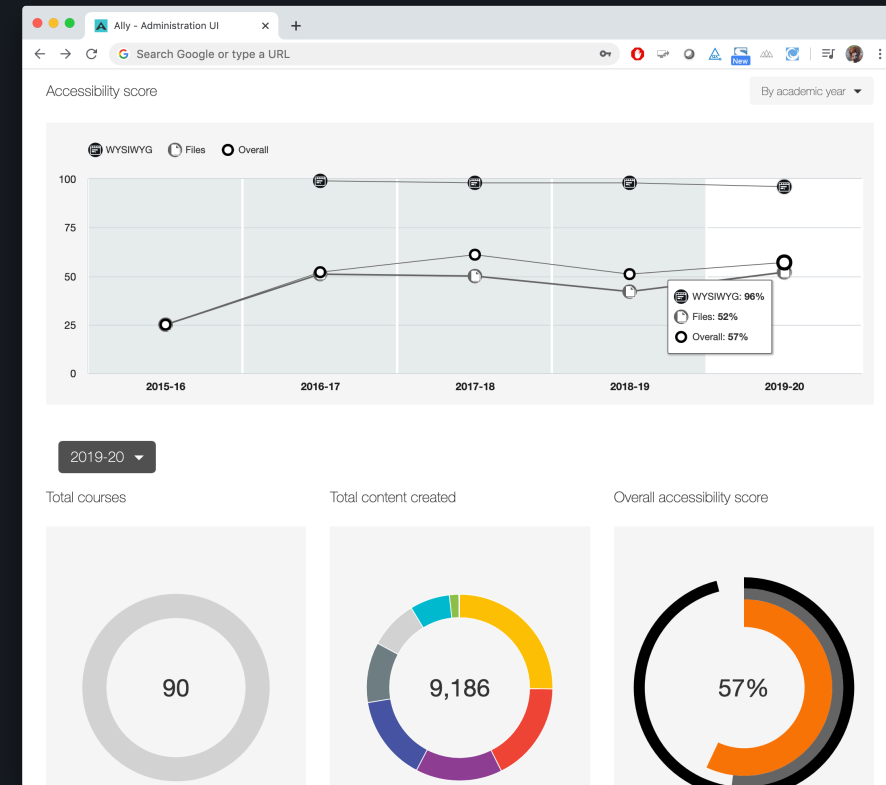
- Ally is increasingly using feature flags for large user-facing changes to help with change management
- Feature flag settings as part of Configuration UI
- Easily control what features are enabled / disabled

The screenshot displays the 'Features' configuration page in the Ally system. It is divided into three sections, each with a title, a status indicator, and a description of the feature.

- Alternative Formats - Translated version**: Status is 'Disabled' (indicated by a red 'X' icon). The description states: "The 'Alternative format - Translated version' allows students and instructors to download a machine-translated version of the document in a language of choice." Below the text is an 'Enable' button. To the left, a screenshot of the 'Download alternative formats' modal is shown, with the 'Translated version' option highlighted in a green box. The modal lists options: HTML, ePub, Electronic braille (BWF), Audio (MP3), and Translated version (with a language dropdown set to 'Français (French)').
- Ally data integration into EesySoft**: Status is 'Enabled' (indicated by a green checkmark icon). The description states: "The Ally-EesySoft Integration allows EesySoft to capture Ally usage data and display it in the EesySoft Reports." Below the text is an 'Enable EesySoft Integration' section with a text input field containing '125k-9o48-Ag4m' and a 'Save' button. To the left, a screenshot of the 'How can we help you?' support page is shown, with a search bar and various navigation links.
- Instructor Feedback Launch from Institutional Report**: Status is 'Enabled' (indicated by a green checkmark icon).

# Accessibility score (Completed - Ally 1.38)

- Remove distinction between Without Ally and With Ally score
- Significant difference between file and WYSIWYG accessibility
- Show “Overall score”, “File score” and “WYSIWYG score”



# Instructor feedback guidance

- Add additional instructor feedback guidance flows
- Provide guidance for Office 2019 and LibreOffice 6

The screenshot displays a document viewer interface. The main window shows a page from 'The Science of Biology' with a concept outline and a photograph of the HMS Beagle. The sidebar on the right contains a progress indicator at 40%, a close button, and a section titled 'Why specify a language'. This section lists two benefits: 'Helps identify language mistakes' and 'Helpful for students with visual impairments'. The first benefit explains that setting the document's language allows text to be spell- and grammar-checked against that language. The second benefit states that students using screen readers need a correctly set language to hear the document read out in the correct language, as text may be pronounced differently in various accents or languages. Navigation arrows are visible at the bottom of the sidebar.

**1**  
*The Science of Biology*

**Concept Outline**

**1.1 Biology in the science of life.**  
**Properties of Life.** Biology is the science that studies living organisms and how they interact with one another and their environments.

**1.2 Scientists form generalizations from observations.**  
**The Nature of Science.** Science employs both deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning.  
**How Science Is Done.** Scientists construct hypotheses from systematically collected objective data. They then perform experiments designed to disprove the hypotheses.

**1.3 Darwin's theory of evolution illustrates how science works.**  
**Darwin's Theory of Evolution.** On a round the world voyage Darwin made observations that eventually led him to formulate the hypothesis of evolution by natural selection.  
**Darwin's Evidence.** The fossil and geographic patterns of life he observed convinced Darwin that a process of evolution had occurred.  
**Inventing the Theory of Natural Selection.** The Malthusian idea that populations cannot grow unchecked led Darwin, and another naturalist named Wallace, to propose the hypothesis of natural selection.  
**Evolution After Darwin: More Evidence.** In the century since Darwin, a mass of experimental evidence has supported his theory of evolution, now supported by practically all practicing biologists.

**1.4 This book is organized to help you learn biology.**  
**Core Principles of Biology.** The first half of this text is devoted to general principles that apply to all organisms, the second half is an examination of particular organisms.

**FIGURE 1.1**  
A replica of the *Beagle*, off the southern coast of South America. The famous English naturalist, Charles Darwin, set forth on H.M.S. *Beagle* in 1831, at the age of 22.

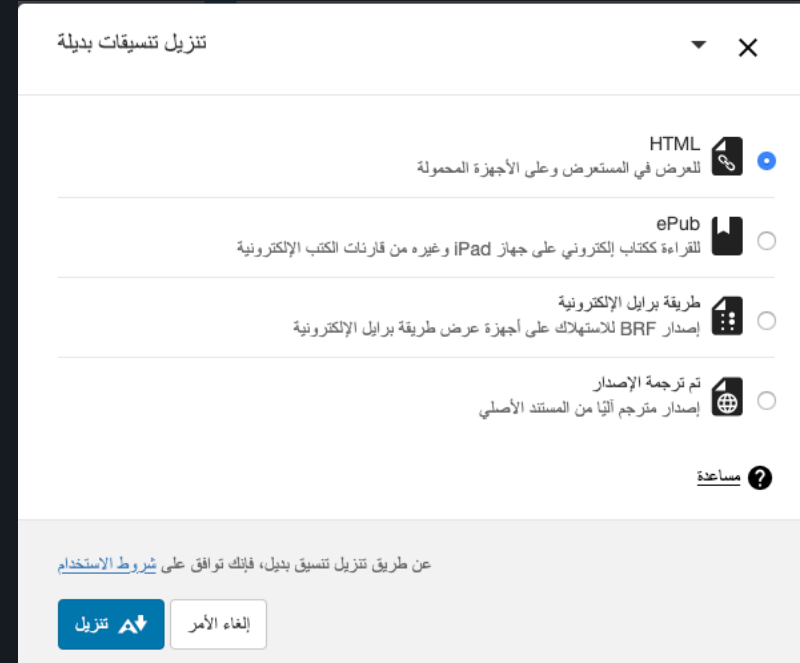
**Y**ou are about to embark on a journey—a journey of discovery about the nature of life. Nearly 180 years ago, a young English naturalist named Charles Darwin set sail on a similar journey on board H.M.S. *Beagle* (Figure 1.1 shows a replica of the *Beagle*). What Darwin learned on his five-year voyage led directly to his development of the theory of evolution by natural selection, a theory that has become the core of the science of biology. Darwin's voyage seems a fitting place to begin our exploration of biology, the scientific study of living organisms and how they have evolved. Before we begin, however, let's take a moment to think about what biology is and why it's important.





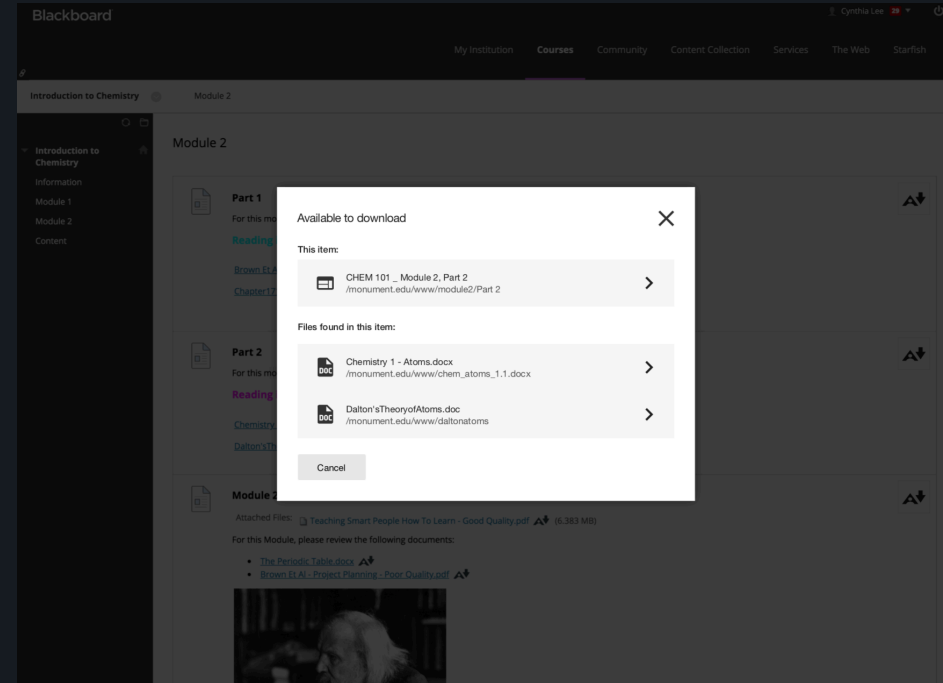
# Right-to-left languages

- Add support for right-to-left languages in
  - User Interface
  - Alternative Formats
  - Machine Learning algorithms
- Initial target is Arabic



# WYSIWYG Alternative Formats

- Provide alternative formats for WYSIWYG content
- Full coverage of alternative formats across file and WYSIWYG content



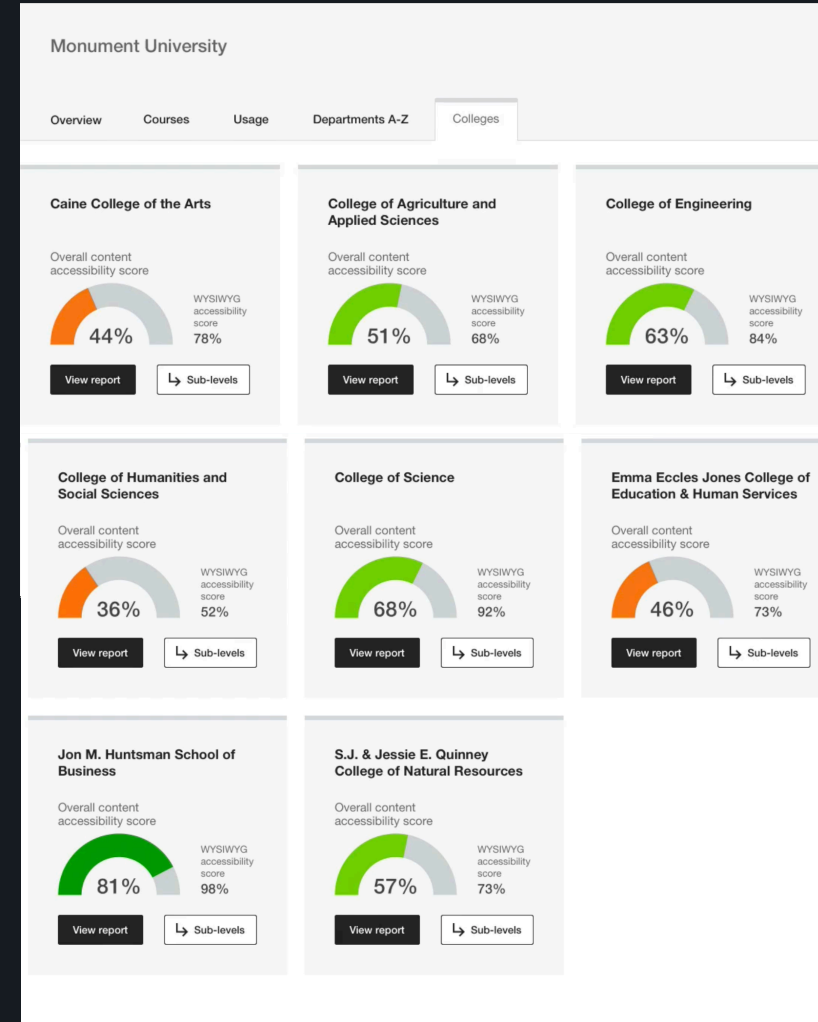
# WYSIWYG Instructor Feedback

- Provide instructor feedback for WYSIWYG content
- Feedback directly embedded in content editor
  - Live score while editing
  - Highlights within the editor

The screenshot displays a WYSIWYG content editor interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'My Institution', 'Courses', 'Community', 'Content Collection', and 'Services'. The user is logged in as 'Aly Instructor'. The main content area shows a page titled 'Atoms + Compounds' with a 'Black' theme. A red asterisk indicates a required field. The content area contains a banner image with a beaker and the text 'ATOMS + COMPOUNDS'. A live feedback score of 14% is shown in the bottom left corner. An accessibility issue message is displayed at the bottom: 'Accessibility issue: Using headings will help people better navigate this page'. The message includes a 'What this means' button and a 'Next issue >' link. The editor toolbar includes options for Paragraph, Arial, 3 (12pt), and various text and image editing tools. The bottom right corner has 'Cancel', 'Delete Page', and 'Submit' buttons.

# Departmental reporting

- Provide reporting at departmental level
  - Based on configured institutional hierarchy
- Delegated access to departmental administrators



## WCAG 2.1

- Extend accessibility checklist with additional WCAG 2.1 checks (<https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/>)
  - Orientation (Mobile - AA)
  - Reflow (Mobile - AA)
  - Text Spacing (Low Vision - AA)
- Focused on general readability and mobile-friendliness

## Audio/video content

1. Add support for additional audio and video sources
2. Add tools to instructor feedback to allow instructors to provide captioning, transcript, etc.
3. Provide integration with 3rd party (auto-)captioning provider to provide easy captioning request workflow from LMS



## External remediation

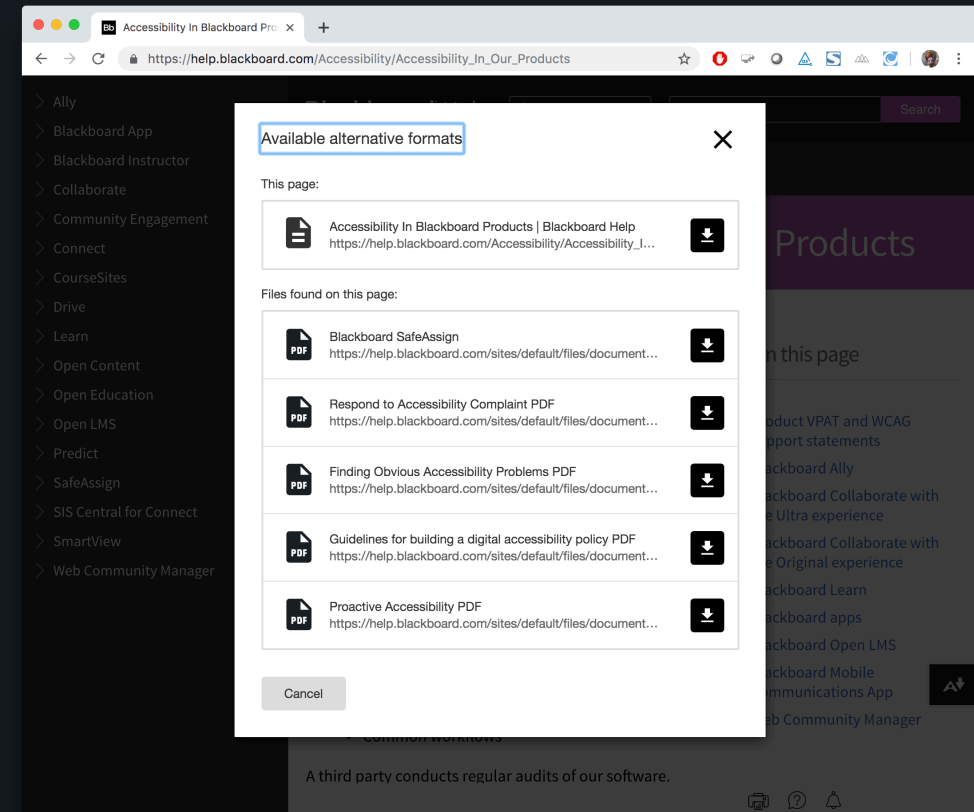
- Lots of duplicative manual remediation across institutions
- Ally can facilitate re-use of remediation by suggesting improvements made elsewhere
- When content has not been remediated before, option to have it manually remediated through integration with expert remediation provider

## Pillar 2: Ally for Websites

Overview of released functionality is available at  
[https://help.blackboard.com/Ally/Ally\\_for\\_Websites/Administrator/  
Release Notes](https://help.blackboard.com/Ally/Ally_for_Websites/Administrator/Release_Notes)

# Alternative formats (Completed - Ally 1.30)

- Automatically provide alternative formats for web pages and embedded content such as PDFs, PowerPoint and Word
- Helps improve accessibility for all website visitors



# Content creator feedback (Completed - Ally 1.36)

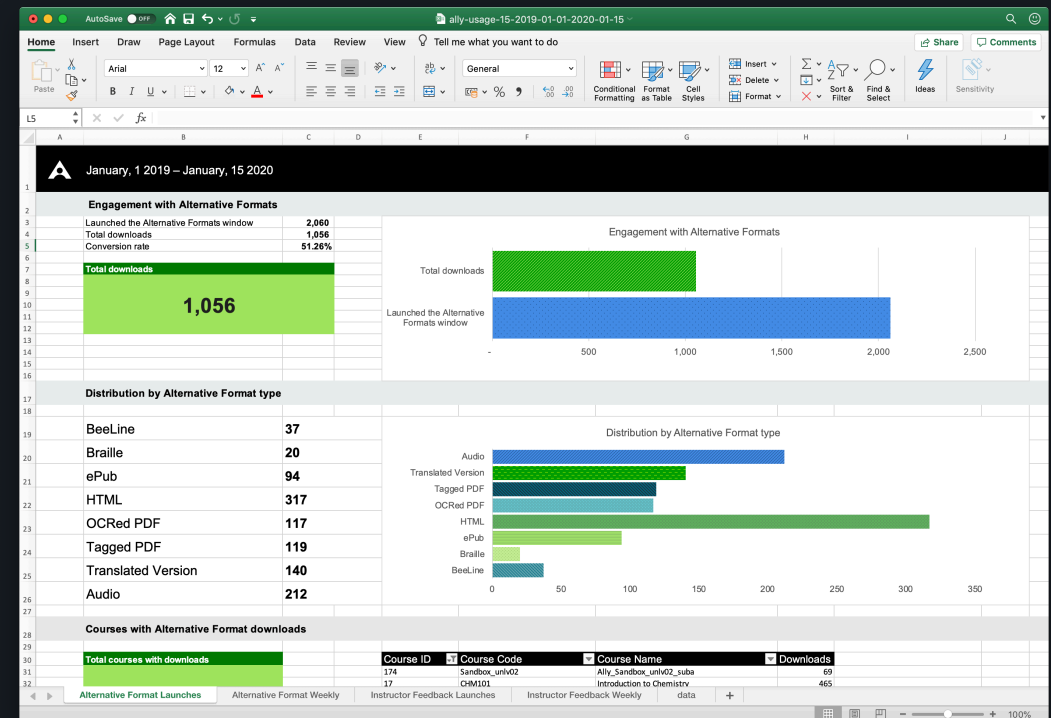
- Feedback and guidance to fix accessibility issues in website content
- Launched from the accessibility report

The screenshot shows the 'Monument University Library' accessibility report page. At the top, there is a 'Back to domain' link and the library's URL. Below this, a 'Go to domain' link is present. The main content area is divided into two sections. On the left, a 'Document:' section with a warning icon states: 'The document has contrast issues' and 'These documents contain text with low contrast between the text and its background with low vision, poor eyesight or colour blindness.' On the right, a summary box indicates 'Items with this accessibility issue' and shows a large number '16'. Below this, a table lists specific documents with their respective accessibility scores. A tooltip for the first document reads 'Accessibility score: Low Click to Improve'.

Document Name	Accessibility Score
Vincent Van Gogh(4).pptx Presentation	5%
elements_compounds_mixtures.ppt Presentation	7%
elements_compounds_mixtures.ppt Presentation	7%
elements_compounds_mixtures(1).ppt Presentation	7%

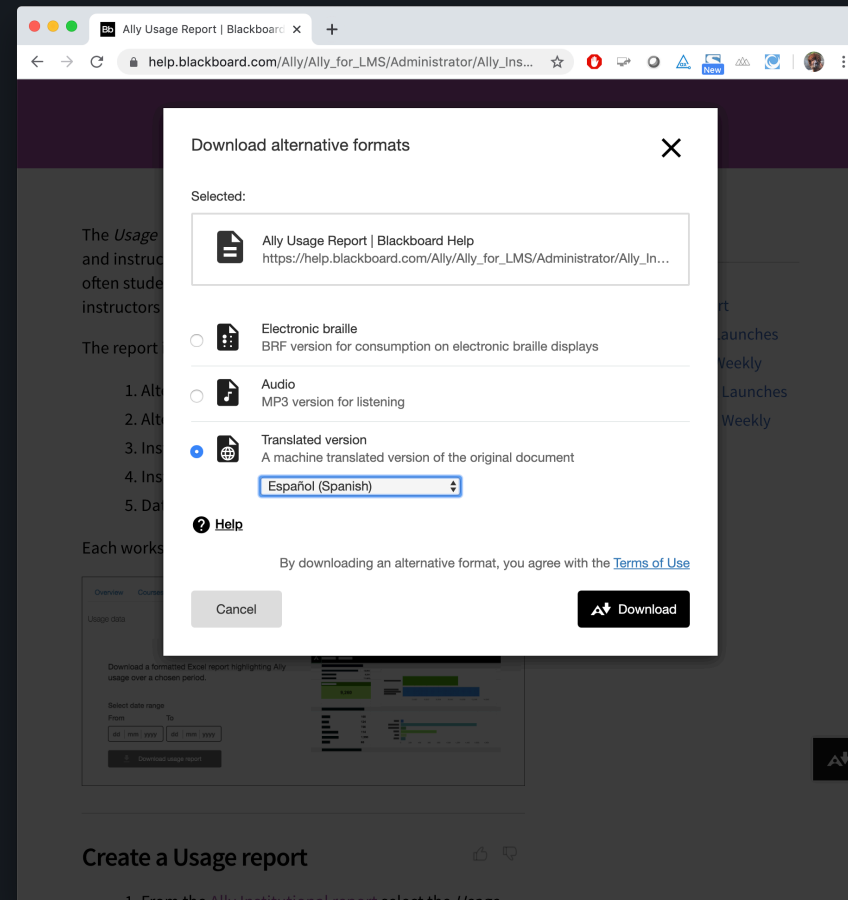
# Usage reporting (Completed - Ally 1.37)

- Ally captures detailed usage data on alternative formats usage
- Expose usage data in accessibility report



# Translated Version alternative format (Completed - Ally 1.37.2)

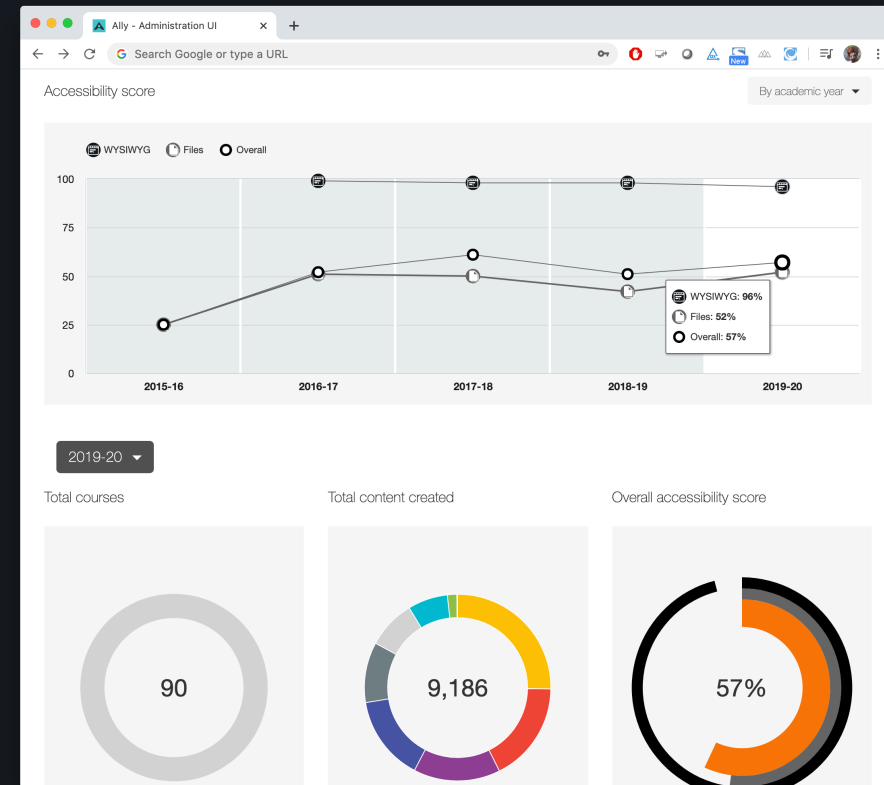
- Significantly improve quality of translated version alternative format
- Retain layout, styling, links, images, etc.





# Accessibility score (Completed - Ally 1.38)

- Significant difference between Web Page and File accessibility
- Show “Overall score”, “File score” and “Web Page score”



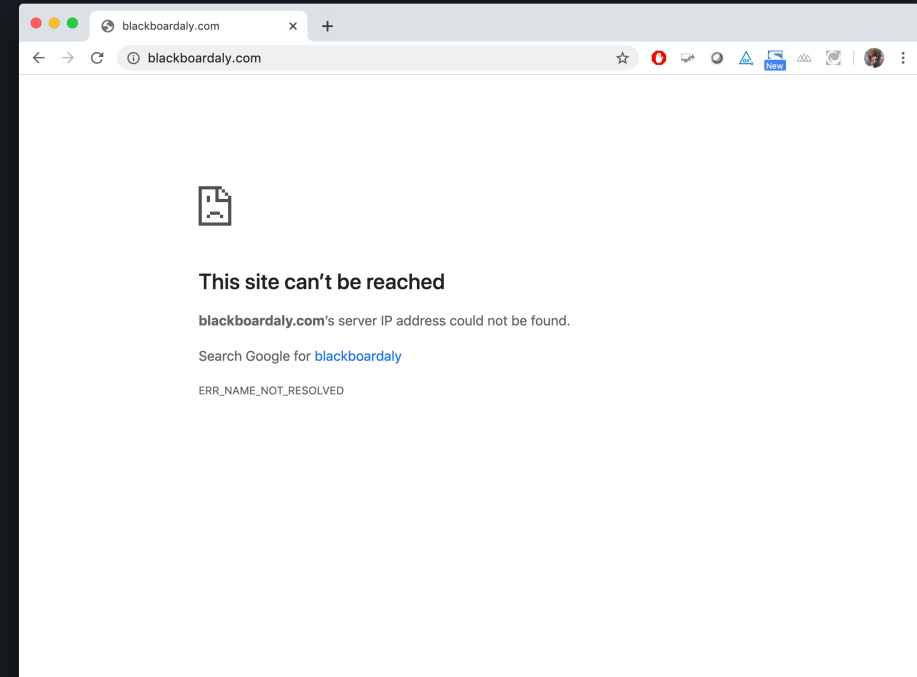
# Content creator guidance

- Add additional content creator guidance flows
- Provide guidance for Office 2019 and LibreOffice 6

The screenshot displays a document viewer interface. The main window shows a page from 'The Science of Biology' with a large number '1' at the top. The page content includes a 'Concept Outline' section with sub-sections 1.1 through 1.4, and a photograph of a three-masted sailing ship (the HMS Beagle) on the right. The sidebar on the right is titled 'Why specify a language' and contains two options: 'Helps identify language mistakes' (with a globe icon) and 'Helpful for students with visual impairments' (with a magnifying glass icon). The sidebar also shows a progress indicator at 40% and a close button (X). At the bottom of the sidebar, there are navigation arrows and a page indicator.

# Broken link checking

- Broken links are common web accessibility issue
- Check web page content for broken links
- Incorporate in web page accessibility score



# Web Page feedback

- Provide content creator feedback for Web Page content
- Highlighting on page where specific issues exist

Web Community Manager - SV X

prod.ally.ac/launchinstructorfeedback/?fromPageUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fprod.ally.ac%2Freport%2F83...

Page 6 of 13

14 Text fragments with insufficient contrast

### Work with the Google Folder App

With the Google Folder App, you can connect to a folder in Google Drive. You'll add the Google Folder App to a page, insert a Google Drive Shareable Link, set the View Type and set app Options.

**Add a Google Folder App**

Here's how you add a Google Folder App to a page.

1. In *Site Manager*, navigate to the workspace containing the page to which you wish to add a Google Folder App.
2. Click **Actions** to the right of the page and select *Edit Page* from the drop-down list. The page opens in Edit mode.

3. Under **Actions**, click *Manage Apps & Layout*. The page opens in Design mode.

4. Click **Add App**. The Available Apps dialog displays.

Accessibility score for: SWGoogleFolderApp.html

6%

All issues ⓘ

This page contains text with insufficient contrast

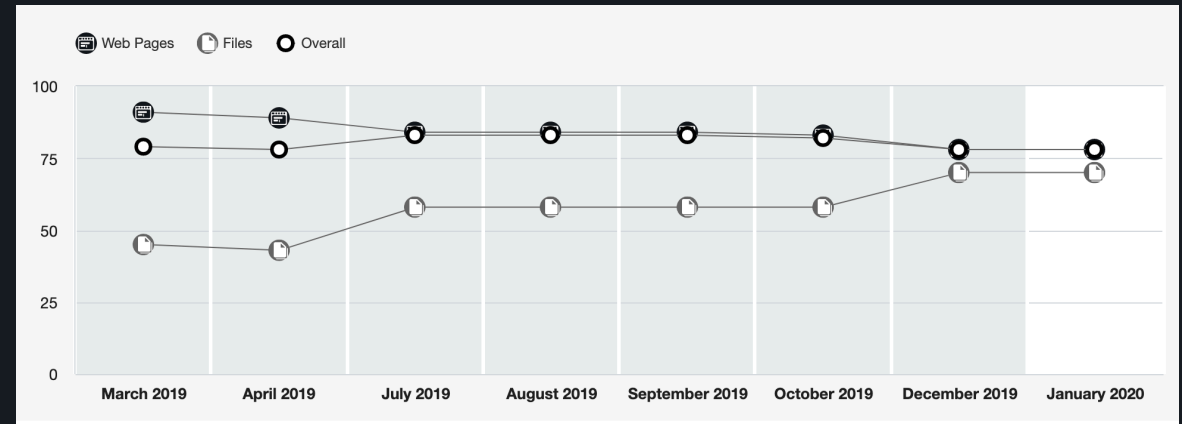
What this means

How to fix contrast

Last crawl for this domain:  
1/22/20, 11:07 AM  
Scores and issues will not reflect improvements you made until the next crawl.

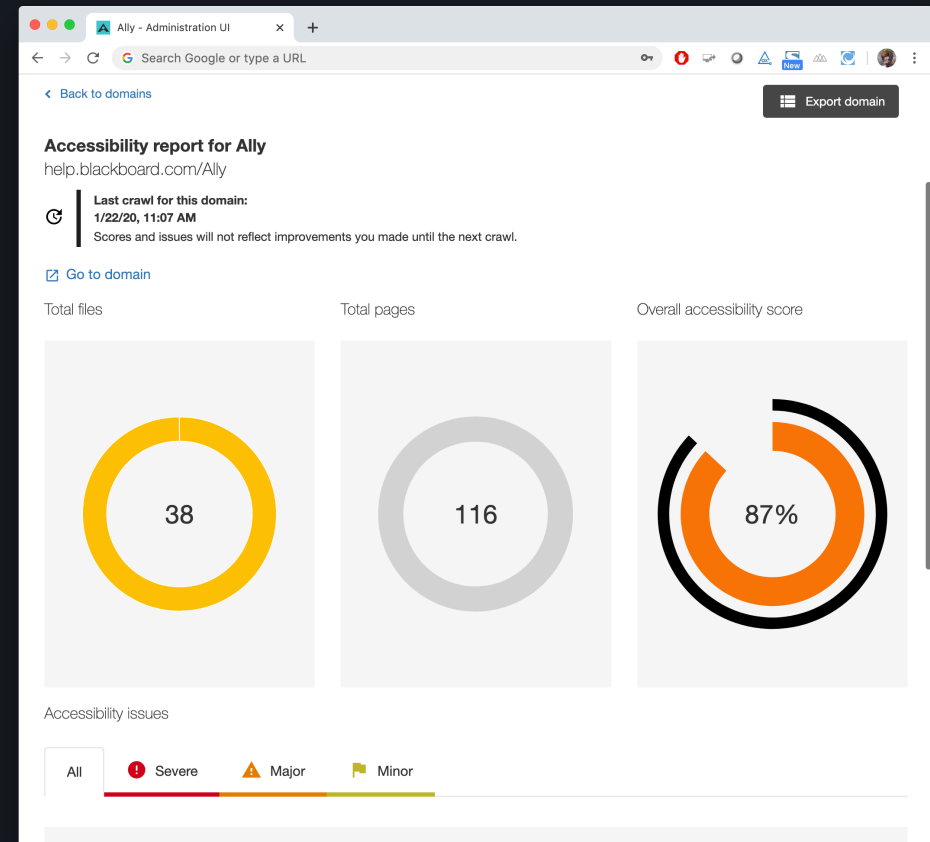
# Domain scoring

- Ally already shows evolution of accessibility score of entire website
- Show accessibility score evolution by (sub)domain



# Access Control

- Allow for creation of users (and groups)
- Limited access to specific (sub)domains
- Only see relevant content



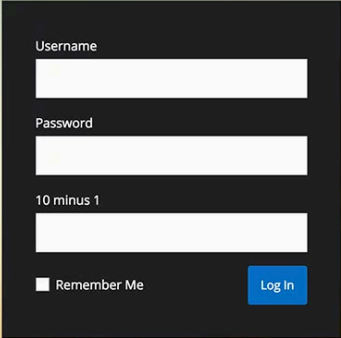
## Re-Scan On Demand

- Allow for re-scan of (sub)domain to be triggered from the accessibility report
- Quicker updated report when making changes



# Password Protected Content

- Allow for (static) content behind password to be scanned and checked
- Full range of public and private content



Username

Password

10 minus 1

Remember Me

[Lost your password?](#)

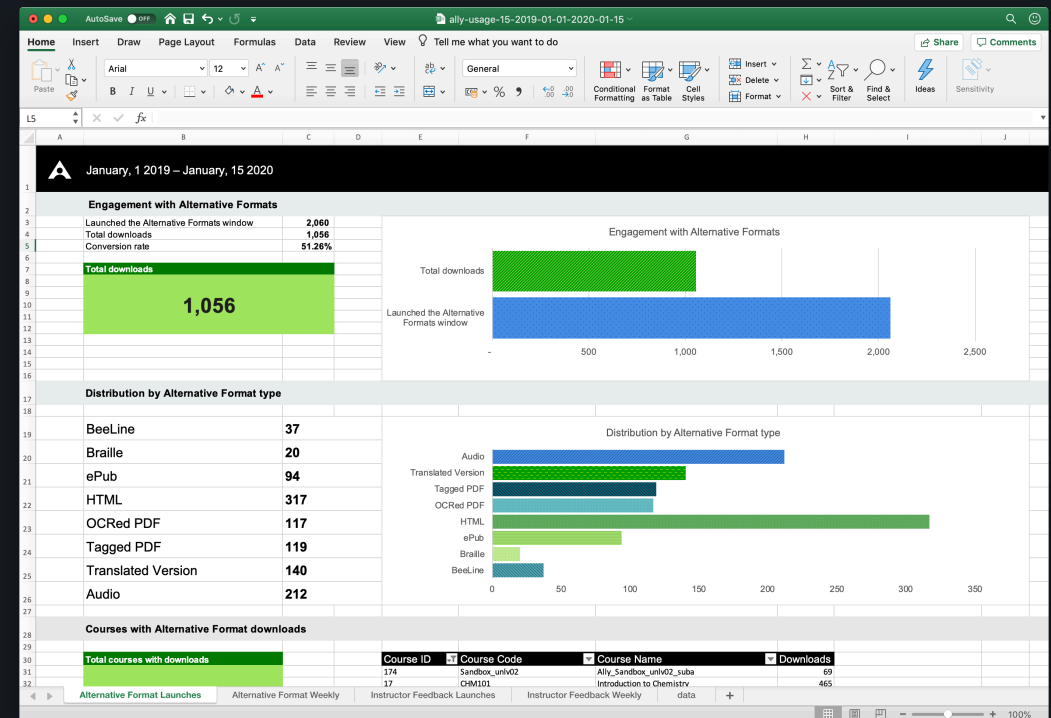
[← Back to Login and Access Plugin](#)

## Pillar 3: Ally for Web Community Manager

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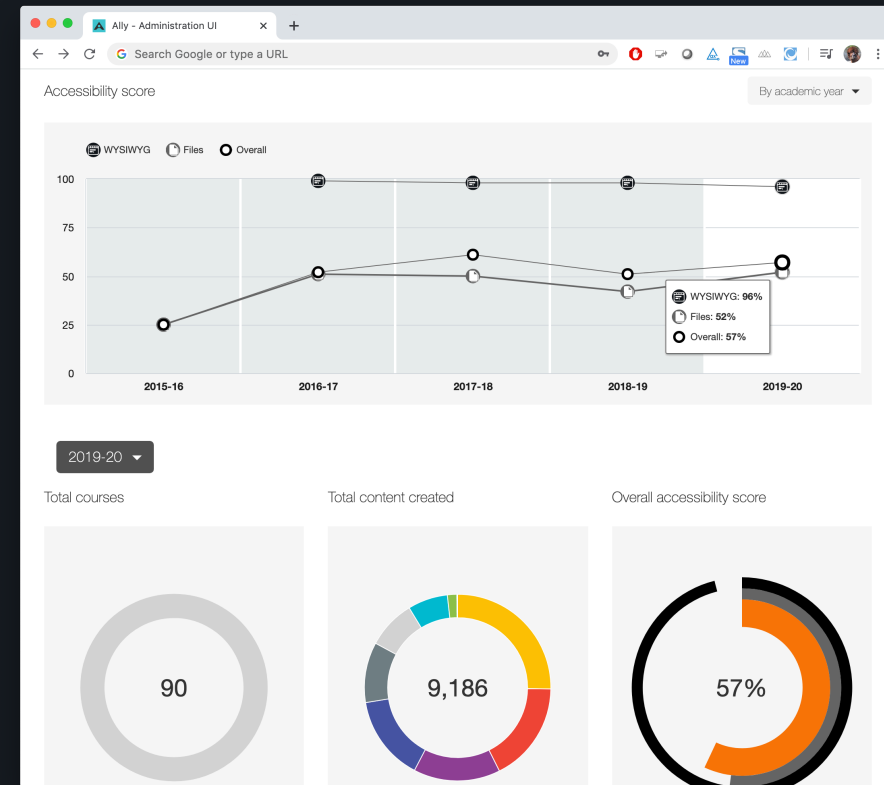
# Usage reporting (Completed - Ally 1.37)

- Ally captures detailed usage data
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  - Content creator feedback usage
- Expose usage data in accessibility report



# Accessibility score (Completed - Ally 1.38)

- Significant difference between Web Page and File accessibility
- Show “Overall score”, “File score” and “Web Page score”



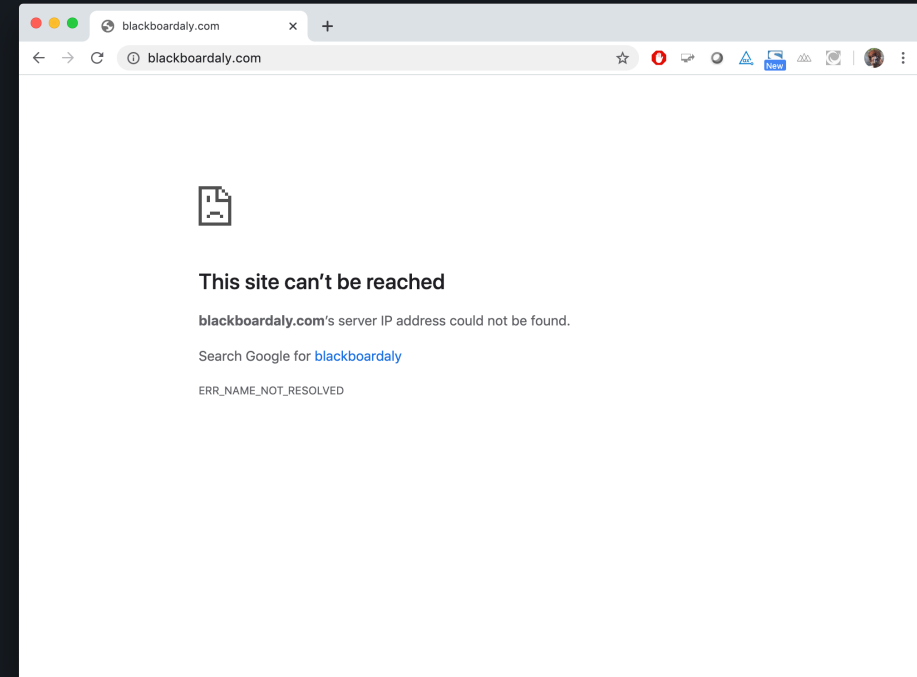
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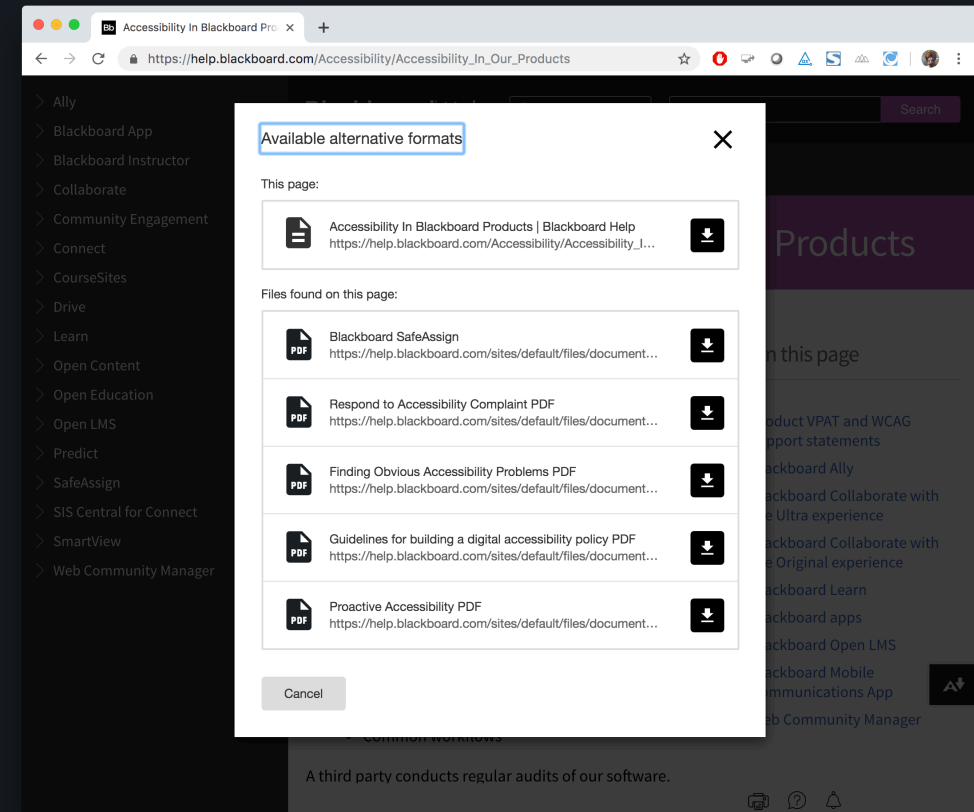
# Broken link checking

- Broken links are common web accessibility issue
- Check web page content for broken links
- Incorporate in web page accessibility score



# Web Page alternative formats

- Ally already provides alternative formats for embedded content such as PDFs, PowerPoint and Word
- Also provide alternative formats for web page content





# Web Page feedback

- Provide content creator feedback for Web Page content
- Highlighting on page where specific issues exist

Web Community Manager - SV X

prod.ally.ac/launchinstructorfeedback/?fromPageUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fprod.ally.ac%2Freport%2F83...

Page 6 of 13

14 Text fragments with insufficient contrast

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6%

All issues ⓘ

This page contains text with insufficient contrast

What this means

How to fix contrast

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Scores and issues will not reflect improvements you made until the next crawl.

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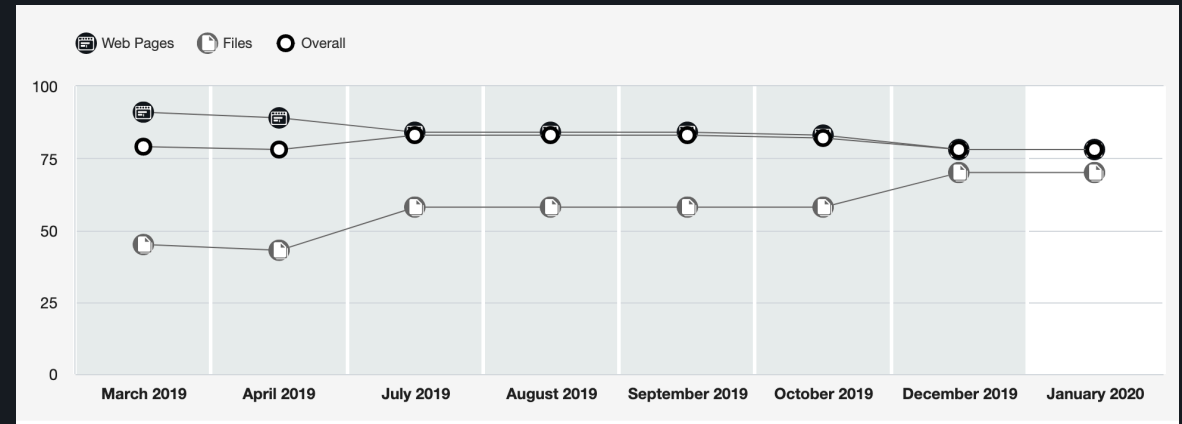
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4. Click **Add App**. The Available Apps dialog displays.

# Section scoring

- Ally already shows evolution of accessibility score of entire site
- Show accessibility score evolution by section



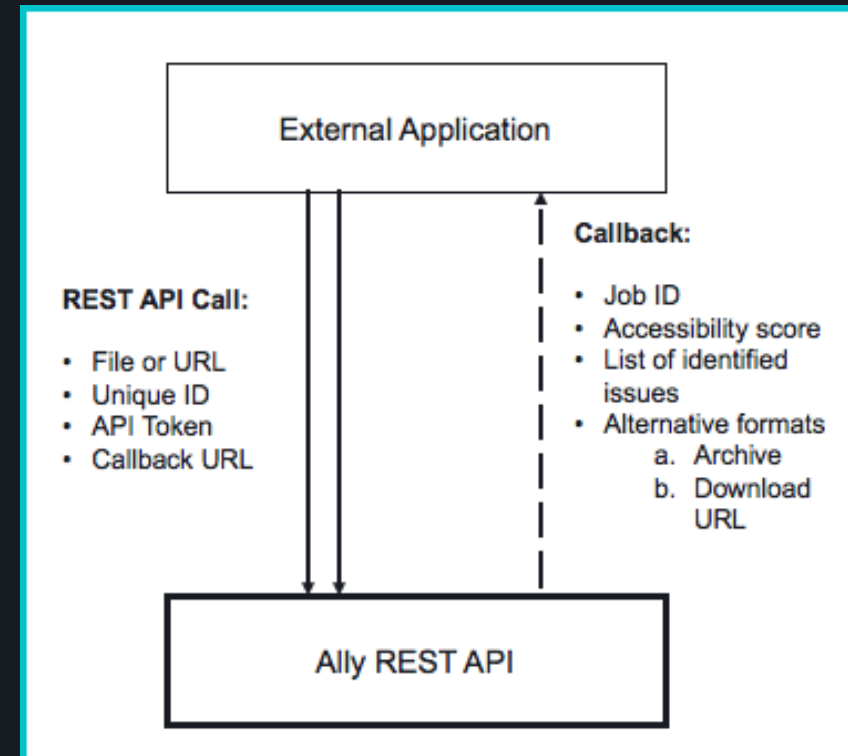
## Re-Scan On Demand

- Allow for re-scan of (sub)domain to be triggered from the accessibility report
- Quicker updated report when making changes

## Pillar 4: Custom Integrations

# Custom integrations

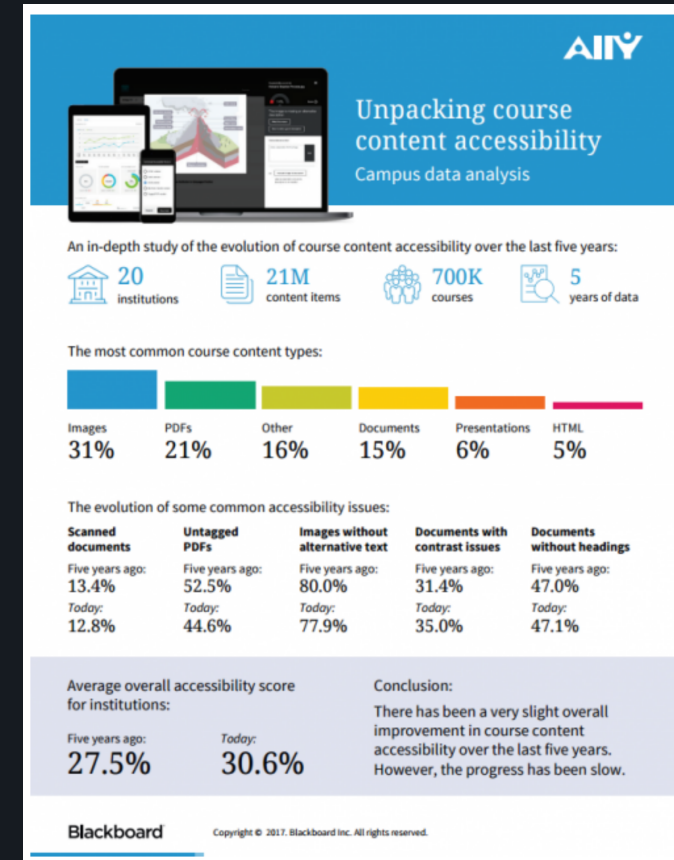
- Apply Ally's capabilities in other contexts
- REST API that consumes content and returns:
  - Accessibility score
  - List of issues
  - Alternative formats



## Pillar 5: Research and impact

# Research projects

- Ally has a wealth of course content and accessibility data
- 2020 focus on new data studies, whitepapers and other research
  - <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/05/18/data-show-small-improvements-accessibility-course-materials>
- Community activities around data and research



# Learning Analytics

- Ally data is automatically included in Blackboard Data
- As part of roadmap, produce xAPI and Caliper statements that can be stored in institutional Learning Record Store
- Allow for including accessibility information and alternative formats in prediction algorithms and other research projects



Statements regarding our product development initiatives, including new products and future product upgrades, updates or enhancements represent our current intentions, but may be modified, delayed or abandoned without prior notice and there is no assurance that such offering, upgrades, updates or functionality will become available unless and until they have been made generally available to our customers.