Blackboard Ally Momentum Continues with Record Number of Alternative Format Downloads in 2019 Academic Year

Blackboard accessibility tool offers new feature enabling instructors to more easily improve accessibility of course content

CHICAGO, Oct. 15, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- EDUCAUSE-- Blackboard Inc., a leading education technology company for teaching, learning and student engagement, today announced that the Blackboard Ally accessibility solution continues to gain traction globally, with over two million alternative format downloads in September and October of this year alone. This record number represents nearly a third of the total number of alternative formats downloaded since the tool became available in April 2017. The spike in downloads accompanies the recent rollout of the tool's instructor-facing course accessibility report, a new feature offering instructors insight into the overall accessibility of their courses.

"We're thrilled to see the growing impact Blackboard Ally is making in the education community," said Nicolaas Matthijs, Product Manager at Blackboard. "This momentum indicates we are making tremendous progress towards ensuring as many students and instructors as possible have access to—and benefit from—accessible course content."

Blackboard Ally is now helping more than 660 higher education institutions—more than 200 of which adopted the tool within the past 12 months—create and sustain a culture of inclusion. Since its launch, the tool has processed over 26 million courses and 825 million content items. Blackboard Ally allows learners to choose how they consume course content by automatically generating a range of alternative formats for the instructor's original content, including mobile-friendly HTML, audio, ePub, electronic Braille, and a translated version.

The tool—which now fully integrates with all leading Learning Management System solutions—is expanding the way it enables institutions and instructors to improve the accessibility of their digital course content. Leveraging Artificial Intelligence, the new instructor-facing course accessibility report scans course content for accessibility issues and offers a summary that includes an overall course accessibility score, the distribution of course content by content type, and a list of all accessibility issues. The report also helps instructors prioritize content items that can be fixed with limited remediation, reducing the time required to improve the accessibility of courses.

"The development of the new instructor-facing course accessibility report was a direct response to requests from our Blackboard Ally user community for additional tools to improve the accessibility of course content," said Matthijs. "The report empowers instructors to ensure all learners have increased access to digital course content by applying the principles of Universal Design and taking the guesswork out of the accessibility improvement process."

To learn more about Blackboard Ally, visit www.blackboard.com/ally.

About Blackboard Inc.
Our mission is to partner with the global education community to enable learner and institutional success, leveraging innovative technologies and services. With an unmatched understanding of the world of the learner, the most comprehensive student-success solutions, and the greatest capacity for innovation, Blackboard is education's partner in change.

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