

Workshop #1: Accessibility and Inclusion for Patrons with Disabilities: The Basic



Handout #4

Universal Design

Universal Design refers to creating products and facilities usable by a wide range of people with varying ability levels. It is intended to benefit all users by making interaction and use comfortable, safe, and accessible.

Architect Ronald Mace developed the concept of Universal Design in the 1970s. Mace defined Universal Design as “The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.” As we saw in Barrier-Free Design, Mace argues that what can be barrier-free for one person can be a barrier for someone else. To remove the barrier is not enough; the designer must address the issue from a broader angle.

Library Examples of Universal Design:

- Lighting should be warm; don't use fluorescents.
 - Use colors that can be identified by people with all types of color vision.
 - Present information in different forms (text, audio, visual, etc.).
-

Seven Principles of Universal Design:

1. Equitable Use- The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
2. Flexibility in Use - The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

3. Simple and Intuitive Use - The design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
4. Perceptible Information - The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or sensory abilities.
5. Tolerance for Error - The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
6. Low Physical Effort - The design can be used efficiently and comfortably with a minimum of fatigue.
7. Size and Space for Approach and Use - Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.