Guidelines for PDF Usage and Management

Follow LBCC Policies: Optimizing PDF Usage for Web Content

1. **Use Accessible Document Formats**
   Prioritize HTML: Create and share content in HTML format whenever possible.
   Benefits:
   - More accessible
   - Optimized for search engines
   - Adapts better to various devices and screen sizes
   - Enhances user experience

2. **Reserve PDFs for Specific Use Cases**
   Specific Use Cases: Reserve PDF files for essential documents that require a fixed format, such as:
   - **Legal Forms**: e.g., contracts, applications
   - **Official Transcripts**: Academic records
   - **Policy Documents**: Need to be printed or signed

3. **Share PDFs via OneDrive**
   Utilize OneDrive: Instead of uploading PDFs directly to the web server:
   Share them through OneDrive.

   How to Store and Share a File in OneDrive

   Name the File:

   - Choose a clear, concise name for the file. Avoid abbreviations and make sure the name accurately describes the file's content.
   - For example, use **"Monthly Report - October 2024"** instead of **"Oct Report"**.

   Store the File in OneDrive:

   - Ensure the file is properly stored in the appropriate folder for easy access.

   Set Sharing Permissions:

   - Right-click the file (or click the three dots next to the file name) and select **"Share"**.
   - In the sharing menu, under **"Link settings"**, click on the **"Anyone"** option.
   - Make sure the link is set to **"View only"** (to prevent others from editing the file).

   Copy the Shareable Link:

   - After adjusting the permissions, click **"Copy link"**.

- The link will now be copied to your clipboard, and you can share it via email, messaging, or any other method.

Send the Link:

- Paste the copied link wherever you need to share the file, such as in an email, chat, or on a website.

Advantages:
- Ensures users access the most current version of the document
- Reduces the risk of outdated information being available online

Downsides of Uploading PDFs Directly to a Web Server

1. **Outdated Information Exposure**
   - PDFs can remain online indefinitely unless manually removed.
   - Users may encounter outdated content, leading to confusion and mistrust.
2. **Negative User Experience**
   - Users expect accurate and up-to-date information.
   - Encountering outdated PDFs can cause frustration and diminish trust in the institution.
3. **Search Engine Indexing Issues**
   - Search engines index all content, including PDFs.
   - Outdated files can mislead users in search results.
   - Managing updates in PDFs is more complex than in HTML content.
4. **Version Management Difficulties**
   - Managing multiple versions of the same PDF can be challenging.
   - Users may access incorrect or outdated information.
5. **Accessibility Challenges**
   - PDFs may not be easily readable by screen readers.
   - They may not adapt well to different devices, limiting access for users with disabilities.
6. **Increased Load Time**
   - Each PDF adds to the webpage's total size, potentially slowing download times.
   - Particularly affects users with slower internet connections.
7. **Server Strain**
   - Hosting numerous PDFs can increase the load on the web server.
   - May lead to slowdowns or crashes during peak access times.
8. **Navigation Issues**
   - A webpage cluttered with too many PDF links can confuse users.
   - This makes it harder for users to find relevant information.

Conclusion

By following these guidelines, LBCC can ensure that PDF content is:

- Effectively Managed
- Accessible

Utilizing OneDrive for sharing and prioritizing HTML formats will enhance user experience:

- Maintain content accuracy
- Promote inclusivity across our digital platforms
- Optimize website performance