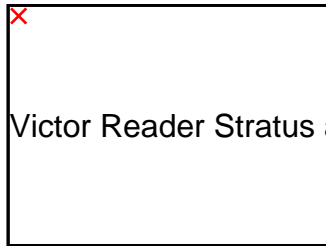




## The Push to Make Digital Books "Born Accessible"

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Despite the laudable effort to increase its [Bookshare](#) library of over 700,000 digital books that are accessible to readers with learning or physical disabilities or other impairments and stay current, Benetech is facing a numbers dilemma. With over 1 million books published in the US each year, there is no way that Benetech can keep up with ensuring that all of these new titles are digitally accessible and eligible for the Bookshare library.

Instead of falling behind on the back end, Benetech is trying to address the issue on the front end through a new innovative effort: get publishers to embed accessibility features as part of the production process, rather than Benetech trying to address the issues after the fact. To this end, Benetech began the Global Certified Accessible (GCA) program earlier this year, and just last week, Macmillan became the first publisher to earn the certification. The basis for Macmillan's digital books and all future publishers who earn the certification is the web accessibility standards created by W3C, the international web standards organization.

The way the certification works is that a publisher submits its digital content to a Benetech content architect who checks over 100 accessibility guidelines, including color and contrast and features pertaining to how the user navigates through the content. At the end of the check, the content architect creates a report that flags any issues that need to be resolved and sends the report back to the publisher. The publisher fixes the issues and resubmits the content to the architect, who runs another check. This process continues back and forth until the content meets all of the accessibility guidelines.

Even though it can take from a few weeks to a few months for a publisher to reset their publishing workflows to meet accessibility guidelines, the benefits become apparent once a publisher creates content that is "born accessible." For one thing, creating content with accessibility in mind, rather than having to go back and fix content to make it accessible, costs less. Additionally, now that the federal and state governments are making more purchasing decisions based on compliance with accessibility guidelines, it gives a major advantage to a publisher with "born accessible" materials over those who are lagging behind.

To learn more about Benetech's "Born Accessible" initiative, visit [this page](#) on the Benetech website. To see if your students qualify for the Bookshare library, visit [this page](#) on the Bookshare website.

Article: [Benetech, Macmillan Pioneer Effort to Make All Digital Books 'Born Accessible'](#) from EdSurge