

## FACILITY PLANNING AND DESIGN

# Accessible Golf Courses: Web-Based Accommodation Communication

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## Abstract

*Websites are a critical tool for sport participants to seek logistical information prior to arriving at a facility. Given the challenge in accommodating mobility disabilities, research exploring how outdoor sport facilities, such as golf courses, precommunicate accommodation information via hosted websites is warranted. This study assessed website accommodation communication by nonprivate golf courses. To create a context and comparison, the researchers also collected data for commercial sport facilities. Of 268 nonprivate Indiana golf courses hosting websites, only two (< 1%) included Web-based accessibility announcements. Of 10 Indiana commercial sport facilities hosting websites, six included Web-based accessibility announcements (60%). Perceptions of undue burden and targeting the active-aging community inform the discussion of research results.*

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Casey Martin, a professional golfer, suffered from a birth defect, a condition known as Klippel-Trenaunay syndrome. The disability caused severe pain and swelling in his right leg, preventing him from successfully walking long distances. When the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) attempted to disallow Martin from using a golf cart in tournament qualification play, Martin confronted the PGA via lawsuit under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA; *PGA Tour, Inc. v. Casey Martin*, 2001). Numerous factors affected the court's decision: (1) The PGA tour, associated golf courses, and tournaments were disqualified as private entities; (2) providing Martin with a golf cart did not qualify as undue burden; and (3) allowing Martin to use a golf cart did not fundamentally change the game or give him an advantage over other opponents (Barnes, 2001). Martin won the case and was declared eligible for golf cart use in PGA Tour qualifying events. Although he never qualified for the PGA Tour, this landmark case sparked change in how the ADA would be applied to golf facilities and subsequently how golf managers would need to adapt (Barnes, 2001; Parziale, 2014).

This historic ruling supported accessibility progress with respect to auxiliary aid development (Parziale, 2014; SoloRider, n.d.), policy changes (United States Golf Association [USGA], n.d.), and law amendments (U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division [USDOJ CRD], 2010a). For example, wheelchair users now have the option to utilize single-rider golf carts equipped with specially designed tires that exert less pressure on a putting green than a typical 180-pound person. The 350-degree swivel seat allows riders to play their shots from a seated or semi-seated position (Parziale, 2014; SoloRider, n.d.). The USGA implemented an application process for golfers (the Golf Disability Review Board) who request accommodation, as well as implemented a complete set of adapted rules (USGA, n.d.). In 2010, the ADA was amended to include practical and specific ways golf courses should achieve accessibility (USDOJ CRD, 2010a). This set of changes was perceived to open golf courses to the ever-increasing active-aging market and/or the market for people with disabilities (Barnes, 2001).

Organizations use various means including websites to communicate access to patrons with disabilities. For example, Bankers Life Fieldhouse (home of the Pacers) includes, on their hosted website,

an accessible icon. After the user has clicked on the icon, a new page shows the variety of methods Bankers Life Fieldhouse employs to accommodate patrons with disabilities. The page provides instructions for obtaining assisted listening devices and directions to accessible seating arrangements (Bankers Life Fieldhouse, n.d.). Providing comprehensive facility information online, such as Web-based accessibility announcements, can increase customer satisfaction (Petrick, Backman, & Bixler, 1999). Websites are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, which allows customers to seek information as they need it and thereby increases consumer awareness and consumer demand (Gillentine, 2003).

Between 4 and 5 million Americans with disabilities have declared interest in playing golf or have already made playing golf a part of their lives (Gross, 2007). When a golfer is selecting a course to play, perceived course condition has a high influence on the golfer's decision (Won, Hwang, & Kleiber, 2009); for individuals with disabilities, course condition and accessibility are inextricably linked. Given that websites are a critical and central part of communication for sport organizations (Hur, Ko, & Claussen, 2012; Tuckman, Chatterjee, & Muha, 2004) and an important information provider for consumers (Filo & Funk, 2005; Seo & Green, 2008), an assessment of golf course website communication directed toward the community of people with disabilities is warranted. The literature surrounding ADA application to golf addresses legal issues and undue burden (Hedding, 2002), but fails to illustrate how golf courses communicate accessibility information to patrons and actively recruit this market. The dual purpose of this study was to understand how golf courses communicate accessibility to patrons with disabilities through their hosted websites and to understand this Web-based communication in comparison with commercial sport facility approaches. The following research questions guided this investigation:

- RQ1: What are the methods by which nonprivate golf courses communicate accessibility to patrons with disabilities through hosted websites?
- RQ2: How do the methods by which nonprivate golf courses communicate accessibility to patrons with disabilities through hosted websites compare to the methods used by commercial sport facilities?

# Literature Review

## The Standards Updated

The literature surrounding how golf courses should achieve accessibility focus on these areas: (1) various publications (government and otherwise) explaining the nature of the updated 2010 Accessible Design standards, (2) publications providing a specific guide and support for golf course managers to achieve and embrace inclusion, and (3) the ongoing debate of whether accommodations qualify as undue burden given the unique game of golf. Although nonprivate<sup>1</sup> golf course accessibility is mandated by law and governing bodies and disability advocacy groups support golf course accessibility, the game of golf presents well-acknowledged challenges with respect to inclusion.

The ADA of 1990 was developed “to prohibit discrimination and ensure equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation” (USDOJ CRD, 2016, para. 1). Section 36.104 of the 1991 Accessible Design standards included nonprivate golf courses as a place of accommodation. The intricacy associated with applying ADA standards coupled with a lack of specific recommendations for sport facilities, left golf course managers with a difficult set of guidelines to interpret and apply (Hedding, 2002; Wanless, Judge, Petersen, & Hindawi, 2015). In response to this associated difficulty, in 2010 the original ADA standards were updated (USDOJ CRD, 2010b).<sup>2</sup> Because questions arose with interpreting this new document, the Civil Rights Division provided an ancillary guide to aide understanding and application (USDOJ CRD, 2010a). The USGA (Gross, 2007) and National Alliance for Accessible Golf (2003) also produced a hands-on interpretation of accessible design, specifically with regard to course care. The evolution of the ADA standards to better accommodate facility operators, as well as patrons with disabilities, is well documented within legal documents and through guides to

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<sup>1</sup>Private courses can often be considered places of public accommodation and be subject to ADA law in the same way as nonprivate golf courses. For an example, see *PGA Tour, Inc. v. Casey Martin* (2001).

<sup>2</sup>For a summary of the changes made from ADA 1990 to the 2010 standards, see Wanless et al. (2015).

support the interpretation of the law (Parziale, 2014; Wanless et al., 2015). The USGA (n.d.) took additional measures to implement an application process for golfers (the Golf Disability Review Board) who request accommodation, as well as implemented a complete set of adapted rules.

Many of the essential components of the game include difficult terrain (e.g., sandtraps). In addition, this difficult terrain requires a great deal of maintenance. Under the ADA, accommodations do not necessarily have to be made, if facility managers can prove the alteration creates undue financial burden or that the accommodations would fundamentally alter the game of golf (Barbookles, 2013). The discussion of whether golf accessibility is undue burden permeates two law reviews (Barbookles, 2013; Barnes, 2001), a philosophical position paper (Bowen, 2002), and two court cases (*Celano et al. v. Marriott Int'l, Inc.*, 2008; *PGA Tour, Inc. v. Casey Martin*, 2001). Critics of mandating accessible courses declare the nature of golf would be fundamentally changed (USDOJ CRD, 2010a). Barbookles (2013) identified several challenges in upholding the nature of golf and quality of the golf course and also ensuring access for populations with disabilities. For example, early in the golf season, greens are particularly vulnerable. Wheelchairs or adaptive carts may damage greens during this time. In an investigation of green damage from various forms of traffic, however, Gentilucci (1997) found that when greens are given at least 30 min of recovery time, even the most narrow wheels produce negligible damage. The study did not declare at what point in the year the greens were observed. Barnes (2001) and Bowen (2002) commented that although accommodations should be made for the general public, Casey Martin should not have been allowed to pursue qualifying tournaments for the PGA tour. Barnes related golf course accessibility to employment accessibility in that each individual needs to meet the job requirements and that one job requirement for a PGA golfer involves navigating difficult terrain. In a similar sense, Bowen discussed how court justices misinterpret the limitations by which the ADA should be applied.

The questions surrounding undue burden and ADA in golf course accessibility have yet to be tested in court aside from the Casey Martin case. In 2008, however, a district court in Northern California ruled against Marriott hotels in California for failing to

meet accessibility standards. In *Celano et al. v. Marriott Int'l, Inc.* (2008), the district court deemed that it was a reasonable and necessary accommodation that Marriott provide single-rider carts for patrons with disabilities. Marriott had informed patrons they were able to bring their own single-rider cart, but would not provide them. The district court ruled otherwise. This court case may be just the beginning to understanding the standard to which golf courses and golf course managers will be held. The combination of court cases, related documents, and literature adds important insights to the discussion of golf course accessibility. The literature fails, however, to discuss the strategies by which golf course managers precommunicate with patrons with disabilities.

### **Websites: Information Providers**

Websites allow consumers to gain knowledge, seek information, find entertainment, purchase products and services, communicate with others, and more (Moon & Kim, 2001). As a result, for sport organizations, websites have become an opportunity and expectation. Website communication and website content provides information that can be used to leverage product attributes and benefits in the minds of the consumer (Filo, Funk, & Hornby, 2009). Filo et al. (2009) stated that leveraging the uniqueness of a sport product online creates a competitive advantage among competitors in the market. Websites are now a critical sport marketing tool that sport consumers expect when browsing for information on the Internet (Filo & Funk, 2005; Seo & Green, 2008).

Online users will visit and revisit a particular website for many reasons (Hur et al., 2012). Suh, Ahn, and Pedersen (2013) identified five service quality factors of sport websites: usability, privacy, reliability, information, and appearance. When executed correctly to reach their target markets, these factors ensure repeat online page visits from their users. The Internet has become an integral place for consumers to seek sport information, as identified in the model presented by Suh et al. (Seo & Geen, 2008). "Information refers to the assessment of whether the material and knowledge provided on a website actually fulfills the needs of the customer . . . information is an essential element necessary to secure customer revisits to a website" (Suh et al., 2013, p. 163). When golf course managers, for

example, provide correct and timely information on their website, customer satisfaction increases.

Accessing information online is now commonplace for consumers, and accessing sport information has increased because of the growth of the online presence of sport business (Hur, Ko, & Valacich, 2007). When seeking information online, consumers are creating a behavioral access method that can happen repetitively with the same website if organizations structure their business marketing strategy and websites to capture these users (Moon & Kim, 2001). Businesses are positioning themselves online to disperse information about the business and its products through online marketing tactics (Filo et al., 2009). Nonprofit organizations and businesses alike use the Internet to disperse information and market to customers (Tuckman et al., 2004).

Marketing plans, specifically for golf course facilities, are embracing technology and the Internet by hosting websites (Gillentine, 2003). If a sport company can identify its markets and key consumers, it can design an effective website to reach and engage customers (Gillentine, 2003; Seo & Green, 2008). There is a strong need for websites to connect to users through online interactivity tactics that keep users on the website longer, which allows for more exposure to the sport company, brand, facility, and products (Ioakimidis, 2010; Suh, Ahn, & Pedersen, 2014). When structuring a website, the organization can strategically use its goals and the effect on target users in the marketing strategy (Gillentine, 2003; Seo & Green, 2008). An effective website must best meet the needs of the consumer base and website users (Seo & Green, 2008).

Value can be created and increased through having and effectively using websites (Ioakimidis, 2010). When a user or customer experiences satisfaction through perceived website effectiveness, that person also perceives the value of the organization (Petrick et al., 1999). Seo and Green (2008) designed a sport motivation scale for an online consumption study and found that information and knowledge are two of the 10 dimensions that lead to consumption. Information was again identified and significant in other studies as a substantial motivation for users to select browsing on a particular website (Filo et al., 2009; Hur et al., 2007). These findings support

the need to inform consumer decision-making processes via online modalities. The purpose of this study was to assess accommodation communication of nonprivate golf courses via information provided through the course websites and to assess this communication in comparison with Web-based accessibility announcements from commercial sport facilities.

## Method

### Population and Sample

**Golf courses.** To gain a representative sample and wide range of golf courses in rural and urban settings, the researchers evaluated golf courses within the boundaries of one state of the United States. The state of Indiana was selected because of its close proximity to the researchers. Researchers considered 360 nonprivate (public, semiprivate, resort, and military) golf courses from the total 439 Indiana golf courses. The sample for the study was also limited to nonprivate golf courses in the state of Indiana that hosted websites at the time of data collection, August to September 2015. Indiana Golf, a professional association, served as the initial source for website identification; 183 of the 360 nonprivate courses included Web addresses with their Indiana Golf registration data (Indiana Golf, n.d.). To uncover potential host websites missing from the Indiana Golf database, the researchers used Google to search for the remaining 177 golf courses that were nonprivate and did not register a website with Indiana Golf. Eighty-five additional golf course websites emerged. Two hundred sixty-eight nonprivate golf courses hosting websites (74% of the 360 nonprivate Indiana golf courses) met the criteria for this study.

**Commercial sport facilities.** The researchers considered 16 Indiana commercial sport facilities in the investigation not only for the sake of comparison, but also to add context for the discussion of Web-based golf course accessibility communication. Commercial sport facility host websites were retrieved through professional sport team identification and Google. Of the 16 commercial sport facilities in Indiana, 10 contained facility websites (62.5% of the total). For the sake of consistency, the researchers did not consider team websites. For example, the Evansville Otters play at Bosse Field. Although the

Evansville Otters hosted a website, Bosse Field did not and therefore was not considered.

## **Content and Descriptive Analysis**

Two researchers were trained to independently assess page content and features of nonprivate golf course and commercial sport facility websites in Indiana. Websites were independently reviewed during a 2-week period in September 2015. Given the exploratory nature of this study, it was necessary for the researchers to set parameters to enhance consistency in assessment across Internet sites. Review of content was limited to home page (primary page) and secondary pages. A page was operationally defined as the content available on screen (including scroll) with one click of the mouse. Each of the golf course websites was reviewed in the following manner: (1) The website home page or primary page was thoroughly checked for an accommodation notice, and (2) all subsequent pages considered secondary pages available through the primary page were thoroughly checked for an accommodation notice. For each home page and secondary page, the researchers determined if accommodation information was present. Responses were coded on a dichotomous scale (*lacked accommodation information* = 0 and *included accommodation information* = 1). The accessibility announcement, when present, was documented. The researchers recorded the results for primary and secondary pages in separate Excel spreadsheets. Discrepancies in codes did not arise between reviewers; therefore, the resulting Krippendorff's alpha was 100%.

Because of the exploratory nature of the study, and as a result of vastly different population sizes between golf course and sport commercial facilities in Indiana, descriptive statistics were used for data analysis. Specifically, the proportion of websites with accessibility announcements to the total number of facilities that met study criteria were calculated and represented in frequencies and percentages for golf and sport commercial facilities.

## **Results**

Of the 268 nonprivate Indiana golf courses with websites, two golf courses listed an accessibility announcement on their website: Chariot Run Golf Course in Laconia, Indiana, and McMillen Park Golf Course in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Chariot Run Golf Course, hosted in the Horseshoe Southern Indiana (a casino and hotel), provided this notice on the primary page of its website. Accessibility information was not provided on secondary pages.

Caesars Entertainment is committed to providing an excellent experience for our guests with disabilities.

Our properties offer a wide range of accessible accommodations to meet the needs of our guests and welcomes service animals.

Caesars also seeks to ensure that all guests with disabilities can make a reservation and have access to the information on this website. (Caesars Entertainment, n.d., para. 1–3)

McMillen Park Golf Course provided the following notice on a secondary page labeled About under the General Information tab. McMillen Park Golf Course did not include a disability announcement on its primary page.

Thanks to a partnership with Turnstone Center for Children and Adults with Disabilities and a grant made possible through the National Alliance for Accessible Golf, an accessible golf cart is now available for use at McMillen Park and Mad Anthony IIIs Golf Courses. (McMillen Park Golf Course, n.d., para. 2)

Of the 10 commercial sport facilities hosting websites, six included disability announcements on their websites: the Ford Center (on the primary and secondary pages), Allen County War Memorial Coliseum (on a secondary page only), Bankers Life Fieldhouse (on the primary and secondary pages), Lucas Oil Stadium (on the primary and secondary pages), Indianapolis Motor Speedway (on a secondary page only), and Lucas Oil Raceway (on a secondary page only).

The primary page of the website for the Ford Center located in Evansville, Indiana, included an Accessibility Services tab. This link also appears on secondary pages. Figure 1 shows the accessibility services communicated through the facility website.

The Allen County War Memorial Coliseum (n.d.) facility secondary ticket office page states, “The Allen County War Memorial

Coliseum is ADA compliant for accessibility including restrooms, parking, drop off lanes, and service counters” (“Special Needs,” para. 1).

The Bankers Life Fieldhouse primary home page website contains an Accessibility link with the disability icon displayed next to it. This link was included on all secondary pages as well. Figure 2 shows the accessibility services offered at Bankers Life Fieldhouse.

The Lucas Oil Stadium primary home page facility website displayed an Accessibility tab that appears on both primary and secondary pages. Figure 3 shows the accessibility services offered to patrons attending events at Lucas Oil Stadium.

The Indianapolis Motor Speedway included, on a secondary page only, a declaration that the Hulman Terrace Club offers “ADA-accessible seating.”

The Lucas Oil Raceway included, also on a secondary page only, an FAQ page discussing accessible parking and grandstand seating. “Q: Where is handicap parking for the Chevrolet Performance U.S. Nationals? A: Handicap parking is inside the oval. There will be transportation from the handicapped parking to the grandstands.”

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was twofold: (1) to investigate how nonprivate courses communicate accessibility to patrons with disabilities through their hosted websites and (2) to assess this communication in comparison with that of commercial facilities. Given that websites are a critical and central part of communication for sport organizations (Hur et al., 2012; Tuckman et al., 2004) and an important information provider for consumers (Filo & Funk, 2005; Seo & Green, 2008), an assessment of golf course website communication directed toward the community of people with disabilities was warranted. Of the 268 nonprivate Indiana golf courses hosting websites, only two (less than 1%) included accessible announcements on their website. Sixty percent of commercial sport facilities, however, included Web-based accessibility announcements. This result may be an indication of golf courses lacking accessibility, golf course managers linking golf accessibility with undue burden, failure to pursue the market of people with disabilities through online means, or perhaps a lack of comprehension with respect to implementing Web-based accessibility announcements. How golf course

managers adhere to, apply, and feel about ADA guidelines should be further investigated through a variety of methods and scope.

### **Undue Burden**

Over 99% of nonprivate Indiana golf facilities with a website did not include accessibility announcements on their hosted website. Failure to produce Web-based accessibility communication does not necessarily mean a failure to comply with ADA law; ADA law does not mandate this type of communication. However, this lack of Web-based accessibility communication in comparison with that of commercial sport facilities may be a symptom of bigger issues associated with creating accessible golf courses. The concept of undue burden may be manifesting culturally in a number of ways, preventing golf course managers from providing necessary information to patrons with disabilities via hosted websites. First, even though non-private golf courses are mandated to be accessible, golf course managers may not have updated facilities to compliance with the 2010 ADA standards. Parziale (2014) suggested accessible golf courses exist throughout the nation. Websites such as [mobilitygolf.com](http://mobilitygolf.com) help patrons with disabilities to identify accessible courses. However, only a few golf courses within Indiana have declared with Mobility Golf. Eagle View Golf Club in Crane, Indiana, Eagle Creek Golf Course in Indianapolis, Indiana, and the Birk Boilermaker Golf Complex in Lafayette, Indiana, have declared as accessible through this mode (Mobility Golf, n.d.). (Interestingly, these golf courses did not have accessibility announcements on their pages, a concept addressed in the next section.) When so few are registered with the Mobility Golf website, and so few have announcements on websites, one begins to wonder how many are accessible or how many golf course managers emphasize accessibility.

Given the expense that might incur as a result of adjusting golf cart paths, weather shelters, and practice areas, and perceived adjustments to pace of play, golf course facility managers face a unique challenge when accommodating individuals with disabilities. Barbookles (2013) and Bowen (2002) acknowledged the intricacy of accommodating individuals with disabilities and upholding the nature of the game of golf. Golf involves tedious maintenance of grounds (Barbookles, 2013; Gentilucci, 1997) and the inclusion of inaccessible obstacles such as sand traps that are considered part of

the nature of the game (Bowen, 2002). When course quality is the most important determinant in choosing a golf course (Won et al., 2009), golf managers rightfully and carefully maintain their grounds. Golf course managers may hesitate to fully pursue golf course accessibility or to publicize an accessible course for fear that golf greens and other delicate grounds may be affected by equipment for patrons with disabilities. Gentilucci (1997) dispelled the notion that wheelchairs, especially those with increased tire width, disrupt the pristine condition of a golf course green. Golf culture, however, may vacillate and could require education and promotion prior to golf course managers supporting accessible golf equipment.

Several auxiliary aids can help support golfers with disabilities. For example, wheelchair users can use single-rider golf carts equipped with specially designed tires that exert less pressure on a putting green than a typical 180-pound person while allowing riders to play their shots from a seated or semi-seated position in a 350-degree swivel seat (Parziale, 2014; SoloRider, n.d.). Modifications to other types of golf equipment may include lighter clubs, clubs with altered angles to accommodate golfing from seated positions, and gloves specially made to accommodate individuals lacking grip strength. Golf course managers may fail to advertise to this group because obtaining and maintaining this equipment can be expensive. In addition, golf course managers may perceive that athletes with disabilities could slow play when using these devices.

### **Websites for Accessibility Communication**

Websites are an important communication method for sport organizations (Filo & Funk, 2005; Filo et al., 2009; Seo & Green, 2008). At the time of data collection, two hundred sixty-eight of the 350 Indiana nonprivate golf courses hosted websites to communicate to consumers. Suh et al. (2013) identified gaining information as one of the five service quality factors of websites, and Hur et al. (2007) also identified websites as a critical vehicle to gain information. Eighty-two nonprivate golf courses in Indiana failed to provide websites as of September 2015. Golf courses that did not provide host websites may be failing to best communicate with current consumers or to recruit new consumers. The culture of golf may be supporting another mode of communication such as calling the clubhouse, but

failing to evolve and maximize websites may also be failing to gain new consumers or completely satisfy consumers.

Two hundred sixty-six of the 268 courses with host websites did not provide accessibility announcements. Although these golf courses may better meet the needs of communication with consumers through hosting a website, they may still fail to maximize recruitment of the active-aging and people with disabilities. The two Indiana nonprivate golf courses that registered on the Mobility Golf website did not have accessibility announcements on their hosted websites. Perhaps although golf course managers recognize the value of having a website as a marketing tool, they may not be realizing that providing information is a key service quality construct (Suh et al., 2013). Research has suggested prioritizing website use to key markets (Gillentine, 2003; Seo & Green, 2008). Perhaps golf course managers who do host websites do not view golfers with disabilities as priority consumers. Given that 4 and 5 million Americans with disabilities want to play or are already playing golf (Gross, 2007), and as the active-aging community continues to grow, golf course managers may be missing a key demographic to drive business to their courses.

The lack of accessibility announcements could also be a symptom that golf course managers may not know how to create such an announcement or what to include. Even though the USGA has provided an accessible set of rules (Hedding, 2002), and even though the 1991 Accessible Design standards were adjusted for practicality (Hedding, 2002; USDOJ CRD, 2010b) and governing bodies made efforts to resource golf managers with documents interpreting the standards (Gross, 2007; National Alliance for Accessible Golf, 2003), governing bodies have not extended their support to helping golf course managers provide communication to patrons with disabilities. Represented in Figures 1, 2, and 3, commercial facilities could serve as a model for recreation facilities (e.g., golf), to communicate with the active-aging market and people with disabilities.

## **Limitations**

This exploratory study did not include dialogue with golf course managers about the accessible status of golf course websites, nor with patrons with disabilities about their attitudes toward use of

the facility. The discussion of the study, therefore, was limited to issues potentially surrounding the lack of accessibility announcements. Inferential statistics could not verify a significant difference in Web-based accessibility communication between commercial sport facilities and golf course facilities. The staggering differences, however, make a strong suggestion that a wide gap exists between golf course facilities and commercial sport facilities with respect to providing accessibility announcements. The researchers used two primary methods to locate Indiana golf course websites: the governing body, Indiana Golf, and the Google search engine, by golf course name. Through this process, the researchers deemed that ninety-two golf courses did not include course websites at the time of study. If the researchers had failed to locate existing golf course websites, research conclusions may have been altered. Given the proportion of courses that included accessibility announcements to those that did not, however, research conclusions incorporating additional websites would not represent significant variability.

### **Practical Applications and Future Directions**

The findings of this research stress the need for disability information via sport facility Web pages, specifically websites for golf courses. In an age where the Internet has become a primary source of information, it is important that businesses recognize the diversity of the populations seeking information and visiting websites. Further application of the findings could aid in construction of golf courses featuring accommodations for disability and revisions of websites to include information on the availability of said accommodations. Future research should aim to dispel or support possible reasons for the lack of inclusion of disability announcements on websites. Research should assess how many golf courses are accessible, should seek to understand perceptions of undue burden held by golf course managers, should understand potential revenue generated from the active-aging community, and should compare disability listings from golf courses with listings from other sport and recreation facilities, to see if the disparity is only held by golf courses.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study should serve as a catalyst for additional investigation into ADA compliance in golf course management. Of

the 268 nonprivate golf courses in Indiana, only two listed accessibility on their websites. This proportion pales in comparison with commercial facilities. This finding could be due to a number of potential reasons including the perceptions of accessibility as an undue burden, the belief that golf should not accommodate people with disabilities, a lack of priority and importance placed on serving customers with disabilities, or failure and lack of know-how in providing comprehensive information on course websites. It is also possible that even after the 2010 ADA guidelines update, these golf courses do not provide accommodations for patrons with disabilities. Further research uncovering why so few Indiana golf course websites include accommodation announcements may also uncover additional issues surrounding inclusion of people with disabilities at golf courses.

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