People with disabilities (PWDs) spend approximately $17.3 billion annually on travel and, with typically one or more travel companions, the actual impact is closer to $34.6 billion (Open Doors Organization, 2015). Exploration of accessibility features is what distinguishes PWDs, as they “may rely heavily upon communications” from an organization or destination to “ensure that accessibility will not pose a problem for them” once they arrive on-site (Grady & Ohlin, 2009, p. 162). Thus, it is important to investigate how service-related information is communicated online when traveling for sport-related events. Additionally, PWDs are identified as a marginalized demographic. The current study uses Transformative Service Research (TSR) as a lens for investigating the service needs of PWDs. TSR has been defined as “the integration of consumer and service research that centers on creating uplifting changes and improvements in the well-being of” consumers and employees (Anderson et al., 2011, p. 3). TSR attempts to enhance the well-being of vulnerable consumers (e.g., PWDs), who often enter a service setting with marginalizing and stigmatizing conditions (Rosenbaum, 2015). The current study aims to evaluate accessibility services at sport facilities and how they are communicated to consumers. Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to analyze accessibility of sport facility websites and how they communicate accessibility services provided within the stadium.

The study is currently in progress with a targeted completion date of January 2020. Using Major League Baseball as a pilot, researchers documented the URL where all 30 stadium websites provided information about accessibility. Second, following methodology from Baule’s (2019) evaluation of special education cooperative websites, that URL was evaluated using AChecker, a free, online accessibility-checking software that evaluates content in accordance to the minimum acceptable standards of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A and Level AA for accessibility. Groves (2013) suggested websites must meet Level A compliance, should meet Level AA compliance, and may meet Level AAA compliance. Findings will include “Known Problems”, “Likely Problems”, and “Potential Problems” for all 30 MLB stadium websites, as reported by AChecker. Third, the content within those stadium websites will be analyzed against existing criteria for hosting events in an accessible location by establishing a rating scale for sport facilities (Clemson University, 2018).

Evaluating the accessibility of MLB websites can allow the league and its 30 teams to better understand barriers that exist in their attempt to communicate with fans about accessibility features. Furthermore, establishing a uniform method of evaluation provides the consumer with greater awareness of an environment before they attend a game, combatting the possibility of social isolation by enhancing inclusion. Such a uniform method of evaluation is an attempt to address the charge by Darcy and Taylor (2013), who identified a lack of standards for disability access.