

Spring 2022 Commencement - 4:00pm

Text description of meeting video

0:17

of myself um okay we're recording um so like i said i'm joel's good i'm a white person with

0:24

short reddish brown hair i'm wearing a shirt that says black lives matter and the word matter is fingerspelled in uh

0:30

asl uh letters um so let me just pop up my

0:36

powerpoint here so today we're kind of gonna be doing an

0:43

intro to accessible communication which can kind of look like a lot of

0:49

different things but i kind of just wanted to give you some basics and guidelines to kind of

0:54

get you started and thinking about how to communicate in a way that is accessible

1:03

so um just a little bit more about me for those of you i haven't met yet um so i am late deaf and chronically ill i

1:09

last lost my hearing as a teenager sorry someone was trying to call me um

1:16

and um i also have several chronic illnesses um and i am neurodivergent as

1:23

well so i am uh proudly a disabled person i use identity

1:28

first language for myself i'll probably use it throughout this uh presentation just because that's how i kind of

1:33

default totally respect and understand folks who want to use person first language um i just ask that you respect

1:39

my desire for identity first language um i'm a non-binary person i use they them pronouns i am um an accessibility

1:47

consultant and an assistive tech specialist i work at northeast deaf and hard of hearing services where i manage

1:53

our communication technology department um i have my master's in public policy

1:59

from the university of new hampshire and also my bachelor's in music performance um so that's kind of my basic rundown

2:04

and i'm an open book feel free to ask me any questions about you know my experience as it relates to the things we're

2:10

talking about today um so yeah so

2:15

first we're going to kind of talk about the why of access to information why is it important

2:21

well really kind of the unifying fact about access to information is that knowledge is power right the more we

2:27

know um the more informed decisions we can make um so information helps us you

2:33

know be able to make informed and thoughtful decisions it helps us connect with our communities to be able to know what's going on

2:39

around us um you know both in our local communities and also our online communities um

2:45

it allows us to access services that we might need um it allows us to stay safe in dangerous situations so having you

2:52

know accessible communications during a weather emergency or um you know if there's like some kind of

2:59

crisis happening in an area um or even you know with covid um having accessible

3:04

information about that that's up to date um and then in multiple accessible formats is super important um and lastly

3:13

information helps us make choices independently right when we're able to access the the information ourselves and

3:20

not have to get it through another person um or kind of like a third party then we're able to make more informed

3:26

choices um and have kind of more agency in the decisions that we make

3:34

so i want to kind of ask y'all um and you can either put this put your

3:40

answer in the chat box or you can um just unmute yourself in chat whichever is better for you

3:45

and the question i have is have you ever found it difficult to find information that you needed and how did that feel

3:53

i'm seeing some nod so yeah feel free to put it in the chat box or unmute yourself and share with us uh sam go

4:00

ahead so i totally find it frustrating

4:08

when like things like school clothing closing the

4:14

weather is in a map format even things like restaurant menus

4:20

restaurant menus are not braille

4:25

you know things like the labels on store packaging

4:30

things like that not braille yeah yeah

4:36

so kind of both in the the physical and in the digital world trying to access

4:42

information when you're not able to see it is incredibly frustrating and like all these things for iphone and

4:49

android well i have a flip phone because i have problems with spatial awareness

4:54

well can't they make some things accessible to that

4:59

right yeah yeah so the there's a lot of innovation that's happening but if

5:04

you're not able to use the technology that that innovation is occurring on then it's still not accessible to you so

5:10

i think the or like i can't do the chat box i can't do the chat box but it would

5:17

be nice if there was a number on the dial and thing where you could

5:23

dial you don't like they have star nine to raise hands that's just yeah

5:30

so why don't they have something where you can insert text box yeah

5:35

yeah that's a really good point um yeah so just

5:40

yeah absolutely i hear you um and just to read a few from the chat people a lot of people are saying frustrating yes um

5:48

disempowering that's a great word right like you don't have the the the resources to be able to do something

5:54

yourself it can feel kind of defeating um yeah frustrating isolating kathleen

5:59

did you want to say something oh you're muted

6:09

kathleen you're muted

6:28

whoever the co-host is might want to ask them to unmute yeah i i did that yeah

6:33

kathy you were muted you're still muted

7:01

so when somebody has been able to put something in

7:07

in the chat to me is not over so you just said

7:14

you can say what you want to say or you can put it into that gaming option

7:21

i appreciate the option yeah yeah absolutely right it's really

7:27

important to allow people multiple ways to do things because not every option is accessible to every person so yeah great

7:34

point yeah thank you yeah of course thank you scott did you have something to share

7:40

i can agree with samantha because i when i try to look up my fundraiser page and

7:46

say oh add money to my fundraiser page you're going

7:51

where's the option of adding money when i get offline donations i'm going

7:57

that's frustrating as i look up things that are going on i'll go to www.and

8:03

right so there's like too many steps yeah there's too many steps and it's

8:08

like not clear yeah so those are all really good points um thank you so much for sharing that

8:15

excellent insight um so um just to kind of get us all on the

8:21

same page about accessibility um so when i talk about accessible communications

8:27

um this is kind of what i'm this is what i'm referring to and this definition of accessibility is one that

8:32

my organization has kind of come up with and it's we're constantly changing and evolving it over time but as it stands

8:39

right now we define accessibility as a commitment to ensuring everyone can fully and independently use services

8:46

navigate spaces and not just participate but lead so to break that down a little

8:51

bit a commitment meaning that you're not just making something accessible one time you're making it accessible for the

8:57

long haul and you're changing your processes to make sure that things can be accessible in a sustainable way

9:03

continuously um everyone meaning everyone not just

9:08

people with some disabilities or people um without disabilities but everyone

9:14

um fully and independently so meaning you have equal and equitable access to

9:21

the same information or processes that everyone else does and when we say independently

9:27

really that means that doesn't necessarily mean having to do it by yourself but doing it with the amount

9:32

and the type of support that you choose um and then you know using services

9:38

navigating spaces and participating things that we do every day kind of out and about in the world both um you know

9:45

in the physical world in real life and in the digital world online and then not just participating but

9:51

being able to lead so um an example i always use here is one time i was working with a theater um

9:58

who had um a wheelchair accessible audience seating section but the stage

10:03

was not wheelchair accessible so the space wasn't truly accessible because folks in wheelchairs could

10:10

watch a performance but they could never be on stage or um you know be able to

10:15

lead and inhabit the space in that way um so making sure that all aspects of

10:21

what you're doing are accessible and not just kind of the bare minimum so

10:26

what are some common barriers to information access um i'm kind of going to break this down into four categories

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and again you know this is just an hour-long like intro type of deal right

10:38

so this isn't going to be completely comprehensive but i wanted to give you a few examples from each of these categories

10:44

um so visual accessibility um if you know we're we're not designing

10:49

things being mindful of colors and fonts um if we're not being mindful of software compatibility with things like

10:56

screen readers or refreshable braille displays um then those can be barriers to visual accessibility

11:02

um auditory accessibility um so having captions and transcripts available

11:08

visual means of communicating auditory information for people who can't hear

11:13

language accessibility so things like plain language having american sign language

11:18

interpretation available making things available in foreign languages and then cognitive accessibility um so

11:25

having simplified processes making things easy to navigate not having a

11:31

million steps to do something that could be done in two or three steps just trying to make things as

11:36

straightforward as possible and also multiple ways of presenting info so we'll get into a little bit more detail

11:42

about each of these as we go along um so why isn't information already

11:48

accessible right like we know that accessibility is what we should be doing there's laws that say

11:54

accessibility is what we should be doing so why aren't things accessible well accessibility needs are often ignored in

12:02

design processes or they're added at the last minute so a lot of times when people are designing um

12:08

you know anything a a space a website a social media post a flyer um they're not
12:16

necessarily thinking about accessibility from the start so it either gets ignored or it gets
sprinkled on at the last

12:22

minute and what i always say about that is if you're baking a blueberry muffin right
you're not gonna bake a plain

12:28

muffin and then throw blueberries at it if you're baking a blueberry muffin you're gonna
mix blueberries into the

12:34

batter and so with accessibility you have to mix it into the batter you can't just throw it
on your event muffin

12:41

at the last minute um and the another thing is that most

12:46

people aren't taught how to communicate information in an accessible way um it's not
something that's a part of a lot of

12:52

you know um education or professional development or the places where people learn

12:58

um you know the skills that they use to do their jobs and to create um

13:04

these these events and spaces and and designs um they're not taught how to
incorporate

13:10

accessibility um and then we have the issue of something called disability dongles um
which is a phrase that was coined by

13:18

um two colleagues of mine alex hagard and liz jackson um and this a disability dongle is
a way to

13:24

describe something that's um designed and marketed toward

13:30

fixing an accessibility issue but is only like a partial solution so if we think about like web
overlays for

13:36

example if you've ever gone on a website and they have like a like oh accessibility like
widget menu where you

13:42

can like expand the font or things like that um and it claims to make the

13:48

website accessible um but it doesn't make the website accessible universally because
the things that are needed to do

13:55

that aren't embedded into the code of the website you're just putting an overlay on top
um so things like that

14:00

are only partial solutions and and those are kind of barriers to accessibility because
people think that they're making

14:06

something accessible but they're really not and vanessa it looks like we have some folks
in the waiting room i don't know

14:12

if you're able to let them in um

14:17

that i don't see well okay oh maybe you got in okay never mind

14:23

i just had a notification thank you so um

14:29

before i move on to this next part i just want to pause for any questions you might have
so far

14:37

and again you can either put them in the chat or raise your hand and say it out loud

14:47

jules it's deodane from drc hi how are you hi i'm fine thank you i'm so happy

14:53

you're doing this training thank you so much for taking the time of course i want to just
revisit this idea of the

14:58

widget it comes out all the time with organizations trying to do the quote

15:03

unquote right thing but who don't have a huge budget to revamp their website

15:08

and we get i've gotten this question will could we put a widget would that just make it
better until we can then

15:14

maybe invest more is it an okay stop gap and i mean the concerns you raise yeah it's

15:22

not um actually accessible to all for me i equate it like um

15:29

having people with physical disabilities have to enter in via a different via the basement
um or a

15:36

service area because the front door is accessible so it's like making folks

15:41

with disabilities have to have a different user experience and enter into your website in a
different way and i

15:48

really i'm not a huge fan um but i'm i'm confused by this question because folks

15:54

want to increase the people who the population people who can use their
16:00
website and they want to be doing steps towards that and yet they can't invest in a full
16:06
blown rework of the back end so how how might you approach that kind of a
16:11
question yeah that's a really good question um so
16:17
it's tricky right because of course people are coming from you know a good intentions
and they want to do the right
16:23
thing um i do think depending on the circumstance having the
16:29
widget available as kind of a band-aid or a temporary solution can't hurt but at the same
time if
16:35
you're thinking from a budgeting perspective you know most of those cost at least some
amount of money
16:41
they could invest that into um you know
16:46
an assessment or something um and i think even if that's not you know
16:54
possible at the moment it's something that should be included in like the organization's
17:00
long-term goals um so because i think a lot of times what happens is they'll be like oh
well we'll just we'll just put
17:07
the widget on there until we can invest more money in it and then it kind of gets
forgotten about or it gets kicked down the line so i would say if you're
17:12
going to put the widget in you need to have the long-term goal of of creating that full
accessibility and investing
17:18
the resources in doing that um at some point and i will say you know
17:24
with more people getting into this field um there are a lot more options than
17:30
there were even five years ago that are affordable um so there's things like square ada
that's like 30 bucks a month
17:37
um that's for squarespace sites um there's some other ones i've seen that i
17:42
can send along in the the written resources that i send out to you all um but uh
17:48

yeah the the the options are becoming more plentiful and affordable than they have been in

17:54

the past but that is still um a barrier for sure

18:01

thank you so much jules yeah um sam did you have a question

18:09

thought i saw her hand raised okay

18:15

cool um let me just check actually he has a question oh yes go ahead

18:21

kate did you want to go ahead and ask your question oh sure and um i typed it in the chat too but i was uh wondering what your

18:28

thoughts were where a site can be you know accessible but then because people

18:34

are joining from a multitude of devices and places and things like that um

18:39

what's your opinion on using the widget to allow for more customization for folks

18:45

um well so sometimes unfortunately what can happen with the widget is that it can

18:51

actually make it more difficult for folks using certain assistive technologies to access the site so

18:58

for example um i had an issue a client of mine had an issue where they

19:04

were using a refreshable braille display they were on a website that had that widget option and they had selected it

19:10

to um like enlarge the text um or to what was it or no to

19:18

do voiceover of the text um and for whatever reason when that widget got turned on it stopped being compatible

19:24

with their braille display um so it there's like a lot of um

19:31

there's a lot of highly technical details and issues that can come into this type of stuff i also

19:38

think that overlays depending on which one you use some of

19:45

them are designed with mobile users in mind and some of them really aren't they're only for like desktop sites um

19:51

but yeah there's like not a there's not a widget that i've seen thus

19:57

far that has been like universally accessible and that's because

20:03

the things that you do to make a site accessible means that you're incorporating and

20:08

building in flexibility into almost every aspect of the website does that

20:14

make sense yeah yeah definitely

20:19

awesome thank you all right anything else before we move on

20:27

okie dokie so to get into a little bit more detail here um so with visual accessibility a

20:35

few considerations and sam if you're willing to help me out here i'd love to have your input as well um

20:42

so uh when we're talking about visual accessibility we're talking about accessibility primarily for folks who

20:48

are blind or low vision or who have visual processing disabilities like dyslexia um things like color blindness

20:55

things like that um so a first consideration with visible visual accessibility is compatibility

21:01

with screen readers and refreshable braille displays so just to explain a little bit what those are for folks who

21:06

aren't familiar a screen reader is a piece of software that

21:11

reads text and content on a screen out loud so rather than somebody reading it visually

21:17

um the software reads the the text out loud um and a refreshable braille

21:24

display is kind of in itself like a screen a type of screen reader in that

21:29

it it reads the text but instead of reading it out loud um it

21:34

translates it into braille um on a device that plugs into a computer so

21:40

that somebody can feel um what is being transmitted um through braille

21:47

um and so in designing websites um and

21:53

other forms of digital communication we have to keep screen readers and braille displays and um all of those kind of

22:00

softwares and technologies in mind um sorry i think my bird is chirping i'm

22:06

gonna grab him really quick

22:22

sorry about that he gets excited when i'm on zoom calls who wants to join in the party

um so

22:29

uh moving on um so color contrast um so this may be a concept that you're

22:34

familiar with but um when we talk about contrast so um i have a picture here on

22:42

the right side of the slide that has two squares one is a black square on a white background and the other is a light gray

22:49

square on a white background so the black square on the white background is what we would call high contrast because

22:56

there's a large difference between the dark black color and the light white color

23:01

the light gray square on the white background is what we would call low contrast because there's not a lot of

23:07

difference between those two colors visually and when we design things especially when we're thinking about

23:13

putting text on um colored backgrounds um or highlighting certain components of

23:20

of something that you're designing um it's really important to have high contrast because for folks who are color

23:27

blind or low vision um it can be difficult to distinguish um

23:33

when the contrast is not good um another thing to consider is your

23:38

fonts so you want to use fonts that are relatively simple some people do better with what we call

23:45

serif fonts um and other people do better with sans serif fonts um in the

23:50

written resources that i'll send to you all it has a breakdown of that um

23:56

but regardless you want to pick a font that's simple and and easily readable um

24:03

so ignoring like you don't want to you want to avoid fonts that are in like

24:10

cursive or have super like swirly and ornamental letters um you know when

24:15

you're communicating information um so you could use a decorative font like that maybe if it's like super large and

24:22

like the title of something or if you're using it as like a decoration and it's not like uh

24:28

super important to the message or the content that you're sharing but you never want to use that to communicate

24:34

important information because a lot of people aren't going to be able to read it um another thing to consider is having

24:40

large print versions of documents so this is especially for like printed paper documents um so large print um

24:47

essentially means that you're you're using 18 to 22 point font and

24:52

you're um spacing it in a certain way there's a there's a few different guidelines that i'm going to send to you

24:59

about large print documents um so making those available especially if you have um again like paper printed versions of

25:06

um of information and then alt text so um alt text

25:12

and image descriptions they're technically different but for our purposes they're

25:18

kind of the same thing um using text to describe what's happening in an image

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and the reason that we use alt text is because um when a screen reader that

25:29

software we were talking about earlier comes across an image on screen it'll basically just say yep that's an image

25:36

or it will read the file name of the image which can just be like a random stream of numbers and letters

25:42

or a name that doesn't make sense um so we want to add all text to images so

25:47

that um they can be described in a way that makes sense for what the the picture is

25:54

um and again in the written resources i'm going to send you um there's a bunch of guidelines about how to write alt

25:59

text and and um how to incorporate it into uh various social media platforms

26:05

and things like that um so it won't go into the the super nitpicky details on that right
26:10

now um but just knowing that that is a concept you should be familiar with

26:16

um sam if you don't mind me picking on you is there anything um you think i missed here anything you

26:22

want to go into more detail about

26:41

um i just wanted to mention that uh

26:47

uh screen readers aren't the only things that could uh help people with low vision but a screen magnifier that also

26:56

works for them yeah yeah thank you for bringing that up so yeah there's there's other software

27:02

um called a screen magnifier that basically allows you to

27:08

have a zoomed in view um on on what's going on on the screen and

27:14

there's certain formatting and things that are important to consider for that

27:19

they also can often change like the um the color display of the screen so some

27:25

people view things better in like white on black as opposed to black on white depending on their specific needs so

27:31

there's options for that oh sam did you raise your hand again you can go ahead

27:42

maybe that was from earlier okay cool thank you for that yeah awesome

27:48

so moving on a question

27:54

michaela is asking i often get forwarded presentations and documents from other organizations in a pdf format that

28:00

include very small format do you know of a way to converting pdfs into a larger

28:06

font good question so two things about pdfs

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one is that a lot of times they are not screen reader accessible because the screen reader will essentially process

28:17

them as an image so it won't actually read the text on the document um so when

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you can it's good to put things in like a microsoft word format instead of a pdf

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or a plain text format because then it's actually readable by screen readers but to answer this question

28:36

i don't know of a way to convert pdfs into a larger font without something like adobe or like a professional pdf

28:42

handler what i typically do is i use um an online platform i think it's called

28:49

cloud convert or something like that all included in the written resources um but i convert it into a

28:56

um i convert it into a uh microsoft word document into docx

29:03

format and then i blow it up um so that can be a way to um

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to convert into larger font and then kate asks even if the pdf is fully tagged it will read as an image so yeah

29:16

so there's there's something called remediated pdfs which is the way that um

29:22

we can make pdfs accessible um so sometimes when people create pdfs they

29:27

do um they do format them in a way that's accessible but by default pdfs are not

29:34

so usually you have to go through kind of a special process to um create a fully tagged pdf

29:41

great questions any other questions about this before we

29:47

move on

29:54

okay so auditory access

30:00

um so this is mostly for deaf and hard of hearing people and also folks with auditory processing related disabilities

30:07

so maybe people who can hear but for whom it's difficult to process information that's coming in a auditory

30:13

format um so one thing captions

30:19

so particularly if you're posting a video you want to make sure that it's captioned in the written resources i'm

30:24

going to send you there's a bunch of stuff about captions um what platforms you can use and kind of how some best

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practices for doing it but essentially there's a bunch of um

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apps and software now that will automatically caption your videos and then you can go in and edit any mistakes

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that the auto captioning makes so instead of having to do everything by hand manually you can kind of get a good

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start with the auto captioning and then go back in and edit it to fix any mistakes that it makes

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which is really cool um and then transcripts so if you're posting like

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a clip from a podcast or um you know a song or something that's

31:05

an audio only format um you want to make sure you go ahead and post a transcript which is just you know a written out um

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version of of whatever words and sounds are contained in that audio clip

31:19

um and yeah the editable auto caption resources um i will share this with you but um

31:25

basically there's a like i said a bunch of different apps and platforms now that make it easier to do that than it was in

31:31

the past and then um language accessibility so

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for people who are learning english or who struggle with language processing um

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so the reason a lot of times people are confused that i put american sign language in the language accessibility section rather than the auditory

31:49

accessibility section because we associate asl with deaf people um but

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the reason i put it in the language accessibility section is because it really is its own language so a lot of

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people who aren't familiar with deaf culture might think that american sign language is just signed english but it's

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actually its own language with its own vocabulary its own grammar its own kind of cultural implications

32:12

surrounding it um and so when we talk about asl um we can't use asl and
32:18
english interchangeably they're two very different things um so for people who
32:23
are born deaf or who have been using asl from a young age for who you know asl is
32:28
their first language having things available in asl is really important just as it's
32:34
important you know if you're working with a spanish-speaking population to have
information available in spanish
32:40
when you're trying to get information out to the deaf population it's important to have
information in asl because written english
32:46
is is not folks first language um and
32:51
then plain language so um a lot of
32:57
times um you know depending on the the information that we're posting um
33:03
sometimes we use we might use like flowery language or we might use acronyms that
33:09
people aren't familiar with or we might use like industry related jargon or
33:14
specific vocabulary and so plain language is basically just a way of taking that and
presenting it
33:21
in a format that is much more easily readable by somebody who is not
33:26
familiar with um you know your industry or the context of uh what you're talking about
and
33:34
it's particularly useful again for folks who are learning english or who struggle with
language processing
33:40
who need um written language broken down into kind of smaller chunks to be able to
understand it more easily um and in
33:46
the written resources i'll send you i'll include a few links to plain language it is kind of an
art
33:52
it's something that takes practice to master um but um there are a few kind of
33:57
quick guidelines to get you started um in the the resources that i'll send you
34:02

and then foreign language access so um in new hampshire we have a big need um just because of

34:09

the the different populations we have here we need materials in spanish and zonka which is the language of bhutan

34:15

and nepali um so there's um you know a large

34:22

chunk of folks from those populations who live in our state um and so to get information out to everybody we have to

34:29

make sure we have translated versions of um of you know the the information that

34:35

we're putting out there and then lastly um cognitive

34:41

accessibility so for people with developmental and cognitive processing related disabilities

34:47

um so this one is a little bit less um straightforward because cognitive

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cognitive accessibility is related to like such a wide swath of people and it

34:59

can look different for every person um but these are a few kind of common

35:04

things that can at least get you started in the right direction so one

35:09

reducing the amount of steps it takes to find information nobody likes having to go through a convoluted and like

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multi-step process to perform a simple task and for some people that's actually a

35:21

huge accessibility barrier in being able to access information or do tasks related to that information so reducing

35:27

the amount of steps that it takes to find information is super important um using symbols pictures videos things

35:35

like that to convey information alongside text that reinforces the message of what you're saying with the

35:41

text can be really helpful um people learn in all kinds of different ways and sometimes having that more um

35:48

visual pictographic uh uh

35:54

representation of the information can be really helpful for folks and then also

35:59

giving people more time to respond to information so sometimes we have these like timed forms or

36:06

um you know we send something the day before we want it we want a response

36:11

back to it um and for some folks they need more time to process the information to be able to make decisions

36:17

and be able to respond um and so kind of getting rid of some of those like

36:22

timed uh response type of things or just sending things out a little bit earlier than you think you might need to

36:29

in order to get you know quality responses from people um is something that can be really

36:34

helpful and the other reason that that can help is um you know especially with

36:39

like timed forms and and things like that online for folks with fine motor disabilities or people using certain

36:45

types of assistive technology um it takes longer to use those things to interface with the web and um there's

36:53

been several times that i've been working with people trying to fill out timed forms and um they get like automatically

37:01

logged out after a certain amount of time um and it's because you know it's taking them longer because they're using

37:08

a screen reader or a braille display or whatever other tech they're using

37:14

so i wanted to leave plenty of time for questions discussion

37:20

so that's where we're at now so for the next 20 minutes you can ask me whatever you'd like

37:28

i have a question it's sam yeah so

37:34

things like voice activation it's more of a common

37:39

things like having things voice activated voice commands

37:45

for those with things like motor disability visual impairment

37:51

can also really help and having things

37:57

on the phone for example like automated telebanking

38:03

it's easier than going through the whole online process so having that over the phone

38:11

like i wish restaurant menus were like that press one for this appetizers press

38:16

two for whatever right so instead of it being web-based

38:22

it would be like telephone based both web and health for those who

38:31

right and sometimes that helps too and

38:37

having things be buttons or check boxes and having things like when there's a

38:43

captcha those i am not a robot thing yep those i hate those

38:50

so like a secret question a secret question sometimes works better having a

38:55

thing where you can listen to the numbers that you know

39:01

said or just a checkbox i am not a robot whatever something

39:07

versus having to capture that image

39:13

can really help yeah absolutely thank you for bringing

39:18

up all of those things and i think you know oop sorry did i cut you off

39:25

and sensory accessibility so for those who get overwhelmed by sensation

39:33

having controls turning down the volumes of things the brightness of things

39:39

you know like that sometimes often the sensory needs

39:46

of people when you're designing a space having quiet safe spaces

39:52

yeah totally i i think so i mean just for

39:58

like our purposes today talking about communication we didn't really get into a lot of that but definitely in terms of

40:03

accessibility in general those are all things that um need to be considered in design and i think you know talking

40:10

about all the different options that you discussed brings up a really good point which is that um when you are

40:16

you know designing communication materials um or you're designing a website or something like that um

40:22

testing it with people who have a variety of different accessibility needs is so important and a lot of people skip

40:28

that step they just kind of you know assume like oh well i did this so that means it's accessible to everybody um

40:34

but really for something to truly be accessible it needs to have different options for interfacing because

40:40

everybody has different needs for example you know some people for some people using the captcha is fine

40:46

for some people it's literally impossible to use um and so having a different option

40:52

um is is super important having something like a security question or an audio captcha or um something like that

41:00

so yeah really really good point all around um dna

41:05

hi um so i apologize for background noise i do have my daughter here i'm watching a

41:11

show so um i have a bunch of questions i'm i'm gonna try and uh start with just two

41:16

sure alt text i run into an issue with all texts because i we're trying to

41:23

include people with disabilities in all of our images really positive views no inspiration

41:29

stuff and yet the alt text only captures if a person has a visible disability

41:37

and so i find that i tend towards photos of visible disabilities rather than invisible and then how can i describe

41:44

if i like i see it as somebody could have a disability in this photo but it's invisible so how do you go about with

41:52

your alt text kind of making it balance

41:57

it's just kind of an issue yeah generally so yeah that you bring up

42:03

a really good point and this is something that's been a discussion in the community recently is kind of like the ethical

42:10

implications around alt text because describing things like race or describing things like disability or

42:18

um you know all kinds of different descriptors that that can be

42:24

for lack of a better term politicized um like how do we how do we go about doing

42:30

that so i think the important thing to remember about alt text is what we're going for is

parity um p-a-r-i-t-y

42:38

parity um with cited uh users right so

42:43

if i look at an image and i see a person um and i can tell that they're black

42:50

then in my alt text i should say a black person if that's relevant to the um the

42:57

context of the image um if it's something where like

43:04

you're describing a photo of a person that you know that has a disability but

43:09

you it's not a visible disability if you have their consent to disclose that disability in the alt text then you can

43:15

go ahead and do that but at the same time if you're not putting it somewhere else where sighted people are going to

43:21

see it then it's not important to include um so that's kind of the litmus test that i

43:28

use um is you know is is this something that

43:33

if i'm a sighted person scrolling through and looking at this image i'm going to be able to pick up on or notice

43:38

quickly or is it relevant to know um and if it is then i'll include that in the alt text if it's not um then i

43:46

typically don't okay so that

43:52

that helps a bit um i i often get kind of nervous about it when i say like as a

43:58

sighted person i would look at these are usually stock images this person appears to have

44:05

um a down syndrome perhaps you know like and do i put that in the alt text is
44:10
that relevant like or is it this person appears to have a disability like why should i be
guessing at what this
44:16
person's diagnosis is um would you go with disability or would
44:22
you go with naming oh they appear to have cerebral palsy like yes so
44:28
the what i typically recommend is describing what you can see so for example if i saw
44:34
a picture of somebody in a wheelchair i wouldn't say this is a picture maybe of
somebody with cerebral palsy because i
44:40
don't know that but i could say this is a picture of a wheelchair user so right that's what i
do of course yeah so and
44:47
same thing with down syndrome i mean they're
44:52
it could be that yes somebody has down syndrome but that's like not the disability they
have another disability
44:58
or they might not identify as that like and that's just it doesn't seem like opportunity so
would i just put
45:04
disability yeah i would say like general disability yeah kathy did you have thoughts on
that
45:11
yeah we're like the lies is the posies that might look
45:16
like cp that i can't even put in you know so i would just leave that my own
45:24
disability i mean that was not a good example
45:31
and um not even reading but but
45:37
i mean i thought you only talked about
45:42
disability and relevant situations so
45:47
probably on the drc it is about to get into drc
45:56
but i'm sorry kathy i didn't catch that and i think it was a probably uh important
46:02
point for me to understand i was taught that you always talk about
46:08

disability and development so like for example

46:15

um my friend told me an artist and

46:21

he has me and so i would say

46:31

disabled artist or can i just say tommy is a great

46:36

artist you know the best disabled

46:43

yes he paints you need to turn but

46:48

the point there is that he's a good irish he'll not yeah

47:07

yeah no that's a great point kathy so i think that brings us into this question of like context so for example um

47:17

if i was describing why can't i think of an item if i was

47:24

describing a picture of a a stadium for example right

47:32

um and the the story that i'm posting it with or the tweet that i'm posting it with or

47:38

whatever is about uh you know the the football team who who

47:44

who inhabits the stadium then maybe i would focus in my in my image description

47:50

more on the aspects of the stadium that are related to the football team so like you know a stadium with risers that has

47:59

a you know new england patriots flag or whatever

48:04

um yeah yeah go pets um if i were

48:09

if the context was related more to oh we just did brand new renovations on this stadium for example

48:16

um then i might say you know a stadium with brand new risers and a shiny new

48:23

jumbotron or whatever um so that that context becomes important too so but

48:28

like what you were saying if i'm just using a picture of an artist who happens to have a disability in a story that's

48:34

just about art then i could just say you know a picture of an artist if i'm talking about that

48:41

artist and you know their personal story and and their disability and how that relates to them making art and i might

48:47

say you know this disabled artist um uh you know a wheelchair user or like

48:54

however however whatever is relevant basically so it's like it's it's difficult because

48:59

there's not really like a hard and fast yeah no i get that i think like i'm thinking of the drc website or our

49:08

flyers and to me it is relevant because we

49:13

want our photos and images all of them to be inclusive of people with disabilities

49:19

so i think it is relevant yes um so i've kind of crossed that threshold so it's

49:25

like if the um image has somebody and they have a visible

49:31

um cochlear implant i feel way more comfortable describing

49:36

that and then i feel like for folks who like i can say wheelchair

49:42

i can say hearing aid those are easier and i'm just curious how to treat

49:49

the disabilities that i don't feel comfortable naming because

49:54

i wouldn't know the information so i'm wondering again would you just say appears to have a disability like is

50:01

that inappropriate about it assuming it's not somebody i know

50:08

yes to say

50:16

you know like a wheelchair you don't have to decide what class is going to be in that wheelchair

50:23

sure yes yep yeah i i would agree i think keeping it general and

50:30

just sticking to again what you can see um is is the way to go because if

50:37

there there's like

50:42

yeah it's that's that's that's that's it that's the end of that sentence

50:48

all text is really tricky yeah um so i had another question i was curious if you could talk a little

50:55

bit about social media and kind of emojis that kind of stuff um also

51:04

when image descriptions are needed like if you're sharing from a website and the image has a description in the website

51:12

does that description always transfer over should you always as best practice add an images description

51:19

so um i'm going gonna share a very comprehensive uh written social media

51:24

accessibility guide which is why i didn't get too into the weeds on it um but to answer your specific questions um

51:32

emojis um use them sparingly because when screen readers come across emojis it'll read the name of of the emojis so

51:38

if you have like a stream of smiley faces it'll be like smiley face smiley face smiley face smiley face smiley face

51:44

and it's really annoying so just try to use emojis sparingly

51:49

and also don't use them as the only method of communicating vital information because sometimes

51:56

although you might call an emoji like you might look at it and say like oh that's clearly a cup of tea the code

52:02

that's embedded into it that gets written by the screen reader might not like say that it might be like this is a bowl of soup and then suddenly that like

52:09

doesn't make sense with the whatever you're posting so like don't use emojis as the sole means of

52:15

communicating a concept uh and then with images so um

52:21

when so if you post a link and it automatically populates your post with

52:26

an image um you you could add an image description to

52:32

that um because the the if there is an image description

52:38

embedded in that image on the website that will not

52:43

transfer over in the like link preview that's that you get on like facebook or twitter so if

52:49

so add an image description like either in the tweet or the post or like in the replies or the caption

52:54

um and yeah i think that i think i think that

53:01

was what you asked yeah so best practice would be to repeat to

53:07

even if you think the original even if you know the original photo that you're sharing has an image description best

53:14

practice would be just to repeat it sure yeah i think so

53:19

yeah because i think sometimes like i mean again we're going for parody right so like the

53:25

image populates there because it's used to communicate a concept or be like

53:31

eye-catching in some way about the story so somebody being able to access the context of that so they can make the

53:37

same like informed decision about whether or not to click on the link is is good to do

53:42

great yeah cool well

53:49

tammy go ahead is it possible okay um is it possible for

53:56

blogging to be made accessible for the

54:01

people with disabilities who have never written blogs before but want to learn

54:09

how and if so what what's the best way to um um

54:16

for them to uh learn how to blog well

54:21

that's a very broad question um so

54:26

i would say first of all like people with disabilities can look like a

54:34

lot of different things so i guess depending on what disability you're talking about like for me as a deaf

54:40

person learning how to blog is probably the same

54:46

concept same process that a hearing person would go through but learning how to blog on a website if i was blind and

54:53

had to use a screen reader to navigate would be very different um but i think
54:59
um yeah sorry it's a little bit too broad
55:05
of a question for me to actually answer
55:10
that's okay we'll work something out the other thing i wanted to mention
55:15
um the other thing i wanted to mention was that when when i was attending the
55:22
uh uh write flaw conference uh one of the books uh that
55:29
uh were used was the uh walk on
55:35
from emotions to advocacy and the 22nd chapter talked about
55:42
uh creating a paper trail and so i thought well why can't we advocates
55:47
create a plain language paper trail
55:53
um put down what we want
56:00
in plain language without losing all the important things
56:05
um can you explain a little bit more what you mean by paper trail
56:10
yeah yeah um
56:16
it's it's like um when you when you print something on paper
56:23
and and um it's it's like um like a
56:28
spreadsheet of some sort okay
56:34
so you're saying making so when you're when you're doing documentation about
something
56:39
doing that in plain language yeah yeah absolutely i think that's that's a
56:46
great idea and that's definitely you know especially for information that we're sharing or
that we're trying to like preserve over time for people to
56:52
look at later making it as accessible as possible because you never know who's going to
be happening upon it in the
56:59
future um so yeah using plain language is a great tool there um i think we're

57:04

at time yeah yeah let's take one last question someone's had their hand up for great let me ask you excuse me um i i'm going

57:13

to um i think it's a phone it's

57:19

1-603-913-4873 that's me okay that's me that's samantha awesome can you guys hear me okay

57:26

yep yes so one thing two two things with one with

57:32

the alt tech alt texas when you especially when you're

57:38

texting emojis it's nice if you say i love you

57:43

but let's say a parent says i love you well you can't read a bunch of hearts

57:49

on the phone it won't read that to you or in braille it just looks like a bunch

57:54

of dots so put i love you right and maybe use x's and o's instead

58:01

of those hats because it'll read xoxo right so

58:07

and like doing things like that

58:14

um having things emailed versus you know having things emailed having

58:21

books in a downloadable digital format things like that

58:28

and another thing is for those social media guides and all the written resources could they be emailed to me

58:36

yes i'm gonna get a paper yes i'm gonna send them to vanessa and she's gonna email them out to all of you

58:43

awesome thank you yeah absolutely yeah and they've all been screen reader tested so they should

58:48

be accessible but if you have any issues just let me know and we can work on that thank you

58:54

totally thank you tools so much for um sharing

59:00

all of your knowledge with us yeah absolutely thanks for having me hopefully we'll all be together again

59:05

soon um please send me any recommendations or suggestions for future trainings
59:11

um i'm thinking that maybe in the future doing something around social media
59:17

um and also around plain language for documents um but feel free to call me or
59:22

email me and let me know what you what you all are looking for
59:27

is very interesting and i see the bird behind her going crazy going
59:33

oh yeah he's living his best life thank you are you teasing us bird
59:40

looking my keys are green [Music]
59:48

thanks so much thank you thank you guys you'll be hearing from me have a great day
bye everyone