

3Play Webinars | How to Scale Accessibility Successfully in Enterprise Organizations

MARK MILLER: Thank you, Kelly. I'm Mark Miller. I'm Director of Sales at TPGi. And we're a digital accessibility company, helping people at enterprise scale in all sorts of different scales, helping those organizations make their digital products more accessible. So happy to be here. Thank you.

KELLY MAHONEY: Thank you. And I'm Kelly Mahoney. I'm a content and partner marketing specialist at 3Play Media. We're a video accessibility solutions company, so we specialize in things like captioning, transcription, and so much more, and we're excited to collaborate with TPGi on this. So I'll give you a brief overview of today's agenda.

First, we'll give you some background on the foundations of digital accessibility, just to set the stage for what we're talking about today. Then we'll dive into some actionable steps toward accessibility solutions. And then we'll move into maintaining and monitoring those accessibility programs and solutions once you have them in place. So starting off with the foundations of digital accessibility. This is something 3Play knows well and feels very comfortable presenting on, so I'll get us started, but Mark, please jump in whenever.

MARK MILLER: I will.

KELLY MAHONEY: On screen, we have the word accessibility, as well as the shorthand version, which is a11y. And that number 11 represents the letters between the A and the Y in accessibility. And this shorthand word is also used as an identifier for allies in the accessibility community. So before we really dig into this, I think it makes sense to give you a definition of what digital accessibility actually is.

It's an essential part of creating an inclusive user experience, and it means that you're ensuring your websites, mobile apps, and any other online tool that you're presenting to users is universally accessible and operable to people with a wide range of abilities and disabilities. It's often commonly believed that this is for the primary or even the sole benefit of people with disabilities, but that is just not true. Accessibility can stand to benefit everyone. And even though this is an offline example, it's one of my favorites to talk about universal design, and it's the curb cut effect.

So curb cuts on sidewalks were first introduced so that people using wheelchairs could navigate more independently, but now they're used by people with a wide range of use cases-- cyclists, people pushing grocery carts, strollers, luggage, et cetera. So this is a great example of how making something more accessible can benefit everyone in the community, and the same principle applies to digital properties. If that's not enough, Mark is going to outline some reasons why accessibility actually matters.

MARK MILLER: Thanks, Kelly. And I love that you brought up the curb cut-out effect because it's such an important thing to think about when people start to think about getting into digital accessibility, because oftentimes they're worried about fundamental changes and doing something for a specific group, and all sorts of things. And I think it's important to understand that it's benefiting the greater whole in many, many, many ways.

And in fact, with that curb cut-out effect, one of the things that they found is that people who were just walking and had no reason to use that curb cut-out, that little ramp in the curb so that you could roll something up it, they would actually go out of their way. It was something like 80% or 90% of the people would go out of their way to walk up that anyway. So it's a really interesting study and phenomenon.

So why accessibility matters. We tend to look at digital accessibility in three different buckets, or we see more accurately, when people come to us, they fit in one of these three buckets in terms of their motivation for coming here. And of course, the one we like to see the most is just this-- we'll call it morality, but you could call it all sorts of different things.

But this is when somebody gains the awareness that digital properties need to be made accessible to be able to be used by everyone, including people with disabilities, and want to do that because they want to be inclusive and they don't want to exclude a certain group. So universal access is the right thing to do. Corporate and social responsibility can influence this. And the benefits of that is that it improves things like brand reputation, reputation in general, and can totally increase the overall value of that brand, and certainly attract a whole audience that you might be leaving out otherwise.

The other thing, which this is a motivator for a lot of people, and you could make an ends justifies the means argument here. But nonetheless, there is a legal risk out there for organizations who have digital properties, especially ones that are public-facing. So the ADA in 1990 was put in place, and it said places of public accommodation need to be accessible to people with disabilities.

Fast forward through the 2000s, all the way to today. And even though in 1990 there was not websites accommodating the public, there is today, and the ADA has been extremely clear that they count. So that's where a lot of the legal issues come through. And then economically, as I mentioned when we were talking about morality, you can see the statistic here in the slide I'm looking at, or we're seeing.

It says that there's \$400 billion in disposable income in the community of people with disabilities. That's a huge market segment. So when you make your website accessible to people with disabilities, you're opening yourself up to that marketing segment. There's multiple statistics out there, but that's probably one of the more compelling dimension up front. So there's a really good ROI-- we call it ROA, Return On Accessibility-- over here. But there's some real good arguments.

**KELLY
MAHONEY:**

Yeah, and that's a theme that we're going to be bringing up throughout this presentation, is that accessibility benefits everyone. It's a good idea for everyone. Hopefully you don't get bored, but I'm going to throw some statistics at you. Every year, 3Play Media conducts our annual State of Captioning survey and then we publish a report on what we found. And this serves as sort of a pulse check on captioning behaviors and it gives us a way to predict potential industry trends.

So this year, we surveyed over 400 respondents. This included enterprise organizations, of course, in addition to higher education, government, media and entertainment, and more. And these statistics on screen are specifically related to closed captioning, but they serve as a snapshot in terms of accessibility policy, which sets us up well for the rest of what we're going to talk about.

So we have 42% of organizations reporting that they have centralized procedures or processes for captioning, and 45% of organizations have a clear policy for captioning compliance. So obviously, this is just under half of organizations, but it is pretty on par with what we'd expect. Most enterprise organizations have some semblance of an accessibility policy, but in most cases, there's always going to be room for improvement.

So with that being said, we're going to dive into how you might be able to begin to improve this. I'll just go over some of the most common video accessibility services and things like that. Now, I'm focusing specifically on video because 3Play is a video company. It's what we know, and so our recommendations come from what we're most familiar with. More statistics. Please don't drop off. Don't get bored with me. It's quick, I promise.

44% of organizations that we surveyed are producing over 100 hours of video content. So we can see that video is a very important component in many organizations' digital content strategy, whether this be regular production of recorded content or if you're live streaming, hosting webinars like this, et cetera, et cetera. Of those organizations, 88% report that they're captioning all, most, or some of that content, which is great because it means that people are making the effort to begin captioning their content and make headway towards a more comprehensive accessibility policy.

We always recommend baking in accessibility from the start. So no matter where you start, it's a great place to start. Things like widgets and overlays can actually make the experience more complicated. One example of this is screen readers, users who interact with the internet using something like a screen reader. Accessibility overlays can actually complicate their experience by reformatting the website in a way that is not comprehensive to a device like a screen reader. So certain widgets or overlays could actually be working against you in terms of an inclusive user experience, which leads us into the most commonly used video accessibility services.

The top three are captions, subtitles, and transcripts, and these are often thought of being the same thing or achieving the same purpose, but they actually have three distinct purposes. So as we have here on the screen, captions assume that the viewer cannot hear audio, and they include relevant nonspeech elements like sound effects or speaker identifications.

And subtitles assume that the viewer can hear but can't understand the language being spoken. So the primary purpose of subtitles is actually to translate the audio. And finally, transcripts are just a plain text version of audio content that is not time-synchronized with the media. So that would be associated with something like a podcast or another multimedia format.

Increasing accessibility like this, little by little, of course these are the basic introductory ways to start, but they're the most approachable, in my opinion. And these actually provide tangible business benefits. By associating a transcript or a caption file with the video content that you're producing, you can actually make your content more accessible, more searchable, and more engaging to your audiences.

Again, like Mark said, a big incentive for people is the legal aspect of things. Nobody would like to be sued. So by adding captions, transcripts, or subtitles, you can ensure that you're within compliance and you're in a better position if you are legally targeted. You can improve your search engine optimization. So like I said, more viewers can be finding your content organically once you have this text file associated with video, because search engines cannot index a video in the same way that they can a text file.

So it makes it much easier for your content to be served to the audiences that are looking for it, which ultimately can lead to increased engagement, brand awareness, loyalty, and increased profits. Like we were just talking about, people with disabilities have a combined \$400 billion worth of disposable income, and that's a huge market segment to not be serving. This segment will not spend money where they are not accommodated. So number one, it's important to make them feel welcome, but also it has greater benefits beyond just serving that segment.

MARK MILLER: And then the loyalty is--

KELLY So moving on. Go ahead.

MAHONEY:

MARK MILLER: The loyalty from that group when you do serve them is incredible, so you tend to develop long-term customers, as well.

KELLY Exactly. And thank you for bringing that up because that's a perfect segue. In the long-term, how do you move

MAHONEY: forward and how can you maintain this accessibility beyond just the introductory services? So take it away, Mark.

MARK MILLER: Thank you. All right, moving forward, so if we can have the next slide. There we go. OK. So there's a lot to think about when you start thinking about implementing a digital accessibility strategy. And somebody, by the way, asked a question, that when we say digital accessibility, are we talking about disabilities or does it also include language?

In our world, we're talking about people with disabilities. Language is obviously something very important and something you should be thinking about, but just in our business and our world, we're thinking about being inclusive for people with disabilities. And for those of you out there who may have heard of this before, there's a specific set of guidelines, called the WCAG guidelines, that frames a lot of what an organization like us does.

So a few things to think about when you're implementing an accessibility strategy and you're starting, especially, to think about this from a long-term perspective. Like what should I start to think about and put in place now that might help me continue moving forward? Because accessibility is not a project. It's a process, and it will be something you have to continue to pay attention to.

So the first one, the first thing to think about, is just establishing buy-in. Like who in your organization are the key stakeholders that may have the biggest and most direct on accessibility? Identifying those people and making sure that you get their confidence, that they have a stake and a say in how things go.

And finding out what they might need in their area of the organization to accommodate for accessibility is super important. And that's a theme that we'll probably hear throughout this, is that you've got to bring people into the fold and ask them, what do you need? How can we help you help us, basically?

The other thing is understanding where you are right now really helps. What is your current state? And if anybody has heard of things like audits out there, that's a real direct example of coming in and actually auditing, we'll say, a public-facing website. And I mentioned those guidelines before. Here is where you're at variant. Here's where you have gaps to these guidelines. And here's how you can address them and here's how you can start to look at that in terms of priorities.

Typically, when you start to assess what your current state is, you find that there's a lot of work to do and you can't do it all at once, so you start to think about things like priorities. But assessing that current state is really the first step to being able to understand those other things. And it's not just limited to the thing, the product. It's also your internal processes and services and all that kind of thing that, overall, support accessibility.

And then just establishing those buy-in for your key stakeholders, people in different process areas. You've got to involve people with disabilities. There's a huge saying, "nothing about us without us," in the disability community, and it couldn't be a more accurate statement.

If you want to understand if your product can be used by somebody who's deaf that relies on a screen reader-- or sorry, I said that wrong-- that relies on an interpreter or captioning, then talk to that person. If you want to know if a person who's blind can use a screen reader effectively to access the content, there's nobody better than that person to tell you what they need and whether or not that's being successful.

All right, so when we look at this more, what you would be doing in the technical environment-- so this slide right here has three icons-- a magnifying glass with the word "identify" underneath it, a little piece of paper with a test on it that says "test" underneath it, and somebody holding a wrench that says "remediate" underneath it.

So the first one, identify, when we talk about that-- and we're thinking specifically about your digital properties-- that's that big audit that I was talking about. Or that can also be handled in part through automation. So you can use automation to test sites, but it's not complete. So we really think of these manual audits or reviews, where we go in with the assistive technologies that people with disabilities use, using methods of access.

So for example, we've talked a lot here about videos and captioning. That's not an assistive technology that somebody is coming to the table with. That's an accommodation that's needed that should be there. So somebody who has a hearing disability needs that content to be able to understand what somebody with hearing would hear spoken.

So it's identifying where there's gaps in all of that and identifying what you need to test, and then testing it and coming up with those variances. And in that process, too, of testing and understanding what the issues are, annotating the solves. What is it that we can do? If we find a video that doesn't have captioning, quick pop quiz. What do you do?

You call 3Play Media and you have them help you caption the video. That's an easy one. But of course, when we get into the code and some of these more technical solutions, code snippet of examples of how it should work and those kind of things are super helpful in understanding the last piece, which is, how do we fix it?

And our recommendation is we always show you how to fix it and have you fix it because that starts that knowledge transfer process that your team is going to need to maintain and carry accessibility forward, which is really what we're talking about. How do we get started? And we want to get started in a way that's going to build what that team needs, what your team needs to keep it going. So doing the fixes themselves is one piece of that knowledge transfer.

KELLY Whoops, I muted myself. I said, great. And believe it or not, we are already opening ourselves up for some questions. So I have a few, just off the top of my head, to keep the conversation going. When you talk about identifying and testing and remediating, how would you typically recommend prioritizing content when you're going through the process of identifying what actually needs to be fixed? What would you recommend is the most important place to start?

MARK MILLER: Oh, that's a really good question and probably a harder thing to answer. So backing up a little bit, when you go to test your content, one of the things that you can't do-- and if people are thinking through this right now, they're probably wondering something similar-- one thing you can't do is test everything. Usually there's just way too much.

So typically, developing a sample to test that really represents everything that you have going on in your website. So for example, we've been using video as an example. If we test a video and say, geez, this video needs captioning, you can apply that across all the videos in the site. You don't need to then go test each one of those videos and come to the same conclusion. You know that videos need captioning and you've got to go caption videos that don't have captioning. And that kind of carries through with all the issues.

So typically, we look for critical user flows. The biggest question you want to answer is, can a person with a disability get from point A to point B on the critical things that your website is out there to serve or do?

So for example, if you sell something, you're an e-commerce site, can they find a product? Can they put it in a cart? Can they check out? Can they password reset? Can they do these things that are critical to actually being able to participate in the purpose of an e-commerce site?

So that becomes really important as prioritizing according to those kind of user flows, and then the critical elements within those user flows. And once you have issues identified, what issues are significant barriers? Some issues are not good but don't actually stop a person with a disability from getting from that point A to point B. The first thing you should do is find the ones that do and fix those. So a couple of answers, I think, Kelly, woven in there. But hopefully that gives you a bit of an idea of how we would help somebody look at those priorities.

KELLY Yeah, that's perfect. Thank you. I would also just add, on the 3Play side of things, we're also constantly looking through our own digital properties to make sure that we're accessible. As an accessibility company, that's obviously very important to us. And the way that we prioritize is typically how many-- we think less in terms of site navigation. I'm on the content team so I think in terms of the content that we offer users.

And it's normally a lot of, how many people are downloading this content? How many people view this blog in a certain period of time? And you can also choose to prioritize things that way, if that's the model that you're working with, of content production. It makes the most sense to go with, like you said, how many people are using one piece of content?

MARK MILLER: Right.

KELLY We just got another question in our chat. Amanda asks, do you have any advice for addressing accessibility for digital properties that are developed or maintain by external vendors, because they maintain many of their enterprise apps? That's a very good question. Third-party accessibility is very, very top of mind in circumstances like these.

MARK MILLER: Absolutely. You want me to tackle that, Kelly, or do you want to start?

KELLY I'd love to hear what you have to say first and I'll chip in after.

MAHONEY:

MARK MILLER: Yeah, so that's a very good question, Amanda, and it's one we get quite a bit because it's funky. Everything else you control, and then all of a sudden you have these elements that are coming to your website that are controlled by, as Kelly said, a third party, somebody else.

And that could be content that's being streamed in. So I'm sure, Kelly, you deal with that, where companies are saying, hey, we're getting these videos from somewhere else and they don't have captioning. What do we do? Sometimes it could be some bit of functionality.

Like if you've ever gone to a website and you see a chat in the corner, people usually aren't rebuilding that themselves. There's companies that sell chat, little chat bots or ways that you can contact the people in the organization through chat. But if that's not accessible and you're working on everything else, then you've got an element that's not accessible. So the short answer to this is that when dealing with a third party, accessibility is first, in my mind, best handled through policies and contracts.

And this is where we start to look at different process areas in the organization and their responsibility, if you remember that kind of first slide that we looked at. This is where your purchasing department now has a stake in accessibility. What is their policy? Do they have a policy? When they're purchasing a third-party tool to integrate into your website, are they requiring-- I don't want to get too deep right away, but there's something called the VPAT. It stands for Voluntary Product Accessibility Template.

Some people will require the third-party vendor provide one of those, which can give an idea of what accessibility is like. Some people will test a third-party application, kind of a smoke test, a limited test, to see if it's accessible. But certainly the place to start is having a policy. This is what we expect from our vendors. This is what we're going to do to make sure that what the vendor is claiming is correct. And then when you contract, when you put the contracts together with the vendors, having language in there that lays out that expectation for the vendor.

And I recognize, because, Amanda, you're probably going, that's great, but we have a lot of stuff that's already on our site. That's a go-forward strategy. Retroactively, you can test. You can provide vendors with some information. Really, I think what you need to do is open up a dialogue with your existing vendors and say, hey, this is now becoming a priority for us. Can you work with us here?

And oftentimes, if you approach it correctly, you'll get people who will, because when you start to require them to make their products accessible, they start to then have a product that's accessible, that's more marketable, that maybe is unique. Because if people are looking at three chat bots and you're the person that says, oh, yeah, we work real hard on accessibility, that may elevate you to the top when people are comparing you to the competition. I could go on about third party, but I'm going to stop right there, Kelly.

KELLY That's perfect. I'm glad I let you tackle that one. That's exactly what we wanted to hear. Exactly like you're
MAHONEY: saying, it's important to make sure that these processes are accessible, and that's why 3Play says it's important to bake accessibility in from the beginning. I know that that doesn't really help if you have a current backlog of things that you're trying to make accessible, but once you do ensure that your procurement processes, all the third-party softwares, or anything that you may be using are accessible, it sets you up better later on down the road.

And, Todd, I hope you don't mind me sharing, but we received a comment from someone saying that third-party vendors are rarely the ones sued, which is exactly right. Often, the company using this third-party vendor is the one that has the eyes on their website and essentially gets in trouble for inaccessibility when, really, the root cause is from this third-party vendor. So it's a great idea to just have those processes and make sure that you're vetting these companies that you're using in partnership with what you sell.

MARK MILLER: Yeah. It's a great point, Todd, and we see the same thing. Rarely can you pass the responsibility through.

KELLY Right.

MAHONEY:

MARK MILLER: So Amanda's question's a good one because of that. What a smart audience we have, Kelly.

KELLY I know. We got another question from Bruno, asking some metrics to know that an accessibility tool is working
MAHONEY: well. So once you have these tools, how do you know that they're actually working successfully? Do you conduct surveys? Is this part of auditing? What do you think, Mark?

MARK MILLER: Yeah, Bruno, that's really a good question. It's an interesting one because right now there's a group called ACT, A-C-T, within the W3C, which creates the WCAG guidelines. See, Kelly? You thought you were going to bore people with numbers. I think I just did it with acronyms.

KELLY We got numbers and letters.

MAHONEY:

[LAUGHTER]

MARK MILLER: Right. So W3C, Worldwide Web Consortium, they make the guidelines around accessibility. Also, they set the HTML standards and all that. So there's a working group in there called ACT, which I'm going to not remember the acronym for ACT off top of my head. So if somebody knows that, please pop it into the chat and I'll go, oh, yeah. But what that group is doing is coming up with a standard for automated tools.

So I'm making an assumption, Bruno, that when you say tools, you mean those automated tools that you can find out there. Really, most of those tools are good and accurate, even though you might have a variation in the results. So I don't personally see a lot of tools that are just flat out not accurate. I do see some that are-- oh, great. Somebody just posted that link to the ACT. Way standards guidelines is what it stands for.

So anyways, there's not a great way to measure that. A lot of it has to do with whether or not it's working for you on your site, whether you're getting a lot of false positives that are distracting you and another tool doesn't give you that. I really can't sit here and say that a lot of them aren't good.

The interface, what they provide on top of that scanning, that's really what's going to sell you on one tool or the other. And no matter what the tool is, it's only going to catch somewhere in the neighborhood of 30% to 40% of the failures to the WCAG guidelines. 30% to 40% of the failures to the WCAG guidelines.

There's another statistic out there-- and people love to muddy the waters with these two statistics-- that tends to represent somewhere in the neighborhood of 60% of the total errors on a website, on average. And these are statistics that are thrown around out there. You probably could argue how they're gathered and stuff like that a little bit. But 30% to 40% of the failures to the guidelines and around 60%, on average, of the issues on a website can be found through automation. The rest of it requires manual testing.

KELLY MAHONEY: Yeah. And although this isn't necessarily a quantifiable metric, I would point out that this is a great opportunity to also work with people with disabilities. This is the place to include them. So user testing is a great way to go through this. It is more manual than just automatically searching your entire site.

But by including people with various disabilities, you can see where they may "drop off," quote unquote, your website or where they have trouble accessing certain things because of the way the website is built or a third party that you might be using, things like that. We encourage you to keep asking questions. These have been fantastic questions so far.

MARK MILLER: And Kelly, I just want to point out what you just said is really important, and the reason for that is because people do get-- automation is very good, by the way. If you're doing nothing else or as part of your strategy, that automation is huge. But the one thing it can't tell you, if we go back to that question about priorities-- you're hoping that in that percentage it can catch, it catches that significant barrier. So until you do what you just said and you have somebody actually look at it, manually go through it, that's always a question. And we've identified that as the number one priority. What's that thing that is just stopping somebody?

So always recognize, when you're using automation, that that remains in question. And grabbing somebody and having them go through it with their screen reader and saying, I can do it, I can't do it is such a huge-- and you don't necessarily need a full on manual technical review to find that one little priority out. Can somebody make it?

Can somebody make it from the beginning to the end? Or did a tree fall in the middle of the road? Did the road cave in? Did somebody build a wall? What the heck? And obviously, if you're going down the road, you will see that pretty quickly and recognize it's stopping you and you get the bulldozers out and fix it, right?

KELLY MAHONEY: Right. So we have been talking a lot about how to identify or remediate, once you actually have some semblance of a policy or a program. If we backtrack a little bit, do you have any recommendations for starting an accessibility program or beginning to implement? How can you begin to get that buy-in from executives and how can you get that ball rolling if that's not something that already exists within the organization?

MARK MILLER: Yeah.

KELLY MAHONEY: Tough ask.

MARK MILLER: That's the million-dollar question.

KELLY Right.

MAHONEY:

MARK MILLER: If I come up with a really good answer to that question, I'll be sipping drinks on a beach on an island somewhere. But it's a really good question. And by the way, if you guys just saw me laugh, Amanda, I was laughing at you and your W3C nerds comment. So you know, hail to the W3C nerds. I think you're right. We're all W3C nerds. But yeah, so it depends on how you look at that. I mean, if you're at zero, everything else aside, a manual review is the way to go.

To take that first look at the technical conformance to the guidelines is always a good place to start. Once you have reasonably achieved technical conformance to the guidelines, I always think that that's the time to start bringing in usability testing. Like why test for usability if there's just some barrier that is just the nonstarter? Like you can't get an opinion on how good the experience is when somebody just stopped. So looking at that technical conformance.

If you can't do that right away because of finances or resources or whatever-- there's a lot of reasons why that might be a challenge out of the gate-- like I said, you can never poofoo automation completely. It is a great place to start. Always do something. The answer should never be do nothing.

And if you don't have the time or the resources to engage in something big like an audit, start with automation. Start getting a sense of where you might have issues, what the issues look like. Start learning this world of accessibility by looking at your site through something like automation. And you can start to educate yourself in that process and maybe even get a little bit beyond automation.

If the question really is like, we've been doing that and we keep going back around to that because we don't have anything in place yet, I think there's a lot of good places to start. And a lot of them started looking at your process areas, looking at what you might need organizationally versus for your website. Stop thinking about the website and start thinking about the organization. Stop thinking about the project and start thinking about the process.

So moving automation into the SDLC-- I mean, I'm sorry, into DevOps, into the beginning, shifting left into the beginning of the software development lifecycle-- is a great thing to think about. Educating your developers, your QA staff, your managers, your C-suite, all these people. Starting groups internally to evangelize for accessibility. I know some great groups and some great companies that have taken that ally, that you said also stands for ally, and created groups, just named basically after that, of people internally that talk about accessibility, and bringing those conversations, bringing the statistics, bringing your success stories up to that C-suite.

All those places are a great place to start if your question is, how do we go from this initial project that we made it through to creating something sustainable? And we can come in and look at your organization and put a roadmap together. You can put a roadmap together. But really, thinking beyond that project and beyond just that public-facing website, or whatever asset, and looking at what the organization might need in terms of policies, procedures, education, different areas of the SDLC. The question you're asking, how do we stop those issues from making it to production?

Not how do we fix the issues in production anymore. That was the first thing we had to solve. How do we make it so they don't get there in the first place? Do we have a policy that says all of our videos need to be captioned before they're uploaded to the website? If the answer is yes, do we have a relationship with the vendor? Do we have somebody responsible for it? Bom, bom, bom, bom, bom. Those kind of things. I don't know, was that helpful?

KELLY It was. Just a quick question. We had someone asking what the abbreviation of SDLC stands for.

MAHONEY:

MARK MILLER: Oh, Software Development Lifecycle. Sorry. I said it afterwards because I realized I started going into my little--

KELLY Industry jargon.

MAHONEY:

MARK MILLER: --work mode, people I deal with. Software development lifecycle. So it represents, from beginning to end, everything that occurs to get something, like your public-facing website, done, or that application that you're selling out in the market done, from concept to design to coding it to QAing it, all that kind of stuff.

KELLY Yeah, I think you made a great point in answering that question, as well. Something that we say at 3Play, **MAHONEY:** obviously neither of the organizations here are going to recommend, necessarily, automated captions or automated solutions as the fix-all, because we don't think that they will. But something is better than nothing. That's what we believe at 3Play.

So if all you have access to at the moment are automated solutions, it's still a good starting place. It's great to have something, as opposed to having nothing. So even though we don't wholeheartedly recommend automated solutions, that doesn't mean they don't have a use case. They can be very helpful to organizations that don't have a lot of resources or are starting an accessibility policy from scratch.

MARK MILLER: Yeah. And to be clear, we're not including overlay solutions as part of automated solution. That's not at all what we're recommending for all sorts of reasons. I want to point out that somebody threw into the chat the Accessibility Maturity Model program at the W3C and the link to it.

That's exactly the stuff I'm talking about. Susan, thank you for putting that up there. That's a wonderful thing to check out. So appreciate that resource. It's a great group here. And then, Todd, I haven't scanned through your whole question here, but there's another-- oh. So Todd, you're meeting with stakeholders. That's great.

So any recommendations on how to nudge, in the past, the lip service stays? Oh, man, Todd, you're really boiling it just right to the issue there. So I'm going to paraphrase, Todd, and I hope I do a good job.

So Todd was saying he really appreciates that I brought up that idea of evangelizing internally and threw some concepts out for it, and that in his organization, that they've been doing that, but it tends to stop at what he's calling a lip service stage. So everybody, oh, that's great. Wonderful. Yep, yep, yep, yep, yep. But that doesn't necessarily then lead to anything that's actionable. That's probably a bit of an art, Todd, just to step back and speak directly.

I wish I could email you something that would just solve it, but it's probably a bit of an art. And I think the goal that I would have, one is to keep that discussion going. Don't consider that lip service aspect as unsuccessful, because we all know that you have to keep coming back, keep coming back, keep coming back. So if you continue to have those conversations, at some point, that can still turn into action. And it may just be that you haven't iterated enough times to light that up yet.

The other thing, too, I think would be talking about ROI and trying to get people at that level to participate in some of the things. So instead of just saying, we should do this in some meeting, saying, Kelly, CEO Kelly, this group is meeting next week. Why don't you come in? You're busy for the first half hour of it, 20 minutes of it. I'd love for you to hear what some of these people are saying. I'd love for you to hear-- we're going to be discussing ROI. We're going to be discussing this.

And then numbers, graphs, metrics, all those things, push those up. We've improved accessibility by this much. We feel like it's increased our business by this much. We feel like we've reduced the risk of lawsuits by this much. Whatever you can come up with that are sort of quantifiable evidence, that the effort is helping the organization, be creative and come up with as much of that as you possibly can, and graph it. And automated tools can be hugely helpful in that, too, by the way.

KELLY I was going to say, I think Valerie--

MAHONEY:

MARK MILLER: And offline I can show you.

KELLY My apologies. I think Valerie is asking a similar question in the same vein of what you're talking about, through a
MAHONEY: different lens. She asked for some examples of fun or gamified introductions to accessibility to broaden awareness throughout the organization. So this may not necessarily be something you'd introduce in a boardroom, but for example, at 3Play we did things like ASL telephone.

Or we had employees navigate websites or other digital properties using only a keyboard so that they get the experience of understanding what it's like for users who are interacting with the internet in that way. So these sorts of things can be a great way to get people thinking outside of their own typical experience and considering what another user might be experiencing on the internet.

But I will say, I think it's important, when you set up these kinds of trainings, you want to make it fun and you want to make it approachable for people so that it sticks, but you also don't want to tokenize that community. I think I've heard a lot from the disability community about exercises like this sometimes creeping into tokenization. You shouldn't have to bring yourself "down," quote unquote, to the level of a disabled person in order to empathize with them. So I think that as long as it is thought about carefully.

And again, this is a great place to involve people with disabilities to understand their experience better. Maybe you can have a panel of people come in and explain their experiences as a more interactive way of getting people involved with accessibility. It's a great place to start to get people thinking about accessibility, it's just one that you want to do intentionally and thoughtfully.

MARK MILLER: I think those are incredibly good points, Kelly, and I'm glad you said them all. And I want to go back to Todd here because, Todd, you buried the lede. So Todd just put in the chat that he's autistic, and he was making the point that the persistence is probably better than the artfulness that I mentioned. But what I want to say, Todd, is that's fantastic and that makes you one of the best people, one of the most qualified people to change minds and incite action.

So I would think about your perspective and how you can share that with people and how you can use that to really evangelize and help people understand the importance. I think it just makes you highly, highly qualified. And to Kelly's point, you have a power that somebody without a disability doesn't when it comes to insight, encouraging change, and helping empathy and understanding for this. So I would say power to you and use that as best you can to help people along.

KELLY
MAHONEY: Right. We got another question from Stewart, basically saying that digital properties, in terms of websites, are fairly accessible. Their organization feels confident in that. But things like TV, television content, or mobile apps don't seem to be getting the same attention.

And they're just asking for any advice on scaling accessibility beyond the web, which I hope I'm interpreting correctly. I take that to mean websites, specifically. I would just quickly plug that the WCAG guidelines encompass all digital properties. So if you have found that there's something lacking there, first I would be surprised since the W3C is so comprehensive. But I think the WCAG guidelines are probably the most comprehensive place to find what you're looking for.

Although it has not been officially made law or any sort of legal guideline, it has been directed or pointed to by the Americans with Disabilities Act. So that is the most comprehensive set of guidelines for digital accessibility anywhere, whether it be a website or a mobile app or video content, et cetera. That is like the Holy Grail for learning how to be accessible. So I hope that that would be able to help your organization in the way that you're looking for. But otherwise, if it's not the WCAG, I'm out of recommendations.

MARK MILLER: So, Stewart, I feel you on this one, and Kelly's completely correct, in my opinion, that the WCAG guidelines-- you'll hear a lot of people that have been in this industry for a while wished that the W wasn't ever put into it, because we had the same problem with mobile.

And in even in 2.0, WCAG applied to mobile, just not very well because it wasn't thought of at that time. And then 2.1 tries to correct that a little bit. So it's just not perfect in these circumstances, but it certainly can apply beyond the web. But I feel you because a lot of these television services are problematic and the content can be problematic and difficult.

But I don't know that it's a lack of guidance as much as it's the whole reason we're having this conversation right now. It's hard. There's a lot of websites out there that aren't accessible. And it's a huge lift and it's very difficult to do. We can't sit here and pretend like you should be doing this, it's easy. You should be doing this.

And yes, it's hard, but if you get to the point where you've integrated it, it can become much easier. So if you just think about the vast amount of content, the variety of platforms, the variety of platforms that work on other platforms, and the hardware-software combination that occurs in streaming media, and add to that how rapidly it all changes, it's not an easy one for people. And I think that might be what you're seeing out there.

We did a big accessibility conference called CSUN, California State University Assistive Technology Conference, last year, which 3Play and TPGi were both at. We did a talk on how accessible different platforms were. So if a streaming service made their stuff accessible, was it Roku? Was it Xbox? You name the platform.

They did a test. We did a functional test on several different platforms. Which one carried that accessibility forward the best? So it's definitely something people are thinking about out there. And it's a great question, and I feel, yeah, it's a tough one.

KELLY
MAHONEY: I also just want to throw in I got a note from Michelle Landis, who is undeniably an expert when it comes to the compliance side of digital accessibility. And she makes the point that it really is the Department of Justice. Their statement that came out semi recently unequivocally states that the ADA applies to websites and mobile apps. So again, this is that phrase "places of public accommodation."

Even though the ADA was written in the '90s when places of public accommodation only meant physical spaces, it now also means the internet. So there's that. It has to be accessible because the ADA now says that it does, and the internet is included as a place of public accommodation, which includes websites and mobile apps. I think we got one more question. Let me see.

MARK MILLER: While you're looking at that, district courts aside, if you're having that conversation about whether it applies, you're having the wrong conversation. Go talk about something else, and hopefully it's about how to make things accessible. It really should be put to bed at this point, in my opinion, in my opinion.

KELLY Agreed.

MAHONEY:

MARK MILLER: Michelle agrees.

KELLY Yeah, Michelle agrees, too, so we have a stamp of approval there.

MAHONEY:

MARK MILLER: I love this conversation in the chat. You guys are great.

KELLY You guys are really getting some great questions, but I have to read through them to see where what you're
MAHONEY: asking.

MARK MILLER: Do we have more slides or are we done with the slides?

KELLY We don't. Were actually done with the slides.

MAHONEY:

MARK MILLER: Oh, good. This is perfect. This is how all of these things should go.

KELLY It's a fantastic conversation. Someone asks for recommendations on making virtual meetings more accessible.

MAHONEY: They noted the ASL interpreter here, so it's making them think about how organizations can do better in virtual meetings. I, of course, am going to recommend live captions.

I think those are one of the-- again, captions are one of the most common accessibility accommodations, but they're also one of the most helpful. There was a study. I can't remember the exact percentage off the top of my head, so don't quote me on this. But I believe around 80% of people who use captions are not actually deaf or hard of hearing. So again, accessibility stands to benefit everyone.

I'm sure that there are people who would benefit from there being captions in meetings. If you want more information on the technical side of making live captions happen, we can chat offline. But also, ASL interpretation is another commonly requested accommodation. That can be one that is a little bit more difficult to procure, though, on your team because it requires that you have someone who speaks ASL and can interpret regularly.

But this is another point where it's great to ask your audience what they need. So if there are people that you're working with or people that you're hosting a webinar for, whatever the circumstance may be, don't be afraid to ask, are there any accommodations that you require?

Is there anything that we can do to make this experience better for you? And people will tell you. We do that on all of our webinars and we actually have had people reach out for certain accommodations. So that's a great way to find out exactly what your audience needs and then address that need.

MARK MILLER: I think they're great points. I think certainly inviting Kelly G.-- not the famous pop star, Latin pop star, but the equally wonderful interpreter that you see right there-- is a great answer. But Kelly M., your point about just asking people. If you know they're a screen reader user, what platform do you prefer? What's the easiest platform for you to use your screen reader?

Give you a couple of specific tips, though, too. If you have a slide presentation, especially for people who are screen reader users, it's very helpful for them to be sent out ahead of the meeting. Also, look at your technology. I believe it's PowerPoint now. There's a feature you can set where the presentation itself will become interactable by people with screen readers.

So that kind of technology is starting to come out. And then there's a couple of tips, like you can put a sound when your slides-- some people like it, some people don't-- but like a whooshing sound or something like that, so when you change slides, that screen reader user knows you've moved to a different slide and can follow along in their slide deck.

So there's a whole host of things like that that you can think about. But I think it all boils back around to what Kelly said, and that is just ask people what they want, and that can help. That's probably the best mileage you can get right there.

KELLY MAHONEY: Yeah. Someone asks recommendations for questions to ask. So like I said, some of the most common accommodations are captions or interpretation, so those are definitely important to include. If you're also considering physical access of the space, ensuring that the space you're in can accommodate a wheelchair user or someone using any kind of mobility aid.

Dietary preferences, as well. Again, if this is an event that you're putting on and inviting people to, it's important to consider things like that. So even though something like dietary preferences would not be immediately thought of when it comes to disability inclusion, it is a great opportunity to include something like that when you are asking people, what kind of accommodations do you need? Because again, accessibility is for everyone. You're never going to stop hearing that from us.

MARK MILLER: Yeah. What 3Play Media just posted is perfect. It's less. Less is more. Don't start guessing on behalf of the other person. The question is, what do you need? And that's the end of the story. Now, can you say, we have this available, or something like that? Of course.

But as soon as a person without a disability, or without the same disability, start to try and guess-- oh, we brought this in case you need it, it's amazing how many people look at it and go, it doesn't help me at all. You'd think it would, but it doesn't help me at all. It's just impossible to really know if you're not that person. So what can we do for you? How can we help? What do you need? Those are the best questions.

KELLY
MAHONEY: Yeah, great point. Thank you, Mark. I think this may be the last question that we have time to address, but I don't, unfortunately, know if I have an answer. Todd asks if we have any sort of forecast on when WCAG 2.2 might finally be published. I can only give you what the internet will give you, and that is--

MARK MILLER: Tomorrow. [CHUCKLES]

KELLY
MAHONEY: --hopefully early sometime next year. If anybody in the chat here participating happens to know, please shout us out. Let us know.

MARK MILLER: I think it was a couple of springs ago that we were originally told that it was going to come out, and it's been-- like Kelly said, whatever they are saying right now is the best information we have. It's a lot of work. It's volunteer organization. It's fantastic stuff, but I think it can be difficult for that to be pinned down. So no fault to the W3C at all. They're doing great work over there. But we just keep seeing that being pushed out. And Susan just posted the best information that we probably have.

KELLY
MAHONEY: Yeah. All righty, well, I think we've addressed everything. This was a very, very engaging session. Thank you, everyone, who joined us, and thank you for being so involved and participating. We really appreciate the opportunity to talk with you and review these questions.

MARK MILLER: Well, thank you, Kelly. It was a great conversation. Thank you, Kelly G., our interpreter. And thanks to all of you guys. What a wonderful conversation. I really appreciate everything that went on in chat. And we obviously have a really smart, engaged group here, so you guys are all wonderful. Thank you.

KELLY
MAHONEY: All right. And just a reminder, this presentation was recorded, so keep your eyes on your inboxes for the next couple of days. You'll receive all the information that we talked about here, and you can also view the webinar on our website at any time later. All righty. I'll do a final round of thank yous. Thank you to our interpreter. Thank you, Mark. Thank you, everyone. Have a great rest of your day.

MARK MILLER: Thank you, everyone.

KELLY
MAHONEY: Bye.