JACLYN LEDUC: Thank you for being here today for this presentation, Developing a Centrally Supported Captioning System with Utah State University. My name is Jaclyn. I have she/her pronouns. I am the customer marketing specialist for 3Play Media. I'm a white woman with light brown hair and a long braid.

And today, I'm wearing a pink top. And I'm very excited to welcome Megan Spackman Cox and Christopher Phillips today from Utah State. We're glad to have you with us today. And with that, I will pass it over to you two to introduce yourselves and tell us about the amazing work you've been doing.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: Thank you.

MEGAN SPACKMAN COX: Awesome. Thank you so much. Yeah.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: Go ahead, Megan.

MEGAN SPACKMAN COX: Yeah. Thanks, Christopher. So as said, my name is Megan. I am a young white woman with long blonde hair. And I'm wearing a black and white floral top today. My pronouns are she/her.

And as was mentioned in the bio, I am the caption program coordinator for Utah State University. I was hired in December 2022. And my main work is focusing on captions, but I kind of help with a little bit of everything accessibility. So that's me.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: Thank you, Megan. My name is Christopher Phillips. I'm a middle-aged, bald guy wearing a red plaid shirt today, sitting in my office here in Logan, Utah, at Utah State. My pronouns are he/him.

And my role here at Utah State-- and in fact, I'll go back a slide just to catch our roles-- is digital accessibility officer. That's a fairly new title. It used to be longer, electronic and information technology accessibility coordinator, not a very accessible title. So I'm grateful for the new title. And our division is digital accessibility services.

I lead our team here with Megan who's our other full-time staff. And then we have just an absolutely incredible team of six student workers that I just want to shout out. A lot of the work that we will share today and talk about today, our students have really just been instrumental in doing a lot of the heavy lifting on this. And so a shout out to them and to thank you to everything that they do to help make this work happen. And just want to also mentioned a couple of resources.

The first one is just a live document that you can find at bit.ly.usu-3play. That's B-I-T dot L-Y forward slash USU dash 3Play. That's just a Google document where we've put a lot of the resources that we're going to talk about today. And then we'll also add any additional resources to it that come up in the Q&A. So we're excited to share that. Thank you for sharing that link.

And then there's our email as well. Sometimes it can feel a little bit lonely in this captioning space. You may be the only person at your institution who really cares passionately about this.

And we love just engaging and talking to you, hearing about the good work you're doing, if any follow-up questions you have. So please don't hesitate to reach out. If you have any questions at all, we would love to hear from you.

With that, I just want to share real quick a graph. We're going to talk a little bit more about this a little bit later. But this is what our story is going to be today. I'm really talking about how back in September of 2018 when we started this project.

And you can kind of see here there's a graph that shows over time how there's a yellow bar that shows the total number of videos. That has mostly gone up but then down a little bit as well. And then the blue bar is the number of captioned videos. And Megan is going to share more about this specifically. But this is what we're going to be talking about today, is really over the last five years how we've gone from where we were to where we are today.

And with that, I'm going to just jump in. I want to kind of have a little bit of a caveat to start, is that we're going to talk about a lot of different standards and processes and just to make sure that we put out there we've been working on this for a while. This kind of stuff doesn't happen overnight and that wherever you're at in the journey is OK.

I'm a firm believer-- I mean, all of us have different challenges we're working with, different resources available to us. It's much more important the direction you're heading as far as becoming more accessible, more inclusive than maybe where you're at in the journey. And so wherever you're at, give yourself a pat on the back because that's OK. And then we can just think about where we're headed going forward.

As I mentioned, we really started this work in 2018 and kind of just first taking a look at where are we at. We had just created a university digital accessibility policy. But it was a little bit vague and didn't have a lot of specifics about when we needed to become accessible or what we would focus on next.

And we really started, though-- we decided to focus first and most importantly on captions. It's just such an easy win in so many ways. People understand captions, generally understand the value of captions. Many users use captions. In any group of people, if you ask for a show of hands of people that use captions, you'll often see more hands than not that go up in the room.

And so our first step, though, before we could really get started or work with people was just to take an inventory. And so this, again, was 2018. We just got a Google Sheet, a spreadsheet and started out, let's find the channels that are connected to our university and just get some basic information on them, the channel name, the URL of the channel, the channel ID, which is an important kind of piece of information-- it doesn't change-- and then the number of videos on each channel and how many of those videos were captioned.

This was an important first step just to kind of get a sense of, what are we dealing with? What is the scope of the problem? And even at this step, we kind of hope that this list might already exist at the university. But as we asked around, no such luck. And so we just kind of took it on ourselves to start creating this. That very first list we did only had 22 channels on it. We've discovered many more channels since then.

But even with those 22 channels, it felt a little bit overwhelming. It's like, how are we going to keep track of all these videos? Some of the channels had hundreds of videos in them. How are we going to keep track and work with people to do this? And that's where I just want to give a quick shout out to a tool that we found. It's an open source tool. It's freely available.

Carol Thompson up at the University of Washington created this, made it available. It's a little bit outdated now. There may be a new version in progress. We'll talk about how we're using it in a little bit. But it was just at the time a lifesaver for us. And you can find a link in that resource document.

But basically, as you can see here on the screen, you just install it on a server, fairly basic and easy to install. And you can take that YouTube channel ID and plug it in. And it'll automatically go through and give you this nice list of every single video on that channel, the date it was published, how long those videos were, how many views, and whether or not it was captioned. And so we were able to kind of do this initial inventory of all of our YouTube channels. Again, a smaller number then.

And then once we had these reports created, we started sharing them with the channel owners without any expectation they would do anything, really just in the spirit of being helpful. Hey, did you know that we can create a list of all your YouTube videos for you just in case you were curious? And by the way, there's a column here that'll tell you if those videos are captioned or not.

This was a big deal. It really helped us to start to develop a relationship of just being helpful without kind of asking or demanding anything with those channel owners. A lot of them really appreciated this, just to be able to have a list of all their YouTube videos, some they didn't were up still. But we were able to start having those conversations.

And even just from sharing those lists, we had a couple of channel owners who were bothered by the nos in that caption column and started right off the bat without any requirements or standards to work on captioning those videos and then clean up old videos that weren't needed as well. This was a big first step for us, is just being able to get this information. And thank you. I saw that question that just came in. The focus of our presentation today really will be on public YouTube videos.

As a university, we have a lot of academic videos and courses and stuff. That's a whole different kind of discussion and presentation. But really we're focusing on public YouTube video channels, Vimeo as well. But at our institution, it's mostly YouTube that we end up using. So just getting that information and connecting with people was an important first step for us. But then a lot of people weren't doing anything with that information.

Just another question that came in. These channels are mostly department program college channels. There are some that are owned by instructors. But they do most of their instructional videos through a different platform. And so these are mostly public marketing, informational type videos.

But, again, as we worked with people, some people started doing this just having the information. But most people needed a little bit more encouragement. And so we realized we need to work on a standard and get a standard in place to help our university make sure we're creating accessible, inclusive videos.

And so in creating a standard, again, we had an accessibility policy in place. But it wasn't very specific. And so as we looked at standards around captioning from a number of different universities-- and let's see if I can put this link into the chat maybe real quick. Sorry. Throw that there. You can take a look at our standards. It's out there and available for anybody.

But some key elements for us in creating that standard were really coming up with, what are some definitions, some key important definitions for us? Having really clear expectations-- what level of quality are we requiring in a video for it to be considered captioned officially? And what are some specific timelines when you need to have videos done and when to have which videos done? Again, feel free to take a look at that standard. Let us know if you have questions.

And then the last part of that important piece was a compliance process. We work in large organizations. And just everybody has a lot of priorities. And if somebody didn't want to address this or didn't want to caption their videos, what would we do? What's the follow through? What's the process we would need to go through to make sure those videos were captioned?

And a big part of this as we started doing this work was-- and this is a challenge, I think, for any organization-- is starting to find the resources. This takes time. It takes work. It takes money. And that was a challenge for us as well. And really just a couple of thoughts on this as we started working on, how do we find the resources to do this work?

We relied a lot on our student employees that I mentioned earlier to start taking those inventories and keeping track and even doing a lot of the communication with channel owners when we started doing this. This was right in the middle of COVID for us. And at the time, we had a good sense of our inventory, what needed to be done.

And so when some opportunities for some COVID funding came up, we were able to take advantage of those and do really hundreds of hours of video to help get the wheels going on this caption train we were trying to get moving. And this was just incredibly helpful at the time. We were able to work with channel owners to get them set up with 3Play, to get them started, and then pay for the captions themselves.

Now, that didn't last. That was a temporary funding. And we let people know that. But it was really incredible just to get started. And then as we were able to help them do those captions, kind of just celebrate together with those people to say, wow, this is incredible work. Look at all these videos that are now accessible and inclusive for everybody.

And a lot of people really started to take pride in that and just change culture a little bit. This is what we do at Utah State. We caption our videos and make sure they're usable for everyone. And it really gave a lot of these channel owners an opportunity to see the benefits and the value of captions without having to do a lot out of their own pocket just yet.

Now, we won't hope for any more global pandemics or funding that way. But as you see, kind of look for funding. At the end of the budget year, you might say, hey, do you have a couple hundred bucks that you could maybe throw this way to caption some of these videos?

Or just having those conversations and bringing it up to just try to get money here or there. We've used a number of different sources. But that is a challenge for sure. And that was an important part of our journey, was some of those temporary funds that just helped to get the ball rolling.

The next thing, though, is as we had that standard in place, the challenge that existed at that point was it was just me as a full-time person. I had some student help. Megan was one of those students at the time. But we just realized we're not going to be able to do this. At that time, our list of public channels have grown to over 100 YouTube channels that we knew of that were being out there.

And so it was just a lot of work to keep track of all that. And so I want to share just a key part of this that I think is one of my most important mantras working in just kind of this digital accessibility space. It was shared with me by a student worker who I think-- it was fatherly advice that was given to him.

And so I'll just read this out. It's really this idea that if there is a problem that you can't fix, that you then make the problem bigger until someone who can fix it will. And over and over again, I feel like this has come up and been useful. Often when we're doing this work, it's maybe not supported by the organization or we don't have the resources we need.

And sometimes we can feel a little bit like victims or like woe is us. What are we going to do? We know what needs to be done. We just don't have the resources to do it. And sometimes we even try to do everything we can to mitigate the problem or to solve it for the organization, which really doesn't do ourselves any favors as far as getting the resources we need.

And so my philosophy on this is just to lean into the problem and emphasize, OK, here's a problem. I don't have the resources to do that. What are we going to do as a university?

And then in our case, we actually implemented that standard. We kind of had that standard created. We said this is now in place. And then at that point, we said, OK, if we're going to do this, we need to get some additional resources. And that conversation was really what allowed us to hire Megan. And she was the first person in this role as a caption program coordinator.

Kind of just related to this, the other conversation-- in fact, here's a comic I'll just mention real quick that I love. But it's a little mouse talking to a crow. And he says, "I've been taking care of my problems."

And then there's a cell, the crow listening. And he says, "By nurturing them until they grow into larger more difficult problems." Now some of us may or may not do that in our personal lives. But I think there's some real strategy to figuring out how to do this when you're having trouble getting a strategic initiative going, is that if it's just a small problem and I'm just taking care of it or keeping it in my little corner, sometimes we need to let that problem become a little bit bigger so more people can see it, so more people can be aware of it and get some movement going.

As we rolled this out, we had complaints that this is an unfunded mandate. And we said, yep, it is. And that was kind of, again, a strategic decision. We still don't have any centralized funding for this. And so each division, college, or department is responsible for either paying for, which we recommend, using 3Play or doing their own captions.

And, again, at some point, we might ask for centralized funding. But we really felt like until people understand what it takes to caption things, there's really not going to be an appetite to come up with that funding. So that's kind of something that's down the road for us.

But for now, we've had pretty good luck in working with divisions, colleges, and those programs to take care of those captions themselves. But now with the standard in place and Megan was hired, I'm going to go ahead and turn the slides over to her to talk a little bit about how we went about implementing that policy.

MEGAN SPACKMAN COX: Yeah. Thank you. So I'm not sure if it was said, but our standard took effect on July 1 of 2022. That's when it was in place. That's when captions needed to start. And so we felt that it was important to have a number of resources for our department and channel owners to be able to do the work.

So this is the list of resources that we currently have on our website. But we only had about five of these pages at the time that we started this. And those pages contained enough detailed instructions for them to either be able to submit their videos to 3Play or to be able to caption them themselves. And so those were the resources that we had at the time. And one of the biggest things that we also wanted to have were caption quality standards.

And so those standards were what we wanted to be as consistent and professional captions if they were going to be doing the work themselves. And so we looked across a lot of standards, as was mentioned, and found that some things were slightly different. And we just wanted it to be one thing that we could all follow that would keep things consistent and look nice across all of our videos.

And so as we have these resources, as we begin the standard, we needed to have a system to keep track of all this. And so, next, we're going to show a video that shows our processes, our automations, the systems that we use to keep track of all of this data.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: Thank you, Megan. And that document we shared at the beginning has the links to all of these resources. We would welcome anyone to use or take or borrow any of that content, of course. Yep, and we're going-- we didn't dare to quite do a live demo. So here's a quick demonstration, all of that work to keep track of all of the videos across all these channels and some tools we used to do that.

I am really excited to share an overview of a tool that we use at Utah State University to help us keep track and manage our captioning work across the YouTube channels. You can see here we have a number of different categories. We're going to focus on our active YouTube channels today.

The tool we use is called monday.com. There are really a number of different tools in this work OS space that you could use to basically give you a spreadsheet with lots of additional functionality. First, let's just do a quick overview of the columns that we keep track of. Some of the columns have been hidden for purposes of this demonstration, but we have, for example, the channel name. We do a monthly review.

And then based on that, we can mark each channel as compliant, needs legacy captions, out of compliance, et cetera, keep track of things like the college or division it's from, the channel web address. That does change sometimes for YouTube channels. And so we also keep track of the channel ID, which is more permanent. We generate some reports for each of these channels-- I'll come back to that in just a minute-- and some overall information about each channel, such as the number of subscribers, total views. That can help us prioritize some channels at times.

We also look at the most recent video and the total number of videos and caption videos as well as how much time, the number of seconds and how many of those seconds are captioned. And we also keep track of just a caption everything cost. This is automatically generated, but gives us an idea in case budget does come up or is available, what would it cost us to completely caption all the videos in this particular channel?

And then I'm going to come back to this update now column in just a second. That's where a lot of magic happens. But then we also have just some compliance information, our access, how we're connected to that channel. And that's mostly it. But you can imagine across-- I think we have 78 current active channels. Take a lot of time to update all of this information each month. And we used to do a lot of that manually.

But, here, I want to give a quick shout out to Emma Lynn, a student developer, who has just recently finished this incredible magic almost column, it feels like, that helps us really to automate most of this work. We can come in here each month, simply indicate-- say update now. And we can do that for a single channel or for all of our channels at once. But as soon as we click that Update Now button, it automatically goes out using the YouTube API and will automatically update all of this information for us, the number of subscribers, total views. So we don't have to do any of that work manually.

And then if a new video has been created-- I know our IT web team recently added a video, for example. I can come in here and say, oh, it looks like they added a video on June 26. The tool will automatically generate a Google Sheet that lists all of the videos. So I come in here and see here's this latest report.

And then I take a look at this, and it'll show me a list of all the videos from that particular YouTube channel, how long each video is, when it was posted. And then I can quickly come in here and check and see, did they already caption this new video? Yep, they did. We don't need to worry about that. They're in compliance. These reports are shared with those channel owners as well. So they can come in here and look at any time and see a list of their videos and what work needs to be done.

Then coming back to the Monday board here, the other thing that we do with this that has been really helpful is we just have a dashboard for each college or division on campus and so, again, that are automatically shared. So our Caine College of the Arts can come in here at any time and quickly see a list of their YouTube channels and what the compliance status is.

There's an accessibility rep with each of those groups that then helps us work with that. But, again, this is just a quick overview of a tool that we use to help us keep track of all these channels and make sure that our video content is accessible and usable for everyone. Thanks so much.

OK, we'll just note there's a couple of questions. We'll try to answer some of those in the chat, but then we'll have-- or live. And then I'll have some time afterwards as well. I'm going to go ahead and pass it back to Megan for now.

MEGAN SPACKMAN COX: Yeah. So now that we finally had this system in place to be able to do this, it took us a while to be able to finally get to where we could start auditing. And so that first audit happened in January of this year.

And when we did this audit, we found that 41 out of our 112 active channels were out of compliance. And so we consider channels to be active if they posted a video in the last year. At the time of this first audit, we were considering it to be two years. But we thought that that was a really long amount of time so we shortened it. We periodically check channels that are inactive, but our main focus is on active channels.

And our biggest effort and our excitement happened in that month, and we were able to become 100% compliant by February. And compliance means that every video posted after July 1 of 2022 is professionally captioned and meets our quality standards. And so that was huge that we could even get to that point where we were 100% compliant again. Our standard is that they have 30 business days after they're warned to become compliant again.

All that time between January and February was those 30 business days. And we had some that were right on that very last day. But we did it. It took a lot of emails, phone calls, Zoom meetings. Christopher even went and visited somebody in person with some chocolate.

Basically any means of communication we could use, we did. And we were able to get back to compliant. And that's something that we do every month. We follow that process over and over again to meet our deadlines.

And I chose this picture of some sheep and a herd dog for this slide because I think sometimes we might feel like that in accessibility. Sometimes it takes a little bit to get everybody on board. And I used to show sheep when I was little. And I just remember being so frustrated that they would not walk or do what I wanted.

But I found that the more I practiced with them, the easier it got. And when it came to show time, they performed a lot better. And so I think that that's something that can be similar in our situation of accessibility, is giving people the resources, practicing with them, helping them as much as we can to make things go a lot smoother when it comes down to it. And that's what we hope to do with the resources we provided and the work that we've done.

Communication. Communication is one of the core things that I do as part of my role, lots of emails about the standard, lots of communication and Zoom meetings. And I try to be as helpful as I can and always offer to help. Another big thing is staying organized in your communication.

On the left, we have a screenshot of our captions inbox, which is a separate Outlook email that we use to keep track of our captioning work. And that's super helpful because Christopher and I can both see that email if one of us happens to be gone, and it doesn't clutter our personal emails.

And so one of the very first things I did when I was hired was to organize this email based on our university structure. And so we have top-level folders that are sorted into our division and colleges. And then we have subfolders that are each department.

And so whenever I email somebody from one of those things, I'm able to keep track of it in that folder and then review it if I ever need it. And quite often, there's times when I need to go back and look at communication. So I almost never delete an email. It's just so good to keep track of it and have it if I ever need it.

And then on the right is a screenshot of one of the templates that we use when we do our compliance emails. And so each month when I run reports again, I send out an email letting people know if they're out of compliance or if they're in compliance. And I just use a template in a mail merge. And this has saved my life. It would take me hours to send 112 emails manually.

And so using mail merges has been a big save for me. There's lots of resources out there that teach you how to do this. And, yeah, I would definitely recommend using a mail merge if you ever have to send mass emails.

Next is just our ongoing compliance tracking. We keep track every single month of our updates. And so this is just an overall pie chart that shows where we're at right now.

And so green means that the channel is 100% captioned. Everything in there has captions. And 73.4% of our channels have that, which is awesome. And we're hoping to one day make that 100%. Blue, it means compliant, legacy captions needed. And that's part of a separate project I'll mention in a little bit. And purple is a similar status where legacy videos are in progress.

And we have about 20% of our videos in one of those statuses. And then orange is our out of compliance channels, which is about 4% right now. But they're in progress. We've had communication with them. And we're working on it. And then we actually have one channel right now that's in the process of deletion as it was combined with some other channels, which is really great for us.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: And then just a clarification on legacy captions or any video-- and Megan may have mentioned, but it was published before July of last year. We only are requiring captions on videos published since then. So legacy captions are those published before then.

MEGAN SPACKMAN COX: Yeah. And I just also want to mention too that each month we usually have a few channels out of compliance. I don't think we've ever had a perfect month so far. But the good news is we've been able to get back to 100% every month as well. So that's really awesome. Even though we have a few that come up, we're able to get back.

And so just coming back to this chart, this shows our overall progress over time, which we're so excited about. There are periods of time where we definitely jumped by a lot. And some of that was due to the COVID funding that we had. We were able to go up from about 2,000 videos captioned to 5,000.

And so as was mentioned earlier, just using your resources and being able to use them timely and well to make big dents in the work. And we're excited just that that gap between total videos and captioned videos is closing over time. And so as I mentioned, there's kind of a separate project that we work on with some of those statuses in our board that are about legacy content.

And so we utilize our student employees and staff on campus that have some extra time to do some of this work manually. And so, for example, our testing services group, they have some extra time in the summer as there's not many students on campus doing testing. And so they help us a lot with our accessibility projects. So we pull some of the older videos that are before July 1 of last year, put them into a separate board on Monday where any of our workers working on this can go in and claim them and start working on them.

And so they do this manually as they have time. And then we have somebody go back and review it after they're done. And so we offer this free of charge to our departments and channel owners. But we don't promise a certain turnaround time. It's just as we can get to it and work on it.

So we started this project in May of 2022. And as of today, we've captioned 6,581 minutes of video, which is awesome.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: One thing I'll just note on this-- I think in at least any university and maybe any organization, but certainly at universities, there are often positions where people are just paid to be in a seat. Maybe it's a receptionist job where they're waiting for someone to come up or they just have some extra downtime or whatnot.

And it's just been incredible for those students to be able to take part in this. Megan's got some incredible training, a review process, just a really good system. And a lot of those students have found real meaning in being able to do this work that this just created a more accessible campus for everyone.

MEGAN SPACKMAN COX: Yeah. Thank you. As I mentioned before, my role is just helping people and being overly helpful and doing all I can do. I'm always looking for ways to better our captioning process, to find more resources, and to make things easier.

And one of the things that I've done as I've been in this role is to develop a captions Canvas course. And this is just a general overview of the benefits of captions, what captions are, and how to do them for our staff and our students that are going to be working on this project. And so the goal is to have them be fully prepared and ready to start jumping into this project once they're done with that. And that's just a free course that's available to our staff and faculty.

I also have noticed that there's been some questions that have come up as we've been doing this. And so one of the things that I've also been involved with is helping our staff fix open captions. And so there was some confusion about open captions or burned-in captions they might be called as well versus closed captions, which is the separate sidecar file attached to a video.

And so some of our channel owners started doing the burned-in captions, which isn't quite accessible, and we weren't looking for burned-in captions. We wanted closed captions.

And so I offered to go back and help fix those because I could tell that the intention was there to have them be captioned. There was just some confusion. And a lot of people just appreciated that we were willing to do that for them when they had really tried to make things work. And so just being overly helpful within the bounds that we could has been really helpful, really good as far as relationships, and doing what we can to just help them make things so much easier.

And I've also been involved in quality checks. So for those people that are doing the videos themselves, I'll go in and review them, look for anything that doesn't match our quality standards, and give feedback. So most of the time this is in an email saying, hey, I've noticed that your line breaks aren't quite right. Here's an example of what I would do to fix this. And that has also been really helpful.

So our goal, as I mentioned before, is to get to 100% of our public content captioned. Now I know that this is a goal that will probably take a while. But I don't think that it's unachievable. We've already made huge progress. And we're getting close. I'm so excited to see how close we're getting. And I hope that we can reach that goal really soon.

But some other things that we're hoping to implement soon is another part of our standard is to have all video content on websites captioned. So that's all of our official USU websites. All the videos on there need to be captioned. And so we're going to be working on implementing that standard soon.

And then just some other goals that we have are to better our process for live captions and to also work on social media captions. Social media captions is kind of a little bit of a question right now. We've looked into it a little bit, and it's a little bit more difficult than we thought. And we're hoping to make that just easier, and better, and to develop some resources on that.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: Thank you so much, Megan. This is our last slide. Then we have plenty of time for questions. And we're excited to answer a lot of those. But the one thing that I think has been as important to anything on this-- and as a accessibility professional, sometimes it can be hard to ask for more resources, more time when everybody has so much work to do.

But with captioning especially, changing my mind shift and I think the conversations from-- I mean, the question might come up-- and it doesn't come up very much very often because people just understand captions. But really shifting the conversation from saying, why should I caption my content? Now we have a lot of answers to that question. But more and more, I think it's just in the environment that we live and where captions are so prevalent everywhere, we can feel a lot more comfortable asking the question and really bringing the attitude of, why on earth wouldn't we caption our video content? It just is so easy to do.

There's so many resources available to do it. And it helps so many people that it just makes so much sense to do that. So I think getting that. And sometimes for me, even in my own self, not feeling small but feeling like we really belong and that these questions deserve to be asked and deserve to be answered can make a huge difference in how you approach the work and what you do.

With that, we are excited to visit with you. I'll maybe go back to just leave our contact information and this resource. We'll share some additional things. But would love just to hear-- question, now, Jaclyn, should we just wait for you to give us those questions or just start tackling them as they've come in? Some of them I wanted to answer in person.

JACLYN LEDUC: Yeah, absolutely. We had a lot of questions come in. We did compile them sort of behind the scenes while y'all were talking. I can read them out to you if that's easier or we can go through the Q&A window. What would you prefer?

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: I've got the window up here. So we can maybe just start. And then Megan and I can back and forth.

JACLYN LEDUC: Sure. Go for it. Sounds good.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: The first question is just, what about compliance? When somebody doesn't-- says we don't have the resources to do that. We're not going to do it. The quote is, if you want us to comply with your standard, give us the resources to do so. You've almost, like-- there's at least a couple of phone calls or meetings where that almost exact sentence was said. And it's this idea of an unfunded mandate and that that's problematic. It just is a challenge.

One of the things I've been so impressed with Megan is really as she approaches this because this comes up a lot. But it's not so much as a compliance role that she takes on but a partnership role. This is a standard. It's been approved by the university at the highest levels. We have a digital accessibility committee that's under the direction of the provost.

And so we just don't give space for there to be an option not to do this. It comes up still. And so if somebody doesn't have a budget, then we say, OK, that's a difficult conversation.

Could we maybe meet with you and your supervisor to help clarify to them why a budget is needed for this? Or maybe budget is just not available. And we look to see, what resources do you have within your office? Are there any work study students? Is there an admin assistant that maybe needs a little bit something else to do that we can work with them? And it's really just focusing on solutions.

We understand this is a challenge. It is frustrating. I mean, sometimes somebody has said like, I ought to complain about this. We say, please do. That's great. Send this up.

We want that message to be heard. Ideally, we have centralized funding for this someday. But in order for that to happen, we need to feel some of that pain or else it's not going to be approved when it does come up on the agenda for some committee. Megan, anything else you would add to that?

MEGAN SPACKMAN COX: Yeah, and I think I would also just add that sometimes it's been evaluating whether or not that channel has content that should be captioned. For example, some have just like internal trainings that it was kind of like, oh, does this really need to be public or can we just unlist it and decide, oh, this will just be sent to a person if they need the training?

Or if there's outdated content. A lot of outdated content was found as we've done this. And so channel owners have just decided, oh, we don't really need that anymore. So that could also be a solution that has come about.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: And then just relationships. I mean, if the first time you're talking to someone is to say, hey, you have to do this thing by date, that's not always great. And so that's where sometimes a visit to an office or a step back just to understand, what are they doing at the university? What are all the challenges they're dealing with? But connecting with people on an individual basis can often just solve a lot of those problems as well.

That next question is, what happens if someone is not meeting the compliance standard by the deadline? Is there a consequence? This was a big one we wanted to make sure we got in the standard, in the policy, basically saying, if we put this out there and there's no so what, then what good is it? And so we did put a standard in place.

And, again, at the highest levels of the institution basically supported us in saying that if somebody wouldn't do this, we would just take down their YouTube channel or ask them to take it down. And so we've never had to get there, which has been incredibly fortunate. And we have different escalation phases. Megan, maybe talk through a little bit how if maybe something isn't happening, what are some of those processes you go through?

MEGAN SPACKMAN COX: Yeah. So first of all, it's usually our accessibility representative. We have accessibility representatives for each of our college and divisions that are sort of our bridge because they probably know these people a lot better than we do because they work within their division or college. So, first, we'll kind of go to them, see if they can help.

Next, if we need to go up further is usually a supervisor, maybe a department head, things like that. Then we just kind of keep going up the chain. Next would kind of be overall division managers, vice presidents, whoever would be. And then if we had to, eventually the provost. But hopefully we never get there. And we haven't yet.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: And we have that backing of our vice president to come into that conversation. We just haven't had to pull that card yet fortunately. And I think part of it is just assuming the best intentions. People don't hate captions in general or whatnot. They're just stretched or they have too much on their plate. Or they don't have time to do this.

And so if we can take some time to understand where they're coming from and what their concerns are, often, they can be resolved. So good. Legal repercussions for not being accessibly compliant is a question from Jude. Absolutely, there are.

And that's a whole other presentation. Again, I think 3Play has some good recorded webinars you could refer to. But if you don't have accessible content, there are a number of federal laws, maybe state regulations, maybe local policies that you could get in trouble for. Again, that's a big question. I'd be happy to send some resources if you wanted to email me.

And then the follow-up question-- it looks like doing it manually is a nice to have since YouTube does them automatically. Great question. Automatic captions can be a good starting place. And in some cases, they get you a lot of the way there. But at least with YouTube automatic captions and many others, you're often going to have typos, misspellings, people's names spelled incorrectly, missing punctuation.

So for us at least, if it's an automatic caption, we just consider that as uncaptioned. It has to be professionally captioned and meet our caption quality standards for it to meet that standard. Megan, chime in on any of these. How is our department funded? Is captioning the main function of our job, Christopher and Megan? Megan, speak to your job maybe. Do you want to start with that one? Just the role of captioning?

MEGAN SPACKMAN COX: Yeah. So I would say that captioning is probably my main role. A lot of this YouTube channel stuff is what I spend my time on. And also as you mentioned, we also do a lot of work with course captions and things like that.

But then I also just kind of have my hand in a little bit of everything. I am the lead on some other projects that we have as well. But, yeah, my main focus is captions.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: The best advice I could give any of you is to find a person like Megan because she just is incredible at doing this work but so much more. My role is a little bit more broad. And, again, Megan helps with all of this, but kind of all campus digital accessibility.

So that may be online courses or online websites. And that's a big focus for us right now, applications. Anything digital or electronic, we're really working on proactively. What can we do to make those resources more accessible?

Question on open captions and why they may not be considered accessible. That's our definition. I don't know that I would say that they're not. In some cases, open captions may actually even be preferred by some people. But there's a couple of disadvantages.

One is an open caption that's burned into the video. That means it's not able to be turned off. For one, you can't edit it. But then most captioning platforms give you the ability for a caption file to change the font size, change the background colors to adjust the caption to be in the style that you would like.

It also makes the video searchable, all the benefits that come from captions. It's better than nothing certainly. And some schools might consider that to be accessible. But for our standard. We require closed captions if that makes sense.

Good question on audio descriptions. Do we have a similar process in place for that? No, we don't yet. But as Megan said, we also don't have a standard in place for live captions. I think part of this is accessibility is such a big elephant that you really have to figure out, what are you going to tackle first?

We certainly have the ability to do audio descriptions and are responsive to those needs when they come up. But we're not currently making that as much of a focus as we are captions. Over time, hopefully we'll do more and more there. We're just not there yet.

Question from Kim on helping instructors caption their asynchronous lectures. Yes, and, again, maybe there's a future presentation. We have a whole other process in place for captioning videos within Canvas. And we're able to do that and, again, some similar ways of automating some of that work that we'd be happy to share. But we do have resources available to that. Send us an email to captions@usu, and we can share some of that.

But our video platform is Kaltura, is our main one. And we've done some-- we're working on right now, actually, some similar integrations with Monday to automate a lot of that. I'm happy to talk through that. Maybe-- that's a big question, though, that we'll maybe save for another time.

And then the question on editing automatic captions. Absolutely. Again, it's a great starting place. 3Play themselves-- they start with a machine caption file. And then they edit it to make sure it meets their quality standards. And so you can do that in YouTube, probably in just about any YouTube platform. Megan, can you speak to the resource you've found that I think is linked in our resource document around Adobe Premiere?

MEGAN SPACKMAN COX: Yeah, yeah. Adobe Premiere Pro is in the Adobe Creative Cloud. And I found that it just produces a lot better machine captions than YouTube. It adds things like punctuation and capitalization, which YouTube does not really do.

And so we actually use that as part of our legacy content process that our students do. We run it through Adobe Premiere just to get that base. And then we go through and edit it in a slightly different program called Amara. It's just a free basic caption editor that you can plug things into and edit on.

And so we use a couple of different tools. But Adobe Premiere is the biggest one. And it has saved a lot of time just because YouTube is kind of the bare minimum as far as auto-generated captions.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: On that same theme, Megan, can you answer that new question about what caption [INAUDIBLE] recommend for the legacy content?

MEGAN SPACKMAN COX: Yeah. So I think Premiere is probably my biggest one. I know some people use Otter.ai. There were a couple that were trying out like the Microsoft Word built-in one. But I don't think they had as much success with that one.

And so Adobe Premiere Pro was something that was free to all of our campus because we have just like a university Adobe Creative Cloud license. And so that's something that I recommend to all of our staff members who are doing this.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: But then another free resource that was just mentioned in the chat as well that we use for our legacy content project for all those students is Amara that was indicated there. We have a shared Amara account. So students are able to go in, add-- so the process starts in Adobe Premiere, like Megan said. We get the script from there.

And then they're able to go in and edit that and make sure it meets the quality standard using Amara, a great tool. There's lots of tools out there. I think this is a space we'll continue to see more innovation. And some caption editors are better than others, a lot of space there.

I know there are some questions that have come through the chat instead of the Q&A that we may have missed. Feel free to ask your question in the Q&A if we haven't answered it yet. One that I've seen is third-party content. That's a huge challenge. Most of the focus of today's webinar has been on university-owned YouTube channels.

As we move into making sure all of the videos on our websites are captioned, we're going to be dealing with a lot more third-party content. And we're working through that. Some of the solutions to that will be using something like the 3Play wrapper, where you can caption content even if you don't own it.

Amara is able to do that as well, where you're able to caption a video owned by somebody else. We're still working through and kind of to understand-- Megan is working on an inventory now of how much of that content on our websites is third-party content versus content that we own. That's a great question and a good challenge.

Those are all the open questions I'm seeing. Jaclyn-- if anybody else has other questions, feel free to put them in the Q&A. We're happy to [INAUDIBLE].

JACLYN LEDUC: Yes, we have another one that came in through email. And it's, have you conducted any assessments or studies to measure the impact and effectiveness of this captioning system? And if yes, do you have any notable findings that you can share?

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: I mean, for our system specifically, just the most notable finding is that it saves us hundreds of hours over the course of a year. And Megan's spent a fair amount of time going one channel at a time, putting it into the YTCA, getting those reports and copying them into Google Sheets. Again, even YT saves us hours versus having to go video by video. But it's a lot.

And so I think the biggest impact of this is just that it has saved us-- it's allowed us to do this. Really without some of these automations, we'd be where we were two or three years ago. It's just allowed us to really kind of accelerate the work that we do and be a lot more responsive and provide people with more up-to-date snapshot of where their channels are at any time and giving us the ability to know what needs to be followed up.

There was a question or two-- I just want to clarify. The YTCA tool is a fantastic tool. It's not what we demoed as far as within Monday. That's a different tool that's not currently available.

Really, we just finished this-- I mean, this week, really we have tied up the ribbon on that to make sure it's usable. If that's something there's a lot of interest in, I think we're interested in exploring how it might be able to be shared or used by others. Feel free to reach out to us. But I hope that answered that question.

MEGAN SPACKMAN COX: Yeah. And I would even just say we used to only do these reports quarterly because it took so much time because we would have four or five students that would spend days doing this. And I was one of them. But now we can do this monthly because we can do this so fast. So, so much time saved. I'm just so grateful for Emma that developed this.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: Yeah, Emma Lynn, big shout out to her, was mentioned, a student developer. And I think a key message to that is just to automate what can be automated. And we're not talking about going and hiring a big development group with tens of thousands of dollars. It's a student developer who she's super sharp and good at what she does.

But a lot of this can be done using that type of resource. And it's made a world of difference in the work we're able to do. I think, too, just being able to as we work to change culture, as we follow up with people, like, within a month versus-- people can maybe feel like, oh, I can get away with not captioning my videos because I won't hear from them for a few months versus now they know if they don't caption a video, they're going to get an email from Megan at the first of every month.

And I think we hope to see that number go down and down to where everybody is just proactively captioning all of their videos all the time. I mean, that's maybe a pipe dream, but we're moving in that direction. Jason asks about a YouTube summary, YouTube.

I think there's a lot of tools with ChatGPT, AI type machine models that take the captions or even the audio of a video and just summarize it into something that's more digestible. A lot of neat technology, fun stuff happening in that way. I think captions really provide you a text-based foundation to all of your videos that enable all kinds of cool stuff to happen.

JACLYN LEDUC: Amazing. That's great to hear and I'm sure encouraging for all of our listeners. I think we have time for one last question that can hopefully leave our viewers with a little inspiration.

So the question is, can you share any words of advice for other universities or organizations that are looking to develop this centralized captioning system? And yeah, any words of advice for them who are just getting started or maybe in the middle of this process.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: Megan, anything you would start out with on that?

MEGAN SPACKMAN COX: My first thought that just came to mind was relationships, relationships, relationships. That changes everything. If you have support from leadership that will back you, that's a big thing, but also just people that will help you and encourage you along the way.

Christopher and I are just this little small team. He's helped me a lot in this process of learning, how do I help people understand why this is meaningful? How do I do this? And just having a support system to boost and get started and then slowly just taking that and spreading it out.

And I think, as was mentioned, captions is becoming a really big thing. People are starting to get it. Everyday users just use it. And so it's really a thing that is big, that is well known, and that is starting to become meaningful for almost everybody.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS: Thanks. And advice-- I'm just going to go back to this idea that this can be a frustrating process. And there were certainly some difficult days, weeks, and even months along the process where it just felt like maybe we were stuck or we weren't making the progress that we hoped. And, again, we're in year five of really actively working on this problem.

First of all, just make sure you have it in your head that what you're asking for is not unreasonable, not in a way that's demanding or overly aggressive. I think we want to be careful about that. But really, it's just like, look, our students at a university, they can access captions on Netflix, probably on Instagram. Everywhere else they have captions. Why on earth then when they come to an institution of higher learning would they not have access to this thing that's available to them everywhere else?

For us, we don't emphasize the accessibility part of it. That's an important part. We make sure it's part of discussions. But really, I think we mostly focus on just how usable captions are to so many different audiences.

And 3Play has some great research that they've done on this, whether it's helping students to learn better. It might be helping English language learners to participate in ways they couldn't. And it might be helping students-- I mean, you could just go on and on.

And we have one of the links on our document is benefits of captions, especially for a younger audience. It's just one of those things where I think if you can shift the conversation from-- and just to bring up that slide again. The more we can not focus on trying to ask permission or why can we please do this, but put the onus on the people who don't want to do captions. Why on earth wouldn't we do this?

I think it's a harder and harder question for someone to answer. Maybe a few years ago, it wasn't as much. But you can approach it this way. And then over time, there'll be obstacles. And you'll solve them.

Reach out to other people. Find community, whether that's at conferences or listservs. But just have the confidence. This is a good thing not just for accessibility, certainly for that. But just in general, we all benefit when our content is more inclusive and more accessible for everyone.

Thank you so much for your time today. We really appreciate it and hope to hear from some of you by email. Again, captions@usu.edu. Thank you so much for your time today.

JACLYN LEDUC: Thank you both for those excellent parting words and for joining us today. It was so wonderful learning from the both of you. We really, really appreciate your time and sharing your resources and your process with us. And thank you to our audience for joining us and asking such amazing questions. And thank you again, Christopher and Megan. I hope everyone has a great rest of the day.