

ELISA EDELBERG:

So thank you for joining this webinar, "What Marketers Need to Know about Web Accessibility." My name is Elisa Edelberg. I'm from 3Play Media. And I'll be presenting today along with E Foley and Esty Peskowitz from Level Access. And with that, we're each just going to take a quick minute to introduce ourselves. And then we will run through the agenda and get started.

So as I mentioned, my name is Elisa. I'm the Content Marketing Manager here at 3Play Media. I manage our content strategy and our awesome content team. I'm super passionate about web accessibility. And outside of work, I love dogs and pretty much anything that has to do with crafting. And with that, I'll pass it to E.

E FOLEY:

Hey, everybody. I'm E. I've been with Level Access since 2016. Before that, I wrote copy for some software companies and some retail companies. So I've done a bit of everything. Outside of work, also a huge dog person. Those are my three Cocker Spaniels-- Titania, Jadzia, and Syrio. And I also teach group classes in rally obedience and agility at one of our local non-profits.

ESTY PESKOWITZ:

Hi, everyone. My name is Esty Peskowitz, as Elisa mentioned earlier. I have been with Level Access since January of 2019, so nearing the end of the first year. Before Level Access, I led marketing operations and program management for large financial institution companies in the United States and technology companies worldwide.

I have a wonderful little kid named Eitan. He's almost turning 18 months. Lived in about three continents. And I'm fluent in three different languages. Welcome, everyone.

So I'm just going to quickly go over the agenda for today, "Everything a Marketer Needs to Know About Accessibility." And we're actually going to be focused on digital accessibility, anything that relates to your digital properties, like your website, your mobile app.

My quick introduction will be around the business case for digital accessibility. We're going to talk a little bit more about the demographic shift, the customer experience, and a little bit about ADA lawsuits because that's kind of the focus, as its consumer-- focusing on consumer facing industries.

And then I'm going to hand it over to E and Elisa. They're going to be talking a little bit more in depth about implementing accessibility, best practices in your marketing content. They're going to be talking about some best practices like alt text, video captions, webinars, headings, and more other things.

So Elisa, I'm ready to jump in to the business case.

ELISA EDELBERG:

Great. Thank you.

ESTY PESKOWITZ:

And as Elisa mentioned, just feel free to put questions in the chat box. And we'll be able to respond to those at the end of the presentation.

So the business case for web accessibility-- so when I first started working for Level Access, I was amazed at how big the industry is, that there really is a much larger market than most people perceive and especially, as marketers.

I think the definition of accessibility, or disability-- sorry-- is a lot broader than people think. When I first started, I thought, OK, it's people who either are visually impaired or have hearing disabilities. But it's a lot beyond that. People who have mobility issues, or anxiety, or anything that is cognitive, they are actually affected by inaccessible technology.

Also, thinking of the Baby Boomers, people who are between 52 and 70s-- and 70 or older-- they are actually more and more using technology. And as such, they need to have that accessible technology, make sure that they can shop for stuff, they can make a transaction with their bank, and so forth.

Yeah, so as we talked about the Baby Boomers, that graying globe, people are just getting older. But they're more actively using technology.

They more need technology to be accessible to them.

There's a common misconception that accessibility only benefits those who self-identify themselves as a person with disabilities. But as I mentioned before, accessibility greatly benefits those in the aging population with vision or dexterity challenges. The world is getting older, and these consumers are really among the people who are most active users in technology and features, such as color contrast, font sizes, mobile responsive designs, more and more of that. So all these things really allow them to shop, browse, conduct business with your organization.

So one thing to look at here is that 42%-- just one of the stats at the top right corner of your screen, you can see that 42% of adults ages 65 and older actually own smartphones. And this is up, just 18% in 2013. And this has been almost seven years ago, so we can definitely think that these numbers have probably tripled or quadrupled because there's just more usage of technology and smartphones.

Great. I think for us, as marketers-- and I always think about this as we launch marketing programs-- our job is really to ensure that our content is accessible to everyone in our target audience. We shouldn't really be differentiating between the different aspects of our target audience.

And a few stats here really show that the content is a core focus for us, as it has developed in a very fast pace. So we really need to think of having accessible content that can be a competitive advantage.

Just one thing here to note-- over almost 1,500 WordPress posts are most published every single minute. And think of out of those how many are really inaccessible, and how many of those are not being able to be read by 27% of the US population. So just something really to think about as we, as marketers, develop our content strategy.

Yeah, and as we know, our content strategy is mostly delivered through technology, right? So we use website, and emails, and mobile apps to make sure that our content is really delivered out there to our target

audience.

And this slide, we wanted to show how nowadays more organizations are shifting their attention to digital accessibility. The table on the right that you see here, it actually shows the percentage shares of digital accessibility lawsuits in the past few months. We actually looked at September, October to have more accurate data. You can clearly see that retail and consumer-facing services that dominate with over 80% of the lawsuits.

But as we start to reach saturation in some of those industries-- obviously, some organizations really become more accessible-- we do expect that new industries will open up. One that we can clearly see is financial services, particularly in banking and credit unions. So again, and since lawsuits are mainly related to organizations that use technology to communicate their message, as I mentioned-- email, website, mobile apps-- we do expect that companies should consider fixing their digital properties.

Yeah, and that's just a quick overview to look at some trends, since, really, our focus is more on companies that are consumer-facing, industries like hotels, restaurants, consumer goods, and industries like that. We wanted just to share over overall trends of ADA-- ADA is basically how we categorize every industry that is regulated by the ADA-- and a trajectory over the course of 2020. As you can see, there will be continued massive growth in ADA litigation. And we expect that litigation be related to digital properties to continue to increase next year.

So some of the dominant reasons that we do expect this to happen, to this part for litigation and ADA industries to continue growing, is really the number of plaintiff firms filing cases. It continues to increase. In 2015, there were virtually no law firms that were doing this. And in the last three months, we've seen over 30 law firms who are actually focused on that. So that reason really supports the increase that we are expecting in 2020.

Another reason for that is that you can think of the number of plaintiff firms as the driving of the supply of lawsuits.

And last, definitely, but not least, there are a large number of members of the plaintiff bar that focus on ADA lawsuits that are not active in the space, of minimally active. So we do expect this to grow.

There's probably going to be more of a slow down in some of those more saturated industry, like we mentioned with ADA, with some of the consumer-facing ones, but probably other industries will continue to grow. And with that, I'm going to hand it over to E.

E FOLEY:

All righty. So I get to cover the more practical, hands-on stuff as we're talking about implementing accessibility best practices in marketing contents. So just a quick disclaimer about this. We are marketers. We're not techies. I know enough HTML to be dangerous, but that's not a whole lot of HTML.

So what we're going to be doing here is really giving you an overview of what we do, what you can do, stuff that can actually be implemented by folks who are just managing a WordPress site versus actually deep in the code, doing that kind of stuff.

Elisa, I don't know where the rest of my slide went. I see the picture. Oh, hey, there it goes. Sweet.

So we're not going to go super deep into code-level stuff. We're not going to go super deep into WCAG, but enough that you'll know what you can do as a marketer to make sure that your stuff is accessible or who you can hand it to and what you can ask them to make sure you get it to be accessible.

So we're going to start with good old alt text. Alternative text is coded when you upload a photo or other kind of image. And it basically describes the image in a short amount of space.

So what happens is, so there's someone who is blind or someone who's low vision, and they're accessing the web. They're using a screen reader. And that screen reader is saying out loud everything that it's coming across on the website. So when it comes across your photo, it's actually

going to read the alt text to the person. So for those users, alt text is super important because, otherwise, they're not going to really see the photo.

Also, really important for people who use voice input as opposed to actually clicking on a mouse or using a keyboard because they're able to describe what button they want to press. So they might say click Add to Cart. And if your Add to Cart button it's just coded as a "Button," which sometimes happens, they're going to have a hard time actually completing what they want to complete on your site.

Alt text also super important for search engines. If you've ever gone to Google Image search and looked for something, that's pulling a lot from alt text to know what exactly the image is.

And then, also, finally, people with extremely slow internet connections-- back in the day, we had that problem a lot, where you'd go to a website, and you'd just sit there and wait for the photo to slowly appear for you. It turns out, I have a friend who lives in rural Vermont. And she has the same problem some days with her internet. So there's still folks out there for whom alt texts could be useful.

So if you're going to write alt text, I have two questions that you can ask yourself. And they're going to show right up there. There they are. So the first question you're going to ask is, why did we pick this particular image?

So if you look at the image on the left, there is a front desk of a hotel. And you could see the little bell for service that's on the hotel desk. And you could see this lovely, smiling lady handing a card for the room off to a customer.

And so if I was in this hotel, and this is the image I had picked, I would say, I picked this image because it shows how friendly our service people are. Our front desk people are so great and wonderful.

And then your second question is, what feeling or understanding do you hope to create in the viewer? So when you're picking this image, you're saying, we have these friendly people. And I want people to see this photo

and feel like they're welcomed. And so you take those kind of ideas. And then you could write your alt text. So you could say, a friendly, welcoming desk attendant hands a key card to a customer.

All right. So the fun thing with alt text is there's a bunch of different ways you can write it, and there's a bunch of situations where you don't necessarily need to write it. So quick but not definitive list-- if you have an image that gives any sort of information, that is a 100% yes. So if you have graphics, or photos, or illustrations that convey some sort of meaning that someone would need to have to understand your content, it absolutely has to have alt text.

If it is a decorative image, then you do not need alt text. So a lot of times, for Level Access, we have these little rainbow triangles that hang out in the corners of our PDFs. And those are-- they're pretty, but they're not relevant to anything. So we don't need alt text for those.

For functional images, like a button, you do need alt text. But the alt text should describe the function of the button. So if you had a Save File, you would call it Save File. You wouldn't say floppy disk. Also, because there's a good number of people who have actually never used a floppy disk in their life.

The last one on this list here-- images of text. So stuff like memes, stuff like if you were doing a sale, and you've got a 25% off all women's tops, you can need alt text there unless the actual exact text is somewhere else. So if you've got an email, and it's got a little splashy image that says what your sale is, you don't necessarily need to put alt text on that if immediately after it, it says the exact same thing. So they don't need to hear it twice.

And now, we get into some of the gnarlier ones. So if you have complex images, like a graph, or a diagram, or some sort of educational thing that's just very, very complex, you can do a couple of different things. You can describe it in the body of the text on the page, or you can do it in the alt text, whichever is going to make more sense for the data at hand.

And I actually have a link that I will make sure that we send out. Someone did a really good presentation on alt text for educational images. And it's super duper great. So I'm going to make sure you guys get that because it's very, very useful.

As far as groups of images, you can actually group them together into one alt text attribute. So let's say you run a summer camp for kids, and you have a page with a bunch of pictures of happy kids doing camping activities, you can actually group those as one image and say, these are happy campers doing arts and crafts at the camp. So you can definitely group stuff together if it just makes sense to call it one thing versus each individual thing.

If you have an image map, there is a very technical explanation for that. So that is something you're definitely going to want to talk to your accessibility experts about because that is a whole webinar in itself.

And then for portraits or head shots, if you're doing your event About page, it really depends. If it's just someone's head, it just needs their name. And if their name is directly underneath in the text, then you don't even need the alt text because it's already there.

So the next one, I have an example of an employee photo. So this is Tim Springer, the CEO here at Level Access. And we could technically give this an alt text of just "Tim Springer" because it is. It's a photo of Tim Springer.

However, it's not just a photo of Tim Springer. So if I were writing alt text for this, I would say, "Level Access CEO Tim Springer talks animatedly in a purple conference room. Seated next to him is a 3-foot teddy bear with a bottle of champagne in each paw." And so that definitely gives you much more of an idea of the flavor of our office space and Tim's personality versus just, say, "Tim Springer."

And I'm going to actually answer one question that's out there. For a recommended length, you want to keep it around 100, 120 characters, but you can go longer. Most of the screen readers will pause after a certain amount of characters, but they're not going to cut it off entirely. They'll

keep reading it. So if you can describe it in fewer words, great. But if it needs more words, then definitely use them.

So I've got this other photo. So what do you do? You have an employee photo. It's not technically a head shot because there's stuff there. So you want to think about, OK, why did we pick this photo? What is this showing? What kind of understanding do we want our viewers to have?

And so, for this one, I said, he sits facing the camera with his elbow resting on his desk. And behind him are two wide monitors full of colorful code. So that says a whole lot more than just saying who this guy is. Clearly, he is some sort of coder, and it's nice and colorful and pretty, so always a good thing to add in.

Oh, we're on video captions. I get to hand this back off to Elisa.

ELISA EDELBERG:

Yes. Thank you so much. So we are going to talk about captions now. So just to make sure that everybody is on the same page, I wanted to start out talking briefly about what captions are.

So captions are time-synchronized text. They can be read while watching a video. And they're usually noted with the little CC icon. They assume that the viewer can't hear, so they include relevant sound effects, speaker IDs, and other non-speech elements to make it easier for the viewer to understand.

But in terms of marketing, we want to talk about who benefits from captions. And of course, the first thing that comes to mind for a lot of people is those who are deaf or hard of hearing, which is absolutely true. But they also benefit a number of other people, including those with cognitive disabilities, non-native English speakers, and thousands of people who watch video on their smartphones or tablets with sound muted, or a lot of apps now play videos automatically without sound.

So I want to go through a couple ways that captions can really help from a marketing perspective. Video accessibility has really tremendous benefits for improving SEO, or Search Engine Optimization, the overall user

experience, reach, and ultimately, your brand. You'll see, on the slide, I said, "You'll get more website traffic."

Facebook has uncovered that 85% of Facebook videos are watched with the sound off. And if your video relies heavily on sound, a lot of people are probably scrolling past them. A study by LiveClicker found that pages with transcripts earned an average of 16% more revenue than they did before transcripts were added. And according to Facebook, videos with captions have 135% greater organic search traffic.

So as you can see, there are a lot of additional benefits to adding captions and transcripts to your video, in addition to accessibility. A research study from the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* found that captions also improve brand recall, verbal memory, and behavioral intent.

And as far as accessibility, I do want to touch on this and the impact that it has on marketing from an accessibility standpoint. So as we talked about, much of the world is moving online. We can now shop online, watch a whole bunch of different entertainment options online. People are doing online dating and all kinds of different things happening on the web.

But unfortunately, a lot of this content isn't accessible. So what ends up happening is when someone with a disability runs into a website that's inaccessible, they leave because they can't access it. And in fact, 71% of people with disabilities report leaving a website immediately if it is not accessible.

And to put that number into perspective, there are 48 million Americans who are deaf or hard of hearing, which is about 20% of the population, and 24 million Americans who are blind or low-vision, which is about 10% of the population. So that's a massive number, a massive portion of our population that's just left out. And not only is this morally wrong, but it's actually bad for business, too.

So I want to briefly talk a little bit about quality of captions. We have a slide here on not relying on YouTube's auto captions or other ASR, Automatic Speech Recognition Only captions. And we did point out that these are so

inaccurate that sometimes they're funny, unless, of course, you're relying on captions. And many of you may be familiar with different caption fails. There tend to be a lot if you watch YouTube videos.

But to give you a little bit better understanding, I have a video. Let's see if it works.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- One of the most challenging aspects of choosing a career is simply determining where our interests lie. Now, one common characteristic we saw in the majority of people we interviewed was a powerful connection with a childhood interest.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- For me, part of the reason why I work here is when I was five years old, growing up in Boston, I went to the New England Aquarium. And I picked up a horseshoe crab, and I touched a horseshoe crab. And I still remember that. And I'm still-- you know, I love those types of engaging experiences that really register with you and stick with you.

- As a child, my grandfather was a forester. And my childhood playground was 3,600 acres of trees and wildlife that he had introduced to me. So my entire childhood was around wildlife and in wild places. It just clicked.

- When I was a kid, all the cousins
would use my grandparents' driveway--

[END PLAYBACK]

ELISA EDELBERG:

Great. So if anyone wants to take a moment to answer in the chat panel, is anyone willing to share what errors they noticed in the transcript? So a couple of people are pointing out a lack of punctuation or incorrect punctuation, no indication of a change in speakers. A lot of the words were just incorrect, like "forester" became "four story." "The New England Aquarium" was transcribed as "the new wing of the Koran." Yeah, so a lot of people are noticing some of these errors.

And I just want to point out that these are errors that a human wouldn't make or are not likely to make because of a lot of it is around audio quality and also context, which a human would be able to understand. They would know that "forester" and "four story" mean entirely different things, even though they sound similar. So thanks, everyone, for sending in some of the errors that you've noticed.

And then, just to kind of really show this point a little bit further about the quality and accuracy of captioning, I have just another couple other quick examples about how punctuation can really change the meaning of language tremendously.

So I have an example on the screen, and I'll read it out loud. It's an image of this little cartoon older woman. And it says, "Let's eat Grandma." And the woman is screaming, "What?" And then under it, it says "Let's eat, comma, Grandma." And it says, "Punctuation saves lives." So it's just kind of a silly example, but it really does show the importance of accuracy.

And then another quick example-- which I was told that this is actually just a fake example, but nonetheless it really does show the point-- there's a cover of a magazine. And it says, "Rachael Ray finds inspiration in cooking her family and her dog." Hopefully, that's cooking, comma, her family, comma, and her dog, not cooking up her family and her dog.

And then, now that you have a better understanding about what captions are, I wanted to touch on some easy ways to get started with adding captions to your videos. So there are a number of different methods and a number of different costs and amount of effort and time that these take.

So one way to use YouTube's captions is to upload your video, let YouTube generate those captions, and then actually edit them so that they're correct. This certainly takes some of the effort out and keeps costs down, but it does take some time.

You can also use the script from your video to create captions. You can add those time codes in. If you don't have a script, you could have someone in-house transcribe the video to create those captions. But it should be noted that the time and effort are both high on this.

And then, lastly, you can certainly outsource to a video captioner or transcription company, which is certainly the easiest, and depending on the company, can be the most accurate. But it does require some planning ahead.

And then I briefly want to touch on webinars, and why and how captioning works for webinars. So it's important to make sure that you're using a webinar platform that works with captioning. We have captioning here today. You would want to hire a transcriptionist to do live captioning. And then at the end, you actually receive a transcript of the document.

And a number of people benefit from this. Everyone, certainly, attending the webinar, and the host of the webinar, and the marketing department really benefits as well because you can actually turn your transcript into content. And that's one of the other really important benefits from a marketing standpoint is that once you have that transcript and everything is written out, you can really use that to easily create derivative content such as infographing, infographics with facts and figures. You can use quotes for social media posts. You can turn that into an e-book or white paper, an email campaign, an online course, blog articles, and so on.

So with that, I want to hand it back to talk about heading structures.

E FOLEY:

Alrighty. So headings-- super important-- majorly important for folks who are blind or have low vision because for the ones who are using the screen readers, they are able to click to go between headings. So you want your headings to be in order, so then, the screen reader can actually read them in the correct order.

So it's super important. That's how they are able to skim a website. So a sighted person can just easily just scroll down and just glance at headings as they go. But someone who is blind is going to be tapping through with their screen reader and waiting to get to the right heading to stop and start reading in full.

They also are really helpful for people with cognitive disabilities, especially folks with ADHD or other kind of attention disabilities, that it's good for them because they can quickly be like, oh, right, this is where I was going and get back on track. I know they're super helpful for me.

And for you, headings are also super great for SEO. You want to have really good headings. You want to have your keywords there-- super great for SEO.

So as far as headings go, you want to make sure that you have them in the correct order. And I think that is on the next slide. Yep, all right.

So you want to make sure that they have-- you're in the correct order, so those people who are blind or low vision have the way to skim. So they're going to be able to skim from heading 1 to heading 2 to heading 3 or across. So we have an example here of a Word document, which exactly the same thing-- if you're preparing Word documents, that you want to make sure that your headings are also tagged correctly.

And I believe the next one talks about headings on the web, yes. So one thing that we tend to do, as marketers, because we don't necessarily want to bother the web team, is we think, well, you know, I could just use block quote, and it will look the way I want, even though the thing I am putting

there is not actually a block quote. Or you might think, well, heading 2 and heading 3, I like the font on heading 3 better, so I'm just going to put it there because it looks nicer.

So please, please resist that urge to do that. A lot of times, these are things you can fix in the cascading style sheets. And it is a super duper fast fix. So if you could buy lunch for the web person and just say, hey, can you fix heading 2 and heading 3 so they're swapped as far as what they look like, they can literally do that in five minutes or less. So definitely do it because it is worth it, and it makes a big difference for folks using screen readers.

Alrighty. And for links-- for accessible links, this is one of the things that people forget about. But having accessible links are really great for folks who have visual disabilities. And it's especially good for folks who have to magnify their screen. So they have vision, but they need to actually zoom in really, really close to be able to read things.

So if there's someone who's magnifying content to 200%, they're only going to see 1/9 of the screen. And if you're magnifying to 500%, they're only going to see 1/25 of the screen. So we need to make sure that everything is accessible for them when they're zooming in like that.

And also, I don't know why that bullet went inside. Oh, well. So it's also really helpful for people who have physical disabilities like hand tremors, or they don't have 10 fingers, or they're using a mouth wand to click on. And accessible links, also great for folks with cognitive disabilities.

So what do I mean by accessible links? Since we're heading into the Christmas season, I figured I'd go with the naughty versus nice examples. So a naughty link would be "click here to download the PDF," where "here" is the only thing that's actually linked.

What's wrong with that is that one, you can't understand that out of context. So if someone having a screen reader was tapping between the different links on your page and they just get one that says "here," that means pretty much nothing. So you want to make sure you actually link

the full concept. So a nice link would be "Download the 2019 report." And we've also made a note that it's a PDF.

The second one for naughty links is the thing I see on so many blogs, including professional company blogs. And it's where you want to give a ton of examples of a thing, and so you just link every word in a sentence to a different example. And I get it. I see how that it's cool and trendy. However, the individual links? Not understood out of context.

And if you are a person who has Parkinson's, for example, and you've got a hand tremor, are you going to be able to click on the single letter "A" or the word "is"? Probably not. So if you want to do that, it's much better to just give yourself a footnote, or a sidebar, or something, where you can actually list out all your examples.

The third one is our ever popular "read more." It's not terrible. But it is much nicer to actually tell them what they're going to be reading more about. So "Read more about our facilities," "Read more about our software," all that good stuff.

And then, finally, tying it back to alt text, it is naughty if you have a clickable download image that has no alt text at all because then the person doesn't know what they're clicking. So you should have your download image and then have the alt text telling them what they're going to be downloading if they click there.

So the big thing is just asking yourself, is this link going to be understood out of context? And if the answer is yes, then you are totally great.

All right. Color contrast is another big one. And we have an example here, where someone called out *The Washington Post* because they put up a page that had an error message that was printed in almost a pink over a picture of the Capitol at night, which was almost like a kind of orangey color. So you can't even read it. And then if you're trying to read what the form fields are supposed to be, you can't even read those either. So even the big guys sometimes get this wrong.

Color contrast-- super important for people who are low vision, people who are colorblind. For colorblind folks, that's one out of every 12 men and about one in every 200 women. And there are also people who aren't color blind, but maybe they just don't have quite as good perception of color. So having good color contrast is important for them. And then, also, if you're reading something in a less than optimal light, so if you're on the beach trying to read your cell phone, or if you're in the dark trying to read stuff, it's very important to have color contrast that is readable.

So we've got a couple of naughty but nice-- naughty versus nice-- examples. So we have a form field here on the left side that just says, "Your ID" and "Your Name." The text is in gray, and the button is a light orange, and it has white text on it. That is really hard to read. And it's exceptionally hard to read if you have low vision.

But if you look on the right, we've changed it so the text is in black, and the button is blue with white text. And suddenly, it is so much clearer.

So sometimes, it's just a matter of doing a teensy bit of tweaking to your colors. And there's a lot of really good color contrast checkers. We have one on Level Access, where you can literally just put in the code for the colors for the background and the text, and we will tell you if it's accessible or not-- so super helpful.

The one on the bottom is actually a thing from Target, from, I think, last year's Halloween. And it's just the night and day. And then if you look what happened was when you changed the size of your image-- the size of your screen, that is-- the list of costumes bled over and out of the black bar. So it ends on men's costumes. But if you look underneath, you can see infant and toddler costumes and accessories. But it's white on pink, or white on white. And it's just completely not readable, even if you have normal vision.

So social media, hurray! Also, I get to share a picture of my dog. So this is Syrio. He's got his Santa hat on.

If you're using Twitter, you can set your settings up so it will automatically

have an alt text field for you. So you would just click that Add Description, and you would write in your alt text, and hit Apply. And you would have your alt text ready to go on Twitter.

On Facebook, it is a little bit different. For starters, Facebook will try to generate alt text for you, and it will almost always be terrible. They did get that it was a dog and it was indoors. So I mean, that's two for two, but doesn't really describe the photo very well at all.

So what you're going to do once you've uploaded your photo is you go into the Options, and you can change your alt text and type in much better alt text, and save it.

I don't know if you guys remember. It was several months ago. Facebook had some sort of bug when all the images on Facebook just didn't load. And so all we were seeing was the alt text. And people were like, what is this? Facebook is spying on us and analyzing our photos.

But for real, it was just Facebook's AI trying to guess what was in photos. And that's literally the experience that every single blind person has when they come to Facebook, is they're getting bad alt text. So if you were in that debacle when it happened on Facebook and you were frustrated by not being able to see your friends' photos, that is a really good wake-up call to remember to get your alt text in so folks can actually get to know what's in your photos.

And Instagram-- Instagram has the alt text under their Advanced Settings. You can click on Alt Text. And then you can write it and hit Done, and it will be there. So pretty easy for Instagram.

LinkedIn finally got on board. The last time we delivered this webinar, they did not have alt text, and now they do. So good for them. So once you've gotten your photo, you can click the Add Alt Text button. And you can add your alt text in there, and save it. They cap it at 120 characters, which is the average cap. So that's usually enough, especially on LinkedIn, to explain what it is you're talking about.

All right. And so I have a checklist here. So if you're doing some especially web content, you can go through and take a look at things.

So the first question is, are your informational images tagged with meaningful alt text? You check that off. Go to the next one. Are your decorative images marked as decorative? If you're in Microsoft Word, you can actually check a box that says this is decorative. And then if it's not, you have to have actual alt text in there.

Third one is, are your headings in the proper hierarchy? Are they actually in order by the level of headline and not what the font looks like?

The next one is, do the headings make sense without the rest of the text? So if you were to take it and make your content into one big outline, are your headings able to tell that story and have it make sense?

Are you using other semantic markup appropriately? So we talked about using block quote for things that aren't block quotes. It's making sure that you're using everything the way it was intended.

If you have audio or video content, does it have accurate captions? And that includes whether the captions are properly timed.

If you have links, do those linked texts make sense out of context?

Have you checked color contrast for your background and foreground? Like I said, there's a lot of free tools out there you can do that with. Sometimes it's a matter of making one thing just a tiny bit darker or a tiny bit lighter, and you'll be A-OK.

And finally, if you're using Microsoft Office and doing some kind of document there, there is an Accessibility Checker. So you can run that, and you could fix any of the errors that the Accessibility Checker found. And Microsoft is very good at telling you how to fix things once they find the errors for you.

And if you're making PDFs, finally, has it been tested by a screen reader user? A lot of times, we think we've got all of our I's dotted and our T's

crossed with the PDF, and we hand it off to someone to check it with the screen reader. And they're like, oh, hang on. This right here is all wrong. So you really want to make sure that you hand it off to someone who can check it with the screen reader and make sure that everything's reading in the correct order.

So I've got a bunch of links. And I need to add the one about the complex educational alt text. But I will get that to Elisa as soon as we're done here.

But we have a lot of cool links for color contrast. There's places where you can go and put in your URL, and you could say, show me what this looks like to a colorblind person. And it will do that for you. So it's really good to get an idea of what's working or what's not working.

There's also a really good closed caption and descriptions decision tree. 3Play has lots of great stuff on video captioning. ACS is the captioning services we use at Level Access for our webinars.

And then we have a bunch of stuff for WCAG and also stuff about document accessibility. We've definitely done lots of other webinars about document accessibility. And it is a whole different ballgame when you're talking about getting PDFs accessible. So if you're interested in that, definitely follow us at Level Access. So we'll probably be doing one in the future.

And alt text, it's kind of my baby. So there was a webinar I did last year on writing meaningful alt text that was very fun. We played a bunch of games. And I hope I get to do it again this year because it was a blast. And then there's a follow-up blog post that has some answers to more technical questions that I got answers from some of our actual technical people.

The Social Security Administration had an alt text guide that is really great. It has lots of good context. And it's got a cute guide dog. So if you want to read a nice PDF with a dog-o, you can go check that one out.

WebAIM, W3C have also great stuff about alt text, good things to have bookmarked. And then we have PDF, which is, I think, five pages. It's just

quick tips for writing alt text. So that's really handy as well.

ELISA EDELBERG:

Great. Thank you. So we're about to move into our Q&A. But I just quickly wanted to mention a free resource by 3Play Media that is coming next month. It's a online video accessibility certification course.

There's a couple things I wanted to note about this. It's really meant to help you become an expert on pretty much everything having to do with video accessibility and help you make more well-informed decisions and be an advocate at your organization. You'll have access to a lot of exclusive content that we've created just for this course. And it's also an opportunity to network and meet other accessibility enthusiasts along the way.

So we will include the link to this and the email that's going out and in the chat panel as well. But it's just 3playmedia.com/certification. And that's just to get on our list to be notified when it is live.

And with that, I want to thank everyone and open it up for questions. And we have a few that came in already. So keep them coming, and we can get started with the questions we have on deck.

So the first question that someone is asking is, what about embedded image galleries? They said, we use Flickr to embed, and those don't include alt tags. Is there a way to add some descriptive text with those?

E FOLEY:

Oh, so that's a fun one. I actually don't know what Flickr does. If it doesn't include alt tags, but you are embedding it, you can always find a way to include your description somewhere else on the site. So if you're able to do some sort of caption underneath the photo, or have some sort of little sidebar that describes the photos that are in there, that's definitely a way to do it if Flickr is not allowing you to do it within their actual program.

ELISA EDELBERG:

Great. Thank you so much. The next question is, how does 3Play's live ASR captioning work for webinar in terms of accessibility? And I'd be happy to answer that one. So our live ASR is a new service that we're offering. So it's still kind of in that early phase, and we're doing a lot of

work around it to increase and improve our accuracy.

Right now the solution uses, like I said, ASR. So we're finding that we have about 80% to 85% accuracy. But we are continuing to work on creating a more accurate solution, including adding glossaries and improving overall technology.

Some of the other recommendations that we like to make for those using it is to make sure that you're using really clear and high-quality audio; have just one single speaker, typically with scripted content. That helps because there are fewer filler words like ums, and uh. So all of those things can help bring that accuracy level up to above that 85% mark.

The next question is, what tips do you have for getting buy-in from your team to care about accessibility? I'm happy to answer that unless either of you want to jump in.

E FOLEY:

So I think the big thing is figuring out, what are the values that your team has? So there's some people who are going to buy in more when you talk about the impact on actual people. And so you talk about, here's what a blind person surfing the web actually looks like. And a lot of people have literally no idea. They've never-- it hasn't occurred to them that a blind person could use an iPad because they're like, it's a touchscreen. How the heck would that even happen?

So I think there's some folks that you can really reach with that message, to say, look, these are actual people. Here's how they access the web. But they can't access our stuff because we're not coded the way we need to be. So that definitely hits well for some people.

For other people, they need to hear the legal message. They need to hear that here's x number of people who are being sued because they have inaccessible websites. And that gets buy-in from a certain kind of C-level executive.

And also, you can talk about market reach, so saying, hey, this is the number of people, we could be reaching if we were accessible, but right

now, we're basically telling these folks that they can't buy from us because they can't actually use our website.

So definitely, you have to figure out who you're talking to and what kind of message is going to work the best with them. And we definitely have, I know, some info on that the Level Access website that you can download and use as talking points. And I'm sure the 3Play folks also have it on their end.

ELISA EDELBERG:

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you. So we have time for just a couple more questions. Someone asked-- they said, diversity and inclusivity are really important to our organization. Should we include ethnicity or disability description in alt text for images so that people with disabilities can feel included?

E FOLEY:

So that's a fun one. So there's kind of a yes and no to that question. If you asked a bunch of people with disabilities, you will get a bunch of different answers. So I think it is important to point out that there are a group of diverse people, but it's not always important to say, like, oh, there is a board room, and one of the people is in a wheelchair. That may be important; it may be not.

So I think it's one of those things where if it is on a page where you're specifically talking about diversity and inclusion, and that's why you picked that image specifically for that page, then yes, definitely make a mention of the types of people that are in the image. But it's not always something that you're going to need to have.

ELISA EDELBERG:

Great. Thank you. So we are just about at the 3 o'clock mark. So I want to thank everyone for joining us today for this webinar. And thank you to Esty and E for joining and participating in this presentation.