

JOSH MILLER: All right, thanks for joining us today. My name is Josh Miller. I'm one of the founders here at 3PlayMedia, and I've got Beth Crutchfield with me as well. She's the VP of Strategic Consulting Services at Level Access. So we're going to talk today about how to get buy-in for accessibility at your organization.

So the agenda today-- we're going to go through some research-backed reasons to invest in accessibility. We'll talk about getting organization-wide support for digital accessibility, talk about organizing for success, talk about budgeting, and then general approaches for governance.

All right, so some research-backed reasons to invest in accessibility-- it's easy to say implementing certain solutions will have additional benefits, but let's understand what we're dealing with according to real data.

First, what is accessibility? Let's start with a common definition. In order for something to be accessible, it must offer an equivalent experience to everyone, including those with a disability. This can refer to physical locations, but in the context of online accessibility, it refers to a disabled user's access to electronic information. The content and design must provide the most convenient and all-encompassing experience possible to prevent any level of exclusion.

A11y, as you see here on the screen, is another term for accessibility. It depicts that there are 11 letters between the A and the Y in accessibility, and it also kind of looks like the word ally, which can be a very powerful concept as we build experiences for everyone. We often talk about how an accessible experience allows anyone to consume information or content however they like for whatever reason, really kind of trying to broaden that concept of accessibility.

In our 2019 State of Captioning Report, we uncovered that the two top barriers to creating accessible content were cost and resource time. So how do you show the value of accessibility and convince decision makers at your organization that it's worth the investment? That's a lot of what we're going to be talking about today.

First we have to look at how many people we exclude if we don't make our content accessible. This can be a very powerful conversation. There are more than 1 billion people who have a disability around the world. Now keep in mind that disabilities can be permanent, temporary, or

situational, and in some cases, they even go unreported.

Much of the internet isn't accessible to people with disabilities, in particular people who have hearing, vision, or motor disabilities. And across the globe, there are 360 million people who are deaf or hard of hearing. This means that if you have video or audio content on your website, they aren't able to interact with it if you don't do something proactive about that.

There are 245 million people who have some kind of vision loss or disability. This is where having alt text, audio description, and screen reader accessibility is essential.

And finally, there are an estimated 190 million people who have some kind of motor disability. That is a large portion of the population that can't access websites that aren't keyboard or voice-assistant accessible.

So much of the world is moving online. That's, I don't think, any surprise. You can shop online, watch pretty much any video or show or movie online. You can find your life partner and get married online. Everything is online.

Unfortunately, much of the content is not accessible, so what ends up happening is that when someone with a disability runs into a website that's inaccessible, they leave because they can't access it. And there are a lot of stories about how real this is, where parts of the website are fine, but some of the critical transaction points such as checkout points on retail sites don't actually work properly. So that's a massive portion of the population that's left out, which can really be bad for business. In fact, there was a study done by the RoD Group that showed that \$1 trillion in annual disposable income exists from people with disabilities, and that is essentially missed out on if your site or your content is not accessible.

So let's talk a little bit about video since that's our world. If you're on the internet or if you host content on the internet, you probably are interacting with video in some degree. There's now more video uploaded to the web in one month than there was television created in three decades. That is staggering if you think about that.

So video is not going anywhere. If anything, it's getting bigger and growing really exponentially. The web environments and video in particular are being used for entertainment, for business communication, for teaching and learning. It's everywhere. So the amount of video being produced and published is astronomical, clearly, and we have to make sure that we're complying with all the laws in addition to just user usability to make sure the video is

accessible to people with disabilities like being deaf or hard of hearing or blind or low vision.

So captions in particular are really important to make your video comprehensible without sound. Facebook found that 41% of the videos posted on the platform are incomprehensible without sound or captions, which means that if someone doesn't have headphones and there are no captions, they're not watching your video.

So you may be wondering, are people watching videos with the sound off? And in a recent study by Verizon Media, they found that 50% of people agree captions are important and they usually watch videos with the sound off on mobile or desktop. So the easy example would be if you live in a city and you're commuting to work, you take the subway or a bus. If you don't have your headphones, you really do need your captions to watch whatever show you're watching. And so that's just one of many, many examples.

Facebook uncovered that 85% of Facebook videos are watched with the sound off. So they know that the vast majority of videos are watched with the sound off. And if your video relies heavily on sound, that means people are probably scrolling past them.

Video accessibility has tremendous benefits for improving SEO, the user experience, your reach, and your brand. According to this Facebook study, videos with captions have 135% greater organic search traffic. So it's very powerful.

And then another research study from the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* found that captions improved brand recall, verbal memory, and behavioral intent. So there are lots of side benefits of making your content accessible. It really is a usability and user-engagement play, much more than is just about an accommodation.

In a study we actually conducted with Oregon State University, the study was focused on why and how students use captions for learning. What the data showed here is a pretty overwhelming result that students are using captions for reasons that have nothing to do with an accommodation or the traditional definition of accessibility. 65% of students are using it for focus. 75% said that they use it as a learning aid. This is about enabling better content consumption.

USFSP-- so University of South Florida in St. Petersburg is running a study right now looking into how captions and interactive transcripts-- so the idea of a scrolling transcript-- impacts student success in the classroom. So this has nothing to do with the traditional definition of

accessibility. This is all about, can it help student outcomes?

They've uncovered already that students who used captions actually increased their test scores by 3%, and those who use the interactive transcripts were able to increase their score by 8%. This is statistically significant data. So this is proof that accessible design can act as a learning tool, not just an accommodation. We'll be publishing a full report on their findings this fall. So definitely be on the lookout for that. It's going to have some really interesting information.

So while this data is really powerful, kind of coming back to how it all started and why we're talking about it in the first place is that there are legal requirements for accessibility that many people have probably heard of to some degree, and it's worth touching on them. So in the US, there are three important laws related to accessibility. And while we won't cover it right now, a number of other countries have adopted either similar or, in some cases, even more stringent guidelines for accessibility. And we have a lot of that information on our website, which is free to consume, and I'd definitely encourage you to check it out. So that's there.

So first, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was the first major accessibility law in the US. It has two sections which impact video accessibility in particular. So Section 504 is a broad antidiscrimination law that requires equal access for individuals with disabilities, which applies to federal and federally funded programs. Section 508 requires federal Communications information technology to be made accessible. This applies to federal programs, but it's often applied to federally funded programs in general.

The Section 508 refresh references Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, specifically WCAG 2.0. So closed-captioning and audio-description requirements are written directly into Section 508 now.

The Americans with Disabilities Act was the second major accessibility law in the US, and there are two sections that impact video accessibility. Title II applies to public entities and Title III applies to places of public accommodation. There are a number of lawsuits that can be cited to both the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA. One of the highest-profile ones in the ADA was *NAD versus Netflix*. One that is still kind of ongoing with the Rehabilitation Act is the one involving Harvard and MIT.

And then the third major accessibility law in the US is the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act, which is often referred to as the CVAA. So this applies specifically to

online video that previously appeared on television. So any online video that was on television with captions, which is pretty much everything these days, must also be captioned when it goes online. And this includes video clips and trailers.

So there were a number of milestones and timelines for this law being phased in, and the vast majority of the law has actually already gone into effect. And so anything that you would expect to have had captions on television, if you're seeing it online, it almost definitely has captions at this point.

So in the last couple of years the number of web-accessibility lawsuits has increased dramatically. So from 2017 to 2018, for example, it increased by 181%, and that number has been pretty steady in that ballpark for the last couple of years. So we're seeing thousands and thousands of web-accessibility lawsuits happening or taking place. And these are across the country, across all industries, and it just shows that there is a serious importance of making content accessible. It shows how much we rely on web-related entities and web-related experiences. It's a really important thing to keep in mind.

So I mentioned a couple of these high-profile lawsuits. Let's talk a little bit about them just so we understand what they're all about. So this NAD, National Association of the Deaf versus Harvard and MIT-- basically Harvard and MIT were both sued kind of together for failing to caption a lot of video and for specifically having unintelligible captions on a lot of their online courses. And what that means is they were being hit for having auto captions, largely from YouTube. So the speech-recognition-generated captions were being cited as inadequate.

And so this was the first time accuracy has actually been part of a legal decision or any kind of legal case when it comes to video captions. And so there's some really interesting ramifications from that.

This lawsuit represents a violation of Title III of the ADA and has extended the requirements to the internet in general from the original writing of the ADA. And so while it's not a settled case yet-- it's still ongoing-- the outcome will absolutely have serious implications for higher education in general. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act was also cited as part of this, in that they were failing to provide adequate closed captions for online video.

There are a number of other schools that have also been sued or have entered into various consent decrees in regard to inaccessible video. So this is a pretty common trend. UC Berkeley, Penn State, Miami University of Ohio, they've all dealt with this in different degrees.

And then the *NAD versus Netflix* was the first web-accessibility lawsuit for video, really, that a lot of people paid attention to. So under Title III, the court ruled that Netflix is considered a place of public accommodation and therefore needed to make their content accessible. What's interesting is that Netflix has taken this very seriously and has now become really a pioneer when it comes to video accessibility and have really set a high bar for making sure that their content not only has captions, but very high-quality captions, and often has a lot more content described than you would find in other places.

All right, so I'm going to turn it over to Beth now, and she's going to talk about building organization-wide support.

BETH Great. Thanks so much, Josh. So in this section, we're really going to focus-- I'm sorry. I'm
CRUTCHFIELD: having a little user difficulties. It won't let me advance the slide past the current one.

JOSH MILLER: Oh no.

BETH Yeah. Sorry. So I'll at least start talking. Thank you.

CRUTCHFIELD:

So in this section, what we're really going to focus on is in situations where you've been asked inside your organization to spearhead or start up an accessibility program, lots of different things tend to happen. And so often you're in the situation of how do I get started? Where do I began? And some of the things that you might be dealing with if you've been asked to oversee or head up one of these programs is-- there are a few things listed here.

I think some things I'd like to highlight are with some organizations, it's really easy to get that proper executive support. Sometimes it's very easy to get folks engaged and participating in the topic. And that not only transcends just with the executives, but also with teams and stakeholders. So sometimes it's very challenging to get teams and stakeholders to participate. Sometimes they push back. They don't want to participate. There might be different interpretations on their end as to whether or not the laws apply to them. I've got some examples of that from my prior experience.

Additionally, sometimes there's confusion over what is a realistic goal for the program. What are some things that should be set as goals overall? How should you set the program up to be successful? And all of these are really important factors in getting yourself started down your

journey with respect to accessibility.

And I'll just mention momentarily, one of the biggest things that I've seen in my experience is that realistic-goal-setting piece, and we'll talk a bit about that on some later slides. But I was asked to head up a program, and I was told I had one year to fix 172 properties. Pretty unrealistic. And so that's a great example of sometimes getting the executives that are key to helping you drive things forward and getting your budget, sometimes getting them on the same page with you of what's realistic and what is industry expected is a bit of an uphill battle.

So when you're first starting out in this kind of discovery phase, if you will, there's some key questions that you want to analyze and ask yourself about your organization's current state. And this applies to any organization. This is not specific to one or the other.

So making sure you're sufficiently educated on the topic of accessibility-- so in my example, I knew nothing about accessibility other than what accessibility actually does for persons with disabilities. I didn't actually understand any of the technical requirements. I did not have a background in development. And so for me personally, I was definitely very uneducated on the topic of how would we go about fixing this from a dev perspective and really even understanding how it impacted everybody in the software-development lifecycle.

You also want to be thinking about what tools your organization might need. So this isn't just tools such as AMP, which is one of our tools at Level Access. It's also tools that help people do use-case testing-- so screen readers and things of that nature.

Also, I'm a big advocate for agile. So what kinds of agile framework do you have? Do you have Jira? What kinds of things do you have to help with defect tracking and bug tracking?

If you're asked that first question about are you sufficiently educated and you realize you might not be, should you be thinking about engaging the services of a third party? And in many cases, that's definitely a point of contention inside some companies. There are a lot of companies and organizations that feel that they want to tackle this on their own, and I think my personal experience is-- I previously worked and I was a client of Level Access, and it was my experience that hiring Level Access did us a tremendous service in the sense of being able to understand things that we might not have had exposure to because we were not experts at the time when we started our journey.

Also, thinking about things like do you have budget, do you have resources, and has anybody

in your company been exposed to or are they at all familiar with accessibility? Have you done any initiatives in the past?

So after you kind of do some of that discovery, I think the most important thing, as I always call it with my clients, is charting your course, which is, really, you've done some groundwork discovery about your organization, yourself, your team, resources, and budget. There's some other key things that often get overlooked by clients and by folks just starting out in this space. So really understanding the legal and risk landscape.

So you heard a lot from Josh about all the different things we see in the video space and all the different very powerful lawsuits and decisions that have been made that are in support of accessibility. So really educating yourself on what sector do you fall into? So if you're an educational institution, you want to go look at educational decisions and judgments and things like that.

Make sure that you're thinking about those, but then also look at that broader landscape because all of it really-- we just saw a landmark decision communicated out recently this week. Those types of things, you want to stay at the cusp of those to understand how that impacts your risk as an organization.

Figuring out people and resources internally as well as potentially externally that you might need. So in my case, we had to hire a pretty large swath of contractors because internally my organization didn't have enough experts. We had no experts. We were self-taught. So that's another key step.

Figuring out if there's any money, which is always a big painful powerful question and challenge that organizations struggle with, which is understanding do we have to go get money-- like there's no money for this-- or are there things that you could do internally to kind of move money around? So if a redesign is underway, could you maybe tack on that and address accessibility that way? And I'm a big proponent of that approach. And then also figuring out what tools and training and consulting services exist that will support the needs and the gaps that you've identified in that discovery phase.

So once you've done those things, it's really important to have a next step. So always be armed when you go talk to executives and when you try to secure internal buy-in and support. So that's kind of what that discovery phase is that I just talked through. So make sure you've got your data and you've kind of got your ducks in a row as you go out and seek that internal

buy-in and support.

One of the most important things when you're going out to seek that support is getting folks to understand, especially at a senior-leadership level. So the example I gave earlier about the one year, fix all these properties was someone extremely high in a very large organization that didn't really actually understand, and I wouldn't expect them to, the nuts and bolts of what it was going to take to move the needle forward for us as an organization. So really getting them to understand that it's a journey.

And so you'll hear me use the term program, and when I use the word program, I'm meaning your digital-accessibility initiative, effort, program, kind of all synonymous. Program not the sense of we stand up a project or a series of projects that are all interrelated and then it's got a finite start and end date. This really is a journey.

Your short-term goal should be starting with awareness-- and that's that whole discovery piece that we spoke about-- and then understanding the different steps along the way. So driving for a resolution and remediation, driving for maintenance, and making internal changes, and effecting a change inside your software-development lifecycle and making sure folks are educated and aware and passionate and committed.

And then it goes to the longer-term plan, which is overall prevention, and you've got everyone in your organization on board. Everyone's an accessibility champion, and everyone is kind of marching to that same beat.

So that's an important message to communicate when you're going out seeking support, is making sure they understand that it's not a once and done. It's not a once we fix it, it's fixed forever. This stuff changes constantly. We're always updating our web content, our video content. So it's a continuous journey.

So just to share with you some important statistics-- so from a customer-experience perspective, I think a lot of people don't actually understand the direct impact to people using the internet or looking at video content, things of that nature. So I think a lot of people don't actually understand the term disability, and I think what I want to try to share here is a different perspective, which is accessible websites, they do help make for more search-friendly sites. But additionally, having a site that's accessible, it can help to serve a population that is often underserved, and these could be folks that are either subliterate, English-language learners or English as a second language, or those folks that might have ADHD and that struggle with

content. So having things written in a very clear, concise manner will really help support that population.

And just important to keep in mind that the baby-boomer population is currently between the ages of 52 and 70, and we're seeing that population, as they age, starting to have vision, hearing, and mobility disabilities come about. And so having accessible technology for them is becoming more and more important. I think my mom is probably the only adult human-- she's slightly outside the baby-boomer age there. She's the only adult human I know that does not actually have a smartphone. So just for context there, everybody's using them. It's the way to communicate these days.

So some other statistics to share with you guys-- these were kind of profound. So the number of people worldwide aged 80 and over will quadruple to 400 million, and for the first time in history there will be more people over the age of 65 than under the age of 14. So those are really powerful statistics to show the population is aging and graying, and we really need to be thinking about serving that population and the different things that they're going to need from a technology perspective.

So some additional data here for you guys-- so 42% of adults ages 65 and older are owning smartphones, and that's up from a statistic of 18% in 2013. And 67% of seniors are using the internet, which is a 55% increase in just under two decades.

And then the last data point is, I think, pretty staggering, especially when I look at my family and who I see on the internet and who I see on social media. 45% of seniors under the age of 75 are using social-networking sites, compared with just 20% of those that are aged 75 and older. So they represent a really large population of folks that are out there actively using technology.

So as we start thinking forward into our journey about securing that executive support and buy-in, a couple of things I like to always share with folks, especially my clients-- I think it's really important that people understand that you can't do this alone. You are going to have to get support inside your company. And sometimes that support could be just a few small people and start out as a grassroots effort and lead to a massive program, and that's kind of the case in my prior employment. We had a few passionate people, myself included, that kind of drove a big change for the organization as a whole.

Making sure that you get that support at the highest level, though, is so important because if you don't have the most senior folks bought in and participating in, it is going to be a constant struggle to get things prioritized, to get bugs prioritized and fixed, and also to continue to get resources assigned, to get funds allocated should you need funding for things.

And I guess my personal experience is that legal actions often drive awareness but in the wrong way, absolutely the wrong way. What you want to be doing and thinking about is always being proactive. You don't want to be like some of those entities that you saw on the slides that Josh showed earlier thinking about the impact to your brand. Netflix has really been through the wringer. They've come out on the high side of that given everything they went through, but there are so many organizations that have been sued, have lost a ton of money, have taken a huge hit to their brand.

So those are all things, and I think that the big takeaway I want you to carry away from this particular slide is it's been my experience that if you help the senior stakeholders by doing empathy exercises and getting them to understand and connect with the end user that we're trying to serve when we think about digital accessibility, that really is a key first step just to be able to get them to understand. Don't come at it from the "we've got this law" kind of perspective.

I've worked with thousands of organizations, and then I ran my own program at my prior employer. It's been my experience that in every case if you help them to connect the content, you help them to understand what that experience could be like for someone on the other side, it really is a very powerful tool.

There are a few ways that you can go about getting that. And so some of the things that I do with our clients are getting folks to do some observation of user testing with assistive technology. I prefer for this to be done in person. It does not always work that way.

But in my prior example of my prior employment, this was a place where we really struggled. And we did this big summit, and we brought a bunch of senior leaders in. A lot of them were saying no. And while I had really senior support in my organization and we were going to kind of drive the charge, I needed these people to participate, and I needed their teams. I needed them to provide resources to us. I needed them to be at the table to help us make those remediation efforts. So we did an observation exercise, and it was extremely powerful in getting some of the most stubborn naysayer folks onto our side.

Additionally, if you can't do the actual experience in person, there are videos out there, tons of them of AT users navigating different experiences. Have folks do some hands-on practical exercises, and there are a lot of different ways you can do that. I like to have people try different things like turning off colors, disabling images, things like that, lots of things that you can have folks do to get that practical experience to understand what it would be like.

And then if you've got a data-driven executive, which that's probably 90% of the executives that I deal with with my clients, sharing statistics and data on things like the population impacted, the litigation risk-- so gather that data about the lawsuits and how much money has been expended and things like that. Also thinking about settlements that are out there, and then also doing brand-impact studies can also help you with gaining that support.

So a couple of things to keep in mind. Getting the support's not going to be easy, so setting realistic goals upfront is really important. And especially when engaging with senior leaders, they're not all going to be supportive, they're not all going to want to participate, and you are going to get pushback. I know of no one that-- and if anybody has ever had the experience where they got no pushback, please let me know because I'd love to tell that story. But patience and persistence really are key in this space of trying to get support.

I do find that the stick versus hammer is always preferred. And if you go down this path and you find that you're stuck, I always say when all else fails, call legal compliance or your risk partners to help you. And obviously you'd have to start over and educate them on this topic many times. Especially, in my experience, large companies, the compliance officers are not educated and aware of this topic. Legal might know a little bit about it. They're really looking to the IT teams and the digital teams to educate them back on what is required.

So I believe now I'm going to kind of focus in on organizing for success and some of the key activities that you want to be thinking about. So you've done all the education. You've got yourself educated on tools and vendors and what your organization looks like. Figure out if there's a third-party vendor out there that will offer a suite of tools and services that will meet your organization's needs.

And I'm not here to sell you anything. I'm just here to say my own personal experiences. We thought we had things under control, but once we really kind of dug in and really got a sense for things, I've found, in my experience, that going out and seeking some support in these spaces-- so somebody that's got industry expertise.

So you might only need to be thinking about WCAG or the ADA Title III, but having somebody that knows all the things in the industry can make the difference of saying to you-- so for me and my example, we only were focused on WCAG. And then all of a sudden we find out through our partnership with Level Access that there were these other laws that we needed to be thinking about, CVAA being one of them. So they can provide invaluable support. Also help you with lawsuit management, litigation, any risk-avoidant strategies, training and education, but then also that expert-level auditing, testing, and remediation, guidance, and support.

So from a goal-setting perspective, one of the things to keep in mind-- and we've talked about it consistently throughout-- is keeping in mind it's a journey and to setting goals that are realistic. 170-some properties in one year is not realistic. So I encourage folks to think about building a strategic roadmap and timeline that kind of gives reasonable time frames for activities to occur.

In my examples, we were told 170-some properties-- 172, 175-- in a year. I had already kind of mapped out what I thought was realistic based on the internal support I had, and so I presented that back. And yes, it was initially met with resistance. I worked for a very risk-avoidant company, which is a great thing. But at the same time, you have to be very realistic in your expectations. So one of those roadmaps is key, especially with some timelines.

So as you're thinking about putting together a program-- again, keep in mind program means your effort and your initiative-- you want to, as you're going out and getting that buy-in and support, see if you can find a senior stakeholder that would serve as your digital-accessibility champion, somebody that will help you be the voice of accessibility at the highest levels in the company.

Establish goals that make sense for your initiative and for your organization. Figure out with those senior stakeholders some type of desired organizational governance model. I think in the best cases that I've seen in my work here with Level Access and all our many clients, I think when you have an ideal governance model in place-- and we'll talk a little bit about some options towards the end of the presentation-- but having that in mind, even if it's a proposal, can really go a long way.

Showing that you've thought about it and you've done your research is going to be key here, and what you want to do is go look at what other clients and other organizations have done, and you can get tons of information. You don't have to come through a third party to get that.

Map out your organization and try to figure out if you've identified all the core stakeholder groups that are impacted and you've got their buy-in and their support. If not, make sure that your senior stakeholder is working to get that buy-in and support.

And then lastly, organize a kickoff meeting and try to get everyone aligned around a common set of goals and understanding and things of that nature. Some additional things as you're thinking about that kickoff meeting, probably good once you do that initial kickoff to start talking about building that strategy and roadmap, and build that in conjunction with all of your stakeholders and your senior executives.

Also, partner with them from a budget and staffing perspective to understand what budget and staffing needs there might be and what the overall big picture might look like as an organization, whether you're going to tackle it organization-wide or whether you're going to have each business area or each college or university handle it themselves.

And then definitely don't forget the most important thing, sharing out some type of organization-wide communication about the company, the organization's commitment to accessibility [INAUDIBLE] and what governance model are in place are really, really important. A lot of people work in this state of not telling and not sharing out. And the best way to kind of, in effect, to change what you're really looking for overall to effect a change across your organization is making sure everybody's educated and knowledgeable about accessibility.

And then lastly, time to get to work.

JOSH MILLER: All right, that's great. So we're going to talk a little bit about how to incorporate accessibility into the budget because. That often is a big roadblock. And what you'll find is that what we're talking about in budgeting is very consistent with what Beth was just talking about just in terms of building organizational success.

So this issue of raising funds is very real. While some places are able to budget adequately for, say, captioning or audio description or even just accessible design, it's not the case for everyone certainly, and a lot of organizations are still starting from early stages. So there are cases where you might need to look for outside sources beyond your department or your group to help finance the accessibility efforts.

So some thoughts on how to do that. First, you can apply for grants. So the US Department of Education provides several federally funded grants for schools. You can check the Federal

Register for more information on that.

You can sometimes get creative and find funds from other budgets. So maybe there is something left over in an HR budget or an IT budget that is analogous or related to some of the work you're doing, and you can create a budget for, say, captioning a few videos, or for designing a new web page in a different way. So depending on how your organization budgets, this might be a very quick way to say, hey, I've used my budget, but maybe there's some other people who might be willing to support me in this effort.

You could actually create an accessibility grant or an accessibility fund at your school, for example. So the idea here is that some schools have included a small fee in student tuition or an activity fee to help create a budget for accessible design. So we've seen some schools like North Carolina State add just a few dollars per student each semester, and that helps create a budget for captioning and other accessible course-related materials.

And then finally one of the things you can do that basically results in less cash being required is thinking about prioritizing your projects. We think about this a lot with some of our customers when it comes to captioning videos is what are the most important videos? What are some of the most important projects? Start with those. Start smaller and don't feel like you have to solve everything at once. And so identify some of those high-priority projects and start there.

So some things to think about here as you build out your budget-- first, quality. Quality matters. So you don't want to cut corners just to get it done. You really want to think long term here.

So low-cost solutions can sound appealing because you'll be able to get it done faster, but you actually may end up spending more time and effort fixing issues down the road if it's a solution that isn't as reliable. So you really want to find a solution that really addresses quality, it addresses scale. And certainly cost is important, but you really want to think about what will this look like if I do get the support I'm looking for? Will this work for us?

You want to plan ahead. So as the effort grows, complexity will grow, and the amount of content you need to address will grow, and so think about that. So some vendors might offer bulk discounts based on how many videos are being processed or how many pages are being audited, things like that. It's just something to keep in mind from the beginning.

The other thing you could consider when it comes to planning ahead is what is your actual

timeline? Can you get a better deal by stretching things out? So if it's not as urgent, then maybe you can do more with the dollars you have. And so, again, urgency often comes when there's less planning involved.

Other things to just think about-- hybrid approaches to your projects. What do you need external resources for, and what can you do internally with the resources you have? So in the video world, maybe you can caption some of your shorter videos yourself or with the group you have and then outsource to a more professional vendor for some of the longer-form content that would just take too long to do yourself.

So think about what could you do internally? Maybe there are certain types of pages that you feel comfortable designing yourself, but when it comes to more complex course design, you need some help to do that. And, in some cases, there are tools that work really well for standing up websites. The key there is do you understand the key aspects of creating an accessible web page.

So Beth talked about this a little bit as well. Show success. It makes a huge difference. So start with a pilot project. Show that it works, and that can help build up support and get buy-in for larger budgets because sometimes it's just really hard for people who don't understand it to want to put dollars or time behind it until they see it working. Especially when it comes to building awareness, until people see it, it's just not the same.

And so we see this all the time as well. Once you start doing things a certain way and it's good, it's really hard to go back. And so we definitely would encourage finding a way to show some successes quickly.

So sometimes you can think of it as a trial. You can think of it as a pilot, and the same goes for even using other services. Can you get a deal for a pilot? Can you get a deal for a trial? That often works really well.

So part of designing a pilot for this means make sure it's well defined. Make sure that you have a clear goal of what you are going to achieve with that pilot so that you can show it as something really tangible. And that way you can also start to measure the impact of having, say, videos that are captioned or videos that are described compared to others.

You want to make sure how people respond to having an accessible experience. Get feedback. Measure the effect. If you're captioning videos and these are public videos, do you

see a difference in the traffic? Do you see a difference in how long people are staying on those videos? So think about what are the different metrics that you can show that actually can be tied back to this project that you've put in play.

Once the pilot period is over, you'll really have a much stronger case to get buy-in. That's what's really exciting about this is that you'll have something to show when you start to ask for real dollars and maybe even headcount to do this at a larger scale. To the point that Beth made about these grassroots efforts-- I mean, we see it all the time, and we see it when it comes to video. We see it when it comes to software development. There are a lot of different ways that this can grow, and sometimes it just needs one or two passionate people to start helping spread the word, show a few successes, and then it becomes a much larger initiative.

But I would say don't be discouraged by getting that pushback that Beth mentioned. It's very likely going to happen, and it's going to take some time, which is why being realistic is a very real thing.

BETH CRUTCHFIELD: Right. Yeah, so I completely agree with everything Josh said. And honestly, one of the things that I mentioned earlier-- as we pivot and go in to talk about these slides related to general approaches for governance, I want to share a couple of different models and talk briefly about them. But one of the things I think that's really important to highlight is when I talked about setting realistic goals and that crazy goal that was kind of assigned to me, we went back and did exactly what Josh just mentioned, which was we built a pilot program.

We came back and said, this looks much more sizable for us to manage in a one-year period. This is what we would like to do. We would like to target this one business area. And actually, that approach ended up going very well.

But as we move into these slides and think about governance, I kind of want to highlight for you a couple of different-- there's two different models that I'll show you. This does not mean these are the only two models. This means that these are the two more common ones that we see.

So one is a centralized APO or Accessibility Program Office. And this is typical. You'll see this in really large organizations. I don't see it a whole lot in the EDU space just simply because the way most EDUs are organized, this model doesn't really work. But centralized resources-- this is a support team of people that are experts, technical staff that can do [INAUDIBLE], make assessments, do interpretations, kind of understand the lay of the land as well as some central

resource that can help with the governance and oversight, somebody a little bit more strategic in mind.

That can really help rally around putting together a centralized kind of-- I call it the "teach them to fish" concept. So putting together some central tools and training, making sure your customer-service folks or people that deal with the public are educated and aware. This group would also be responsible for monitoring schedules, making sure that if properties fall way out of the organization's kind of desired threshold that those kind of get addressed and identified. As they bring properties-- LOB stands for Line of Business. Sorry. I probably should have mentioned that a moment ago. But basically it's really one person, one team as a hub trying to effect a change across all of those different lines of business and organization.

The next model is more of a decentralized model. If we want to move forward to the next slide. This is more around a smaller accessibility program office. So it might be one or two people charged with-- I see this a lot in the EDU space, one or two people charged with being kind of the central person or the kind of person that has to answer the questions, the tough questions about accessibility. And then the LOB-- again, in an EDU, it's not going to be an LOB, but the point being you'll see those peripheral groups, and each of those-- so a lot of times in the EDU space I think you see these being the colleges, the various different colleges. So there might be one central ITI person, and then there might be a bunch of subgroups that work in partnership with that.

These typical models, it's a committee made up of accessibility leads from each of those LOBs or business units. Much more autonomy in these models. We do see oftentimes different approaches, and we can talk about that in a moment about the advantages and disadvantages. But each of those business units or colleges or LOBs would be managing their own external relations, be managing their own complaints that might come in, keeping their own records, and there's really a lot less centralized training. There's some guidance and documentation and things of that nature, but it's not as formalized as in the prior model on the prior slide.

So some pros and cons of these models. Obviously, with a centralized APO you get centralized governance and control, which means consistent application of standards. And typically you will see-- and I say typically because it doesn't always happen-- central budgeting, and you will definitely usually see formalized centralized reporting there. I should have edited that slide, so my apologies.

Some of the cons that we see in this model though are capacity is really hard to forecast, so it's hard to know how many people you need and how much effort things are going to take. Siloed knowledge may exist in pockets across the organization.

On the decentralized model, the pro there is you've got tons of experts and champions across the entire organization. But a con that we often see there is an inconsistent application of standards. So one business area might interpret one of the WCAG requirements for a video requirement one way, and another business unit might interpret it a different way.

So in those two models that I showed, the first model, the centralized, it's a sample organization, roughly 50,000 people, roughly 10 people on that centralized APO team, and there is a large swath of lines of businesses, so greater than five. Whereas in the second model, the hybrid-- I've seen this in organizations. This is why we wanted to share this data point that's 200,000 or greater employees. We have seen in that model there are some global standards that exist. And the overall accessibility vision is driven by executives in that model mostly.

So how do you ensure long-term success? So one of the key things we've talked about throughout is build a wide array of accessibility champions that are knowledgeable and passionate about accessibility. These can be both formal and informal relationships. Ensure that you have that executive support and buy-in for key people. Especially as people move in and out of organizations, having those champions is super important.

And then make sure you ensure a training plan is built both for new hires as well as having some refresher training in place. This is probably one of the things-- in addition to communications, this is the second-most-missed thing inside organizations. A lot of organizations do spot training like we're going to train these people. They don't do refreshers. They don't track it. It should be tracked like any other compliance law or reg. So when you take your annual privacy training, you should be taking some annual accessibility training as well.

And I believe the next slide is some resources that we have. There's a variety of different resources here. I believe most of these are from the Level Access website. So a number of those are very valuable, and then there's some industry-specific resources available to you on the right.

That concludes my portion of the webinar, so thank you guys for your time today. I very much appreciate it.

JOSH MILLER: We've got a few minutes for some questions, so we'll try to get through as many as we can. Beth, a couple of these are right up your alley. So let's start with one that's give a good example or an example of good empathy exercises.

BETH CRUTCHFIELD: Yeah, so the biggest one that I found is we've done the actual-- I called it end-user immersion when we did it, and it was basically bringing those senior stakeholders in and having them see AT users navigate experiences. So you tend not to want to use your own, what's in your backyard. So we tend to recommend you go to different sites. I'm not going to name any, but go to different sites and ask them to do different experiences like purchase an item and put it in the cart and do the checkout process, and let the AT user do that experience.

But then also one of the things-- and this is a sensitive one. You have to figure out organizationally-- should go and talk to HR if they're supportive. We had an opt-in process in my prior organization, and we had folks wear eye masks kind of like the sleeping masks, and we asked them to navigate different experiences and do different activities relying on JAWS or NVDA. And so having them experience what an assistive-technology user hears and what an inaccessible experience feels like and how frustrating it is I think is probably some of the most powerful that I've personally seen.

JOSH MILLER: Great. Another one that I think, Beth, you're well suited to answer-- can you give an example of a good strategic roadmap?

BETH CRUTCHFIELD: Sure. So I'll do my best here in two minutes. In my example that I talked about, go fix 170-some properties in one year, the road map basically was a bunch of properties listed out and a one-year timeline. What I found to be very, very beneficial was to take a subset of that and identify a pilot group and focus our roadmap on a pilot first. So however many properties or assets or videos or PDFs or whatever you're dealing with, put that into a pilot. Map that out. Talk about timelines, and balance that with resources and things of that nature. Vet it with that business group that you might be working with.

So have kind of a pilot, but then also have multiple phases for your roadmap. So after you get your pilot done, you should have a retrospective, and you should figure out what lessons learned you have from the pilot. What went well? What opportunities do you see? And then iterate into your next wave.

And then across that whole continuum there should be line items for things like training, for tool evaluations. There's always new tools coming out. You always want to be looking at what's the best out there to serve your organization. And then also below that should be a line item related to governance. So that should kind of extend throughout the whole roadmap, if you will, making sure you're thinking about how to govern inside your organization with proper policies and having statements and making sure customer-service agents are trained or people that interact with the public.

Hopefully that helps. I want to be cognizant of time. I can certainly [INAUDIBLE].

JOSH MILLER: We'll go one more question, and then I think we're going to have to call it. So this one I think is a really interesting one. It has to do with development and responsibility. So the question is do you think it's the developers' responsibility to learn how to use accessible technology and test for it, or should we be employing external resources, really, people who use screen readers full time and so on? I think this is a really interesting one because it hits on the reality of awareness and education in the development world in how little accessibility is taught when it comes to engineering classes and such.

So one thing I'll say-- and then, Beth, it would be great to get your input. There are organizations that are trying to help teach better awareness and appreciation of accessible development in classes. One of the organizations is called Teach Access, and there are representatives from some of the largest tech companies in the US-- Facebook; what's now Verizon, was Yahoo; Google. And there are a whole bunch of people involved in trying to push this effort forward because it's very real.

And we at 3Play have taken an initiative to make accessibility part of the development process, but it takes time, and there's a lot of education involved. So Beth, definitely curious on your view on this.

BETH CRUTCHFIELD: That's a great question. So I would say my view is it's both. So my experience is I was all legal background, compliance, program management, had no technical depth. I've taught myself everything I know. I remediated hundreds and hundreds of pages at my prior employer. That's not the role I play today at Level Access, but I think educating yourself and teaching yourself as much as you can on, especially if you're a developer, how to use the tool, I think, is the first step.

But what I will say is there is nothing like the experience of someone that is a super user that has used assistive technology devices their entire lives, and they don't know the hacks that we that have the benefit of our sight do know. So there are certain things you might think you're not cheating when you're using JAWS, but you are cheating.

So I always encourage a view of both. I'm a big advocate for always getting real AT users doing the testing. But it is good if your developers are knowledgeable about how to use-- and there's so many courses out there. You can get certified in using JAWS, lots of different things out there.

So I think it's a two-pronged approach. I think it's educate yourself as well as rely on the resources of others.

JOSH MILLER: Awesome. Thank you everyone for joining--