Lauren Appelbaum: Good afternoon everyone, and welcome to today's webinar. Thank you for joining us as we begin RespectAbility’s seventh installment of our eight-part webinar series “Including People with Disabilities in Philanthropy and Nonprofits.” I'm Lauren Appelbaum and I'm the Vice President of Communications here - and today we're going to kick off this webinar, “Premium Skills Workshop in Social Media Accessibility.” I imagine many of you joined us on Tuesday for when we went on an overview of website and social media accessibility and this today is going to be a deep-dive into the real how to's and going to some of the technical issues of how you can ensure that your social media is accessible. Before we begin, RespectAbility would like to thank all 18 of our equity and access series partners from foundations to nonprofits. We thank all of our partners for their help in promoting this series. We have about 500 registered people for today's webinar and we're thankful for each and every one of you as well. We know that organizations are at their best when they welcome, respect, and include people of all backgrounds. This includes people with disabilities. So, on the screen right now are images of several individuals with disabilities: there are photos of folks like Stephen Hawking, Whoopi Goldberg, Richard Branson, and Steve Jobs. I want to highlight one that is newer to the list is Greta Thunberg who was recently named TIME's Person of the Year. She is the youngest person to have ever received this title and oftentimes people don't really understand, like, who are people with disabilities so we like to share this. 61 million people in the United States have a disability. They want to work, succeed, and reach their full potential just like anyone else. This is a lovely image of Tatiana one of our speakers and where on it it says that one in four adults have a disability and this is especially important as people with disabilities age that they have proper supports and services in place to live and thrive. Disabilities can be temporary or permanent, visible or nonvisible, acquired at birth or acquired later in life; and it's important to note that any person can join the disability community at any time. So I'll now introduce the two fabulous speakers that we have joining us today. Today's speakers are Eric Ascher and Tatiana Lee. Eric is our Communications Associate here at RespectAbility. He is responsible for supporting me in developing and implementing advocacy efforts and communications of various types. He manages RespectsAbility’s social media channels, website, and emails; organizes and develops webinars - such as these today; and supervisors our Communications Fellows. He initially joined RespectAbility as a Communications Fellow in Spring 2018. He was drawn to RespectAbility he told me because being on the autism spectrum himself, he knows that people with disabilities are capable of doing great work - just like anyone else. Tatiana Lee is our Hollywood inclusionist. She also was a Communications Fellow - she served in our Fellowship Program in Spring 2019 - to gain better knowledge and skills to be a more effective advocate in Hollywood for disability inclusion. Now she helps represent RespectAbility in Hollywood. Like RespectAbility, she has dedicated her life to fighting for inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of mass media. She has learned to harness the power of social media to speak boldly about accessibility and inclusion in mass media. She became the voice behind "Accessible Hollywood" where she highlighted her journey as an actress, model, and lifestyle influencer born with spina bifida. We invite you to submit questions at any time for our speakers by typing them into the Q&A box. We will answer them later on in this webinar. If we do not get to your question during the webinar don't worry - we will follow up with you via email. For now, I would like to turn it over to Eric and Tatiana. Take it away.

Eric Ascher: Well thank you very much, Lauren, and thank you Tatiana for joining me on this as well.

Tatiana Lee: and thank you so much -

Eric Ascher: I’ve been running tech support for all these webinars so it's great to actually speak on one of them. So I'm very excited to kick this off. So Tatiana I'm gonna let you take the first couple slides.

Tatiana Lee: Okay so open-caption is best for social media and 41% of videos are incomprehensible without sound or caption and 80% of people who consume captions actually aren't deaf or hard-of-hearing and so - if you think about most people, they watch videos on their phone, and they may watch it while the sound is turned off, so having caption is very very vital not only to people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing but to everyone. So just - in a nutshell - it's beneficial to everyone. And 85% of Facebook videos is watched without sound as well, so basically this is the same thing across the board: YouTube, Facebook - most people watch without sound, and so having captions added to your videos makes for great impact because we can read what is being said in the video. So it's very important that it helps support so much - and you're more likely to have people watch your videos and just some stats. Snapchat, which has 10 billion videos a day and 82% of users watch video content on Twitter.

Eric Ascher: So, basically we're gonna go through two basic forms of accessibility on social media and then we'll take your questions for anything else you might have. So the first thing is alt-text and the second thing is captions on videos, and these are important for many reasons but, basically we talked about some of the why in the last two slides, but now I'm gonna show you the how. First, Instagram. Instagram was not available on- with all the features online, so what I did is I recorded a screen capture on my iPad and you can watch how - the process of making Instagram posts accessible. I'm gonna push play.

Tatiana Lee: And most social media programs have a -

Eric Ascher: Pick an image, you can go in - any of these you want, we're uploading an image. Click “next,” and then you can write a caption that doesn't have to have anything to do with what's the image is actually about describing it for people who can't see it but then you go to “Advanced Settings” right here on your screen and there, you'll find a setting for “Write Alt-Text.” And it says alt-text is automatically created but it's useless - we'll get to that later. “A sunset with a lot of orange and purple coloring in the sky.” That's what I wrote to describe this image. Done, back, share, and you're done.

Tatiana Lee: And you want to try to - you want to try to keep them an image description simple and to the point - not something that's super fluff but just straight to the point and what it is, and usually when you go to most programs, they will have an accessibility section, so if you can never find what you need to click on, always look for accessibility.

Eric Ascher: Ok. So I'm going to now do a live-demo.

Tatiana Lee: So just some other things while Eric is finding that - some other things to think about when you are doing image description: like I said, don't add a lot of fluff and keep it straight and simple, and to the point and then, Eric is about to show you a demonstration on Twitter and - so go ahead Eric.

Eric Ascher: Okay. So here's our Twitter account - you can see - so I'm gonna go to more because- one of the things about Twitter that's a little bit interesting is that, before you can actually write an image description, you have to turn it on in “Settings.” So if you're looking for a way to help out in the disability community, one thing you can do that I recommend is write to Twitter support about why you have to turn on this setting in preferences, because as you’re gonna see it adds very minimal effort - so make sure this box that says “Compose Image Description” is checked blue - and now we're gonna do a tweet real time. So I'm actually going to Tweet something which is, [typing noise] “Are you watching our Premium Skills Workshop on Social Media Accessibility? If you are, you know exactly how we made this post accessible.“ And now I'm gonna add an image which I have downloaded right here

Tatiana Lee: and while you're at it, make sure you're following us on Twitter, @Respect\_Ability

Eric Ascher: And you'll see this post in real time! And then I'm gonna add - click this button right here, below the image, it will say “Add Description,” and it says describe the image for the visually impaired. So I'll type in, “Webinar Premium Skills Workshop in Social Media Accessibility,”

Tatiana Lee: You can mention that that's gonna be the text - and another thing to think about is, you don't have to put “image of,” it will already detect that it is an image so you don't have to put “image of." So just like Eric is saying, it's a headshot of Eric, Tatiana, and Lauren, and then he's saying the text, this is what it says - you can mention that it's text, and then that's it so you keep it super simple, straight to the point, and just best to help the person understand what is going on in the image.

Eric Ascher: One thing I'll add to that is that, the only reason I'm writing “headshots of” in this one is because there are three different images - it's a collage image, that's why I had to put “image of” or “headshots of” otherwise I've just written, if it's just one person in the image it‘d just say, ”Eric Ascher.“ So, “done” and we're gonna Tweet this.

Tatiana Lee: And like I said, make sure you're following us so you can check this out: @Respect\_Ability. Make sure you're following us. And now I'm going to go to a Facebook demo. And so now I'm gonna do a post on Facebook, so this is the Facebook publishing tool section - and you can see we have lots of posts scheduled for coming up - if you’re sneaky you can see what we have coming up for rest of the week on social media. So-

Tatiana Lee: Make sure you like us so that you can check out all of those posts too.

Eric Ascher: Yep, all right, and I'm gonna do the same type of post. [Typing noise]

Tatiana Lee: See how on Facebook you don't have to click anything but then on Twitter, you have to click and do this...

Eric Ascher: Facebook has their own weird quirks. So, I'm gonna save it. The thing about it is, you have two options for adding alt text on an image on Facebook: you can either share it and then immediately add the alt text after, or you can save it as a draft and then add the alt-text before you post it. It's up to you how you want to do it but, what we're gonna do is I'm gonna save the draft to do it so everyone can see at the exact same time. Save the draft, turn on the schedule - and Facebook does not want to cooperate with me today. So let's just click share now...

Tatiana Lee: Things that happen when you work in real time.

Eric Ascher: “Object object.” What? Okay. Did it go? Yes it did. So –yay- and now what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna click on this image, “options,“ “change alt text” right here under options. And so here's why - this is the same type of thing that Instagram would do - it will automatically generate alt text, but as you can see the alt-text it generated - wouldn't really help anyone understand what the image is about. It says “three people, people smiling, text.” I would say that's better than nothing but not by much, so we're gonna override this generated alt text right here by clicking on this button, and we're going to type in the same thing we typed in on Twitter. [Typing noise]

Tatiana Lee: And again, you don't have to put “image of.” The only reason he's mentioning that one part is because there's three different photos so if it was one photo you would - say, you know, if it was a photo of a group of friends you can say, it's is a photo of a group of friends and if it tags people it will give you the option to say it's Tatiana, Eric and Lauren, or something like that. You can override it and choose to say something else. Another thing to think about -- I didn't know if you were going to cover this Eric, but when you are sharing a website link, you have to put the alt-text image of in the post because it won't do image description of a website link.

Eric Ascher: Yes, I was going to say, if you're sharing an article on Facebook or Twitter, what it will do is it will often times populate an image from that article as a featured image to go with the post, but unfortunately Facebook and Twitter do not let you edit the alt-text of the featured image. So, what we do in that case is we do what we would write and then we do "image description:" whatever we would have written for the alt-text so that people can understand what's happening in that image. So now moving on to captioning and so part of this video - this is actually our webinar from Tuesday that I'm going to put captions on right now – or at least start the process of. So, there are two different things you can do. There are multiple ways to add captions to videos on YouTube and YouTube is the easiest way to do it as far as I've found. First of all, sometimes you might not have to do very much at all because YouTube is going to automatically generate captions for you if your video has high enough audio quality. They're not perfect as you'll see when we go in. Or, if it your video is low audio quality or you have a transcript that was professionally done for you, like we did, you can upload the transcript and YouTube will automatically try to set timings for the captions. So, it will basically take all the text and try to assign the text to when things are said, so the captions will flow normally. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to go into the automatic ones, because -- Sorry, a bit of a demo fail -- the transcript one did not work. So here's YouTube's captions editor and you'll see that you can download the SRT file from here which will be important later. But for now, I'm going to go in and edit these because they're not perfect. As you can see YouTube's caption editor has some nifty features to it. It'll pause the video while you're typing automatically if you want it to, so you're typing it from scratch it'll be easier to enter captions manually. But you can see that YouTube gets a lot of general things right, but it doesn't know brand names, so it doesn't know that RespectAbility has a capital R and a capital A, and it doesn't know punctuation. So I would like to add a period here and capitalize the "we" and it will sometimes get words wrong but basically you go in, you make these tweaks and once you've made all the tweaks, which I'm not going to make you watch…

Tatiana Lee: Overall it does a pretty good job, though.

Eric Ascher: Yeah.

Tatiana Lee: And that's completely free to have that - to do that.

Eric Ascher: It’s free and happens pretty fast, actually. It sets them probably within an hour usually and this is an hour-long video so … and if you check back you can turn automatic captions on…but the best practice is go and edit them and when you've done editing them you can click “Save Changes.” So, I'm going to pretend that I made all these edits, which I did not do but I'm going to pretend I did, and then I'm going to click under published and now I can download the SRT file. And you'll see this is an SRT file, this is the standard captioning file format that all the video editors and all the video hosting websites use. So, I'm going to save it as “Captions.srt”, and now what I could do with that is the fun part. I can either import those captions into Final Cut or any video editing program that supports captions, or if I don't want this video on YouTube but I'm going to sites like Vimeo, what I could do is upload the captions to Vimeo automatically, and it would just put them in with the right timings and everything it would just set it up. I don't have the video uploaded to Vimeo and I don't have the time to do that now. But yeah, basically those are the basics of captioning on YouTube, and alt text on social media. As I said, follow us on social media, as Tatiana has said.

Tatiana Lee: Yes, so make sure you can check out all our videos like this webinar, and the one from Tuesday. You'll be able to check them, come back and watch them again if you think you missed something --- you can come back and check it out. So we've covered alt-text, where you can add image description on all your social media links. That makes it possible for someone who is blind or who has low vision to be able to consume the content you're putting on your social media as far as photos. And then we covered captions, which makes it possible for not only people who are deaf and hard of hearing but everyone who watches their videos with the sound turned down to be able to consume the content that you have on your videos… which makes all your social media accessible to everyone. Okay, so now I'm going to go to the last couple slides real fast.

Tatiana Lee: Also - wait - another thing I wanted to mention when you're doing the alt-text, I also wanted to say try to use keywords, because another thing that I think a lot of people don't realize is that it helps with search engine optimization when you are being searched through Google. So, if you use alt-text if you use keywords to describe the photos -- that helps to really help with search engine optimization, so it's a win-win all around to be accessible. As plenty of people in the tech and the accessibility communities like to say, accessible design is better design. The idea of accessibility helps everybody. So here are some resources on the slide. This slide deck will show up on our website shortly after this presentation ends as well. You can see how-to’s for Twitter, Facebook and Instagram for alt-text, as well as articles and best practices and how to compose the alt-text that I found. And for captioning, YouTube has a great how-to guide for going over the caption editor. Clipomatic app and Clips App by Apple sometimes will put captions on the videos for you as well. And if you don't have the time or patience to go through and actually fix all the captions yourself, or the video is low-quality and just not have captions automatically generated, There's an option for - you could pay people to do the captions for you, like the comments one that we've used here and they're great. So now back to the Q&A and I see a couple questions already, so let's see. “So if you use the alt-text function on Instagram and share it to multiple platforms, does the image remain accessible when viewed on most platforms?”

Tatiana Lee: So, if you were to share it on Twitter, usually it will just take you a link back to the Instagram, so yes you would still be able to consume it. When it goes to Facebook -- I'm not 100% sure, but I don't think it does -- you would have to go to Facebook and then also do your own alt-text under Facebook. And just to answer those as far as that when you're doing and that's only with Instagram that I know of that you would - it would take you back to Instagram for Twitter but then if you go to Facebook, you would have to go in and put in the alt text on that post.

Eric Ascher: Okay, so here's a fun one: Do you know if you can add the alt-text after content has posted on Twitter or Instagram? On Twitter the answer is no. On Instagram -

Tatiana Lee: You can go and edit. Instagram. You can go and edit, so even if you've posted it, you can go back and go to the alt-text like Eric showed in that demonstration. You can go edit and then go to alt-text and add it so yes - even if you've posted a photo a long time ago, on Instagram you can go back and put the alt-text. Not with Twitter. Twitter, you would have to delete the tweet and then redo it all over.

Eric Ascher: Twitter does not have an edit button as many people know and makes a lot of people annoyed.

Tatiana Lee: And same with Facebook. You can go back and add as well. All you have to do is just edit it. You can edit any time on Facebook and Instagram. On Twitter - Twitter's very -

Tatiana Lee: - unforgiving. [Laughs]

Eric Ascher: "We used a closed captioning company to burn the captions on our videos. Do Facebook and YouTube then not recognize our videos as having captions, therefore not showing it to more people?”

Lauren Appelbaum: Hi, this is Lauren. They will not recognize it. They will not show that you have captions like in terms of the button. But in terms of when people are watching it like on Facebook, when people are scrolling through, usually it works so they have it on silent, so they don't want their boss to find out. People will see that there are the open captions and continue watching it. We always recommend open captions are best, because that means that they're always there. The closed captions -- adding it the way that we that we showed you what you can do for any video -- sometimes people will have to toggle that on and off, so it's nice that someone can toggle it off if they want it off, but it does mean that someone would have to toggle it on in order to be able to see them in the first place.

Eric Ascher: Yeah, which can add confusion. So honestly, the reason I like the YouTube caption editor is because I can take the captions that I edit on YouTube, and then download the SRT file that I showed you all, and then import that into a video editing software like Final Cut Pro and just add the captions in. It will let me burn the captions in, which is easy and cool to do.

Lauren Appelbaum: So, if you have unique programs that you use in terms of to schedule, not all of them will carry over unfortunately, especially with Twitter - when they first started out, the only way to ensure that you were able to add the accessibility - to add alt-text was through Twitter. Now, some others do allow you to do it like TweetDeck, for example, but oftentimes it takes a lot of time for it to go to all these ones where you can schedule, which is why what we have done - which takes longer - is we schedule things like Facebook and Twitter, we schedule Facebook in the Facebook editor, then we schedule tweets in TweetDeck, which is owned by Twitter. It does make it harder, we understand that, but for now that's the way we're able to ensure full accessibility. And then with Instagram with doing it directly on Instagram.

Tatiana Lee: So, someone said, "YouTube caption generator: is it closed or open?" It is closed caption. And then someone asked about an abstract photo. So, if you were to do an abstract photo, I probably would explain a little bit about what it is, so that they can kind of get an experience of what it is, but then also the connection to the text, I guess, would be great. I guess it's up to your own judgment of how you want that person to experience the photo, I would say with that.

Lauren Appelbaum: And this is Lauren again. I'd like to add, sometimes there are elements that are included in there which don't add anything to it, like a yellow box for example, and it's okay to say that it is just a graphic element. The biggest purpose of the alt text is for someone who can't actually see the image, for them to know the purpose of the image, so it's okay to just say that it's a graphic element if it doesn't add anything to the understanding of it, as if you have a bunch of different things that you're going through. I just want to reiterate the most important part of alt text is to ensure that the viewer who can't see it understands the purpose of the image.

Eric Ascher: Tina in the chat wrote that she unpublishes the automatic caption file that YouTube generates when she adds an edited one. I do that as well, that is a great tip because it makes, it does alleviate a lot of confusion. Best practices and resources for designing and delivering accessible webinars? Well, I can point you to our caption company, they've been really helpful throughout this. I would say having live captions is a good thing for accessible webinars. We've been doing that. I would say making sure the PowerPoints are accessible which is a little bit of a process, but I can send you a link on how to do that. The difference between closed and open captioning? So, closed captioning is captioning where you can turn it on or turn it off. Zoom uses closed captioning because you don't have to see the captions if you don't want to see them, but open captioning means that the captions are actually built into the video itself, so you can't turn them off, you have to see them, but it makes it less difficult for people to have to figure out how to turn the captions on so it's more accessible to use open captions.

Lauren Appelbaum: If you use these different third-party platforms, the best thing you can do to help ensure accessibility for all, is to talk with your with with the person that you purchased the programs through, whether it's a live person or an email address, and to tell them your concerns and say, "hey I really want to continue using you, but I can't figure out a way to ensure that some different accessibility features are there." Either they'll be like, "oh, we just added that! Here, let me show you how," or if enough people keep sending them emails and calls then they'll realize, "hey, we need to add this or we're gonna lose business."

Tatiana Lee: Katie asked, "how does the alt text appear to consumers on their social feed, or on Instagram for example?" So, for instance, with alt text, if someone has a screen reader, someone is blind or low vision they have what is on their phone a screen reader which basically reads to them what is being done and what is being said and when you put alt text it explains what is going on in the photo. So, instead of them visually seeing it, they hear what is going on. So, when you write in the alt text it will say photo of Eric or photo of a sun, or whatever the photo is - it will basically explain based on how you wrote what they're seeing, and so that's just kind of the best way to explain what appears, because nothing appears, the screen reader reads it for the person who is blind, or low-vision, or who is using a screen reader.

Eric Ascher: Yeah, and so, and also it will say image/image of if you write image of for most things. So again, unless it's a collage or an abstract thing where you have to describe this weird image, you don't say "photo of person," you say "person".

Tatiana Lee: You just say "the person". because otherwise it's gonna get really redundant after a while, the screen reader reading all the "image. image of." "image. image of."

Tatiana Lee: Like if it was a photo of me you could say - it would say - I would write "Tatiana in a black top." It would read "an image of Tatiana in a black top."

Eric Ascher: Camel case.

Lauren Appelbaum: This actually was discussed on our webinar on Tuesday on accessible websites and social media in general. And capitalization actually has in hashtags at this point has no bearing on screen readers. What it is, is, it's very helpful to individuals who are reading the hashtag especially if if it's a long hashtag it helps and it's multiple words, it definitely helps for people to understand what you're trying to say in the hashtag. So there still is a purpose for it. It's just not necessarily a purpose for screen readers but its purpose for for other individuals. If the image has a lot of text on it, do you include all of the text in the alt text? We do. I've heard conflicting things about this, but we go ahead and do it, because you want, I mean, first of all, this is reason number one not to post something like - a lot of people on Twitter will post a screenshot of a notes document, and that's one of the least accessible things you can do on Twitter, and so we highly recommend that you don't do that and you either split tweets up rather than doing a giant image, because it's not screen reader accessible. So, yes, if you have an image with a lot of text in it, we personally include all of the text in the alt text, because that way people with a screen reader can understand everything what's being said.

Tatiana Lee: Yeah, you want them to get the full experience of what is being announced in that photo.

Eric Ascher: Our web developer told me the text from the image should be in the body of the post, but that is redundant to those who see the post visually.

Lauren Appelbaum: There are a few different cases here, so, one case would be in an email where you have an image, and we would always recommend, below the image if the entire body of the email is the image that has text in it to include the text below. That is important for several reasons: sometimes spam filters don't show images, and sometimes spam filters, if the email is full of just an image, then they'll assume it's spam as well, so we always say in the email sense. In terms of like a Facebook or Instagram post, it often can be a lot easier to read the text than it is on the image, and so sometimes people will have like a one or two line caption for the Instagram or Facebook image but then will put the text below. Another option is putting the text in a comment for Facebook, for example, because I know that Facebook algorithm is constantly changing and so sometimes if the post that goes along with the image is too long, that can hurt you, so we recommend where you have the two line up at the top but then in your first comment you do a full description of all the text that is in the image. On Instagram, it doesn't matter the length, so you can do whatever you want at the top, and then do the text below that, so you're helping more people than hurting anyone and if you do it in alt text that only is seen by people who use screen readers, so no one else, when you do the alt text, when you put in the alt text you are not - no one else is going to see that, that is for people who are listening to it using a screen reader. Now, you could see it if you look at the HTML, if you look at the code behind something, and then as was mentioned before it's also going to help with search engine optimization, in terms of, because you're gonna have more keywords. So the words that you have in your alt text count towards that in addition to the comments that you have put with your image.

Eric Ascher: "Microsoft accessibility has been using the word decorative in the alt text field which I think can be useful for both non-essential information graphics." So what Tina's talking about is PowerPoint accessibility. When you're checking accessibility on an image or something, if the image isn't relevant, and you don't want the screen reader to surface it to a person using a screen reader, there's a checkbox that's "mark this image as decorative," and so that way they won't read something that they don't need to hear to understand the image, or to understand the slide. Like lines or like dividers, that's what that's for. "How accessible is this question/answer box?" Our board checked out Zoom, and it apparently is very accessible.

Lauren Appelbaum: And we have members on our board who are Deaf and who are blind, and so we did, we had them test it out for us.

Eric Ascher: Which is always the best thing. If you don't know if something's accessible, the best way to find out if something's accessible, is to have someone who actually needs the accessible technology to use it.

Tatiana Lee: Yes, I agree.

Eric Ascher: User testing is always a good thing.

Tatiana Lee: And I know people that love Zoom, so I have a bunch of people that highly recommend Zoom.

Eric Ascher: If you have any questions that you have, that you come up with after this webinar, my email is EricA@respectability.org and please send me an email, and I would love to answer any questions that you may have. Assuming we don't have any more questions, and if we do, again, please email me - EricA@respectability.org - and I would be happy to answer any questions you have or point you to someone who could answer a question if I don't know the answer. Thank you so much for everyone who have participated in this. So, we have one webinar left in the series now, it's hard to believe they've all gone so fast, but next Wednesday we have our webinar on the legal aspect of disability inclusion with our colleague Matan, and another guest speaker, and we are very excited to see you all there for that one Wednesday, 1:30 Eastern, 10:30 Pacific, and until then, have a great rest of your week, have a great weekend, and thank you very much for joining us today.