>> Tatiana Lee: Thank you everybody for joining us today on our webinar on How to Ensure Accessible Websites and Social Media. We really want to thank RespectAbility for hosting this webinar and we have some really great speakers for you today that we are going to dive right into it. So, first, we want to thank all of our partners that have partnered with us on this accessibility series. We've had a great series of webinars and more to come on ensuring accessibility for the one in four people with disabilities and we really want to thank all of these partners who collaborated with us in making this happen.

So, I am Tatiana Lee. I will be your moderator for today and I want to start out with just presenting a little bit of stats. Including people with disabilities in diversity, and organizations are at their best when they include all backgrounds and that includes people with disabilities. People with disabilities, we come from all different communities. I myself am a person with a disability and also a woman and also a person of color. There's people from so many different backgrounds and religious organizations and so many different social classes that have disabilities and we want to be included in every aspect of work, community and everything else. And these are people with disabilities and these are amazing people who have done amazing things in our society who also live with a disability. And their disability has not hindered them from achieving greatness and so many more people with disabilities can achieve greatness and really step into their own when we have access. So, just some stats to share with you. 61 million people live with a disability and like I said, we want opportunities to work, be involved in community and so much more in every aspect of our lives. And one in four adults live with a disability. So, one in four working age adults live with a disability. And disability comes in so many different ways and I think a lot of times people think disability is someone in a wheelchair. That could be someone in wheelchair but there's so many other ways. There's temporary, there's permanent. So temporary could be, you've broken a leg or needed surgery or something like that. Or it can be permanent where you have a Spinal Cord injury and you permanently have a disability. It could be visible which -- I'm a wheelchair user. You could see that I have a disability. Or it could be non visible. Someone with ADHD or dyslexia. Or something like that, or depression -- those are things that are nonvisible. And it could be acquired from an accident, illness or age or you could be born with it, like myself. I was born with my disability. So, these are the ways that describe people who live with disabilities.

I want to turn this over to our amazing speaker, Sharon Rosenblatt, who is Director of Communications at Accessibility Partners and Dan Mouyard who is the front end technical architect for Forum one. They are very well versed in web accessibility and so much more, I'm looking forward to really hearing what they have to share. So, Sharon and Dan, please take it away.

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: Wonderful! Thank you so much, Tatiana for the introduction. My name is Sharon Rosenblatt. I'm the Director of Communications at Accessibility Partners. I have been with the company for just about ten years. I also identify as having a disability and its really influenced the way I see people and how they interact, using the web, information technology as we help companies make their technology more accessible for people with disabilities.

>> Dan Mouyard: Hello, I'm Dan Mouyard. I also identify with a disability. I'm hearing impaired and I'm legally blind and I usually have to get around with a cane if it's dark or very crowded. And I have done a lot of work mostly on the technical side implementing websites and stuff to be accessible.

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: Thank you. So I'll jump in, and Dan and I were going to go back and forth a little bit with our different perspectives on accessibility, some tips that hopefully the attendees can take back whether it's developers or to their web team to make their sites more inclusive to people with disabilities. Accessibility is a big word that you will hear a lot and not everybody necessarily, you know, might know what it means, especially in the terms of web technology. It's really the design of products, devices and services or environments for people with disabilities. You could kind of think of it as not necessarily the same type of use, but ensuring equal access. So, whether or not somebody is using something the same way as another, if they are benefitting from the product and getting the information that they require, it may not be the same usage, but as long as everybody is using a product or a website for its intended usage and the right experience, then something is accessible. Okay. So, anything that can be designed with accessibility has - on the screen a picture of a road sign, kind of on a desert highway. It's a little squiggly. It's not necessarily a straight path to accessibility. So that kind of looks at the equal access but how you get there is not necessarily the most linear. You want to focus on the members of your target audience and again, that equal access. So it's not necessarily designing something in multiple versions for each targeted disability, but really having the equal access and usability so that every member of your target audience can benefit from that one version. So we'll get into some of those accessibility best practices that can benefit everyone else And actually, you know, start reaching more users than you would have thought otherwise. So, some interesting facts that we have seen in the field of web accessibility. And just about three quarters of people with disabilities will leave a website immediately if it is not accessible, often in less than a minute if the website isn't functioning the way it's supposed to, if they can't access it with what we call assistive technology and I will get to that in a second. It becomes a frustrating experience. They will leave and more than likely seek out another accessibility experience which is something that we tell our clients who are trying to make their sites more accessible. But that being said, people with disabilities can use the internet. They do use the internet. Whether or not it is how people expect them to use the internet is a whole other issue. Some of the factors I will get into about web accessibility are the ability to perceive, understand, navigate and interact with web content, and that encompasses all disabilities that would affect web access, so those are four overarching principles to think about when designing or fixing components of a website. Assistive technology is any sort of tech product, hardware, software, any sort of peripheral, that can be used by people with disabilities to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible to execute otherwise. And I will share a couple of examples in a second. But for instance, somebody who may be unable to walk, wheelchair can be thought of as a type of assistive technology. Hearing aid for someone who is deaf. That is another form of assistive technology.

>> Dan Mouyard: One really cool quote I know of for when I talk about technology and accessibility is a woman by the name of Judith Heumann. She worked at the U.S. Department of education in the '90s, and she had this really great quote "For people without disabilities, technology makes things convenient. For people with disabilities, it makes things possible." So it really expands their ability to integrate and get stuff done and to be more of a functioning part of society - that really helps.

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: That is great. I like that perspective. One of the pictures I have on my screen here is kind of like a larger example of some more popular assistive technology that you may never think of. A hand bike can be the best form of assistive technology when competing in a marathon. It can help you win it. Here's a picture of Daniel Romanchuck winning the Boston Marathon in 2019. This is another type of assistive technology that you may see and not necessarily think about in that capacity. But that is not necessarily what we are talking about here. But going back to web accessibility. So, folks who are not able to use a standard keyboard or mouse when interacting with their computer, other types of input devices can be used. These include on screen keyboards, Braille keyboards, some folks will use joysticks if they have mobility disabilities. There's multiple ways to input information. If you have an iPhone, there's speech recognition software that you know as Siri, which you can dictate commands to, but a lot of computers as well have speech recognition software that allows them to execute functions on there. Video phones are another type of assistive technology, this is very helpful with the increasing demand for face to face communication and this can also include sign language interpretation and translation, especially if distance is any sort of barrier. I have on the top of the list here screen readers and magnifiers. These are some of the more prevalent ones that we see when looking at web accessibility. A screen reader is a software that does text to speech reading, So, for somebody who is blind or low vision, it will read the content back in the order that it is on the website - I will get into that in a little bit - so that the content is read back and visual items like images often have some back end coding so they can be described to somebody who may be blind. A magnifier for somebody who is low vision - can enhance text. Also large print - With your phone, with smartphones these days, you can enhance images and text and make things larger. There's also tactile keyboards. Other types of assistive technology include professional Braille displays, which I have on the screen, on that previous slide. Where text on a website is translated whether wirelessly, through bluetooth or USB and it is read and translated back into Braille for somebody and that can also be translated on to a cell phone.

On the next slide, something that we always like to think about and I saw this statistic, I believe from the paralyzed veterans group VFW, Almost 20 million people have difficultly lifting or grasping. This includes grasping a glass or pencil, any sort of fine movement or dexterity. This can be thought about with the proliferation of mobile technology, with so much being at our thumbs and fingertips. This can also make some sort of web navigation difficult without some sort of assistive technology devices. So, going a little bit into the guidelines and I will go through these a little quicker. They are not - they are a little bit too much legalese. But again, accessibility means equal access and encompasses all disabilities. If you want to start focusing on accessibility with your website, if you have an accessible website, it means that people with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate and interact with the website just as well as a similarly situated person without a disability can.

 So, some of the questions you may want to ask about the features of your website before you start diving into what exactly is accessibility and some of the standards, just going back to the previous slide for a second.

 Is your content available to users with disabilities? We will touch on things like all text, I mentioned it briefly, which is a textual description for visual elements. Any form fields, if you are asking users to input information, if those are well labeled. If there's any links, can keyboard only users navigate them? Looking at keyboard accessibility as well. Some of your users might not be able to operate with a mouse. How your site interacts with the assistive technology - Again, I mentioned screen readers, magnifiers, speech recognition. Making sure all sorts of input are available to users with disabilities. What happens if there's multimedia, if you have any videos, if you have a podcast. Anything that can be downloaded. Any sort of attachments like PDFs and really, that last point is reaching out to the widest base of users both with and without disabilities and how you position yourself to looking at accessibility. So, a little bit of this is the legalese I want to go through rather quickly, especially in the nonprofit space. The Americans with Disabilities, the ADA, which is going to turn 30 later this year has -- it is not really so new anymore -- has begun to cover websites under adherence to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. There's three titles of the ADA. There's employment, there's state and local government, and Title III is public accommodations which is something your website might start to fall under. Religious institutions sometimes get difficult. But I'm just here to talk generally. So, on the next slide, looking at those public accommodations of the ADA, you want to make sure that you have equal access to goods and services to ensure effective communication to all your constituents whether or not they need auxiliary aids which can be thought of as sign language interpreters, other sort of services. A lot of people think about accommodations here under the ADA and have been for a number of years as physical accommodations like a wheelchair ramp or Braille on buttons to get inside a building. But now, with so much information being shared online, even more so than in public, that could be something to look under too as the ADA.

>> Dan Mouyard: One cool thing is in the past year, I think it was last January, there was a big court case that was finally settled with Dominos pizza that their website had to be accessible. And it kind of argued it was part of the accessibility the ADA so that it is part of - it is not just brick and mortar stores, but also public-facing websites that need to abide by that as well. And just this past October the Supreme Court declined to pick it up. So, it became essentially the law of the land.

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: Yeah. That was really exciting for folks who are in accessibility because it has been a little legally murky, and I definitely don't want to get into that here with this sort of handshake with the Department of Justice on how they are going to start defining accessibility and looking at those standards. I have on this slide here in the second bullet, section 508 and WCAG, which I will get to in a second, which are kind of going in some spaces, there's a best practice that's accepted, but right now, for those in the public sector like under the ADA with their businesses, it can be tricky to see what exactly needs to make it accessible. That last bullet I don't want to get into much either. But there have been some demand letters where a tremendous amount of organizations, especially those in like the retail space, food, really almost all sorts of industries have been getting letters saying your website is not compliant. We are suing you under the ADA. Whether or not that is the best tactic is, you know, up for debate. But it's really been increasing a ton of energy on accessibility and bringing to the forefront a lot.

 So, we can go to the next couple of slides.

 I might be on a bit of a lag here. I apologize. So, here we go. The web accessibility standards. We touched a little bit on the ADA. I'm going to focus mostly in this presentation on what is called the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, WCAG. These have been around for a number of years. They are global. There's no web accessibility police. The creators of WCAG are part of the World Wide Web consortium as part of the web accessibility initiative. We say that they are not necessarily a legal requirement, the World Wide Web consortium is not monitoring websites, but under the ADA and Department of Justice precedent in some of the courts, they are beginning to use this as a global standard for these lawsuits.

I know this PowerPoint presentation will be distributed later, you can view a bunch of these guidelines in much more detail and coherency than I'm describing them.

 But these are the best practices globally that are influencing web accessibility. So, WCAG - and they are up to at least 2.2, but 2.0 is kind of the global best practice for the moment that we are seeing in the United States. There are 12 guidelines. They go under those four principles I discussed - Perceivable, operable, understandable and robust - that I brought up earlier. There 's testable success criteria, if you're at all in compliance, there's three levels to adhere to. There's A, which is one of the least stringent levels of compliance. There's AA which is currently the best practice and there's AAA and then there are various standards that you can find in each. So if you are compliant to AA, you are compliant to A, and if you are compliant to AAA, you are compliant to AA. So, going in looking at those WCAG guidelines, perceivable - again, providing any text alternatives for non-text content like images, alternatives for video content. That could be adding captions, transcripts. Really creating content that can be presented in different ways without losing information or structure. So, if you choose to have an image and there's no other way to describe it, you know, you may want to provide some sort of background text around it and making it easier for users to see and hear content. So, how are they perceiving that information if they may not be able to see it or hear it as well as another user may be able to.

>> Dan Mouyard: And the key thing about perceivability, is you want to focus on presenting information in multiple channels. So, like visually, orally, through tactile feedback, so that even if someone can't see something, they could hear it and they could feel it. That is part of the goal of perceivability, it's to give as many different channels so a wide range of people can access it.

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: Yeah. That is a very, very good point. Looking a little bit about operability. That's the actions people take when they're browsing on a website. If someone has a disability that gives them motor or dexterity difficulties, They can use their keyboard to navigate, they can use their voice to navigate. But it is making sure that all functionality is available from other sorts of input. There's this trope in accessibility - unplug your mouse and see how well you could interact with a website. And then making sure that different form of input, as Dan said, is there so that people can use it in as many robust ways as possible. Providing users enough time to read and use content, not designing any content - right now especially on a lot of shopping sites there's flashing content, there's carousel images that just don't stop. Giving users a little bit more control of their experience and providing logical ways to help them navigate, find content, and determine where they are on a website. Especially if you are a keyboard only user, it is a bit more difficult to navigate up and down if all of a sudden, you know, your keyboard usability just stops and you have to begin the experience all over again. And again, understandable. This is making sure your website has an expected experience. Making web content readable and understandable. Some folks interpret this also as reading levels for content, which is another web accessibility standard. But really just making sure things operate in predictable ways. If you have buttons, making sure that if a button is used one way on a website, if you click on it another page, that the same function happens. If you're filling out a form, helping users avoid and correct mistakes. Especially some password forms, where they ask for an endless amount of criteria to create a password, letting the user know what is wrong with what they've inputted and providing helpful feedback.

>> Dan Mouyard: And it's also very important to make sure that you organize your website so it's easy to understand, so that things are in sections that make logical sense. Another thing to keep in mind for people who can't see a website - they get it through other ways. from listening to it or tactile feedback - is that they can't just see the whole website at once. They have to sort of - it's sort of a blank canvas and they have to gradually figure out where things are. The more easy you can make it that you can explore that page makes it very helpful for those people.

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: That is great, Dan. And the last one in WCAG, is keeping your website robust. This is making sure that your website interacts well with assistive technology. Your site can operate on the most current version of the browser. There's nothing in the back that is outdated or creates those unexpected versions. It is kind of like a nice handshake to make sure everybody gets along with your users. I touched on this with the ADA covering websites, that public access doesn't relate just to locations, Dan had brought up Dominos. You can order pizza online or you can order it in a store, but with more people doing it online or on an app, the ADA is looking at that as well as a public accommodation and definitely covering it. And the WCAG 2.0 is currently the best practice. So, I'm going to jump into this and I'm hoping Dan goes a bit in tandem with me. These are some accessibility design tips for some of the web developers on the call and designers. We are hoping to speak to you on a number of levels. I'm a bit more on the introductory. Dan will have more actionable tips. We talked about alternative text. This is a textual alternative to image content, whether it is a picture like the one of the car I have on my screen, it could be a scanned image, it could be a chart or a graph. Alternative text on the back end describes the purpose of a graphic, not necessarily its appearance. So you want to keep in mind you know, whatever you've inserted onto your site, and you want to have conveyed back to your user any of that important content - whether or not it is there for visual enhancement or it could be a link to other areas - really the purpose of why it is there. Not necessarily what it looks like and something that someone who is sighted may take for granted.

>> Dan Mouyard: And this is one of the cases where there can be a lot of discussion on whether something needs to have sort of that text alternative. Especially like when you talk about parts of the site where sort of like just using images as sort of like give a general sense. It is not actually content. That could be a gray line. But basically if the image is on the page that conveys information, that information should also be conveyed via text.

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: That is great. Going along there as well, for users who be blind or low vision or they may be color blind, color alone should never be the sole way to convey information. Some users with disabilities, like those who are color blind, cannot distinguish color, between colors, and this can also lose meaning if you are using a high contrast browser. So I have a very outdated image but I love this one very much. It is a screen shot of a questionnaire that says click on the green button to win a car or the red button to erase your hard drive. And they are both buttons. One is green, one is red, but they're both labeled go. So if somebody who is blind is tabbing through the buttons, their screen reader would just read both as go. Screen readers don't announce colors, so if there's other ways to share information besides color It's definitely valuable. Don't use color alone as an identifier. We have on this slide a nice little color wheel. Other sorts of things that you can use for emphasis, especially on webinars like this, are vocal inflections, other emphasis from the body text. Even if you underline things, if you Italicize things, again, those aren't read by screen readers, but they're another way to be a bit more accessible for other users. And then there's color contrast which I'll get to in a second. Black and white is ideal. It's got the highest ratio of colors - you're looking at your background and your foreground colors but accessibility is not a commandment to be boring. There are certainly many ways to use colors on your website. There's some freeware you could download -if anyone reaches out I can send some links - to test for color contrast on your site. You know, seeing how well some of the colors go with the color wheel I have, any color that is necessarily opposite from the other one has the highest contrast in some degrees - I'm not a color scientist - but with different ways on the color spectrum. So, these are some examples of good color contrast. Again I'm not trying to make your website look like a pure one showroom. But it's other ways to look at it, either having a lighter background and a darker foreground or vice versa. And then timeouts. A lot of folks encounter these if they are trying to buy concert tickets for instance. If they're filling out a form. If there's some sort of exam prompt in an academic setting. These are used to track a users inactivity or how long it takes them to complete something. For someone who may be blind, or have a cognitive disability, there may not be enough time to either finish the prompt or a user would have no way of knowing how much time is left. So these are things to look into with web accessibility ia how well someone with assistive technology can see how much time is left, how this is announced and if a session expires where they return to. Descriptive links. This is very huge. It ties back into keyboard accessibility. Certainly any link that you have should be accessible via the keyboard but they should also be descriptive. If a user is tabbing through a website, all of your links are just saying click here for more content, being read out of context can be a bit confusing. So, we always emphasize having a good descriptive link with perhaps part of the title of where the page is going. A brief summary so that if the links are read out of order and they all say click here, it is a bit more of an accessible experience. Having a proper link structure, if it's keyboard accessible, it will work with all major types of assistive technology. This is a little bit more in depth. But again labelling the form fields. I have a very bad example of color contrast with a screenshot of a form on my slide here, but when coding for a form, there's different sorts of labels you could have in the background so that the visual form fields here would be first name, first name and company. When a user with assistive technology may be filling it out, whether with their mouse or with their keyboard, when they tap through it or go into the next form field, That title of the field is read back to them with their assistive technology so they know what sort of information to input there. This is not just for text fields. You could have this for combo boxes, with that select country dropdown, and other sorts of checkboxes. These would all require the label element. You can't assume just because the text is to the left of it that it will necessarily make the association with the user of assistive technology. And then kind of a very, very basic. We talked about this at the beginning of the presentation, for any multimedia, video or audio, having captions, yes, but making sure that they are synchronized with what is happening on the screen. That there's no sort of lag except - for live content can be a little bit more forgiving, and that any of those equivalent alternatives - whether it is a transcript, subtitles, or captions - are synchronized with the content so they could be encountered in tandem. And one of the big things I want to leave users with, start looking for web accessibility on your own is keyboard usage. Making sure any points of interaction, any links, buttons, menus, form controls are operable from the keyboard. Test with your Tab and Enter keys, your arrow keys as well, for dropdowns or lists And this is one of the biggest ways you can start seeing the experience that a user with assistive technical may have on your website because this will also look at the order things are read. If your focus is jumping from one place to another or some areas aren't touched at all and are only accessible by the mouse, those could be huge areas of inaccessibility for some users. And going back to the keyboard. This is an area called skip navigation. For websites that have a lot of content on a menu bar. You see this a lot of on retail sites where you scroll down and things are organized by different categories, having a link at the top - that's not necessarily, doesn't have to be huge - but it can kind of jump a user down to the main content, to an anchor spot lower, to bypass that content so that it's not repetitive or redundant for someone who's trying to go to the next page. And then still has to hear your menu read out, and again I know these are kind of a lot all at once. I'm happy to answer questions. There's so many things that can be on websites. Especially for non profits. Tables. We see this a lot. Obviously if you're sharing budget information, tables are a largely visual way to share information. Really not changing the structure that much. Using row and column headers appropriately. I have an example of some code on my screen. Having the TH, which stands for table header, identified; and for all the data cells below, the TD, in the next table row, if you show the association with the column headers above, and I'm not going to get too far into it- Dan may want to - about what complex tables may need to start associating with the right content, because the last thing you want is just a bunch of nonsensical numbers read out via assistive technology.

>> Dan Mouyard: Yeah a table is just how it's coded in the back end so that all the headers are associated with whatever the data cell is within it.

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: That was probably the quickest introduction to web accessibility and WCAG that we have done. Again, I'm here for questions. Dan is a tremendous resource too for those who want much more than the introductory level. I'm done there and I'm excited to see what Tatiana has to say about social media accessibility.

>> Tatiana Lee: Thank you Dan and Sharon. Thank you both. I learned so much from all of this information and I hope you guys got a lot of great information and in a minute, we will have a chance to answer questions. So, if you guys want to put in your questions now, we will definitely have time to answer them. And I am going to run really quick over social media accessibility. So, we talked about ADA compliance and things like that. And so, open captions is best for social media. And open captions make sure that people can read your digital content. We are in an age where there's so much digital content that is out there and a huge percentage of people, if you don't put captions on your video, cannot consume your content. Just to let you know, 80% of viewers who leave their YouTube or whatever on audio play are usually watching it with the sound down. And so that are even people who aren't deaf or hard of hearing. So, you are more likely to have people consume your content if you put captions on your video, which is very, very important because it will open up more people to consuming your content. And so, it just goes to show you that being accessible makes it better for everyone, not just people with disabilities. And 85% of Facebook video is watched without sound. And those are some more stats. So many people will just watch their videos with the sound down and so it is really great to make sure you have captions on your videos. YouTube actually does automated captions that you would just click a button. Sometimes it is not as accurate but you can easily add it on there and then you can add it to your other videos, and so on and so forth. And it's very very easy and simple, and it's and free or low cost. There's other ways you can do it to also apply it to Twitter, Snapchat and things like that. These are just some stats to let you know how much people consume social media that is on the internet and they use it as ways to get their message out to the world. Just like websites, images on social media need to be described as well. So if you guys tune back with us on Thursday, we will actually be going over how to add the alternate text to your Twitter, your Facebook, your Instagram and things like that because that has accessible things already embedded in it and you just need to do a few little tweaks and things to add in so that your social media content is accessible to everyone. And then another tip just to let people know - I don't know if you know, but when you add alt text into your website, it makes your website more visual or seen higher on Google. So, more people are likely to see your content when you add that alt text to your website. That is something else to think about and that applies with social media as well on a lot of things.

So, like I said, join us, Thursday. We will have an in depth tutorial. I and my colleague Eric, we will be going over social media accessibility from Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Vimeo and if you have any requests, please let us know. We will work on having that available to you. And now here are some additional resources. Clipomatic is a really great website - well it is not a website, it is an app that you can download. And it automatically adds text as you speak to upload to your Instagram, your YouTube, Facebook, anywhere you want to put your digital content out. And like I said, YouTube does a free generator. That is fairly easy. Sometimes it may mishear a word in there but we're going to cover more of that in depth. And then there's another option which is Rev.com. Which, if you don't have time to add the text yourself, they have a 24 hour turnaround time. And they charge you a dollar for every minute your video is. If you have a five minute video, they will do the complete open or closed caption for you for a dollar a minute which is a really really great resource. So those are some different things to think about and I want to thank Sharon and Dan so much for being here and bringing your knowledge. So, now we are going to take this time to do Q&A. So, please if you have any questions for either Dan, myself, Sharon, Eric is here. He could answer any great questions. We are all here. Please, we want to hear from you.

>> Eric Ascher: Thank you very much, Tatiana and all our speakers. "My organization will soon be going through a process of redesigning our website. Users with disabilities are not our primary audience but we would like to make it more accessible in general. What is the best place to start when redesigning a website?" I think the basic things are alternate text on images, captions on videos and make sure basically everything was discussed in this webinar pretty much.

>> Dan Mouyard: As far as the best place to start for making it an accessible site, if you're just getting started on a project, is to start thinking about it before you get started. You thinking about it right now is very important. Because if you wait until the website is almost finished and you are about to launch in a week or so and you are like [Gasp]!

 I need to make it accessible, it will vastly increase the amount of time that is needed to make your website accessible. So, you have -- from the very beginning you have accessibility in mind when you're doing the user interface architecture of how the pages are laid out. When you're talking about design, and what colors to use and how they go together, You want to think about accessibility through each of those different steps.

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: Yeah, and I think, coming off what Dan said, my goodness, thinking about it from the onset will save you a tremendous amount of time and resources down the road. Reach out to people with disabilities that you know, if you have a committee or any sort of group. Factor in some input from users with disabilities about what they see as good and bad examples of design. You could have a free focus group, but getting those voices in from the planning stage can be great.

>> Dan Mouyard: And if you do any sort of usability testing on your website, again make sure at least some of these users you are inviting to sort of do that testing also have various kinds of disabilities, so you can have a wide range of feedback of what is good and what needs to be improved on your site.

>> Tatiana Lee: And also I wanted to add - I think people shouldn't assume that people with disabilities aren't your audience. People with disabilities are everyone's audience because we fit into every community. There are people with disabilities. We are a huge, huge community. Actually the largest. One in four people live with a disability, so I think that organizations and people shouldn't assume that people with disabilities aren't your audience because we are part of every audience.

>> Dan Mouyard: Another thing to consider is why disability should be important is because the things that we do to make things available and to be used for people with disabilities makes it even easier for people who don't have disabilities to sort of get the same content. Just like how on a street where they have going down to the street where they have the - what do they call it? The rubber bumps on the floor, so people who are using wheelchairs can feel it when they get close to the end of the street. That same technology helps someone pushing a baby stroller or shopping cart be able to just by feeling see where they are in reference to the street. It helps everybody. Not just for what you might be thinking of just that small target audience. It actually affects everybody.

>> Eric Ascher: Okay. We got a lot of questions while we were answering that one, so we'll get through as many as we can. I'm gonna start with Tara's. When I'm posting articles on Facebook, is there something to do for accessibility? Tune in Thursday, we will have details on that. There's a lot of things to do. I will quickly say image descriptions, text for any images that comes with any Facebook article is the best practice that we have implemented at RespectAbility and I think it's a good best practice for everyone to implement. Lots of questions about websites that people can use for usability testing or to do an ADA assessment. Do any of the panelists have answer to that one?

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: Dan, I'm happy to tackle this one unless you want to.

>> Dan Mouyard: Sure. Go ahead.

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: There are some free accessibility checkers online. There's some toolbars that I'm always cautious to recommend. There are automated ways to check your website. They can find some of those quick issues like images without alt text but they're not gonna assess the qualitative experience of your website. They're great for catching a bunch of issues all at once. But keeping in mind that your overall website is designed to interact with people and not to pass a test. So, these sort of automated checkers - I believe Chrome has one, there's a web accessibility toolbar, some of my competitors make them as well - can help you look for areas that are inaccessible but they are not going to necessarily look at the quality of your website for images that require alternate text. You are going to make sure whatever you provide is informative and equivalent and a checker would just automatically pass something that just said "graphic." So yes, there are certainly places to start. There are dozens of accessibility checkers you could find by Googling, and different plug ins, but that is something I'd still be mindful of is having a good handshake and not relying solely on automated checkers.

>> Dan Mouyard: Yeah, the automated checkers basically fall into two categories. There's one that you can let run and go and they are going to be more or less hundred percent accurate. They will answer things that a computer can answer very quickly. Yes/no - does it have enough color contrast. Yes/no - does it have alt text on an image. The other class is things that it can kind of catch but you need some manual oversight to make sure what they do catch is an actual error and not -- as Sharon mentioned, the automated checker may test - yes it has alt text, but is it appropriate alt text? Another thing to keep in mind is you want to do these automated testing tools before you give it to somebody who is an actual user because you don't want to be spending their time saying this doesn't have alt text. You don't want them wasting a lot of time finding issues that a computer tool could have done much easier and quicker.

>> Eric Ascher: So also a website recommended to look to purchasing assistive technology - Do you have any ideas for that?

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: That is a big question. I will say it depends who you're purchasing for, definitely keep in mind the individual user. I know this is a large non answer, but if you are buying for somebody without knowing their needs, I see this a lot in large offices, where they say, "we have an ergonomic chair and it's perfect for everyone" - and it just, it doesn't work. There are different screen readers that some people prefer. Even within my office, we have two different types of screen readers. A lot of assistive technology is built into our devices if you are looking to kind of get started. Windows has narrator built in and that's a screen reader, they have their own magnifier built in. Apple has VoiceOver [inaudible] so there are some free solutions, but I would look into what your budget is and the user that you are purchasing for because all sorts of organizations have various purchasing powers.

>> Eric Ascher: Kate asks about whether screen readers read hash tags correctly when they have the first letter of each word capitalized?

>> Dan Mouyard: So for screen readers, different screen readers ones will handle that kind of text differently. Some of them will have different pronunciations whether it is all capitalized or not. Sometimes if it is kind of complicated, it won't read it as a word. It will spell all the different letters. It really depends how you create the hashtag and what screen reader you are using.

>> Eric Ascher: Do you guys have answer for best ways to show links during a live PowerPoint?

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: I think one of the best ways to have this is probably like a bit.ly link, one of those link truncators. It certainly depends as well because you are not going to have users clicking on the link during a live PowerPoint. But then if it is distributed later - as long as the context around it makes sense, that should be fine too. Really just thinking about the most appropriate usage for your setting. If something is a tremendously long URL, truncating it would be for the best. If it is just say, WhiteHouse.gov, that might just be enough for somebody.

>> Eric Ascher: And I do know that we make it a practice after each presentation, our PowerPoints are posted to our website - including this one. So after this one ends, you will be able to click on any links and download all the PowerPoints and go through it as much as you want on our website and I pasted the link in the chat earlier and I will do that again. So, that is an option. Are there any compiled resources available that provide instructions on how to incorporate better accessibility for websites? My organization is interested in creating a more accessible website but they aren't as tech savvy and can't build code to create tables and remove functions from scratch.

>> Dan Mouyard: There's a lot of great resources out there. I think the first place to start would be the web accessibility initiative - the WAI. They handle the WCAG 2.0 guidelines and they have a lot of online information for what their standards mean and different ways to address them.

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: Another place that could be good to look at too, to throw more acronyms at you, It's called Web AIM, Web Accessibility In Mind. And their website is WebAIM.org and they have accessibility training, they have a checker, as well as I have found they have the most actionable suggestions and tutorials when trying to learn more about web accessibility. They are certainly where I started a bunch of years ago. And they are also a non profit. So, from one non profit to another, I think they are tremendous.

>> Eric Ascher: One more question that I found I think is going to be an interesting one for discussion. What are the most effective arguments to present to developers who omit accessibility? This person says "the population argument is not very convincing." I'll leave it up to our speakers.

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: That is a tricky one because you are not exactly sure what is going to resonate most well with people, especially if they think they don't know somebody with a disability, don't understand how it relates to them. There are certainly a bunch of drivers, there's financial incentives to be accessible. Whether or not you are getting more constituents or consumers because you have a more accessible web experience or because you are avoiding a lawsuit. Some people unfortunately respond well to fear of litigation. It is certainly -- it can be an uphill battle. A lot of people come to accessibility for a number of reasons. It is not only because they want to just be nicer to people as well. They kind of -- seeing some of the larger features of what the current landscape looks like. Tatiana had discussed about the metadata behind accessibility driving up search engine optimization. Having alt text, especially with your company's name, can bump up your Google ranking as a side effect. So there's kind of some free marketing there as well.

>> Dan Mouyard: There's a ton of stuff that -- making a site accessible has these secondary and tertiary benefits that you might not think of when you first implement them. Another thing I want to point out is particularly for developers who, as you say, don't want to focus on accessibility because it is a small population or something like that is - a lot more time is usually spent on making a website work on older browsers than it is on accessibility when the older browser that they're supporting may only be 1% of your users, where people who are disabled are much higher than that. They have to balance what their priorities are for the time that they have to spend - What can they fix that helps the most people?

>> Eric Ascher: And I would strongly agree with all of that. But I think my personal opinion is that the emphasis should be on if you don't think helping people with disabilities is enough of a reason, help yourself. Accessible websites are just better websites. They work better. They are treated better by search engines and, yeah, accessible is better. Dawn asks what are some examples of great accessible websites?

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: Dawn, I would look to - I can always send you a link - a lot of the federal agency websites because their web accessibility standards have been enforced a lot longer than those in the private sphere, especially the USDA. Last I checked their website was very accessible. A few good examples of skip navigation, and even Target's website for the most part is fairly accessible. They have put a tremendous amount of work into it as well. But I would definitely look into the federal agency websites. I'm not sure if things have changed in the past couple of years but they are some of the best practices to look into and WebAIM has a number of - you can see snapshots of good and bad context. Looking at those tables to compare and contrast with.

>> Eric Ascher: Dan?

>> Dan Mouyard: I would say there's so many different websites. And there's sort of a range of accessibility of what they fall under. So, it is hard to give like -- so accessibility it's never like, you're never going to reach 100%.

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: Exactly.

>> Dan Mouyard: 100% is completely accessible to every person in the world regardless of what they have to deal with and that is never going to happen. But you want to work as close as you can to that magical 100% number. And so it is really hard to say this particular website is exactly what you want to strive for because it is not 100%. But as far as one that tend to do better, I would agree with Sharon. Some of the early adopters of accessibility in the government space like the USDA, EPA. There is an organization called HF that recently sort of like - I don't know how you would describe them. They are a small organization that a lot of the government contracts sort of refer to as sort of, what are the best practices to get the agency up on the web. They have a large focus on accessibility. There's also - if you want something a little more specific - there's the United States web design system which is put together, it's sort of like a design style guide system that has all of these sort of prebuilt and predesigned typography, headings, as well as form elements, buttons and all that kind of - different pieces you would put together to make a website. They have examples of all of those that's extremely accessible and well designed.

>> Eric Ascher: Cool. I think we have time for two more questions or one more actually. Does the U.S. DOJ has any settlements or decisions describing what a public entity's web page must do to be non-discriminatory?

>> Sharon Rosenblatt: There's a bunch in some of the lower courts below the supreme court, there's some. I can always send some links as well to you to, Eric. Right now the D.O.J. - I'm not a lawyer so I'm not probably describing this as well as I should be. They put a pause on finalizing that handshake with saying yes, to be accessible, You must follow WCAG 2.0 level AA. They are saying yes you have to be accessible, but right now it is a little bit murky. So, there are some settlements. I know Dan brought up Dominos. I have a list of these somewhere. There's another lawyer who follows all this, with grocery stores and restaurants, H&R Block, Publix where some of these lawsuits have settled and all of the lower courts, lower than the Supreme Court, have said WCAG 2.0 AA is the best practice. But unfortunately, that has not been applied countrywide yet. But it is a trend that we're seeing these lawsuits go to, the higher they go up with prosecution. It is a little frustrating, so I have to choose my words carefully.

>> Dan Mouyard: I will just say aim for the WCAG because that is generally where the consensus is going. And if you need a place to start, start with the A. The WCAG 2.0 A, because the A is sort of like, these are the things that will completely prevent somebody from doing something. Those are the most important things you want to fix. And then you go to the AA, which is things that are more of a hindrance that can really not necessarily completely stop, but you are aiming for the AA. And then once you have that all that done, then you can aim for the AAA in cases where it makes sense for your website and organization.

>> Eric Ascher: Well, I want to say first of all, thank you so much to all of our presenters and speakers today. Tatiana, Dan, Sharon, we really appreciate it. Tatiana and I will be back on Thursday for a live demo webinar type thing. We are going to be doing a lot of live demonstrations on some of the stuff we talked about in more broad strokes today on Thursday. I'm very excited for that. So I am looking forward to see you all back on Thursday. And for more of the legal stuff, actually, next Wednesday, Matan, one of our colleagues, is moderating a webinar on the legal aspects of accessibility. So for some of the legal questions that we didn't really have answers to, maybe Matan will have some. Thank you all so much for joining us. We will hopefully see a lot of you on Thursday. Have a great rest of your day.