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Access Granted

Leveraging the Rapid Pace of Change In Organizations and Tech to provide greater Accessibility

Earl C. Parks, Jr., Executive Director, IT, Gallaudet University

Jarlath Bloom, Technical Support Account Manager, Splunk>

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Background

- Gallaudet University
- Legal Context in U.S.
  - American with Disabilities Act
  - Section 508
- Key Digital Access Resources
  - World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)
  - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

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Inclusive Excellence

Changing the culture:

- Accommodations *(legal change)*
- Access *(legal + behavior/attitude change)*
- Thriving Organization *(legal+ behavior/attitude + culture change)*

When everyone thrives, synergies happen; the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts

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Accessibility Initiatives at your Organization

- Who is currently responsible for this function in your org?
- Who should be?
- What does/should this look like?

- It's not just a "Tech" problem – it is a ***cultural*** problem.

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Design Thinking: 20 is the new 80

- Software development approach 80/20
- Making choices to meet budget, goals

- Change approach and start with the foundation (20)
- Synergies in product development, deployment, and overall experience far outweighs the flashy “wants” and “nice to haves” and will make these extras cheaper, easier, and faster to build.

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Reactive v. Proactive (welcoming and supportive) Approaches

- Current System: Individuals must request accommodations in advance
  - Do not always disclose disability
  - Who's in this group?
- Opportunities Missed: Supporting Access for All
  - Ex: Certain initiatives can benefit all – ChatOps, etc.
- Retroactive ideas tend to not be actually inclusive, or miss the mark.

Universal Design: Everyone Benefits

- Curb cuts
- Closed Captioning
- Sonicare Toothbrush
- NCAA Swim "Starter Gun“
- TTY/TTD
- American Football Huddle

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ChatOps as an example of Universal Design

- Unifying Communications between teams – regardless of modality
  - Full visibility into what is being done and when (and accessible!)
- Not just emojis (but they don't hurt!)

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Zoom as an example of Unintentional Design

- Zoom – awesome video platform
  - ”Feature” – zoom highlights the video conference participant with noise, assuming they are speaking.
- Opportunities Missed: Supporting Access for All
  - (make a “turn highlight off” feature please Zoom!)

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Legal and fiscal ramifications

- Consumer perception:
  - Remedial accommodation is costly and resource intensive.
- Workforce productivity and retention
- Federal and State government investigations and actions
- Private lawsuits
- Damage to “brand” and reputation

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Lawsuits and Precedents

- DOJ v. UC-Berkeley (content removal)
- NAD v. Netflix
- NAD v. MIT

- Disability coalitions are actively pursuing legal enforcement

http://www.d.umn.edu/~lcarlson/atteam/lawsuits.html

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Leverage the Power of the Purse/Pen

- Require VPATs from Vendors when reviewing software or systems for purchase
- Request evidence of studies, research on product development related to accessibility
- Add language to contracts (accessible digital files, transcripts, original/native/unlocked content)

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US Dept. of Ed. Office of Civil Rights

- Groups of lawyers are filing complaints
- OCR has over 1,400 active cases

- Has your organization been “served”? Are you at risk?
- Do you know your website/software accessibility status?

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Lost In Translation

- Disaster Communications (Interpreters on Screen) – Why?
- Captioning Automation (not quite there)
  - EX: Training Videos

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Accessibility and Web SEO go hand-in-hand

- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Web crawlers consume the web in similar fashion as screen readers.
  - Accessible content improve search rankings/results
  - Captions improve video searchability

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Web/Digital Accessibility

- How centralized is your web presence?
  - What should your minimum WCAG 2.0 standard be?
  - How pervasive is the use of PDF files? (links to Adobe Reader software required)
- Avoid temptation to convert existing files/publications (enrollment brochures, annual reports) to PDFs
- Pay attention to site navigation (tab order/keyboard navigation)

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Accessibility Standards and Guidelines

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) published by the World Wide Web Consortium (www.w3c.org)
- Section 508 Amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 508)

- What is the baseline or benchmark for web accessibility?

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WCAG 2.0 Principles

- Perceivable
- Operable
- Understandable
- Robust

- 12 guidelines

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Web/Digital Accessibility Conformance

- **A (Lowest) :** visitors will find it impossible to use some pages or functionality. These issues should be fixed as soon as possible and comprehensively.
- **AA:** visitors will find it difficult to use some pages or functionality. These issues do not need to be fixed right away but should still be addressed as soon as possible.
- **AAA (Highest)** visitors will find it somewhat difficult to use some pages. These issues do not carry the same urgency as the first two priorities, however we still recommend they are repaired so visitors can engage with your content more successfully

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Key Takeaways

Universal Design!

1. Universal Design
2. Accessibility Accountability
3. Different Viewpoints benefit all

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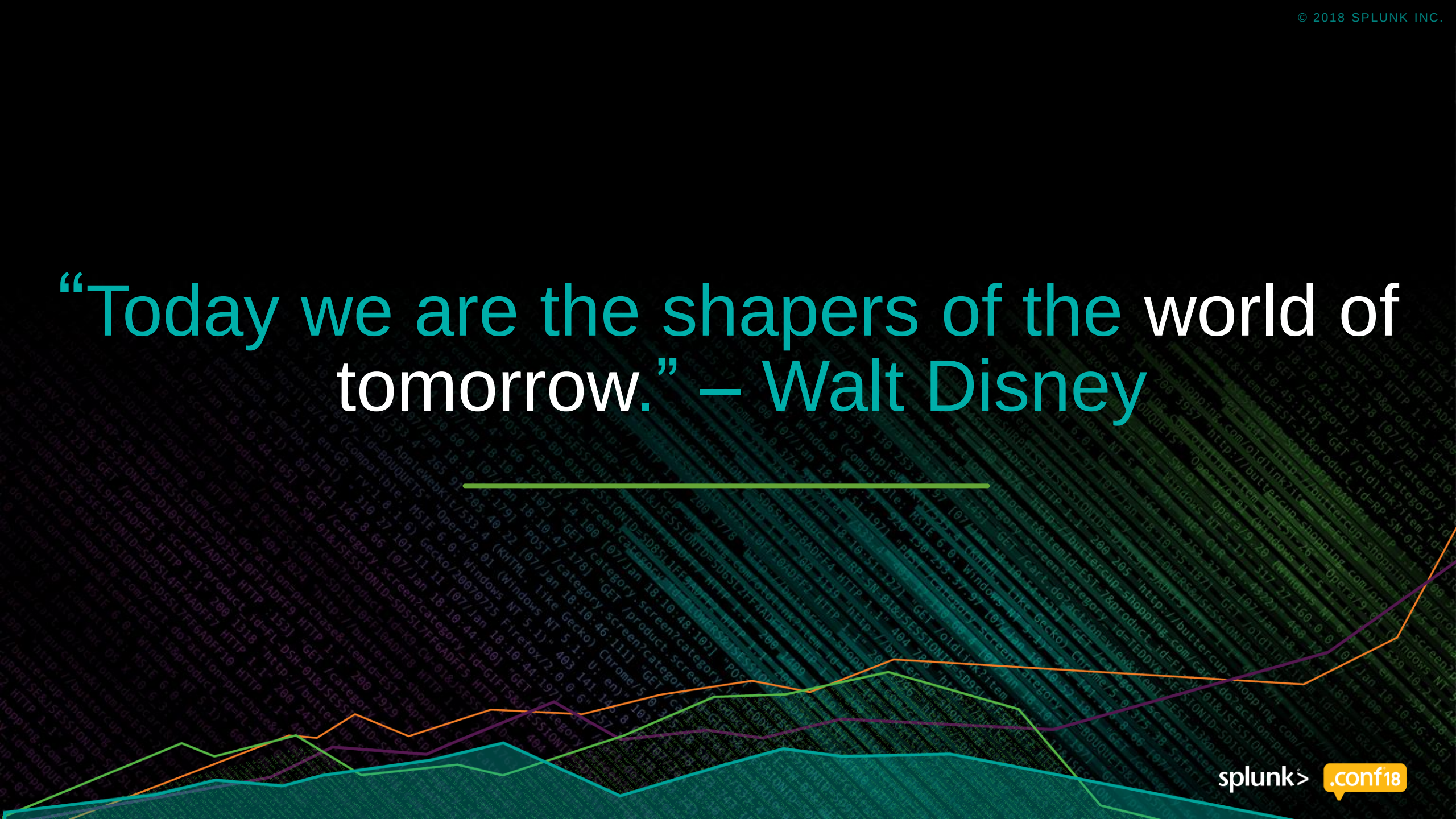
"Today we are the shapers of the world of tomorrow." – Walt Disney



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Web Accessibility Checkers

- Use Screen Reader software/plugins (VoiceOver; NDVA)
- Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools
  - WAVE Browser Plugin
  - SiteImprove
- Before and After Resource (https://www.w3.org/WAI/demos/bad/Overview.html)

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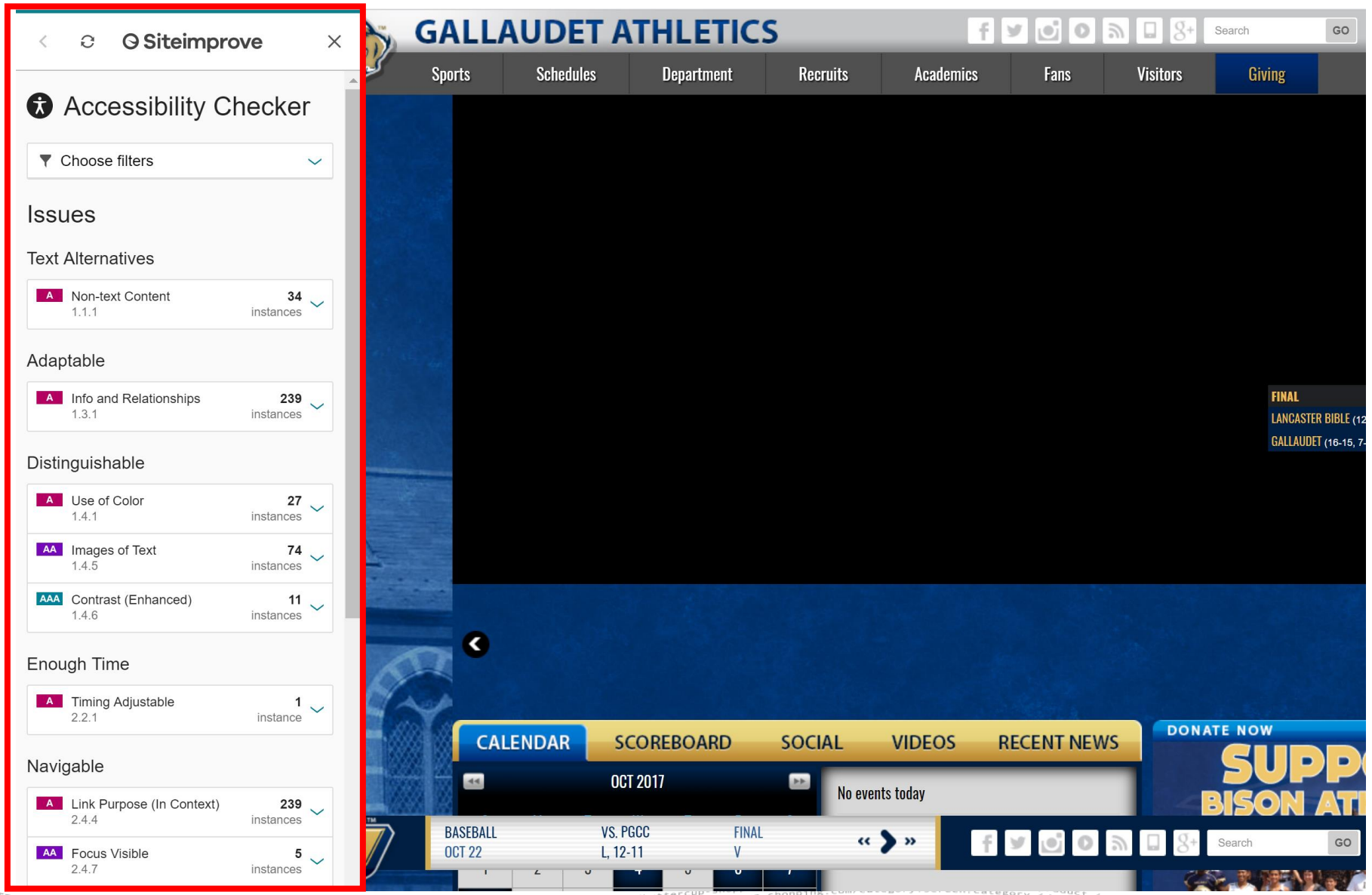
SiteImprove Plug-in



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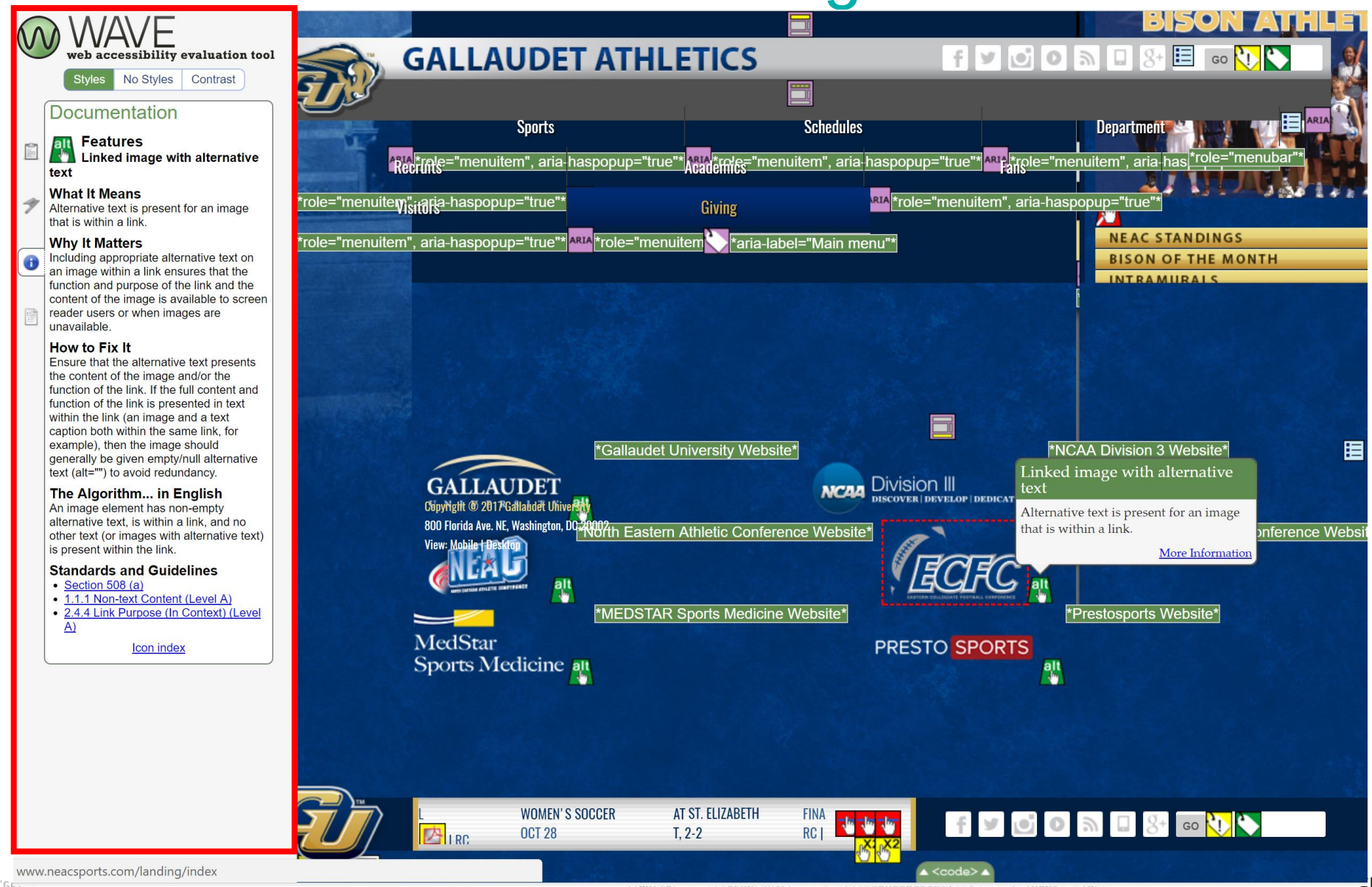
WAVE Plug-in



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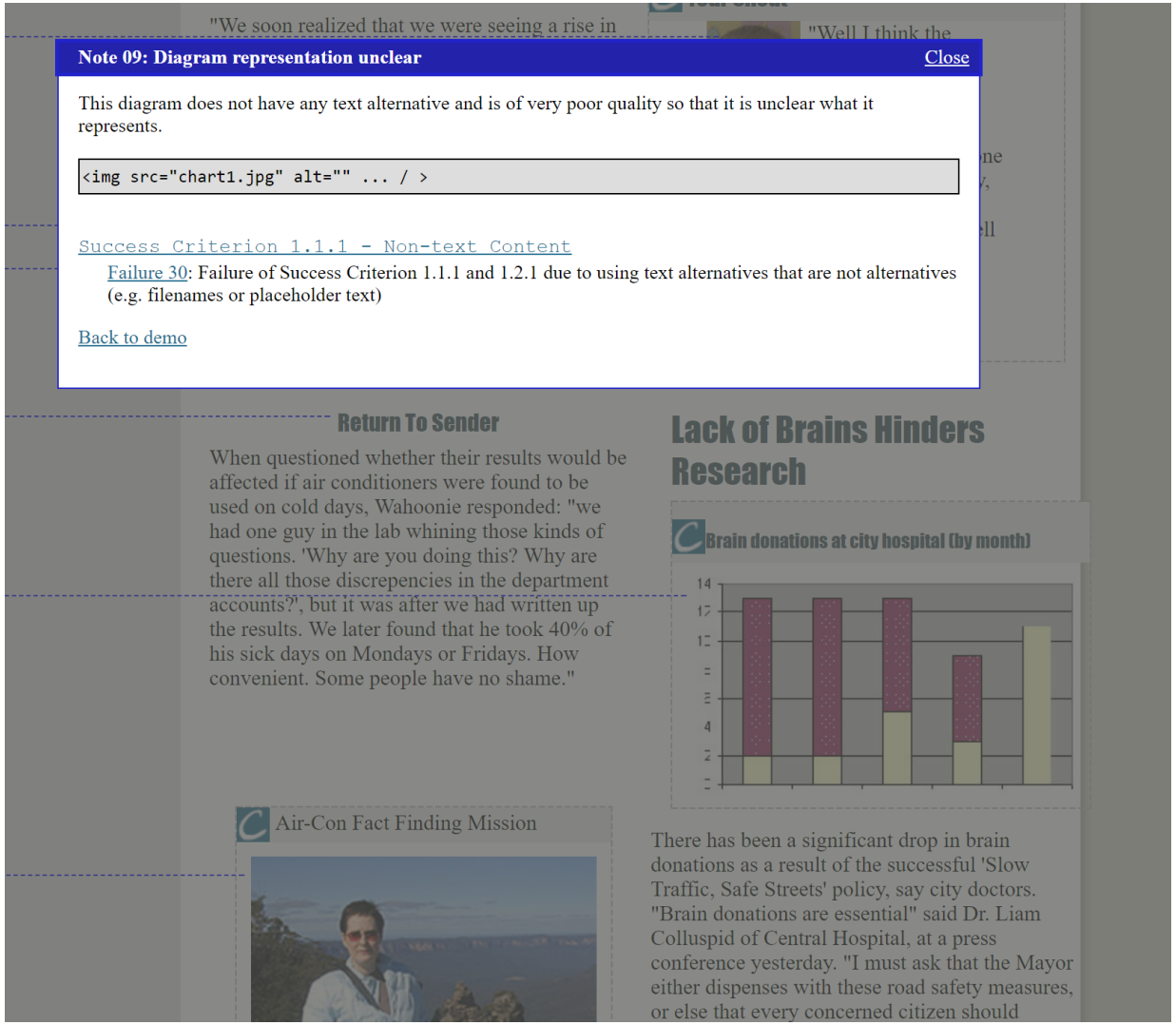
Before: Chart



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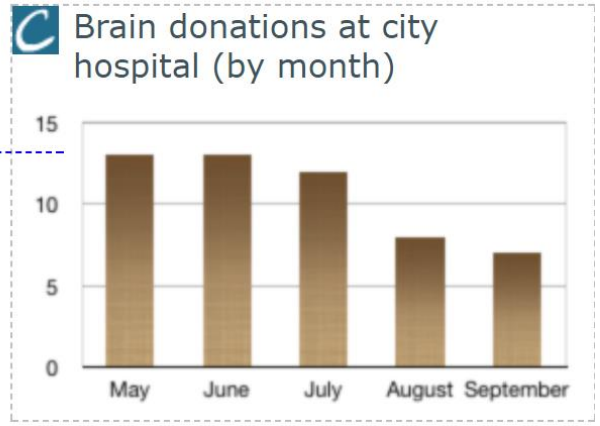
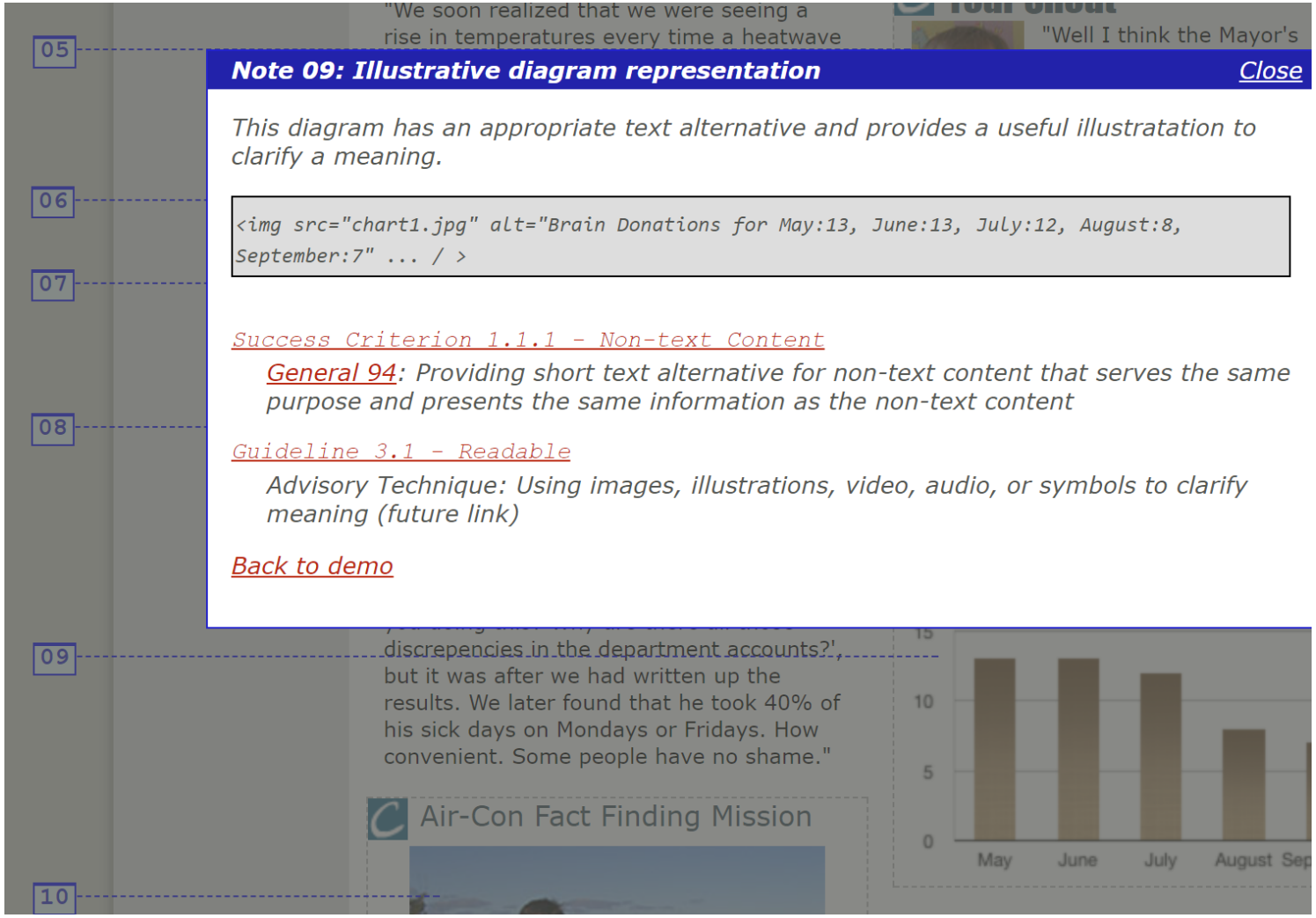
After: Descriptive Chart

Lack of Brains Hinders Research



<img src="chart1.jpg" alt="Brain Donations for May:13, June:13, July:12, August:8, September:7" ... / >



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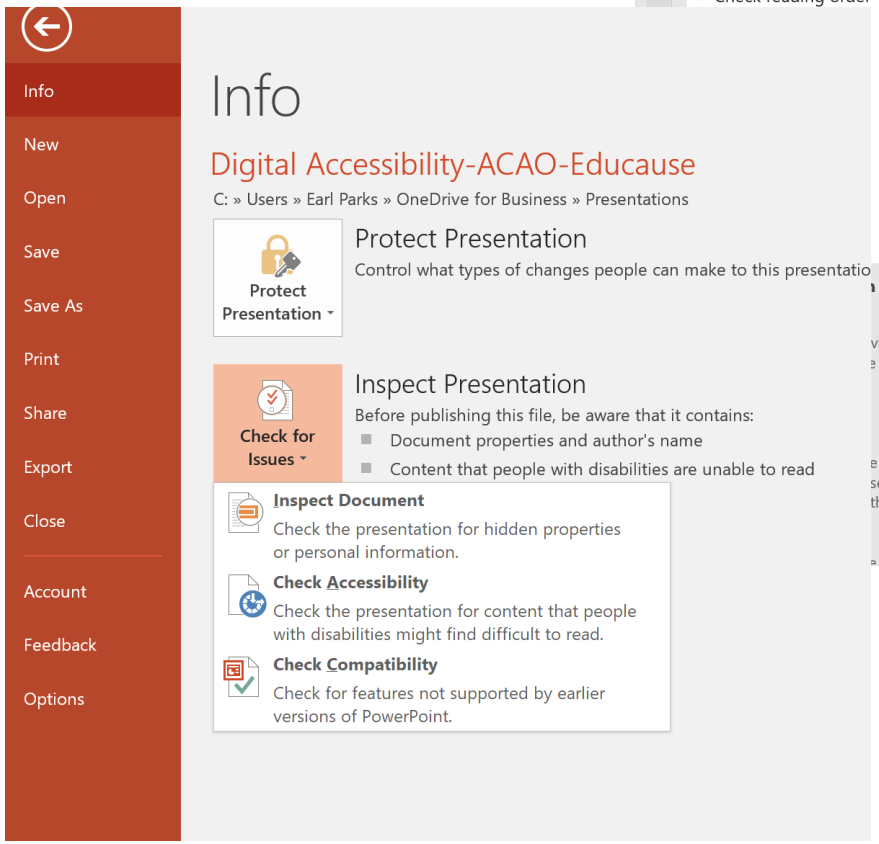
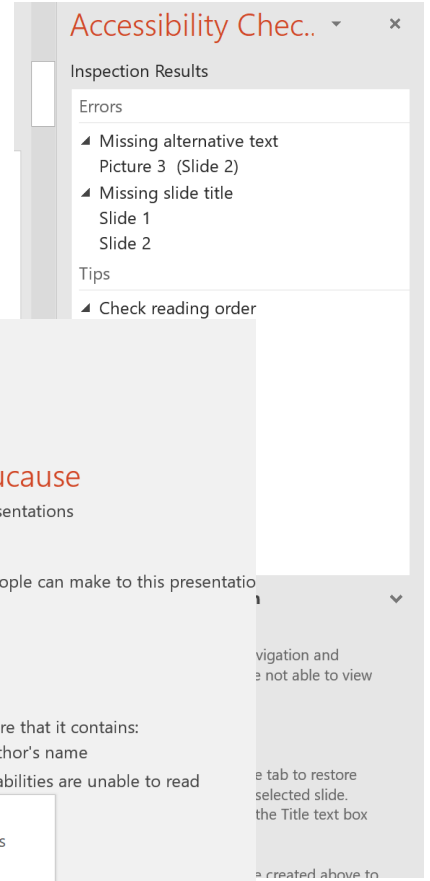
Going Native: “Born Digital”

- Applications have accessibility features, checkers, and fixes.
  - MS Office
  - Adobe Acrobat Professional
- Structured Content (Titles, Headings, styles)
- Descriptive Content (Alt Text, etc.)
- Descriptive File Names





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Resources and Vendors

- W3C (World Wide Web Consortium)
  - A11Y Project
- SOAP (Stanford Online Accessibility Program)

- Blackboard Ally
- Perkins Center on Digital Accessibility
- Site Improve Web Governance
- Brailleworks Document Accessibility Service

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Checklists and Tools

- WCAG 2.0 Checklist
- Section 508 Checklist
- Color Contrast Checker
- Web Accessibility for Designers
- WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool

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