December 2021 IT Accessibility Community Meeting Captioned Text

The December 7, 2021 IT Accessibility Community Meeting was hosted as a virtual meeting by the General Services Administration, Office of Government-wide Policy.

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# --- BEGIN CAPTIONED TEXT ---

Let me start, thank you very much everybody, I appreciate your patience. I got a new computer last week and sometimes things don't always work correctly as they should. Happy to be here today, I think my start to this program today really is how we started out. You know, way back in 2001. I started with the program at the Department of Veterans Affairs. And, back then, it was, we had no tools. We really didn't have much in the way of a programming, we didn't have much of guidance, a lot of documents, and we just were kind of winging it with all the different agencies that were putting program together. I can remember sitting at GSA's auditorium on 18th and F with a room full of people and going through just working with websites. And that is really all that we had back then, were websites and we would look and try to make websites accessible, as a visually impaired person I would [ Indiscernible ] and it would deconstruct the website. And it would put everything in one big, long line, so 1194.22 was really the standard that we did a lot of work on. So, it really made us bond together and work together because we didn't have a lot of answers when it came to documents. Even alt text and that sort of thing. As we moved on we got a little more sophisticated, we started looking at things like primitive web-based applications. And, really, the focus on the early years was all just web. I think when I started the program at the Department of Veterans Affairs, we focused really on three things. Looking at the new tools that would come up, looking at training, and looking at how we could support a program. And, I think, that is one of the things that really has stayed with us. And whether the program is small or the program is you know, larger, really, I find that the training is key. Getting people in as part of the program, teaching them what they have to do. From the ground up has been critical. We are starting to do that even more now and we have been around for 20 years. The training, it doesn't matter whether you are doing web training, web-based application training, tester training as we have come to know and love it. Any kind of training up front is good, getting people engaged in the process. Because one thing that we have learned over the years, is we don't have enough people in my agency, to do all the work. So we needed to start to engage other people to help. To do some of the work, whether it is web testing or document mediation or that sort of thing. Training has been huge. When we started out, years ago, we had very, very primitive analysis tools. The vendors were coming to the different agencies and shopping these around, and the was a, there really were no standards for tools. We were doing a lot of the testing with our screen readers and doing the best that we could to try to navigate these pages. Tools that we have now, are so much more sophisticated. They give us just so much information. So, it is trying to figure out what tools can an agency afford. How did you use those tools? How accurate of the tool is it going to be? We made the classic mistake in the early years, of having a whole bunch of tools, none of which seemed to agree with each other, as far as their results were concerned. And, we ended up having individuals during the tools back in our face, because we hadn't gone through to figure out which tools we should use, which tools complement each other, or which tools just weren't all that accurate. So, we have learned to do a better job with that, putting together a gap analysis of which tools we use, and in what order, and how much compliance are we going to get. That has been helpful, but like everything else, it has been a learning experience and we sort of learn by doing. And, certainly learn by working with other agencies, coming to places like GSA where you could talk, get together, spend some time together. And then, in the early days, we used to have these week long retreats where we would go and discuss and bond together. That was useful. Because it's a lot of work. It is good work. I would like to say thank you to all the folks that are on this call. For the folks who are disabled, like myself, I do it because I have a stake in the outcome. The folks out there that are nondisabled, you probably could do other types of work. The work you are doing to level the playing field for disabled folks like myself. It is really, it means a lot, I think you from the bottom of my heart for the work that you do. Making things better for people with disabilities. It's good work. And it takes a lot of time, a lot of ever, and you keep at it. And sometimes you wonder if it makes a difference. But, over time, it is appreciated. And you have a culture that you begin to work together and build in your agency, with relationships. The last area that we worked in that we have worked in overtime, has been in the area of support. We have individuals who are excellent in certain areas, where we work, whether it is application development, where we have 508 subject matter experts that work with developers. And work with them to try to improve 508 within there. The organization, or not. So we build those relationships with developers. We try to get the developers to do their own testing, and sometimes we end up doing a lot more of the work, depending on how sophisticated the developers are. And whether you have three people or five people or 10 people, I have been through all of that, it is building the relationships and enjoying the successes that your developers bring, that your support people bring to the table. Celebrating the small victories. And making, and giving credit to the people who are doing the work out there. I think that's great. There is always more work out there than we are going to be able to accompany us. And I spend a lot of time on the phone with my people talking to them about how they are doing. Not so much about how much work they have on their play, because I know they have a lot. But the subject matter experts, people who are hitting the ground day today, the testers, you know, the developers. The document authors. How are they doing? Are they seeing success? Or are they getting into a situation where they are burning out? It is easy to burn out in this business. And that's not what we want to do. We want to be able to take the successes that we have and move it forward. You also want to be able to take and I will turn this over to Gary in a minute, and take the information that you have, the successes that you have, or the problems that you have in your agency and make sure that you report that to leadership. Where I work, my leadership is very risk averse. So when we have projects and we have data which we collect, we give that to upper management in terms of risk. So, if we produce something here and we are going to do plate we know we need to deploy it, how can we mitigate those risks? Then we work with projects. Upper management and developers, to try to mitigate that risk. Not throwing anybody under the bus, because, you know, we all do the best work we can. And we try to create a win-win success going forward. That will help give, maybe not 100 prison compliance, maybe we are at 60 or 70. Or keep building that compliance forward. Enjoy what we do, realize that particularly the work that you guys are doing, whether it is webpages, documents, web-based application, whatever you are doing, taking pride in that and really understanding that the disability population of which I am a part, appreciate all the efforts you guys do. Whether you have great successes on a given day, or you end up having to start over from scratch, it is really the effort that is involved. It is worthwhile. I have been doing this for about 20 years. And I have the great fortune of having a lot of smart people that I work with. On my team and in my agency. And we certainly aren't perfect, and we certainly have a way of overburdening our people sometimes, and even burning a few of them out. So that is one thing that I would just say, is be thankful and happy for the journey that you guys are on. We started way back when, back in Genesis, back in the beginning. With very few tools, but we had a lot of people that were dedicated, wanted to do the job well, and moved forward. And now we are much more sophisticated with a lot of other automated tools. Scanning tools, word document tools, and we have metrics. And we use those to put the product together. And thanks for the people who went before us. And, helped us put together a good program within our agency, so, thank you for what you do. Thank you for being here today. Gary? Would you like to take over?

Sure. Thank you. I think my comments, although they ramble a little bit, I think they follow really well on what you have just been talking about. I am going to stop sharing the screen so that I can look at my notes, without everybody else seeing eye notes. And split my screen so that I can look at what we are doing, what I am doing, and - let me see, I have the Zoom meeting and I have my notes, excellent. You know, it has been 20 years, Pat, hasn't it? And some of us have been around for a while. When Yvette asked us to talk from historical perspective I thought what is he saying about us old-timers? But I think we do, we have seen a lot. And I think that's good. There is a perspective of people who have been around for a long time, and then there is continuously come over the last 20 years, new people coming into accessibility and 508. You know, we often forget that Section 508 is a part of the rehabilitation act and that the rehabilitation act long predates the ADA, which a lot of people are million with. In this country. But not too many people are familiar with the rehab act which is almost 50 years old, itself. We have to remember, that is what comes with the federal government, and that is a huge population, a huge number of employees. And, members of the public. You know, lately I have been hearing a lot about intranet sites still being exempt from 508, and I said how can that be? If federal employees are one of the or two key beneficiary audiences of Section 508? Federal employees are members of the public, so obviously, intranet sites are critical, as critical as Internet sites. But I think that goes back to an old misconception. That because in the beginning, about risk and trying to avoid risk, agencies were very concerned about public facing websites. Because that had the biggest risk. Everybody in the country could look at a public facing website and decide if it was accessible or not or conforming or not and a complaint. And, so, we overfocus on public facing websites to the point of mist communicating that intranet sites weren't equally important. Or equally obligated under 508. I think we've come a long way. As you said in the beginning it was just static websites and now we are talking about mobile phones, and multimedia on mobile phones and software on mobile phones. Which is why we've got to wait for those old categories of hardware, software, and multimedia, standalone equipment, and started talking about how do we interact with this information. I don't think we should stop and rest on our laurels, that we have come a long way but we can certainly stop and appreciate what we've done. Which, if nothing else, is to create this incredible community of knowledgeable employees, knowledgeable contractors, knowledgeable consumers. People who do keep us on our toes, and let us know when, yes, maybe your technology is conforming with status, but it might or might not be fully accessible. It might not be fully compatible with this technology. So it is always good to stop and reflect. How far have we come, and how far do we have to go. Have we come 20 years worth? And I think on some things we have come a long way, on other things maybe we haven't. Here's our chance to kind of stop and wax poetic, we have a incredible body of knowledge, between all of us, everybody on this call, all 79 people, and those who couldn't make it today. We all know how to do Section 508 and we all know that Section 508 is a means to a greater and. 508 is not the goal. It is subjective, it is a way to better increase or ensure digital quality, I think we talked about diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, that is what I want to bring up today. Digital inclusion is really our goal. Our people with disabilities, are they able to use the information? Are they able to compete in the workforce? So, the body of knowledge is vast. The skilled people, the number of skilled people is vast. Maybe it is overwhelming at times, but the information is there and if we can get past people's discomfort with, I don't know everything I need to know, well somebody does know it. And it is a matter of just reaching out and asking for it. This is the community that really does that. We do share that list serve, that we all participate on so much. We all know that we can expect answers within a day or two when we ask our colleagues. When we talk about people who are involved with the 508, we have specialists, we have generalists, and then we have come out of the tangential people that are above, some of us know a little bit about everything and there is a space for that, I have long embraced Matt Mays quote, what we have are a few people who know a lot about accessibility. What we need are a lot of people who know a little bit about it. Everybody needs to know their piece, whether it is acquisition, or software development or video production. Project managers, project managers on IT projects or project managers that are five weight:eaters. And then at the same time, we need specialist. I like to think of it as the book Fahrenheit 451, 451, no one person memorizes the entire library but each individual becomes an expert and becomes one book and passes it on to the next generation. So, we need to reach out. Who are those experts on social media? And accessibility, who are the experts on acquisitions and contracting? Recognize them, acknowledge and celebrate them. So, you know, when we were planning for today's 70 asked me if it is all human glue, and I don't think it is. It is not all human glue. It is a little bit of each. But it has also been failures, maybe that's a better way to express that, is areas of weakness and then the art definitely successes. We have agencies with limitation plans, we have trusted testers that are DHS trained across the government both in civil service employees and as contractors, or vendors out there with custom testers. Some agencies have really strong formal implementation of remediation plans, and I think that is probably easier in smaller permit agencies. So I am really looking forward to hearing from Angela and Dennis about pension guarantee corporations and Americans protections board. Smaller, centralized agencies, might have an easier time of it, they may also have less resources financially or staff wise. That may be the negative. [ Indiscernible ]. For those of us who are in bigger agencies such as the DEA, we are so decentralized. It really can be difficult to have a uniform agencywide program plan. It takes very strong management and leadership. And that commitment to 508 accessibility needs to be communicated top-down and bottom-up. And across from colleague to colleague. I think every agency or department has something to crow about and successes to show off. Some are doing well they were on software development this past, I think BA is a good example of that, I think we at the National Cancer Institute have gone to the VA for guidance on mobile phone applications. Smart phone applications. You know, they have got trained developers, testers, testing for both performance standards and for assistive technology users. Captioning, videos and multimedia. Agencies have become much more uniform in their inclusion of captioning, which, of course, really predates Section 508. It goes back to section 504 and program accessibility. There has also been more attention to quality of captioning. Implementing style guides and creating a standard captioning image or style allowing more predictability, and usability for those deaf and hard of hearing and vigils. One China, one federal agency either open captioned or close captioned, the size of colors and fonts are uniform, and customizable. There uniformly either blended with the video background or perhaps they are below the video in a box style. This makes it much more rejectable and user-friendly for members of the public, we are using videos. They know they can go to the YouTube channel or to the website [ Indiscernible ] and know how the video will be presented, much more accessible in a plain language, the way to access those videos. I think we are seeing great progress on online web and computer-based training, being accessible. Much more consideration for screenreader compatibility. Or [ Indiscernible ] compatibility for those of us who use those tools like Dragon actually speaking. There is more recognition that we have to conform to the standards. But we also have to make sure that the information of digital content is meaningful and accessible for for many of us that means reliance on technology. So, more training will be definitely coming more accessible. Not 100%, and I think it varies within each agency. So, again, great success, some agencies doing better than others, or some agencies within division's doing better. And it is a matter of sharing those lessons learned, the easier it gets the more we do it, the more we do it the easier it gets. We are beginning to see more audience discussion, this is something Pat and I have both had a chance to work with the American Council of the blind and weak worked with the parks service. There are some incredible work other, and every time I look at a public agencies videos it is just amazing, the content out there. In the quality and diversity of products. So, it is really a matter of making sure that investment is getting out there to people who are deaf or disable, people who have not had access to information or digital content in the past. You know, again, we are seeing more audio description and a quality audio description. Agencies such as the VA, the national Parks service, and the NIH, the national Institute of medicine, the National Cancer Institute, and child health, they have all put out audio described films that have either just better narration without audio descriptions and are, by design, accessible. And then there are videos with audio descriptors, very formal interspersed into the silence, silent moments. And even some that have extended audio description where the video is frozen for second-tier there to create pauses to insert audio description. I think people are getting past hesitation, getting past the resistance to cost. It is an investment but it is a valuable and worthwhile investment and it is not as expensive as people believe it is. Not as expensive as people thought it was, and it was more expensive in the past. But, market demands, the price has come down. We even see people doing it in some of our work [ Indiscernible ], and it is very good. There is a time and place for audience description and there is a time and place for commercially added audio description. You know, Pat, you may remember, you may know this. I hope everybody else does. There is an upcoming webinar in January, the 25th, from the U.S. access port in the Great Lakes ADA Center called the wonderful world of audio description in 2022, getting started, discovering what is out there, enjoying the process and the product. Pat and I will be co-presenting, it is a follow-up to our intra-agency accessibility form, but we have also gone Michelle Hartley from the National Park Service and that is something I am really looking forward to. Michelle Hartley has done a lot of work on adding audio description to brochures, and other artifacts, it is not a video but it is not just a word document, it is something in between. Very visual, colorful brochures and 3-D collages. To make our national parks services accessible. That should be a really exciting webinar in January for thanks, Tim, for posting that link. You know, what strikes me is that [ Indiscernible ] jaws for Section 508 performance, but in the fact we neglected making videos accessible to people who are blind or vision impaired. There has been an inconsistency, and we want to make sure that our documents are accessible to jaws, compatible with jaws, our training modules, but then our videos were to accessible to people who are blind or video impaired. Sometimes you have to use jaws are think about by people other times it is deaf people. That in the past we only thought of videos in multimedia as a captioning issue. So, that is a progress. You know, everything, every type of digital content has the diversity of people with disabilities. Deaf people, blind people, dexterity impaired. Cognitive impairment, not just Section 508 for the blind. That is a very critical population. Unity. But every piece of digital technology has to be considered in terms of every possible and ability. We have gone beyond the paradigm that jaws is the only assistive technology that we need to worry about or consider doing a compatibility testing with. There are other screeners, some of which are really gaining market share. So, for years jaws was the only screenreader available now we see tools such as and PDA, and we also see that screen readers aren't the only technology out there, there are screen magnifiers for people with vision impairments or loss. There is speech recognition software such as Dragon. The people with dexterity impairments or amputees who may not be able to physically type at all. But to everything by speech. So, we are recognizing more commonly that people with disabilities are not monolithic, it is a very diverse community. And the assistive technology is very diverse. In terms of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, I think it is a real opportunity for us to remind people that accessibility is not an afterthought. People with disabilities are not just a part of DIA, that D EIA, diversity, equity, inclusion and diversity is about [ Indiscernible ]. We want to see a government that is more diverse in terms of people with disability. Are they being employed at all grade levels? You know, all job categories? It is not just about oh, by the way, is our technology accessible, but we outreach to other communities. Are we reaching out to people with disabilities, whether it is job recruitment or help outreach. Services for hours. Whatever our federal agency is. That people with disabilities aren't just tacked on like the a, accessibility is intact on. So really looking at that most recent executive order, the one from June, for which I think all federal agencies have to submit a plan for by March or this coming spring, to show how we are progressing. People with disabilities and communities of color and women and other minor ties communities into all of our diversity efforts, our equity and inclusion efforts. There is a quote from Forbes magazine that I would like to share. Including disability and diversity, equity and inclusion activities, is an essential part of making these efforts truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive. Unfortunately, disability is too often either left out of the DE I initiatives or felt shortchanged. Tacked on as an afterthought, there is no rational excuse for it. Others would say that diversity without disability is just slightly diverse. It is not quite diverse, it is sort of diverse but really including people with disabilities, of all colors, of all nationalities, diversities of all disabled individuals regardless of gender, sex, race and national origin. Are they being included all the way? Or not just part of that accessibility afterthought. So what gets measured gets done, how are we measuring this? I know that Dennis is going to talk a bit about project planning and measurements, and I posted a quote. The Forbes quote, let me see if I can do that. Let me know if that is -

While you're doing that, someone said something very, it was great. Catherine said accessibility is the common thread throughout the executive order which makes D EIA possible.

That's I, if it is not accessible, whether that is accessible in multi-definitions, is it disability accessible, is it accessible to persons who have low bandwidth access to the Internet? There are still people in the country without broadband Internet, or high-speed Internet, and are relying on dial-up service. There is a reason why our mobile phones, we want to be able to strip out images if we are on a slow connection. Accessibility such as captioning helps people with him English as a second link with. And he certainly vast resource on that from the national Institute of Child research and development shows that captioning helps not only those who are deaf and hard of hearing, but children who are learning to read and people for whom English is a second language or whatever country they're in, that language, using captions in that location increases literacy. Health literacy, certainly making things accessible. It is like the current cutter effect, 80% of captioning enough are deaf or hard of hearing, the most commonly used place of captioning are sports bars because of the noise level. So, making accessibility or building accessibility really makes it more usable for everybody. I think we've recognized that, we just keep to reinforce it. So I really just want to end on talking about how we measure success. If we measure it in terms of how many effectively written [ Indiscernible ]'s have we had that your, what percentage of our videos are captured or audio described? But I think in a bigger picture we want to look at are we measuring success in terms of the ability for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, or disabled to participate with the federal government? Or members of the public to participate in using digital content that public agencies provide. You know, for the VA, the veterans, access to more and better services. At HHS, our Americans who happen to be disabled, getting better and more informed access to healthcare. Our visitors to the national parks, having a richer experience in visiting the park, whether it is virtual or in person. You know, is that content, the accessibility, or the accessible content really making a difference in people's lives? Do we see people with disabilities, the increase of employment, employees coming into the government, whether it is contractors or civil service. You know, are they participating in society more competitively? And meaningfully. I think that is the bigger goal, how we measure that may be difficult, maybe we are left with proxy measures of the number of video audio described, or the number of videos captured. But at the same time we need to keep in mind that as a goal, that is objective. The goal is people participation in the workplace and competitive participation in the workplace. Equal access to digital content, at government agencies, all of which is amazing stuff when you look at each other's agency websites, and YouTube channels. So, why not make it accessible? That is 20% of our population that we potentially leave out. You know, so, I will leave it at that. And pass it on to Dennis and Angela. But I think maybe we are taking a break at some point race. We will be taking a break shortly, but does anyone have any questions for Gary or Pat? You can unmute yourself, quickly. We have a lot of great conversations going on in the chat box. Which I love.

So Dean is asking, how do you convince management that access to all is critical?

Why don't I take that, I think that is an ongoing, and I think in a word, it is, if it is upper management, what I have seen is that they respond to risk. So you have some documents or you are working with web-based applications which is expertly faced and you can indicate to them that these applications, whether they are internal or external, the agency is at risk for deploying these, if you have a population of people with disabilities. What are they going to do to mitigate that risk back you know, whether it is an IT shop or a quality risk performance shop. That is something that management will understand. So being able to understand what is going on, collecting the data and then finding a way to represent that data, metrics, are absolutely critical. And I think that is what we have seen that they respond to. Certainly, if you have a population that, we are lucky at the Department of Veterans Affairs, we have the disabled veteran population who is our primary customer. At least mine. So we certainly have engaged them. You know, because Department of labor you have another set of stakeholders, so find out who your stakeholders are. And talk to them. Also.

I think, to add onto that, it is a carrot at the end of a stick. That there is the risk, reasoning, for complying with section 508. But also, the carrot. And I think at some level there is competition amongst agencies. You know, if we can say hey, look, this other agency whether the, their YouTube users have doubled ever since they added captioning or added audio discussion. That's a real feather in their cap. Managers can turn around to their managers and say look, our numbers are increasing and how many hits we are getting, and how long those visits are to our websites. Or the repeat visitors. Who keeps those statistics? For use and increasing effectiveness? That is a really good question. We have to really rely on staff who are doing the day in and day out work, whether it is the social media managers, for example, to rely on them and get their cooperation. And I think it is, in their best interest as well, to say hey, we create, the national eye Institute breakable, they created a playlist on their YouTube channel so that if you just want to watch the videos that are audio described you can weed through all the others and just watch that one playlist. Their statistics are amazing. They are getting much higher viewership of videos with audio description versus those without. You know, and so, it is about networking and collaborating with those staff who are managing the website. How many people are submitting forms on the website, whether it is a grant proposal or an application for a passport to the national Parks service. How many are registering to attend your webinars? It is a lot of pieces to put together, I don't know how you can create an agencywide data set on accessibility usage. But I think that is a really good question.

Are there any more? I don't see them. [ Indiscernible ] has a representative from

recently we had a situation of the person who reached out to us, regarding some transcription that we had done for a video where we did the transcription in English but they said that they only understood ESL, are the only were familiar with ESL. Is Eric, have you ever have any experience such as that from any person with hearing disability? That that as a concern?

Providing a video that is translated or interpreted, version of a video, you know, where you, for a deaf person who does prefer American sign which it is easier to the past where it is alternative formats. That is what it falls into. Whether it is braille, or large print for a deaf person, it may be having to submit that transcript, contracting an interpreter. Or setting up a video call and playing the video well that deaf person watches with an interpreter online. I think we could definitely talk afterwards about what the logistics of that are. But it is definitely, I think I'm appropriate. And then you have the recording of that interpreted performance or interpreted representation of the video. There are federal agencies that, we do a shout out to the CDC for doing ASL videos, at the University of Georgia, I believe it is read videos about COVID-19. These videos are not just captured, hearing videos, there actually videos in American finally was. For some things I think that is the appropriate and fantastic way to go, I wish more agencies did provide videos in ASL. For others it might be an ASL version upon request. That's what this sounds like. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every video out there were in American sign? It might not be realistic. Maybe there are some videos that should be. Or others upon request.?

Yeah, we have not really seen that many examples of that, but I agree with you, I think if something were to come to the Department of Veterans Affairs, it would come in as an alternative format and we would have to do a much what you just stated, Gary. Yeah, I was going to say, the next big area that we probably will be hitting as a group, will be working with commercial companies. Like in Microsoft sales force, everything that we are learning here, everything that we are finding out, I am seeing that commercial companies are also implementing within their organizations. So I am hoping that we will see, over the next few years, more and greater accessibility. From industry, as we move forward, because that is also a huge part of, I think, the struggle that we have looking forward. To develop something in-house and then, if you want to implement something from, you know, the commercial marketplace, you put it in your application and then all of a sudden you have a problem. If we, and we are starting to engage more industry. And, so, as we do that I think that their applications will be come more compliant and should integrate into some of the applications that we are developing. It would be interesting to know how many from the federal agencies are doing individual development work, or are you bringing on commercial products and integrating them into your IT?

Very interesting, to know. We probably need to track that. Gary, do you have any final words before we take a break?

No. No, I appreciate hearing abilities input and shared experience and challenges. I think it is only by sharing those challenges that [ Indiscernible ], and not to be little reassigned by any means, but positioning those challenges, those problems as challenges, those weaknesses as opportunities. And that people should feel the confidence in sharing those challenges and not being embarrassed that they are the only one, chances are if one person is excreted in a federal agency, 10 others are in other agencies and again, we have experienced it. Some person has some version of answer to share.

That's true, Gary, and Gary has been one of my great teachers in this community. So, we are going to take a quick break and we want everyone to return at 2:00 P.M., everyone. And then we will hear from Dennis and Angela. So, go ahead, take a break and we will see you at 2:00 A.M.

Welcome back. Two of our partners in crime are Dennis Oden and Angela Watkins, I will turn the floor over to these two people. Dennis and Angela, you are on.

Awesome, thanks, Yvette. Obviously, it looks like I am a pyre I know, I have an eye infection and it just so happens that Linsky has a remarkable ulcer that is actually covering up the giant swollen eye that I have right now. This way you can laugh instead of go my gosh, what happened. For those of you who are actually watching. Angela, are you there? And I am there. I am here. And I was going to play cricket, or the sound of crickets going. Do you want to go berserk you want me to jump in.

Will, I can jump in. I'm fine with jumping in.

Okay, go ahead. Let me share my screen really quick. It may actually tie into some of the content that people were talking about. So, you will see me look up just a little bit. I have shared this form once before, in our group, but it is impromptu so I don't have a long, long thing going on. So, one of the things that we are talking about was that he people to pay attention and actually, my attitude is care about things. I know we talked about the, can you see my screen?

Yes. So, I created this a couple years ago and shared it with another, I wanted to share it again. A lot of time people talk about management and people wanting to do something, how to convince, I know we have a lot. Some of us still speed, and sometimes that is no is always the incident, we have measurements and numbers and those who care about the numbers, and do things like that. Sometimes we just want people to pay attention to get to that point, because some people are still oblivious to I created this as a way to help me focus on my goal is, and I saw somebody who shared, coming to the meeting makes me feel good, so this kind of helped me and kept me moving, I did write it but I read it and it kept me focused. To empathy can lead to action. I will read it, so why should I care how you care? When you use IT that you can't see. As you look on in fear at yet another video about to play that you can't hear. Why should I care how you fare as your eyes glaze and your head you been at another email your brain can't immediately comprehend. They pulled out a lot of big words from the dictionary, forgetting to speak the language of those of us who are's initial in our ordinary. Why should I care how I've fair, that you can't move a mouse like this that you might. And there's no keyboard option or voice command available to solve your plight. What I need from you is to pay attention and apply the rules of accessibility, that is the most and best important thing you can ever do for me. It's not even about a sense of misleading sympathy, it's about using a bit of time, effort, and some effective empathy, if you took a moment to walk in even one shoe you'd realize what's needed. I show this to ask people to ask questions. Sometimes if I can put it in to people's faces, plain language, this inaccessible is not something that should be ignored. We want accessibility ambassador so that accessibility is a forethought, not an afterthought. And even from the last presentation, it is a reminder that a number of us are getting older, disability does not have to be situational or even temporary, so if people are cognizant of that, if they think about it they will care a little more. Maybe they will still be moved by the numbers, like why do I have to do this, but you don't know who has a disability. We took about this we are training people, you don't have a right to know unless they want to share with you. That they have something that is going on. You don't have a right to say well I know these people and they don't have disability, you don't know what people are going through from day today from minute to minute, from hour to hour. Just like, you know, an eye infection, he didn't expect to be compromising when I today. I mean if my glasses break and I don't have contacts I am going to be using something to help me get my job done. One of the things we try to make sure, again, it is a small agency, but my motto and my signature is accessibility is everyone's responsibility. And a number of things that we talk about, I do encourage people to use accessibility checklist, it is the best starting point to get people done, before you send your email, review, check accessibility, before you save or send that word document review, check accessibility. Before you share your PowerPoint, review, check accessibility and, the other part because Microsoft is making improvement, use the subtitle feature when you are sharing your stuff. Both in teams and captions, and in Microsoft PowerPoint. Yes, artificial intelligence is making progress, it is not 100. But when you are looking for technology challenges or whatever, very good stopgap to make sure other people who cannot it with you the way you expect can still participate and get information about what they need. So, we also partner with the learning development division, or department, and try to make it in. Talk about making it in, there is a shift left thing, a motto, but I am always thinking about baking it in and everybody has to eat so they can usually get the connotation of you know, put your blueberries and after you make your blueberry muffin, you can't make an apple pie sweet if you don't have the right cinema, there is not enough apple pie in the world that can sweeten up a bland apple pie. You can't compensate afterwards all the time. Don't apologize, strategize. If you can take the time to think about what you need to include in the beginning, you don't have to be trying to fix something or remediate something or jerryrigged something that you can't because it is all baked in. One of the things, oh, I'm sorry, so I have a question, and you and you have a request for the phone, I will show those afterward.

Also, we also try to, we want people to ask questions. I was so excited because we are having virtual holidays parties. And someone reached out and asked the question, and sometimes we feel like your always chasing people like please, don't forget about accessibility, it is nice having someone, based on what you have shared and the training process as we put together, like Q&A, on a monthly basis. Hands on on a monthly basis, monthly tips, we stagger them so that it is not like every week. So like the fourth Wednesday the second Tuesday or the third Thursday, something we can maintain a schedule with, but they know we are here when they reached out it was like a, how do we make this accessible I was like this is beautiful. Getting all emotional. I then have a smile and explain what they can do. That is a rewarding type of activity and it is not something you can always like measure. You don't have how many vocals you have asked for this. But knowing you have partisan collaborators and making sure people have a good experience altogether, is gratifying. And yeah, it takes away that feeling of running in sand all the time where you feel like sometimes am I being ignored? Am I ignoring people? Am I doing whatever? But knowing that people feel empowered to ask how to do something better, that they appreciate that you are sharing how to do it better, and also, make sure I don't assume. I use the word presumption to make sure we are not like don't you know better? Don't you work for? And I am no, everybody is learning and growing, we are learning, our team is learning and growing. I appreciate going to the is accessibility board training, so we have new perspective. It reinforces this is the right path or maybe I am being a little and flexible. One of the things I appreciate, first people are like this is too much work, blah blah blah. But it is not always that is too much work, I have to appreciate the fact that how can we do it? Not that we don't want to do, but how can we do it faster, better, in collaboration with you. The partnership is real, because I feel like hey, we want to do this but we think this is a little much. Can you make it easier for us? And I'm like okay, let's talk about it. And having that dialogue is a rewarding element of knowing that we are training, what your teaching, how we are sharing, and how we are trying to empower people go do it. Take the time to check your Microsoft tools. Put accessibility in there. Before you hit the send button use the check accessibility feature. The other aspect, you don't always have to put a [ Indiscernible ] in a PDF, leave it in the natural because you can block permission. If you have done everything you have done to make it accessible and that the problem we talk about, not just accessibility checker but we promote ready to go to the training Institute and learn how to use settings and styles. If people can learn how to use the product inherently, style structure makes it easier for somebody to navigate a document. It is not just for people with accessibility technology, if you have a 20 page document that you have no headers that I can use the navigation pane to sift through I am going to roll my eyes. I don't want that, people don't realize that using accessibility features is not just about helping Sam with disability. It is helping everyone with diversity, equity, inclusion, so that they can navigate what they need to do, what is pertinent for them, to get the information faster. And, get it better. So that, you know, numbers, and somebody mentioned the whole return think I even mentioned sometimes, you know what, you can just highlight a paragraph, increase spacing above and behind, stop putting all them paragraph marks in it. Another pet peeve of mine, try to just teach people we have the opportunity, stop putting a whole bunch of tabs in the document, because of your reading it before things got a little more improved, I still remember hearing tab, tab, tab, and I was like you just use the ruler, one tab and the tobacco so that people cannot have that read to them and return return return for like somebody mentioned when you convert to PDF it makes a whole lot of issues and challenges. I would have training for that about using the checkered of the wizard, not just the report but the wizard on how to go through compiling a document. Because you have different standards for the support of a document. We want people to know that there are tools available, and if they don't see a tool ask about it. Some stuff, you need to pin the version, you have the inherent ability of leveraging the software the way it is built, the way it is measured and the way it comes out and use it better. If people can take an hour, two hours, when and invest the time to use the tool better, they save themselves days and hours of challenges later on. It is an investment, the better you do it, can, saves you time. And like the housing thing, if somebody is trying to build a house you don't build everything you say hey you know what, I want to add a basement. Well, no, if you knew you needed a basement you would put in a structure. Not that you can't do that your house will be a strong, you will undo a lot of work, it will cost a lot of money, but if you look at stuff in the beginning and you have your requirements down, you know that the basement is going in and everything is built stronger and better from the get-go that you trying to actually jury rigged something and compromising strength and safety. That is poor planning. We are too far along, I think, to not have other planning processes. And I know Dennis will talk more about that, but we have two partner and grow with people and make it available to them to understand. It just takes a bit of thought, forethought, to make sure we have what we need so we can be inclusive and even some of the templates, I mentioned before. We are talking about people having to do reports, are they be provided to the DIA councils also compliant? Do they have heading structure so that we are putting stuff in place for the people on a team to know how to structure their document? People are like let's make this ever, let's do this stuff, let's be great. Is it accessible? Oh, no. We want to make sure people understand, the people have been waiting, using word and all these documents for years, and they have been using at the same way for 10 or 15 years, they have a go to training to leverage some of the new capabilities. I mentioned captions, captions are in PowerPoint, because I saw Microsoft giving oh, hey, did you know you can do subtitles in your PowerPoint presentation, and no, I did not. Let me press that button and I learned a new way to do it. Sometimes people just need to be open to it and enjoy the experience. We don't know everything and I think, sometimes, people can use some assistive technology that I'm still trying to them is up you have a better appreciation of their benefit, the limitation, how things can be improved and as 70 mentor, you make it but it is not usable. You have alt text because it makes sense for you have a menu that doesn't necessarily give you everything, and another pet peeve of mine personally, is alt text. Use unique discussions don't say click here. If I have a document this is a whole bunch of click here I have no idea where I am clicking. I would've the things I sure before, we have a vision accessible that we do in the last week of October and one of the things I did last year, and I bring it up because it is Christmas related, not a creature will stir, not even a mouse was the theme of it. So I am telling people that your mouse is broken, your trackpad is broken, as well. But you have to figure out how to send an email, so all you have are shortcut keys and your keyboard to do it. And, promoting activities like this, I am not eating anybody over the head but promoting activities like this, here is your mission if you choose to accept it, can you do this activity? With this information and then report out how you were doing it? It makes a little bit more awareness, like someone with the point I'm people are learning in a fun way about capabilities and features that are in their everyday tools. So text to speech or reading out loud future, there are a number of things that are made for people with disabilities that other people are leveraging, but we need to understand how to use this and share with everyone and everybody has an easier, better Plainfield to get their job done. And being mindful of security and privacy. I don't want to have to give somebody a form that they can't use and they have to tell somebody their personal data, that is not secure or private. Adherent. We want to make sure people understand how their stuff impacts and they can feel good and comfortable enough to ask questions. If you don't know, ask. And if we don't know we will ask. You see I posted to the group a lot of time to figure how I can best serve my community better, with keeping things in with the law as well as make something that is really comparable. We want to make sure that people understand accessibility is everyone's responsibility, and you can ask how to do it better out we will help and support and partner. With that I will turn it over to Dennis, for when we do all of this, how we plan and how we collaborate.

There we go, I need to not click the button 18 times so it makes my screen click on the microphone go on and off. Can you be okay?

Yes.

Will good.

Thank you for saying yes. All right. How is everybody doing? Of course I ask that knowing that you are hopefully not going to unmute and I will have 80 people chimed in all of the same time, I hope everybody is enjoying this chat that we are all having right now, and as I am flapping my gums, if anybody has comments, questions or anything I will be trying to remember to look at chat but however, I do have other conditions that I have, I have ADHD so I need to scroll outside the window but I will try to keep up with all of that. So, Tim, Gary, Angela have all talked about a lot of different as of programs dealing with Section 508. And I am going to kind of have my own perspective on some of the parts especially, on aspects of it because there is a lot there that I hopefully, that event will be feeling too bad about giving me the soapbox or the dozens of your other because there are a lot of things I can mention but I think the key thing I will be mentioning will be you don't have to try so hard. People are, a lot of times, one thing I love about not only this but the civil rights movement a large is that it is not something like say for example acquisitions or real property management. I don't doubt there are people out there who have an absolute passion for being seen and renovated building spaces for the federal government but I don't think that there is nearly as much passion for that sort of thing as there is with civil rights. With equity, accessibility, with all of that. And I think one thing that I have seen, which I have seen with my 16 or 17 years with the government, is a lot of folks will push themselves and push themselves but they don't keep their eyes on the prize. They're always trying to actually make improvements, we want them to see better because we know that when we don't do our jobs people actually suffer. Whether it is directly or indirectly. But, that doesn't mean that we can't necessarily take having a setback and trying to make sure we are focusing on what is actually important, and not kind of I will jump ahead in my mental notes because I know it was mentioned, but Gary kind of alluded to it. But, the one key thing for me is the difference between the emphasis on whether or not something is accessible, and how are you actually saying something is accessible. And, for me, obviously, it is absolutely all there for a reason. But there is a reason between functional accessibility and technical accessibility. Good example, our agency, they are very, very small, we literally have as of last week, we just cracked over 200 people at our agency which, for me, is still something I am getting used to. Because I have worked from a number of agencies, was a very, very large agencies. Homeland security, IRS, Department of Army. So going through an agency like this MS PD where we have essentially what would be a rounding error in terms of the amount of people of a lot of other agencies, it is really weak. Because one thing that tried to plan a manager from, in my case, it wasn't an excess ability program prior to my arrival two years ago. There were efforts but no actual central coherence, fully functional effort. And, being able to actually take a look at or being able to come into it and see MSP B, you have heard, but not everybody knows what we do. But really, the two key things are system principles and [ Indiscernible ] practices, we are really here to help ensure that the government remains [ Indiscernible ]. For the most part. The very first prohibited personal practice is against discrimination. There are a couple smaller subitems for that, disability or if you actually look at the actual language in the CFR it says handicapped, but you know, that is still just antique language. But MSP B, it is really important for us, it is important for every agency but especially important for us to make sure that we are actually doing it right. So, coming into MSP B I had a lot on my plate because, realistically, we have been around for a number of years. And, every year, our agency, issues rulings and orders in all sorts of other documents and information that heretofore haven't had varying degrees of accessibility, for people of any sort of accessible needs. So, really it comes down to the question of how do even know of it? Can you pause for a second is if anybody wants to go ahead and run the punchline for the joke? In chat? I actually have the Jeopardy music, there you go, thank you Catherine, yesterday how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. Where do you start? Which might? Which body part? That is getting a little gory so I will go ahead and move on. Getting back to my, well actually getting into MSP B, one of the things, and this is something I wanted to bring up, is if you are vegan, you may not necessarily want to be eating that elephant. But anyway, I am not going to keep that joke going. MSP B, we do a lot of things behind the scenes. One of the things that those are probably going to be most familiar with are the policies, not policy but reports and studies that we do. But then, also, every so often we issue what is called the mirror system printable survey and it goes out to approximately 100,000 fans every time we actually go around and do it. And, it is a very, very big detailed survey going into the merit system principles and how those are actually implemented and prior to getting to a point where those things were final, we had to work with our folks to make sure that the survey results was electronic of course that it was accessible. And that was going against all the various [ Indiscernible ], just to make sure it was actually there. Having said that, [ Indiscernible ] is a little bit long in the tooth, but there is a new one that is underdevelopment, so there are some places and times where we have the letter of the sentence may not necessarily have been exactly what the current, [ Indiscernible ] efforts really look like. And there was one agency that, the actually, before the survey itself was disturbing, each agency that was selected, because employees are endless Celexa, they get the opportunity to come back and get feedback. Particularly very, very strong accessibility program. What then follow, was about 10-15 conference calls and just a flurry of emails that were divorcing a small nation if you actually printed them all out, because we had questions on what accessibility meant in the survey. They were going entirely by [ Indiscernible ], and understandably, there were a couple places where we went back and made changes because they were absolutely right. Decided that okay, we would change it. But there were a couple places that realistically it wouldn't have taken so much time, effort, and just taken time away from everything else that we would have been essentially [ Indiscernible ] and not really going anywhere. The core focus in the conversation, that he really kept with me in a lot of different places is when we are talking about accessibility, it is really easy to get lost in the weeds. Especially with things like color contrast. I know that is something that I am sure half of you probably just cringed hearing the words color contrast. But, color contrast is one of those things that is really kind of my new and small but makes a huge difference, obviously, because if there is not enough contrasting Mayberry will have those who are not able to actually get whatever you are trying to convey. Then there are other things, where you can get so [ Indiscernible ] that you have to stop and ask yourself, what is actually important. So, that goes back to what I was starting to talk about in terms of what we are measuring accessibility what are we actually measuring? And when it comes down to it, we have standards set over time, because we have technology that evolves over time. We had a collie couple days ago, actually, yesterday. To talk about a couple different things and how we were going to be occupying your time this afternoon. Hopefully productively. One thing that we really kind of hit on, was the difference between where things were 20 years ago, and where we are now. 20 years ago when it came to technological accessibility, the Internet for the most part was essentially a digital book. There was very little interactivity compared to today. The multimedia capabilities were practically nonexistent and so on and so forth. And, so, back then the standards were much more straightforward and comparably things were developing in a very straightforward and slower pace. Because of the way that technology develops would whereas today, I know I myself am really looking forward to the new standards because I am hoping they're going to help kind of cut through some of the path that is there, and Deena, yes, it made the comment that he was the alternate test even though they make no sense down in the weeds. So, it comes down to, and Angela you mentioned it, yes we have the law but a lot of us go full speed and maybe we will not come to a fully complete stop, they have a slight rocking and then you proceed on your way to the stop sign and things like that. But for us, we have a lot more gray area when it comes down to what does it mean, we are actually looking at whether or not any of our information systems, any of our electronic information is accessible. And, whether or not you are actually, if you have a time, manpower, people power, or even bandwidth to really go down and have every T crossed and every I dotted, that is fantastic, but realistically, going to our situation I am one person at my agency, that being said, if you look at things proportionately we are doing really well. Because my job is entirely accessibility, 24 seven. I guess technically, eight hours a day, five days a week. But that accessibility doesn't just stop with section by the way, I also section 504 with them because interesting as we really look at the DIA aspect, because [ Indiscernible ]. For us, in this department, prior to the pandemic we had hearings that would take place in actual physical locations, a lot of times agencies just around the country, so, within accessibility those cases literally came down to physical access. The pandemic, for all of the problems it has obviously created, is also kind of giving us a little bit of I don't want to say a booster shot, but it gave us a little bit of help in terms of trying to get that message out about the importance of accessibility. Because all of a sudden everybody in every agency, suddenly became concerned about accessibility. I know we've all heard how many people how many questions about oh, I can't open this, or get to this link at the beginning of the pandemic. Over the last year to have we've been able to take a look at what does it actually mean, how are we actually measuring what is accessible? So we looked really at what is functional versus talent functionality is actually the important part as opposed to is it technically everything exactly according to standards, as they were written, and this is where I will put it out to the audience, how long ago were they current text and is actually written? I will go ahead and keep going as everybody wonders what that is. The point is really made there. When it comes down to planning, because I know there is not enough time in the day, thank you, Jennifer, 2008. I thought it was later than that, so that is even, yeah. There is not enough time in the day to do absolutely everything that we know needs to be done, so then the question comes down to what is the hottest item in the fire. For us, my focus on a day-to-day basis are those things that are going out, everything from when I started and everything forward is the primary focus. We are working on getting older documents, ensuring everything is entirely accessible, especially because it is a lot of very boring court documentation. But, it is there in records and we will get to this. But at the end of the day, I am not, I simply can't have a program that is actually going to do what it needs to do to make sure that our agency is successful. Not only to everybody who uses our services but people actually even come to us for reference purposes for four studies, who have questions. Any of those. Even our employees. So, really taking a step back and say okay, that is actually important. It has been an absolute lifesaver because it is very easy to look at that elephant and just not nowhere in the world to start because it is not an easy thing to actually wrap your head around. Especially at some of the bigger agencies and department, because Tim, Gary, I just feel your pain because I know the two of you have significantly bigger headache than what I have. So, that also, I think, goes into another aspect of really trying to focus on what is important and really managing or measuring where things are, because it has been mentioned by several speakers on how remediation is really a waste. If we are remediating something amiss we are essentially having to, or saying that we are not accessible, we now have extra work to do because it wasn't made accessible when it was first made. Obviously training and just education is a big part of that, if everybody is making those documents, but then there are also things for example, little less than a year ago our agency had a completely fresh, refresh, on the computer system. So we were replacing all of the computer systems which, again, people might think is a problem. But, working with our office of information resources and management, Bobby ducky who was our CIO beaker at the time I started, the very first day he and I spoke, his first day at the agency, and it was my goal was to make sure that I developed a really close and solid relationship with our IT folks. Because I knew that we had a lot of new systems and a lot of new technologies coming up. Instead of having to go back and build the airplane while it is in flight, going in there and making sure or injuring that accessibility was in the absolute planning and design stages of every project has been a huge lifesaver. Huge load off my shoulders. In the past year and a half. And those laptops, one thing we did, I was one of the first two people who were actually testing the images and making sure that the lapse helps themselves will be accessible. What I also worked with them to make sure that we also had all of the settings that we possibly could have set up with the master image that went out to everyone to ensure, try to make things easier for folks. Basically help us help you. Going back to Angela, talking about the accessibility checkers in Microsoft office. We wanted to make sure that when it was distributed and deployed, that it was enabled by default so that everybody saw that front and center. And that was included in some of the training, that people were given as we were migrating from our very antiquated systems, Windows 7 and in some cases older, and older versions of office, as a way to essentially prevent a problem. Or at least make it easier to not have a problem in the first place. So, Gary, made the comment of culture remediation to culture accessibility, and that is absolutely true. Like I mentioned in the pandemic, it was obviously horrible, it's a pandemic, there is nothing else that needs to be said. But, I think I have seen in not only my agency but in a lot of other agencies, that the idea of accessibility and how everything needs to be useful has gone a long way. Because it is something that impacted everybody, from the lowest to the highest. Being involved in the early stages is absolutely crucial because, again, it comes down to time management but also, the more you get integrated into your partner offices whether it is IT or another, the more they will become essentially evangelize for you. Again, I am not trying to be humble or anything but at MS PD, every single one of our employees, especially [ Indiscernible ] are absolutely just dedicated to making sure that people are able to do with any to do. So for them I need to make sure that it makes sense that if we are trying to get interpretation for a hearing, they are completely understanding and understand that that is needed for this appellant to be actually participate in the process. Without that there are deaf or hard of hearing, there is no way for them to communicate or participate in an appeal that will decide whether or not they will be able to compute to the government going forward. So, it is easy for me to say just get to where the people or the intersection is between accessibility and what drives people to do their jobs day in and day out. But those few key steps really obviate a lot of what we've done, and I have been guilty of in the past, too. Missing the forest for the trees. Because, again, if we are going to have accessibility that is part of the larger scope and practice, and only because it is required by law but because it is the right thing to do, by being able to actually get in and focus on what we are actually trying to do here, how are we trying to actually get there, what is the point of this agency separate? Are we trying to issue some sort of permission that will help you are we actually trying to change some part of society, whatever it is, what are we trying to and what do we need to do to ensure that everybody has access to it. And I know it seems really glib and simple and I am sure I am, many of you are probably thinking okay, we know this, what we actually do with all of this. The biggest thing is, like I said, when you are trying to distill down all the things that you have come at the end of the day, after you have pushed back from agency leadership because as I hesitated, both from folks in other agencies, and I have heard it myself in other agencies, if it is a problem we will just take care of it with them but he filed a lawsuit. Well, there is a lot of other ways to do this without having that be a problem or just obviate that in the first place because it goes back to remediation issues. Really it comes down to if we have to remediate something something is already falling down. And because I love our friends at TSA, a good example, and I have used this both when I was at TSA and also in talking about my current agency and other places. Background 2013-2014, TSA put something called [ Indiscernible ].gov. This is for people who wanted to work for the government, and process through their. It was entirely non-accessible to people with blind or low vision. There are a lot of things that contributed to it, but the end result was that GSA and the federal government had to end up paying millions of dollars to settle the lawsuit and go back and redo all of the work that they were told was essential and not sufficient in the first place. Because the idea that was presence was that it is not a problem until somebody makes it a problem. Unfortunately, that was a very long and drawn out process that still continues to have a fax. Hearing about a single website causing an agency millions of dollars when it could have been prevented, goes a long way when you have those people in leadership who think that you can fix a problem as opposed to just preventing the problem in the first place. But another analogy I like to use is that I don't want to be a firefighter because if the fire is already started that means that house has already been burning down and at the very least you already have a mess on your hands. Our jobs anymore to be like fire marshal. Go out and make sure that all the building codes are actually being upheld, go out and make sure the supermarket doesn't have the back exit blocked off, so if there is an emergency, people are able to get out instead of Oh no, supermarket is burning, but we can't get to everybody in the back, what do we do now? It is a lot easier to figure out you need to move a couple of boxes or a dumpster out from the back of the building, as opposed to what are we going to do as the building is literally burning down. So, looking at the time, too:44, it is actually close to the end. I hope this has been at least somewhat productive and healthy, just to bring it back home I know it has been somewhat rambling, unfortunately, [ Indiscernible ] back on my patio are hibernating so they have been expecting too much. But planning, time, measurement, all for me come down to understanding that yes we do have the standards and we do have other things that tell us what we need to do. But at the end of the day, what can we do that has the most impact on the most people? But the ultimate goal of how are we actually impacting accessibility, not just because we want to make sure that every single absolute net amble is exactly put in its little parcel, but we want to make sure that those are actually able to get to these when they need it, instead of trying to create problems for ourselves. And I know that our fellow patriots at our agency like to give us their own problems, so if we can avoid making our own problems and headaches then just go ahead and be Alexander, cut through the Gordian knot, try to find those creative things, we don't always have to re-create the wheel. Angela I thought that was a fantastic vegan mention, I don't necessarily participate in conversations with her but I promise I read everything you one of those and I sound like an absolute genius to folks at my agency. Thanks in most part to you all, and one last quick thing, I don't think we have much time, but it has been talked about a little bit. Don't be afraid to ask, folks. If they have ways of solving the problems that you have, because I know I am not a genius, I am not some magical person who is doing things better than anyone else, I just know how to use Google and I had to ask people here don't be afraid to aspirin when it comes down to how do I make this accessible what is important, because it is really easy to not see what may be important, especially for trying to understand how different disabilities affect people. I have a couple of limitations myself but I also understand I don't have two go through the work and expense of someone who is deaf or blind. So having conversations with folks who are is incredibly helpful, especially with planning because I need to know what they need. I can make a lot of assumptions, but maybe I should be more presumptuous etc.

I am going to chime in with you, we are not individually geniuses, but we are genius together when we are looking at serving our community. And we make a phenomenal brain trust, I think we are genius together. So, any questions, comments? Before I turn it back over to Yvette so she can invest virtual boot?

Well, we have to thank you. So,

Is a think after I hit me, so yeah.

I am going to, for my genius [ Indiscernible ], I am going , I hope everyone, we thank you all for attending but I will revert is a little bit, I will send my commas now because we are going to bring on John Sullivan for the ending, and we will just hang around for a few minutes of anybody want to ask any additional questions. What I really wanted to get to John, to let him, I wanted him to have words as he is retiring and he has been a part of this divinity for such a long time. So, I am going to first think my crew, Pat, Gary, Dennis, and Angela, I love these guys and they are always available if I ask them. They make room for me so I appreciate you guys. I wanted to wish everyone a blessed Christmas and new year, John is retiring at the end of the year but he will let you know that in a few minutes. I will share Angela's point to all that ask if I have your registration information. I will get that to you. And I just wanted to say thank you for such a great year, a great meeting and questions and engagement. And, let's work smarter. And ask each other, reach out to each other because we are this divinity that we help one another. So, I want us, let's be better about doing that, I got you everyone.

You want to just send it to the registration list?

Well I will send it to the one that ask

I am going to say this so don't worry about it. So thank you everyone, John, are you there? I want to turn this time over to you, to have the final word. Oh, one more thing. One last thing. Nobody wanted to go against Tim again, so he is still there king of the ugly sweater. I just want to say that.

Oh, This is Tim Krieger, I just wanted to say I have a message for everyone. And what is is, you are blurring out. The black around. The background features are blurring it.

Hold on. Let's see, here. I am not on camera.

He has a theme going on, Darth Vader, the glasses, I am your 50 8:00 P.M., move it back a little bit, Tim. My DIA something. Read it to us, Tim. 508 Russ, I am your 50 8:00 P.M., Luke. May DIA be with you. Disability, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

That's great. And thank you, thank you. And you are still the king, Tim. Sporadically, that will go on my tombstone when I die. Thank you all. John, it's up to you.

Okay, thank you Yvette and thank you Tim, that was great. I caught having this meeting, I was doing a taping for the first hour. For another purpose, but thank you to everyone in the community, and as others have let out of the back, I have 15 working days left and I will retire on December 31st. Which is still not quite fathomable to me, so I am just going to drop doing all this. But time will tell. And I pointed out I have been working somewhere for 50 years. Starting from a turkey farm in Connecticut, to this. And in the middle of the 34 years of federal service, starting in high school at the post office where I started out with mail and in 1973 my job was replace by technology when they brought in the sorting machines. The same ones that were a topic of interest in the 2020 election, at the post office this getting rid of said sorting machines. Will, they came in in 1973. And my job was clearly replaced. It was no longer needed, you stuck all the mail in a bag and machine did it for you. So I understand the impact of technology and ever since, but most of my career I came to EPA in 89 and stayed in the information sharing community. I will say I never heard about hypo eight, even though I built agency architectures, [ Indiscernible ] never came up in those days, I was part of the problem. But coming to GSA and meeting Helen and Terri, and you know, I too once made the same mistakes, Section 508, or the EDA came out of my mouth so I got immediately slapped down by Helen over that, and have since learned. But I have learned, you know, I have done many dimensions of IT. And nothing has come as close to this year's People's and their needs, and you say something about technology and you understand who it helps. You know? From the little line on my keyboard, I know why they are there now. To everything that we are doing here, in this community, it has been fabulous to work with. And who knows, I may reincarnate into some other capacity, time will tell, I have no plans to do anything at the moment. I am grateful for the opportunity to be here. What I want to do is I just come up very quickly during this meeting have thrown photos together that I want to share. And I don't know how to sort things in a Google album so they are all out of order but they are all about 508 and two thirds for those in the audience who can't see them I will try to describe them as we go along. But they speak to what we've done over the years here and I am starting to put together some memories for myself. And, I thought I would share these, this is my first test drive of sharing this with you all, your. So let me go ahead and do that. And, do you see, let me go here and the first two aren't about 508, but they got added to the album and I don't have to take them out. So, this is what we are missing by not [ Indiscernible ]. This is the view from the EPA rooftop looking over the river. And what a lucky place it is to work. He were back, I believe, over at Natalie's, over in Boston and everyone remembers all the cookies and things that Helen used to bring to every meeting, Helen was so good about cooking. Here we are in a thing that Brooke put together, bringing in service dogs and this is one of the celebrations that was put together, this woman brought in the dogs and here is Katie speaking, again, over at the NSF. With Helen and, this is going too fast for we have Robert and Dave Spader from GSA speaking. Now we are over at the 2016 interagency accessibility form, there is Michelle Clark. And seeing what is going on. Alex and Helen driving the show there, and again we are in a breakout session, something obviously that Robert was leading. And now we are at the 2017 and enabling summit. And watching the involvement with the rest of the community. We see people here, there is Eileen Faulk over at the GSA, one of these meetings with Natalie, putting it together for us here. At this meeting, there is [ Indiscernible ], there is Joyce at the desk and there is Tim giving somebody the eye at a meeting, I cannot tell who he is looking after his some of our speakers, and our captioning services coming in. This is one of the internal GSA accessibility celebration where they see things downstairs. And we've, we manned the desk and here is our team all in red, I don't know if it was Christmas or Valentine's Day. But Yvette, Joyce, and Lori was working with us here in those days. A lot of work we did to put together that this is very different accessibility. Helen leading one of the events in the auditorium, and more auditory visitors coming in and watching us, here. Again, a breakout session over at GSA headquarters, one of the breakouts. Bringing in Microsoft, speaking to us, and that is Bill he used to be on our team who is running the show, keeping them together. Here's Debbie Kaplan's retirement party, with Bill and there is Gary and Tim. Sitting, as he said, saying goodbye to Debbie. Say goodbye to Debbie as she went off to the city of San Francisco accessibility program. There we are together as a group. And then there is a good shot of Bill speaking somewhere, I don't remember where, and a cute little robot, at one of our meetings, I liked the robot. And that we are back at the M enabling summit. The Helen Keller quick, worse than being blind is having site numbers of and another quote, fer narrowed his vision so he couldn't see anything. Now we are back at CSU and out in California, one of the speakers at CSU and is a deaf woman doing a great presentation talking about how the deaf community is. Here we have our presentation, Robert, me, Yvette, and Tim. Tim in front of the microphone, Robert front of an this is that panel we do, I can't remember what you, there is me, obviously, with a question. At said panel and me try to answer, maybe my own question, who knows but only getting a rebuttal from Robert Penn and Tim was having another word in to say, to say the least. And a happy moment with Helen and Tim out in the lobby, I believe this is at CSUN. And Helen in her, when she left the TSA and went up to try to do her own little consulting services, and this is her routine out at CSUN, Mickey Mouse ears on there. Now we are back at GSA looking at one of our accessibility community meetings, and some of the meetings we had there. And there is Yvette, always adding to the style, to our event and I had to get a picture of the rocking heals that Yvette was wearing, because they are great. And now, we are back at the M enabling summit, and I always took above the slides. That one is legislation and this is Elaine Chao speaking at the enabling summit, talking about AI and influence on accessibility. In fact [ Indiscernible ]. I am enabling over in Crystal city, again for this is more of an enabling meeting. And now we are back in the office, there is Mike Horton and our team putting it together, here. Here is the wounded warrior program, this was 2018. A summit at GSA. Now we are back in the 2019 meeting at HHS. That we put together over there. There is another breakout session going on here, and workout sessions and then he won here coming up and there is Yvette giving a cute little stunt, I'm not exactly sure what that was an event and I in front of the staffing desk where we put them together. Again we are back at HHS in our breakout session, these are all HHS there is Betsy and Yolanda and Tim, doing a panel. And this is 2019, there is Yvette ringing in all of this great Valentines and things into our meeting. And, somebody is experienced about pregnancy not sure where that one went in there, and then here's our team putting things together. So, I am starting to put together some snapshots, obviously the first thing I need to learn is how to slow that down because that went way too fast. But anyway, yeah. Just lots and lots of memories and, I say, it is an interesting time to exit stage left because the energy around DEIA will not last forever. So I say to you leverage to the maximum that you can, right now, because someone, other priority, will become all in the limelight. And while we have the attention, yes, we have to make sure accessibility stays in the DEIA message and it doesn't become the back burner issue to other diversity issues. Much as in the IT space, accessibility in always backdoor to cyber security. Always on the back burner. So keep this fight going on, Inc. I leave behind a great team at GSA, for y'all to work with. And I am just comfortable and we've had good conversations. [ Indiscernible ] those are involved with accessibility workgroups, and some of the things that are happening around movie the DEIA plan integrating it with the [ Indiscernible ] plan. The is a lot going on. On that I will keep quiet and I see the ASL interpreters had to leave. That is my cue to say goodbye.

They do, they had another performance at 3:00. John, thank you so much for all that you have sown into all of us. All the wisdom, all of the knowledge, all the information. I don't even, and thank you more from me for giving me a chance. To step into some big shoes that Helen left. I thank you, I thank you. I can leave this open for a few minutes if anybody wants to jump in and say anything to John, please do not forget to take the survey, I put in chat. I will stay on, let's just stay open for five minutes if anyone wants to come on and say anything to John. [ Event concluded ]