February 2023 IT Accessibility Community Meeting Captioned Text

The February 14, 2023 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 ---

[Captioner standing by]

>> YVETTE GIBSON: Good morning, good morning, everyone. We are just letting a few more people in and then we will start. I see Hillary. Antonio! Wow!

Okay.

Who has their ‑‑ I'm going to ask everyone to mute themselves. Thank you. Angela, are we ready?

I see Marcelle. Okay. We are ready.

So again, again, good afternoon, everyone and welcome to flight 508.

Our high today is 59 degrees. Our winds are south by southwest ‑‑

>> Recording in progress.

>> YVETTE GIBSON: Our winds are south by southwest at 5 to 10 miles per hour. I am your captain, Yvette Gibson. I'm an African American female with hair pulled back in braids. I have a red blouse on and a silver chain.

My first officer on today's flight is Ms. Angela Watkins and second officer is Ms. Marcelle Salley‑Owens. Our relief crew today are Ms. Brianna Canty and Jamilah Johnson. Please listen attentively with our first and second officers as we continue the flight and have an accessible Valentine’s Day.

I'll turn this over to my first officer, Angela Watkins. Angela.

>> Angela, you're on mute. We can't hear you.

>> YVETTE GIBSON: You're on mute, Angela.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Thank you very much. As Yvette mentioned, thank you, my captain. I will be serving as part of your crew for flight 508. And our goal is to make sure we're here to soar, we're in flight, we're soaring, and we have a lot of important things to share with people.

We want to make sure ‑‑ our goal today is ‑‑ one of the things I appreciate about being in my role as a 508 program manager is that we come together on a bi‑monthly basis whether it's with GSA or Access Board to encourage one another in our journeys, wherever we are, whichever tools we have and whatever talents we're using.

One of the things I appreciate about the AIFF conference we had was using the playbook to our strengths. And one of the things I wanted to shares a worked at PBGC is encouraging us all to continue in using our strengths and giving the message about 508. Accessibility is everyone's responsibility. I know one that's our PBGC motto, I enjoy singing in DOL.

I enjoy knowing that each us have our own model and culture in our agency. So as I've been serving as the program manager since 2018 at PBGC, we have a different culture. It's a small agency. Our culture may match you or other cultures. But one. Things we're trying to do as our team relay 508 in a way people don't get overwhelmed. See that they can have fun with the information we're trying impart. One of the things I enjoyed sharing with the group as a whole is mission accessible events, where for the month of October we have missions one day a week regarding different disabilities. And we want to remind people all the time that, you know, disability can be physical, it can be visible, it can be invisible, it can be temporary, it can be permanent, just to make sure people understand that they don't need to have ‑‑ they don't need to profile people a lot of the times, but to understand what they do of official communications needs to be accessible with people with disabilities.

Their role, their goal is to make sure they do their job and making sure you just at least do not the minimum, because it is an uphill fight sometimes. But we want people to actually understand that people work differently. And they need to accommodate that. They need to respect that. They need to plan for it.

I know personally I know it's a law that's official communications. But when we're actually showing people, we actually tell people do it when it's not official, because you never know where your content is going to be going. You don't know who it's going to be shared with. You don't know all the time where it's going or who has a disability. And it's not your job to know everybody's information, unless they choose to share it with you.

Best thing you can do is be ready to collaborate with your coworkers the best way possible so they can get their job down independently. I'll share different poems. I've had a couple poems even at work. We've had speaker series that we've been able to share our message with.

There are times we say the same thing over and over and over again. You wonder if people, you know, are listening.

I was thinking about some ‑‑ I forget which musical, but it's.

Can anybody hear me?

And it's like are you all listening to what I'm saying to you guys? And there are times I feel like Ferris Bueller's day off, and I feel like Bueller?

We have Office 365, and we share about the accessibility check, innocence all the different applications, it's in Word, the accessibility checker is in the Word application. It's in Outlook, it's in Excel. It's in PowerPoint. It's in OneNote. I don't know if you use it, but it's there as well. And it's in acrobat professional. So we're always sending that message that use your accessibility checker. Use the tools that you have already in hand available to you.

And so if any of you have these times where we have the Q&A, we're doing accessibility checker, we have training, which I'm going to share with you some of our training locations and information. And then, you know, you tell somebody, hey, because we do random checks. We see an email going to all of PBGC sometimes, and we're like, hey, you ‑‑ you didn't have alt text in here. Let me show you how to use the accessibility checker in your Outlook real quick. And it's like, I didn't know this was here. I'm like, I've been here since 2018, I've been doing training on this thing for years now. How can you not know?

Sometimes we recent as a group sometimes. Are they living underneath a rock? You know what? No worries. I'll repeat it again. Let me show you how to do it. I can show you in under ten minutes. Go to review and check things. It's like Groundhog Day, repeat, rinse, do it again. And there are certain times where you just feel like, again, is anybody listening? Is anybody hearing about what they're doing? But then you get those other days where people's like, hey, Angela, I used accessibility checker and I fixed all my issues. But there was something I just couldn't understand. Do you have a moment? I'm like, sure, I have a moment, I have several moments for you.

Because those are those days I'm like, I mean, in the background because I can't see most of the time I turn on the camera, I get all emotional, the trigger on my own, my babies are growing up. They're actually use the tools that we provided to them. So they could do it for themselves. If you just need a little help, awesome!

And then there are times we get people, we're tired of seeing all these emails. I mean, so I'll share it with you. We do monthly tips. We do Q&A sessions where sometimes it's like, hey, got a question? Silence.

But we also have hands‑on. I'm like, hey, you want to register? Some people register, some people don't.

But one of the things, it is gratifying at times, though, to hear people, it's like, you know what? Don't give up. We sometimes need to hear the message over and over again. And ‑‑ and that person just brought ‑‑ just ‑‑ just brought lightness to my heart. They weren't saying it like, yes, you keep saying this over and over again, you know, like rolling their eyes. But they was really grateful and they appreciate the partnership.

You know, you have some people, Angela, accessibility police. I'm like, no, I'm not a police, I'm a collaborator, I just want to help you. Let me help you. No, no, you're the police. We want to make sure we do it right because we don't want to get into any trouble.

I'm like, that's okay in one respect, but we really do want to collaborate. We really want people to make sure we know that they're doing their due diligence when they're looking at products to see if it's going to be okay to add to the agency's enterprise. We want to make sure you're doing your due diligence when you're about to go live out to the PBGC.gov site so that you know that the people looking at the website understand what they're getting.

We really want to make sure you're doing your due diligence. But if you need ‑‑ you know, feel like we're doing it over and over again, okay, maybe it's true. And so this is those times when I feel like, you know what? Who else repeats stuff over and over and over again? Flight attendants.

So, I'm going to change up my bit of my persona and do my flight attendant imitation. Because I appreciate what they do and the fact that they have to repeat stuff over and over and over again. Just so people know.

And it's like, they have to act like it's the first time. So I'm going to switch over just a little bit. Put my mic over here. So I have a persona Rochelle that's going to be interacting with us for today.

So welcome aboard flight 508. As my coworker flight attendant has already explained, the safety measures and directions for your seatbelts and safety measures, I will tell you more about our destination.

I am your flight attendant Rochelle and I'm glad to welcome you aboard to our journey to Compliance Canyon. Please remember to pack your biases, misconceptions and apathy in the overhead compartment, you won't be needing them.

While some of you having been carrying these biases for years, we will be glad to explain to you why they will have no purpose on this flight. If you're unsure of any misconceptions, please be glad to know we'll discuss them with you so we can learn to collaborate together.

As we get closer to our destination, you will notice the Compliance Canyon abuts or is near the peaks of privacy and is surrounded by the security sea. Depending on how the wind blows, Compliance Canyon can actually be completely obscured. Don't worry, even if you don't see it, we know it's there.

I've heard people talk about their trips to Compliance Canyon. And depending on where you stand, you can hear different words or phrases being echoed.

I've heard stories about hearing checker, checker, checker repeated and echoing into the canyon.

I've heard alt text, alt text. And another favorite is captions! Captions! Audio descriptions and captions!

Then whether you step in as far as 2.0, 2.1, or 2.2 miles into your destination of Compliance Canyon, you may also hear the special bird call of WCAG. And we want to make sure that you are well versed and know that we have an in‑flight movie for your own enjoyment and your own devices will be able to use after that in‑flight service or movie starts.

But before we get there, Angela wants to say something just a little bit more. I want to actually ask everyone, in the chat, if you don't mind, what are some of the phrases you hear or that ‑‑ phrases that you know you repeat to your customers on a regular basis? If you just put them or join in the chat, just so we can see some of the things that you know you share to your community over and over and over again.

If you don't mind, just throw them into the chat.

>> I saw Bethany put in look how easy that was. Kristine says, it's the law! It's the law!

[Laughter].

It's going to fast, Gary said I'm not resourced, I don't have the resources. That means time, money, staff, et cetera, to do that!

>> Right. Start early.

>> Section 508 is not a part of the ABA. Oh, my goodness?

>> ANGELA WATKINS: What? People fighting back?

>> This is unfortunately not an option but rather a requirement.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Okay, awesome. Oh, yeah, I got that one. Someone told me it doesn't affect me, why should I care? I'm like, what if it was you? I mean, people don't understand that you could ‑‑ no one wants ‑‑ no one's asking that something horrible's going to happen to you. But what if it was you?

I said someone tell me, we'll go back to the chat, yeah, I got my old eyes going on. I'm like, you know what? We have experienced eyes, we've seen things, and our eyes are tired of seeing things so we need glasses to see more.

It's too urgent to be made accessible? Oh, I've heard I don't have time, that's why I'm calling you, can you fix it?

I'm like, I'll show you how so you can know how to do it in the future.

One of the things did I forget to mention and one of the things I always tell people, it's like, let me know what I need to do to give it to your team. I'm like, oh, our team will be glad to share with you while you go through the accessibility checker so you can have some support. We come to your house to play so that we know how your layout is set up so you can play the best way you can every time you need to play. Almost like John Pardoe, what have they won? Glad you asked. They've won the knowledge to use accessibility checker in Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, and PowerPoint. Isn't that a wonderful prize?

The vendor will comply and so we don't have to review the ACR ‑‑ what? You do have to review the ACR. PDF, ADR compliant ‑‑ I'm just going through the chat.

Oh, yes, missing heading levels. Alt text, header style, we've been doing a good job with accessibility, but usability gets lost in translation.

That's a great point, because one of the things is how I do use it? I'm like, it's too urgent. Do we have a thumbs up about people talking about I don't have time. Or the person I normally give it to is not here. And I'm like, give it to? Why aren't you doing this?

It's the law, therefore it's a ‑‑ tables for data ‑‑ thank you! The table ‑‑ table ‑‑ thank you. Because we're even doing some training now about a bit beyond accessibility checker and letting people know we're revising them. You know there's a ruler and a tab thing, right, so you can actually use the tabs to allow your content instead of using the table. So use tables for data. Accessibility checker is too good and so we're unable to comply with ‑‑ what?

>> I have a good one.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Yeah, yeah, please.

>> This person doesn't say this, but colleagues say to her, we only worry about compliance if it's external.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Uh!

>> What happened to all the internal people?

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Right!

>> True story, happened yesterday.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: They only talk about external support?

Well you know what? Everybody's a customer of accessibility.

>> I didn't know that.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Yeah.

[Multiple conversations].

>> ANGELA WATKINS: But she refused to comply?

>> She said the agency doesn't worry about it unless it's external. They don't care about people that work within the agency.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: So when that person that's internal who can't get their stuff done and misses an important deadline and decides to sue, I wonder what they'll say then.

>> It sounds like a lawsuit to me.

>> I'm getting warmed up ‑‑ I'm heading towards retirement and getting warmed up.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: What? PowerPoint women ‑‑ PowerPoint management is showing themselves as not being leaders.

And the thing is, there are times, and we're going to get ready for our inflight movie. There are times they say everybody's important. One, I don't have children. But people are lying, all our children are important. But y'all keep putting security more important than the privacy, more important than accessibility and accessibility is supposed to be part of that whole thing. We are getting partners, I'll share more about that next leg of our trip.

But the thing is if I have a privacy and security compromised because it's not accessible, we have failed. If I have to give information to someone else because I can't do it myself independently, and it's my private information and data, but we're secure, no. I'm not secure. My information is compromised.

This is not a good thing. This is not a good thing for me. So it's just as important as security and privacy. We are partners in making sure people can get their work done. And don't compromise at any level.

I know they're like, well, if we get a breach. Okay, well as soon as I have to give up my information, you are breached. Did you not think about that?

And so I heard once from a director, it doesn't affect enough people to move the needle. That ‑‑ uh. That needle can sting when someone is ready to sue.

So I'm just ‑‑ thank you for definitely showing this, because again, we want people to know it's important. We want to ‑‑ there's still sometimes a fight. It's almost like a boxer at times, all right, let me stand? My corner for a minute, rest up, now I'm going to get up and ready back to boxing.

It shouldn't have to be a fight. We should be dancing together, collaborating. And I won't teach your vendor who has contracted to create documents ‑‑ oh, yes, push back when they say it's 508 compliance and I can go through the document and find errors. Yeah.

And we need to give our CORS resources so they can check, or at least the minimum review it. But again, we're asking vendors, what is your proof that you're accessible?

So one of the things I want to make sure as we fly and go into our soaring, again, your flight attendant Rochelle is back and your flight attendant wants to make sure you're buckled in, strapped in, and ready for your inflight movie. Again, your own resources and tablets and electronics will be allowed to do your own entertainment after our inflight story, a hero's tale. ‑‑ a hero's story. And I let you know it's 100% on rotten tomatoes. Thank you so much and please enjoy your inflight entertainment.

>> MARCELLE SALLEY‑OWENS: I am not new to accessibility or understanding how the lack of accessibility tools can impact individuals with a disability.

I, for one, grew one a cousin who was hard of hearing. She wore hearing aids. When wearing hearing aids, she had to wear a special vest that had a little pocket that held a little device that looked like a transistor radio.

It then had two removable ear plugs that insert into it. One for the left ear and one for the right ear.

Her hearing aid was actually used as one of our playing toys. Pretty much on a daily basis her hearing aids were used in one of our little games.

She would keep one ‑‑ she would keep one earplug in her ear, and we each would take turns wearing the other. We would play with all the little nobody's and gadgets to listen to hear what she heard.

We'd play games of turning up the volume as loud as possible and to see if we could whisper and hear it, if we scream, how loud we would hear it.

We would even play how low we can put the volume on those ‑‑ on the hearing aids.

When I think back now, I was already testing accessibility tools. We played games where we would try to read lips, mainly because she did, and we wanted to do what she did. We played games where we would call it, as we would say, let's play school.

We created flashcards and some of us would be the students. We would sound the word and pronounce the word and we always included my cousin and make her pronounce the word over and over again until it was in a sound that we could understand what she was saying.

We played other games in which she would teach us sign language. She was our teacher in the classroom, and she would teach us sign language. Then we would have competitions, who could sign the word the faster or who could finger spell the letters the quickest.

Although I didn't fully understand then, I knew that there was a lack of accessibility and that it was not considered important.

There were plenty of times when we were sitting down watching TV and we would have to explain to her what the person said, because there was no closed captioning.

When we would go out around people that wasn't in our circle, we were her interpreters. Eventually, my cousin did move away, and in order for us to continue communicating with her, she all had to learn how to use the TTY. I didn't realize it until later in life that I was an advocator at a very young age.

Now let's fast forward many years later. Covid hit us, 2020. Everything shut down. People had a hard time getting appointments, medical appointments, and others were just afraid to go to the doctor for exams or certain procedures.

We went through all of 2020, here comes 2021. When things did open up, there were still continuous delays in getting medical appointments for any of your annual wellness exams.

And I was one of them. One of my first wellness checks of 2021 was going to the optometrist for my annual eye checkup. I went to the doctor, sat in that exam chair, had a little chitchat, and then click, the lights went dim to start my exam.

Looking forward, the eye chart illuminates, and some letters appear. He closes the slot to cover one eye and asks ‑‑ and he asked me to read the letters on each line as he clicked from large to small.

He says, tell me what you see. I continued to spout out the letters that I saw, up to the smallest that I can see.

I've worn glasses most of my life, since I was in the first grade, so I pretty much knew how far down I could go down those list of letters.

Next, the doctor closes the slot to cover the other eye. I attempted to read the chart, but stopped because I didn't fully see the letters, just pieces. I said to the doctor, I can't see the letters due to the glare from outside. So I can't tell you what I see. I only see a little mark.

He says, all right, one second. He gets up, goes behind the chair and fools around with the blinds and he's like, how's this? How's this? I'm looking and I'm looking, and once again he says, read to me the letters on the board. And I say, I'm looking but I don't see much. I still only see parts of the letters because I cannot tell ‑‑ so I can't tell you what the actual letter is.

So then he says, okay, let's look at the board using both your eyes. I continue to stare, and then I say to him, the letters are blurry, but in addition, the letters are all twisted and unrecognizable. I say to him, give me a few minutes and I'll look again. But I got the same result.

The doctor says, come with me, I think I need to do an optical image test on your eyes. He performs the test and asks me to return to the exam room. He returned urgently and gives me definitely, definitely news that I wasn't expecting. He says, I need to send you to a specialist because you're going to probably need surgery most likely as soon as possible. My first reaction was shock, but then it was fear. The only thing I can think in my mind was I'm losing my vision? Am I going to lose my eyesight?

I started throwing him a bunch of questions. What is the surgery? What was going to happen to my vision? Then my next thought was, did I do something wrong?

Then I said, should I have came soon center why wasn't it picked up earlier? Because I get my eye exam every year. Was there a way that I could have prevented it?

I didn't get any of those answers at the time except that I scheduled you to see a specialist and a specialist has scheduled to see you within two days. Those two days waiting for those two days to pass felt like an eternity. I was constantly on the Internet searching about vision on seeing squiggly words and eyes being blurried, worrying about my eyesight. And then it hit me how would my job be affected from this?

Two days later it was Friday. I went to see the surgeon. They performed all the necessary tests and I was scheduled for surgery within less than two weeks. I asked all the questions about what happens during the surgery if my current vision would return, yadda, yadda, yadda. And his response was we will only know with time. Those were not very encouraging words to me.

Surgery was outpatient surgery. This surgery required me getting a gas bubble placed in my eye. After the surgery, I had to wear a patch over my eye along with special dark shades when going outdoors. I was required to do everything face down looking at a floor for five days. When the eye patch was removed, I was still required to wear the dark shades for the next couple of weeks outdoors.

Especially on sunny days. Well, it was sunny every day because it was in the middle of summer.

One thing is that this unexpected change in my life introduced me to audio books. Something I never used, never thought I would. I am one of those individuals that fill ‑‑ that like to feel the pages with their fingertips.

I got through the surgery and stayed out of the sun as much as possible. One of the most difficult things for me during my recovery from the surgery was the need to rely on others to chauffeur me around.

I got through it, though, but not with a few choice words once in a while.

My next challenge was going to be working, since it required me to stare at the screen all day long.

I asked myself, how am I going to be able to do my job and function? This is when I realized I must take advantage of all the accessibility tools that I myself was always recommending and training others about.

Are you asking yourself, what kind of surgery did she have? Well, I had to have surgery because I had a macular hole. It is the separation of the clear gel of the eyeball from the retina.

This affects your ability to read, write, and possibly drive. This basically can happen to anyone at any time. I knew as I got older I would eventually need to take advantage of some of the accessibility tools that was available today. But I didn't think it was going to be this soon.

I had to accept that I, myself, now have accessibility challenges. My reading continues to be affected, and most likely for the rest of my life. We'll see. I continue to find myself experiencing also some color contrast issues as well.

I just have to wait over time and see how well my eyes heal. What I do to overcome these challenges on a daily basis?

For one, I take advantage of all the accessibility tools embedded in Microsoft. Basically, these are the same tools as I said I referred to my customers. One of the biggest Microsoft accessibility tools that I utilize is the dark mode feature. This allows me to read text with a dark background and white text. Basically any tools that I use, one of the first things I do is check to see if the tool has the accessibility option of the dark mode feature.

I also used the read mode. Dictation, focus mode, especially the zoom feature. Having these features available has not hindered me from doing my job. The issues that I do come across has to do with getting official communications and documents where the text is too small.

But hey, I can zoom in on those. And documents in which color contrast is not taken into consideration.

When you're impacted with the disability that may be permanent temporarily or situational, I think it makes you even more aware and you work even harder to get people to stop making accessibility as an afterthought.

None of us are going to stay young and we all will eventually need to take advantage of the accessibility tools either at home or work. Think about how many of us use closed captioning featured ‑‑ features at home when watching TV, especially for our movies when accents are difficult to understand. You don't want to bother another individual in the room, or the audio quality is bad.

A lot of people have some form of disability but don't feel comfortable sharing. Or about how they need to use accessibility ‑‑ accessible tools to get their job done.

We can't stop or slow down when it comes to accessibility. The more we advocate, the more we train, the more we can improve people's understanding and acknowledgement of the importance of accessibility. We need to see this is not just for benefit of those currently with a disability, but for those in the future. This includes us as we all age.

So there's one thing I want you to remember is that accessibility is everyone's responsibility. I've noticed as I shared with other colleagues about my challenges as well as ‑‑ as well as the tools at my disposal, like using Microsoft dark mode when working, many of them started to use the feature because they find that it is helpful for them visually as well.

So currently one of my roles at my agency is being a Section 508 deputy manager. Part of my role is to maturity program. I help users with making their content accessible, ensure that agencies purchase accessible tools when possible, and pilot test the accessible tools for purchasing.

Basically I have never held this type of role, and now that I find myself testing software like JAWS, JAWS I inspect, can look, to make sure people have a good experience. It's not just important for me, but for other people regardless of your role. No one needs to know about your disability.

I'm sharing my story because it's the opportunity to share. But it is not necessary to share it with people I work with. The whole point is that you don't need to know about someone's disability to do the right thing. By ensuring your content is accessible so everyone can get their jobs done independently.

I've been to Compliance Canyon before. What a flight I had. What a view. Compliance Canyon is a great trip to take.

Enjoy the ride!

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Thank you so ‑‑

>> MARCELLE SALLEY‑OWENS: I'm going to change my voice. I am flight attendance Charlene. This concludes our inflight movie. Please bring your chairs to its normal position. We will be descending soon for our layover in alternative text road. The layover is for 15 minutes.

We ask all passengers to please remain seated and allow those passengers disembarking to get their accessibility baggage. You may move about the cabin after that to do a quick stretch and to use the restrooms before we let the next round of passengers aboard for our final destination to Compliance Canyon.

Back to you.

>> Thank you so much, Ladies and Gentlemen. This is your captain speaking. We are going to take a brief break and I'm going to ask my first officer Angela, Angela, how are we on flight time?

>> ANGELA WATKINS: We are ‑‑ we are doing well on flight time. People can take at least ten, 12‑minute break ‑‑ 13‑minute break, sorry. 13‑minute break. It's 1:42. We ask people to return by 1:55.

>> Thank you, everyone, please take your break and return at 1:55.

[Break]

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Just want to confirm with the captain, are we good to move forward?

>> Recording in progress.

>> Yes, first officer, we are ready to move forward on to our next location.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Thank you so much.

Again, welcome, everyone. I am again your flight attendant Rochelle. We will be embarking on the next leg of our flight to Compliance Canyon. Oh, you know what? Please forgive me, there's a little turbulence on here. Sorry, we're stabling out. Thank you very much, captain, for making sure our flight is as smooth as possible.

On this next leg we will be switching out our air marshal and unfortunately our air marshal will be escorting one of our passengers off for noncompliance. Remember, it is a law to be compliant and we take that very seriously. Thank you, air marshal Bill, and we'll be welcoming air marshal Tom on the next part of this flight.

And also while we're ‑‑ you know what? We want to be introducing and just welcoming our new attendees. Some of them have disabilities that are permanent, some are temporary, some have a sling, some permanent carrying on their children in their arms and we recognize they may not be able to do and manage all the facilities on board. But we will assist those who need them.

And again, those who need help will get provided the help they need from a reasonable accommodation.

Others ‑‑ sir, you need to make sure your belt is done well. No, sir, we don't do that for you right here. We notice you're able to do that yourself.

I understand, sir, other flights may have done it for you. But on our flight, 508, we work to make sure you're as independent as possible and know how do it in the future. Because when you're not safe, you're a danger to others if you're flipping and flopping around in your chair and not doing what's necessary to make sure everyone gets what they need to do and get to their flight safely.

So we want to make sure everyone knows as flight attendant Charlotte demonstrated before, as she did so again, how to make sure your seatbelt and that you're fastened in securely.

Also, please know that we will be coming around with pre refreshments as we continue on to our flight. Those of you who are going to Compliance Canyon to buy things, we have a special pouring of accessibility in your special cups for you. We want to make sure everything you buy is perceivable, operable, understandable and robust while you're visiting the gift stores in Compliance Canyon. Those of you who will be doing web development, we have a special pouring of accessibility for you as well. Please remember to keep your cups full and make sure you do not spill them or disregard what we have poured into you so you can also make sure you're mindful of what's perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust.

For those of you who may not be buying and/or developing anything, you also have special poured accessibility cups as well. There's something for everyone to keep in mind of what needs to be done for making sure things are in a good point for other people.

Now, again, we want to thank you as you are onboarding and you're going to enjoy your flight. Again, we have a sea of security around us as we are next to the privacy peaks. But I want to thank you for flying flight 508. Please remember to keep mindful of things you need to do to make sure things are accessible not just for you, but for your passengers and coworkers as well.

Thank you so much.

Good, this is just regular Anggie speaking again. One of the things I want as we go through and talk, because I want to share with you guys some of the things that we're doing even in our ‑‑ I'm going to share my screen in a moment, but about making sure we are ‑‑ you know, we know we have to repeat it over and over again. But if you can use the chat and just share with us as the group, what are some of the positive feedback you get from your users from the efforts you make to help them?

I mentioned before the lady who was like, thank you for repeating it, I appreciate it. And we have Q&A sessions. So I'm going to share my screen. I want to share my screen in just one moment. But we have ‑‑ I think I've shared with others ‑‑ oh, just a minute. Okay, cool. Hold on one second.

I'm trying to make sure which screen I am sharing. Window. Ah, okay, cool.

And here we go. Hold on one second. I'm going to have to move my sheet for a moment. I want to share this screen. Give me one second. I think I have to scroll or move something. I'm trying to just get the thing and just share. I may be having technical difficulties. Okay. Hold on one second. I think I am having technical difficulties in sharing. Ah, here we go. Share. Here we go.

All right. I think I'm ‑‑ I'm trying to figure out which screen I'm sharing. Can someone tell me what they are seeing?

>> You have a ‑‑ so this is your Microsoft blue ‑‑ it's the Microsoft screen.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Okay.

>> That's an email screen.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: You said email screen?

>> Yes, there's an email.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Okay. Sorry for sharing my email. I'm trying to move my content to the spot where I'm actually trying to get to. Let me just unshare, because I'm not sure what I'm sharing. Hold on a second.

Okay. All right. Screen one. Okay. And that's what I wanted to see. You can see actually my bimonthly meeting information?

>> Yes.

>> Okay, cool.

>> Yes.

>> So let me move my corporate calendar information. I want you to see an Excel spreadsheet. Are you seeing Excel spreadsheet now?

>> Yes.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Awesome. Okay. I want to make sure I got the right spreadsheet in front. One of the things I wanted to share is that when I started the whole thing about 508 and things like that, I wanted to use my strengths about training and showing people what they can do and what they could know. One of the things we started off with was ‑‑ first, it was accessibility series.

Accessibility is great, you know, debate and different things like that, I was trying to be all cutesy to invite people in and make sure they paid attention.

So what I'm sharing right now is the first tab ‑‑ now it's called hands‑on in tech use. We call our series of hands‑on training PBGC tech‑U. Technology meets usability. Technology, usability to help with accessibility.

Because one of the things we kept seeing is that people ‑‑ some of the comments that was shared, why is it important for me do this? There's 1% of people who need accessibility stuff.

And I'm like, that one ‑‑ I won't say it's selfish, although that's how I feel internally, but one of the things somebody actually just gave good advice is that they were oblivious to the need. They weren't trying to be mean, but sometimes ignorant is not necessarily a bad word. It's generally a lack of knowledge of what needs to happen.

And again, we started small. And I know there are things that, you know, accessibility checker in Adobe does not check everything. And Microsoft checker does not check everything either. We're looking for baby steps to move that needle.

Because if everybody ‑‑ oh, it's too hard. I gotta do so much stuff. I'm like, it's not that hard. And especially if you learn stuff and use the features that are inherently available, like style sheets, you can save your whole world a whole lot of issues.

There are a lot of people that I've learned who have been using Microsoft for years the wrong way for years. You tell them, use the heading. What's a heading? A style sheet? What? I don't understand what you're saying. That's just too hard.

I'm like, you can click on it, open up a style and click heading 1 and the document's not even that long. Give someone some navigation so they can get through your document.

And even recently, again, I was sharing a bit about beyond accessibility checker is to show people how easy it is to use styles. How easy it is to navigate information when they have it available. So we're demonstrating this stuff. But I digress.

What I wanted to share and definitely look at the chat eventually as well, is some of the stuff you've heard your peers say about the efforts that you make.

So, back again 2018 I was getting ready to start the training and stuff like that. We got the hands‑on tech‑U and we have these classes, again, how to use accessibility checker, and just to give baby steps. So I've been doing this for a while, so now I have to change to 2020 and we ask people and we did a survey, what do you want to learn? What's your priority? What are the main documents that you used so we can actually give you what you're looking for.

Yeah, we asked them, ooh, I want this, I want this. And then when we had them, some people didn't show up. But we kept going. We forged through and doing our thing and offering the courses and our classes.

So one of the things that we do now, I mean, also that's the hands‑on tech‑U. That was 2018 when we started. We also because of the handbook made sure we also had open hours. Q&A session. And again, try to be cute, Section 508 is great and a debate aspect of it. Come talk to us.

So we would come in, make sure we did it once a month for an hour and just have a topic and just, you know, just make our self available if they had questions.

And it was one of those again, Bueller? Nobody had anything. So we structured even our Q&A session to have like, you know what? Here's a to take this we'll show and talk about and have that as a starter. Because that may be the conversation starter. So that's how we started doing those. People could pop in and they could pop out and we just make sure we kept track of the topics that we're keeping. That's what this whole Excel spreadsheet is for so we know what we said, when we said it, how we said it. And if we had a different conversation leader from the team, because it's more than just me, it's more than Marcelle. We have at least eight or nine other people that we try to make sure to promote and get out there. There are people who's like, Angela. Yeah. But I have a team. They send me an email, I'm like, yeah, but I have a mailbox, it's Section 508 mailbox. I just know you. But I'm trying to make sure you get to know the other members of the team. I'm just working with you.

I'm like, okay, as long as we're working, okay, that's fine. But please know there's a whole team of us here to help you and support you.

So here are the Q&A starter topics so we could structure the meeting, talk about this for 20, 30 minutes, leave the next half for Q&A and different things and make sure the topics are, you know, engaging.

So then something happened and management was upset, they were like what else can we do? We can start monthly tips.

So we started monthly tips in April [broken audio] here, what about this? And do this and don't do this and I'm keeping track of everything. I'll show you where our library is. So we moved the things that was going in email to an intranet site or SharePoint area, whatever, so we can actually have that available to them.

We have [broken audio] Q&A for starters, their takeaways. Even though we save them to the library, [broken audio].

>> Angela, you're breaking up some.

>> Can you hear me better now?

>> Yes.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Okay. Let me know again if I'm breaking up. Did you hear ‑‑ it was just going in and out?

>> Yes, you were going in and out.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Okay. Let me do it again, hopefully this will be better, my connection will be better.

So one of the things we started doing for those in attendance also received [broken audio] say again.

>> It is happening again. I'm not sure if it's because our network ‑‑ I don't know. You may have to go off camera and try it, see if that works.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Okay. You sound good. You want to share? You want to share? Is it still breaking up?

Maybe because I'm sharing my screen as well? I don't know.

>> MARCELLE SALLEY‑OWENS: Yeah, I think so.

>> That's why I was saying maybe you want to go off camera and talk about it, see what happens.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Okay. Go off camera or stop sharing? I'll just stop sharing first. Can you hear me any better now or no?

>> Yes, you're fine.

>> Yeah, without the sharing, when you're talking about your screen, switch off your camera.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: All right. So without ‑‑ well, we did we got a glimpse of some things. But one of the things I'll share without sharing the actual file, we restructured our Q&A and then we implemented like what would you do scenarios. Again, everything is to ‑‑ working to get conversations started with people so they can feel that they can contribute and participate.

So one of the things we started changing up was then our Q&A started with a little bit of a demo of a topic, 15, 20 minutes. And then we have a Q&A scenario, like what would you do scenario so that we could get people polling and interacting with one another. And we could ask them. And some of the questions was like, if you needed to check your accessibility, you know, would you use the accessibility checker? Call a friend? Or not do it at all?

So, you know, and we let people know all the questions were anonymous. So they could actually just be, you know, free to answer as honestly as possible without any retribution of calling people out. But it gave us a good way to have a post check of what really are you doing? How are our trainings helping and what are you learning?

Because even some of the answers was I don't know what you're talking about with the accessibility checker. I'm like, really? Okay.

But it let us know what we needed to do, how we needed to target people, that kind of thing.

So the other aspect is what you don't seep area you don't see that, but we just made that part of our topic. In the beginning, we had one topic a month, and they're just like, let's get this out there. We were just gung ho. I'm like, we're going to share them with everything. And it's like, they're not listening.

So how we implemented our own flight attendant process is as ‑‑ well, let me step back. 2022, one thing we wanted to make sure with the handbook is that we wanted to make sure we had some consistency. Now outside of the fact that our 508 team meets monthly, we started meeting at the first Wednesday of the month.

But we would have our Q&A session the first Tuesday of the month.

And then we have our tip like the first Thursday of the month. So you got something in a different week on a different day. And then we would have our hands‑on things people could register via the learning development division on our fourth Wednesday of the month.

So, and we started just doing that. At one point our hands‑on training was done at 10:00 a.m. and then 2:00. But again, sometimes the people weren't coming. And I'm like, we have to face the fact, if you have to pay somebody to come and only two or three people trickling in, that's not a good investment.

So we changed it recently, even in 2022, to just have one session in the month at 2:00 p.m. So in the afternoon. So now we're in 2023, we're getting ready to actually go back to the office. I'm going to be coming in on, like, one day a week, which is Wednesday. So for 2023, we moved everything to be on a Wednesday.

So now the Q&A will be on Wednesday. And again, people are welcome to pop in and pop out even from the teams electronically. The tip will come out the third Wednesday. But the other thing that we've done is we have ‑‑ we have gelled things even more succinctly and repetition, we have four topics a year. We have one topic a quarter. One of the things is like, well, our timing may not be as flexible for people ‑‑ people may not ‑‑ people will miss our session, but if we can be flexible enough to repeat it, then people can still get it. They get three times for a topic. So January, February, March, everything's about, you know, a little bit on the accessibility checker. Then we have the next quarter.

So a bit beyond accessibility checker is a Q&A session. And we have a takeaway document where we go over what we're going to talk about, how we're going to do our what would you do scenario. And then we go through and read the document. I'm not always, as you can kind of see, always doing a PowerPoint presentation.

So we go through and read the Word document which has links for more resources, information, it has time for demo so we can actually demo a little bit of what we're doing to give people a taste and a teaser. But it also is a plug for people to register for the hands‑on training about the same topic where we have to actually give actual exercises.

And we're actually doing this, because our environment sometimes it's like we give them baby steps so they can feel successful so they can go on to make larger steps later. Because they already feel overwhelmed and already feel that it's hard, yes, we have to make it a little bit more palatable so they can feel like it's not that bad. Yes, there's more to it. There's always more to it.

But if we can at least get you to feel successful in this part and understand how it makes a difference for someone, you'll be more inclined to do more of it as you expand your repertoire.

You know what? We'll fix it at the end. No, no, nope. No, no, no, you fix if as you go. But I can do it at the end. I get that you're saying, but if you fix it while you go, you put the accessibility checker on while you go, you don't have to be fixing a whole lot of stuff at the end. One graphic that you do, you use over and over again, why fix it 15 different times when you can fix it once and paste it 14 other?

You have to think a little differently about what you're doing. It's not hard, it's just a different way of doing your information.

I put my style sheets ‑‑ no, no, no. You can put your style sheets now, that way if you're working and doing things, you can move stuff around faster and easier. Let me show you the benefits of using what's already in the tool so you can have a better experience overall. Oh. Oh. My favorite was tap, tap, tap, smack the hand. No, tap, tap, tap. There's a ruler in Word, you can put your little tab in one spot and tell it where to go. When you hit that tab one time and that's where it goes. No, you don't need a table, you just need to use the ruler and the tab, they've got the left tab, decimal tab, all kinds of tabs to help you align your information.

I didn't know this was here. I realize that because that is what was wrong with your document. You can't say that unless you have that special relationship with them. But I'm like, did you ever steak a class? They have actual training for Word for three or four hours?

And that's the time to learn how to do it right the first time so you can stop wasting time fixing the issues in the first place. And I'm like, you're wasting your precious time by not taking an investment to learn how to do it better the first time the rate way from the get‑go.

But I didn't know this was here. I know because I saw your email. I know you didn't know it was there. I know. I saw your document. I know you didn't know it was there. I know. I saw your PDF and it had no bookmarks so I could navigate my document because you printed it the wrong way.

We always can tell something. But they need to understand sometimes we're here to collaborate with you, not fix it for you. Because if I fix it for you now, you will continue to do it wrong over and over and over again.

So I digressed with my little venting a little bit. However, the main thing, though, is we set up stuff to be as flexible as possible so if you can't make it in the first month, maybe you can make. Second month. Or maybe you can make. Third month. Or you know what? Maybe you can't make any month. But you know what? We've already put it in our library. I wanted to share that, I should have made a picture. But we put it in our PBGC Section 508 library so you can access it at any given time.

I mentioned sometimes I feel like Bob Ross. Let me paint his happy little tree. Let me just create my happy little email with all the links to all the things in our happy little library so you can get all the resources you need to be successful. We have information on color contrast. We have information on COR principles. We have information on how to do a check for your we development. We've modified certain things for the tables. If you don't want to do a full accessibility report based on a VPAT, okay, we have these other checklists that you can do to make sure you can at least have an eye for the level of detail you have to make sure your stuff is correct.

We have tools to help you. They're always there, they're always available. And I know I can't still share, but the other thing that I was excited about just sharing a bit, we are ‑‑ as Marcelle mentioned or flight attendant Charlotte mentioned, we are making sure we mature our program for complaints that we get, our providing the CIO a Power B.I. board with information and all the different events. It's growing.

First and foremost, we're sharing about the complaints that we will have over the years and it's a Power B.I. dashboard. And we can let him know how many things have come in, what category have they come in in, and we can also see to tell the story, okay, maybe we had a spike in this of non‑captioned video. And then eventually that gets reduced in number in coming years.

So we're seeing progress. We're seeing people care more. We're seeing, you know, it's a two‑way story. Some people care more. Some people are like we need to make sure the 508 team is able to fix everything. No, no, no, no, no. That's backwards. That's backwards. That's backwards.

We need to make sure the 508 team's efforts are landing and that management, you know, we use the tools we have already to hold people accountable. A lot of times again, like some of the comments already and I want to go back in there, that people are feeling that, you know, sometimes it's like toxic or hostile or whatever, some people are like we don't have enough people to care about.

I'm like, no, one person is enough to care. And that's the whole thing. One person can make a difference. That's the whole part of this whole thing. We are here to make a difference.

So you know that what we're doing as impact. And they want to make sure that what we're doing can be measurable.

Now, the other part is, you know, I saw somebody even talking about DEIA. The A in DEIA is not supposed to be afterthought, it's supposed to be accessibility. And even I have vented, I'm like ‑‑ I'm on one of the boards and councils and I saw some of the templates and I'm like, doesn't have any heading. The template had a whole lot of red text. And it didn't even have like the important part. I'm like, how are we leading if we're not doing the same thing?

What message are we sending? And so one of the things did I for our team was part of my thing is, you know what? I'm not going to scare you. I'm not. I'm going to make sure your document looks exactly like you sent it, but I'm still going to give it heading structure.

That's the other thing I teach people. Whoa, no, no. People are scared about I don't know what's going to happen. I'm going to let you know what's going to happen. I'm not going to make it look any different, but I can make sure it has structure so someone reading with a screen reader can go through your document and not have to scroll through every page.

So when you convert this to a PDF document, that PDF can also be navigated with their bookmarks because style sheets there are.

Y'all got teams of people creating, you know, tech documents, design documents, these are web team members trying to tell somebody how they're doing the work. Back up your PDF doesn't have a style sheet because maybe you didn't get ‑‑ well, just request it. It's not like you can't get the tools you need to do the job that you need to do because I have no desire as a proofer to scroll down a 53‑page document when if you put bookmarks in your style sheets in there, I can hop from one section to the next.

One of the things I did, if it's important enough to convey, people have to understand what you have to say. Make sure it's accessible. You want people to actually know that.

And the thing is, the whole point is to still be encouraging, because what we do is not in vain. Even if we feel like a flight attendant day in and day out, or the brief thing about the boxer, let me get in here and fight again, it's not in vain.

I know it's a hit or miss here and there. The flight attendant is talking and people are doing their own thing and not paying attention because they're old hats at flying.

I know this already.

Yeah, but when we really hit turbulence and we need to do something important, then where ‑‑ where will you be? Because I had other ‑‑ Marcelle and I had the other situation. Oh, I got to get this done immediately. I need to ‑‑ I just have to ‑‑ and I'm like, well, one, I'm busy. Team is busy. Here's an email with the exercise guide and the tips about how to use it, you know, the checker accessibility feature and I'll meet you, you know, I can schedule a meeting for you later on.

Then you get there and they're like, I didn't understand what you said. Well what step was it? I just didn't understand anything. What page were you on? And then you get some people that are like, I didn't read anything. Well, that stands to reason you didn't understand anything because you didn't bother to read.

So one of the things that we try to make sure is that you have to take accountability. Let me meet you where you are, but at least be somewhere to meet.

I'm seeing a comment real quick. Anggie, where do you draw the line between training people in the features functions of MS office versus assisting the user and understanding accessibility? This is great that your office provides such training. The training your conducting is really just MS office training to a certain extent.

Well, I have to be careful and I really make sure the line is I am showing you the accessibility checker. We have an actual learning development center to show them all the other wonderful benefits of Microsoft.

So as long as I am referring back to accessibility, I give myself the license to help them learn. But in most of all of our communications, most of the Q&A is be on the lookout for courses for LDD, sign up for Microsoft Office classes. When we have our hands‑on tech stuff, we said hey, make sure you sign up for courses for LDD. We try to maintain a strict line so we're not overstepping.

If I show you style sheets, that's because I want somebody else to move down that document. The other part is even when I show other features doing like mission accessible, it's always in the mindset this is an accessibility tool feature ‑‑ I'm sorry, I missed the ASL interpreter on the screen.

>> She's there, Anggie.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Because I was seeing her and then I didn't see her. Okay. So everything is a fine line at making sure that if I'm showing you a feature, this is how it supports accessibility. Because there are other tools available. I opened up a document, no heading. Even in PowerPoint, no slide title. That's an error. So that whole thing is about navigating and being able to understand your content. There's a fine line, because I am not claiming to be an instructor of, per se, with LDD. They have contractors and people are doing the course and they give them books and everything else.

So I hope that answered your question.

Do you record these ‑‑ those ‑‑

>> Angela.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Yes, go ahead.

>> I had a question, I put it in chat but I want to answer it out for those who do need to hear it. Samantha McFarland asks, do you record those so people can refer to them later? I answered her and I told her we cannot record our trainings, however, we make sure all the training documents are available anytime from our Section 508 SharePoint site.

Users also receive the training documents before and again after the training.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Correct. So yeah, we unfortunately because of privacy concerns and things like that, we are currently not able to record this session. However, we could possibly, you know, set aside some time and give special dispensation to record ourselves, but not the other people. The main thing is that people need to opt in to be recorded.

So we are not able to just do that just in time training.

So we actually make sure the steps are really, really clear and even when we do the hands‑on training, we tell them what page we're on. Because again, other people also, you have a lot of stuff coming at you and attention to different things like that.

So we also make sure we're calling out what page we're on when we're training, what step we're on, what exercise, that kind of thing.

You're right, there's a difference between usability and accessibility. Need to strive to ensure there's a baseline that a document is accessible, then we address the design of accessibility as USCT may not be as accessible as it should be. That's also true. Usability means I can do something with it and it makes sense.

As we're learning, sometimes again it's not lived experience. Just because we say we did accessibility, whatever, we added alt text, does it make sense? Are we also creating, like, repetitive type of thing that just brings someone else out of their experience?

Because sometimes it's not always needed to repeat everything, everything over and over again and it's just like over and over again. And I'm like, that wasn't necessary.

So even learning how to make sure we're accessing and implementing accessibility tools that's effective for the person who's going to be ingesting and using it makes sense. It's a learning curve. Just like even like the alt text, I know I used to sometimes tell people this is a screenshot of such and such.

But I understand there's going to be reading I picture of something. But if it literally is a screenshot of the user interface, you need to make sure you understand it's a screenshot of the user interface, not just the pick you too.

Then the other part is, is there context in the content of the document that gives illusion to what they're looking at, because the bigger picture, there's only so much text you can put in the alt text to tell somebody what's going on.

And when we're talking about a chart and a graph, what's the takeaway? No one's asking someone to put in we have data from 2007 to 2013 and da, da, da. What's the takeaway? What's your point. We lost money. Okay, say so. Say that. Then it gives more context about it.

I think I read that already.

>> MARCELLE SALLEY‑OWENS: Francis says people, and she's right, people are relying on the checkers as the end to all for making accessible documents without understanding there are other things the checkers don't cover and will need to be addressed outside of the checkers.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: That is true. And again, we're doing baby steps because if people went from doing nothing to at least something. And then we can actually still move on to that to do more. Because one of the things we're talking about, as Marcelle mentioned, we are now even working on maturing our own tools that people can use for accessibility checker like common look PDF, common look office for the PowerPoint and word factor and also we still give tips about color contrast and things like that. Microsoft isn't catching everything. But someone who uses a screen reader may have a good experience. It's not guaranteed.

And then the other part is we don't know where the product will end up. Is it internal? Is it going to be converted to a PDF? Is it going to external participants? There's other steps and other levels of security ‑‑ I mean, security, accessibility that needs to be considered as people prepare content. Going back up to chat, I wanted to see some of the positive stuff that people may have ‑‑ yeah, go ahead.

>> We have a hand up for Jean add continues, hopefully I said her name correctly.

>> Jean, come off of mute and ask your question.

>> Sorry about that. If this is an inappropriate question or comment, please let me know. But I've been bounced off like three times just trying to connect to this meeting.

And I wonder if you could address ‑‑ I think ‑‑ I see two problems with accessibility here. I see it, number one, with the technology itself and the software. It is completely too complicated. I mean, it has to be translated.

And that seems to be the problem with translation. And then we've got to train people.

And then there are all these checklists and all of these hoops to go through.

And frankly, how plausible, feasible is that and should we not focus some of our attention on the fact that IT should not be creating all of this software without the user, that the user ought to be driving how this technology is created so that it is useable and it is able. It has to be in plain language.

I look at the plain language listserv just recently, and somebody had asked for a checklist for 508 ‑‑ PowerPoint 508 compliance. And the amount of pages and pages of government directions and training and checklists, frankly, I think it's preposterous. We have to start thinking not in a bubble. We have to start thinking maybe completely outside of the way things are. We have to think of a new way.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: So thank you for your comment and the question. And the thing is, a lot of us ‑‑ a lot of IT is not necessarily, they're not creating.

We're getting customer‑off‑the‑shelf software. And we're relying on the vendor to consider how they ‑‑

>> I'm not talking about the vendors. I'm talking about the software that you're getting from people.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Right. What I'm saying is, vendors ‑‑ more vendors are being educated, in a sense. But a lot still need more education, especially when trying to work with the government. That we are expecting software to work with a varied number of users. We're expecting them to do their due diligent, even other government agencies that are promoting certain things for other governments to use. We're expecting people to take on the due diligent of understanding here's how this user might use this.

Part of the testing when we get customized stuff off the shelf is do you have a user persona with a disability issue? Make sure you're building with that in mind so you at least have an understanding of how would they use this software if they can't use a mouse?

How would they use this software they can't understand the colors that you and your palate to do things? What other ways are you compensating if I can't see this color that I can be successful using this software?

If I have a cognitive challenge and my vocabulary may have been impaired by a stroke or TBI or something else, how I can make sure, what's your language that's understandable for me for me to be successful or if you got graphics, how am I supposed to use this?

The vendors themselves are needing to be better educated about providing better customer off‑the‑shelf software for a wide range of people, even with website development.

>> Yeah, I do think, Angela, though, that even ‑‑ even if all of those things were perfect, somebody without cognitive, visual, oral, whatever, disability that ‑‑ in other words, has no trouble accessing the software, even ‑‑ even I, with graduate degrees in English think it is incomprehensible and it is difficult to use and difficult to understand.

And in a hierarchy like the government with training, I would bet that many, many people are not even getting the training they need. First of all, you shouldn't need training. If it were really well put together, nobody would need a translator.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: I'm going to disagree on that one. Even the well ‑‑ even the best thing you still should always document how it is because you don't want to presume that everybody has the same understanding about how something works.

And I mean, just like appliances that you get for your home, you think should be simple or whatever. Everything needs some type of instruction.

>> Yes.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: I'm not disagreeing that certain things need to be better.

>> I guess I'm ‑‑

>> ANGELA WATKINS: I'm agreeing with you.

>> I think I'm talking about the level of training. You know, if it were in plain language and easy to use from the get‑go, I ‑‑ you know, but you need to ‑‑ you need training on how to set up a heading. How to ‑‑ how to, you know, edit a PDF. How do this, how to do that. I mean, the ‑‑

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Well, you have to consider ‑‑ I know I'm interrupting you, but you have to consider, everybody does not have the same point of reference. Everybody is not IT savvy. Some permanent scared by technology.

So everybody does not have the same baseline of learning regardless ‑‑ you know, you have a spectrum of different things for a lot of different people. So we can't always presume if this was done this way no one would need certain things, whatever.

>> As a communication person, I can say that it means ‑‑ there is no editorial governance over any of this communication that is ‑‑ goes into this software. There's no professional, you know, like it's not a bunch of cardiologists making sure that, you know, everyone's giving instructions on cardiology in a way ‑‑ granted, there are going to be differences in the way people understand things. But overall, you shouldn't have to translate ‑‑ it shouldn't be using IT jargon, in other words. There shouldn't be any IT jargon.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: I'm not sure what software you're talking about.

>> That's what I was going to say, what software are you talking about, and Brooke asked can you elaborate on what you're saying?

I guess some are not totally connecting.

>> Sorry about that. Microsoft, just your simple Microsoft Word for crying out loud, you're Microsoft Word has different versions. And now with the agencies, they have different apps. And they don't even tell the employees what ‑‑ and different agencies sometimes can't even communicate with other agencies because they have ‑‑

>> ANGELA WATKINS: They have different versions.

>> Yes, exactly.

So could you please ‑‑

>> ANGELA WATKINS: And the thing is, and understand because we have Microsoft Office 365. And we get documents from other people, maybe different versions or that kind of thing. So some of that is compatibility. And Microsoft is still working on doing some of their own training.

I admit, they have their own website, they do provide training and some of the information is really helpful, really good. And then you also still have to consider your audience and the culture of what they can consume from their knowledge base. And sometimes the baby steps are the best thing that you have. And Microsoft is not necessarily around for the baby steps of everyone. They have a wide range of people who they ‑‑ they're trying to do their best they can.

But there are still people who ‑‑

>> Yeah, just let me ‑‑ and then I'll shut up.

I just have one last comment. I work for print and broadcast outside the government.

I dealt with editors all across the country.

I never had a problem with Microsoft Word or actually any software programs until I came to the government.

I think that so many people, myself included, are paralyzed or by a lack of knowledge or processes, there are so many processes for every ‑‑ everything that I think it gets in the way of ‑‑ of the actual content.

And I won't say another word because I've taken up too much time. Thank you so much.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: No, this is a good discussion. And I don't disagree with sometimes government can make things more complicated. And I think our goal from a 508 perspective is make things simpler. Promoting plain language is one of the definite things we need to do because government ease or gobbly gook and all this other stuff and then jumping through hoops about what's easier? I mean, we even have our own thing about why use automobile when car can work just fine? People can relate to the word car. You don't need to refer to automobile.

Why refer to usage when you can just, you know, use the word use. We ‑‑ I think there are times in the government some people are too busy showboating about just how intellectual and educated that they are that they ‑‑ they have a hard time understanding the best educated person is the one that's best understood.

I think I have a wonder ‑‑ I think I have a great vocabulary. And I understood even before I became a 508 manager I was the writer of a newsletter for a different department. And I liked acronyms. So I used the word vicarious because I'm like, okay, everybody's educated, whatever. You would not believe the amount of flak I got about the word vicarious. I'm like, that's not my fault your vocabulary wasn't here. This is four, five‑week message, whatever. But I meant a particular group of people, not the whole agency. I'm like, I don't know what vicarious means. To live through, you know.

But I needed something that worked with V. I needed vicarious. But the other part is, people who can't ‑‑ and it's not about dumbing things down. People who can't ‑‑ people who may feel insecure about saying things more plainly can sometimes make things more difficult than they need to be because again, you know, oh, I know. I had someone I'm like, okay, well I have two Dalmatians that need to accelerate across the street.

All right. See spot run. Come on. We can all, you know, have a different relation of those things and there are certain people who just need to say, see spot run.

I don't need pro‑angulate. People need to learn they don't have to use words to sound intellectual. Our goal is to make sure people can be successful in their job and you meet them where they are. Plain language doesn't mean that everything is, you know, totally plain. If you go to the public, maybe.

But if you have an audience that understands, like you mentioned cardiologists or whatever, you talking to doctors or whatever, you use the terms that are relevant to them in their industry. That is plain language to them.

But people need to take account, and that's I think the other part that we're missing sometimes, people aren't taking account their audience. And what their audience needs to be successful.

It's not about, you know, me impressing someone. I mean, I did want to make sure we had fun with our flight stuff, but the main thing is, just to put a smile on our faces, to let us know that, you know, we are a team together. We know we have to repeat things over and over and over again and it's tedious. But if we can make it fun to for each other and support each other in what we're doing, it doesn't have to be as arduous. That's one of the things I've always appreciated about our bimonthly accessibility community meetings is we can come together and vent together and recharge together and go right back in knowing, yes, you can do this! Yes, you can! With a smile. I believe in you! I will help you! No, I will not do it for you because doing it for you doesn't help you learn.

And then everyone else is going to be lesser than for it. And that's the main thing. We just want you to care enough to do something. Because that somebody who needs it could be you. Or it could simply be somebody you care about, just like with Marcelle's story. She has a cousin, you know. If it's not you, maybe you know somebody. And if it's that selfish that it doesn't matter to you until it hits home, that says more about them than it does about us and our goal.

But we always have the good fight to make things better. The more we talk, the more we communicate, you know, that is the whole point.

I want to go back to the chat and look at some other questions. Or if you want to come off mic and let me know.

>> Lots of comments and discussion going on, Anggie.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: I'm actually trying to pick something.

>> MARCELLE SALLEY‑OWENS: Catherine.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Yes.

>> I just put my comment into the chat, but because I was ‑‑ had my hand raised for a long time.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Oh, I'm sorry I missed it.

>> But I'd like to go back and remind ‑‑ no apologies necessary. I wanted to go back and remind Jeanne that has government servants, we must follow the laws. Section 508 is a law and there ‑‑ that law is surrounded by a host of other laws that we have to follow. We can't do a lot of things that we see private industry do without the repercussions that might come after them.

If we spend a dollar or dime outside of what's considered the acceptable practice for government agents, then all kinds of bad stuff can happen, right?

Chief of which our citizens don't get the services that they need. Wasteful spending can be introduced. So while we ‑‑ we hear you saying, you know, there's too repetitive, there's too complicated, you know, education has to occur, awareness has to occur, as Section 508 officers and agents and compliance specialists, that's our job to help put the word out there.

We have wonderful resources surrounding us, each of us on this call connect and talk to each other. We also have the U.S. Access Board. We have the GSA's team. We have OPM. Lots of resources that come together, collaborate, share the information, and help each other to increase awareness about the law, the accessibility, the best practices, what can be done, what can't be done. Things you don't want to try and lots of things that are happening like that.

So I don't want some of the comments that went before to kind of make it seem like none of that's happening, okay.

I also don't want people to go away from here thinking, oh, well I'm just going to throw this out the window and just do like the private industry do. Because I don't want to see us end up in jail, okay. We will go to jail and some of those other folks, okay.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Correct. I tell people all the time, even as a COR, I'm not getting any new jewelry for anybody, no bracelets, necklaces, nothing. And even I'm wearing pink today, certain colors of orange, not complementary.

>> MARCELLE SALLEY‑OWENS: William Jeffers has I had hand up and would like to speak.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Okay.

>> I think that it's crucial that we not lose track of an ultimate goal here. Yes, it's the law. Yes, it's useful in the process when we remediate products so that they pass the accessibility checklist. Yes, it's useful to have the accessibility checkers and other tools to assist us. And yes, it may be difficult, there are may be difficulties in actually going through this process.

But the ultimate reason that we're doing this is that it allows those persons such as the speaker with certain disabilities to be able to consume that content.

It allows those persons who actually use, consume, what we are putting out. So the difficulties that we encounter in going through the process of remediating or hopefully initially constructing documents and products for accessibility are true, are real, are not to be minimized.

But the reason that we do it is because it enhances the mission of our different agencies which is to serve all of the public. All of our audience.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Yes. Agreed. Thank you.

>> Well said, William.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Yeah. What we do is important because everybody needs the opportunity to be able to have the information the way they need it so they can get their job done.

Or just to learn information just the way they need to learn it. I mean, one of the things ‑‑

>> I think you misunderstood. What I was saying is above that, after you make all those changes. So that it is accessible, is it understandable? Is it useful?

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Yeah, I think that's the goal for everyone, to make sure all those checkboxes are there. And that's why we, as a community, are working toward that to make sure what we're doing is accessible, useable, feasible, and it actually has a purpose for someone when they get it that they can actually take action with it.

>> Yeah. So it's the software, is the software itself useable? Not whether or not it's accessible, but is it in itself a useful ‑‑

>> I think ‑‑ I'm sorry, I know I'm getting close to ‑‑ but I think it's a combination. The software alone can't do everything. A software's programmed by a person, and it's the combinations of partnership between the user and the person. For example, I tell people all the time, it's like, well, we got a VPAT from Microsoft. We don't need to check our documents. Well, that's not necessarily true. The VPAT is for Microsoft's creation, but you can create Ann accessible document that no one can do anything with. So it's a twofer. The software has its thing, but what do you do with it after you have it?

I mean, we all eat. There are certain foods that inherently, I'm a person that avoids gluten. Some foods are without gluten and then somebody throws some on there. Why? Why was that necessary? So it's a combination and it's a partnership. And everybody's responsible for their part, I think.

I don't think anybody was saying that, you know, everything's going to be fixed by software. It's a combination and partnership of what we do with the software that we have to make sure we don't break the accessibility features that are inherent already in there because we want to be fancy with something.

>> MARCELLE SALLEY‑OWENS: And we also have to remember with certain things, even software, it's not going to be correct. Some things have to manually be done.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Awesome. Thank you for your time. Okay, cool. We still have a question coming up. Okay. Awesome. Awesome.

>> Exactly, Samantha said it. I think this group and the others allow us to all ‑‑ us all to learn from each other and support each other through it all. And that is what ‑‑ why we ‑‑ why we do what we do.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Yeah.

>> Exactly why. We're here to support one another. And sometimes step in and say, look, I've got you. Let's get through this together.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Exactly. We're on this plane together to fly as high as we can. We're here to soar together.

>> And that's going to be our focus this year. We're going soar together. We can't leave some of us soaring and some of us on the ground. We have to soar together. We have to ‑‑

>> MARCELLE SALLEY‑OWENS: Leave no man behind.

>> Leaving no man or woman.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Leave no one behind. We hold everyone ‑‑ we'll be holding on to the wing outside the window, let me in the plane! Let me in the plane!

>> Everyone is going to be on the flight. Everyone.

[Laughter]

>> So we can continue the conversation, but I wanted to make sure, one, that in the chat we'll put the link back in to take the survey for today.

And, each ‑‑ these meetings are bimonthly, so if you are willing to share your hero story like Marcelle did, shoot me an email, I'm going to put my email in the chat. Because we would really like to hear your hero story too.

And I know a few of us have a hero story, so I'm going to put my email in the chat and just say you're willing to share your hero story. Because we have a lot ‑‑ go ahead, Angela.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: No, I said where else can we go? We went to Compliance Canyon, we visited the peaks of privacy and surrounded by the sea of security, and I think it's alternate text row that was referred to, maybe there's a compliance island or accessibility island.

>> Yeah, we might need to go to WCAG city deep in there. Yes. So this year is all ‑‑ everybody's going to be on flight 508, we're just going to go around the world touching different parts of the accessibility landscape. So there might be a part of Paris that has a WCAG piece, somewhere, and we might have to go through a WCAG piece or ‑‑ let me think. Or ‑‑

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Caption city.

>> Caption city, yes. That might be in Spain somewhere. So we're inviting everyone to come back in April for our next flight. I don't know ‑‑ I'll be the captain. I don't know who our first and second captain's going to be. But ‑‑ oh, okay. I see you, Betsy.

You will ‑‑ please join. Now, Betsy mentioned CISA. I won't be going, but there are a few people in the community speaking there. And if I'm not mistaking, Bruce Bali, Andrew Neilson, Michael Horton, Betsy, did I miss anybody? Antonio. Antonio, okay. Antonio.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Awesome.

>> Antonio H., he needs ‑‑ I always say his last name wrong. Anyway, he'll be speaking so it is going to be great. So if you're going to CISA, please make sure you go to hear them speak. They're part of our community and we want to support them.

I know your last name, Antonio, I just don't want to mess it up. So please look for Kathy, Bruce, look for Andrew Neilson's name, Michael Horton's name, look for Betsy's name, and look for Antonio ‑‑ I'm not going to mess up your name, Antonio. ‑‑ Antonio, come off mute and say your last name. Oh, and Tim Kriegen.

>> It's Haileselassie.

>> That's why I didn't say it. I didn't want to mess it up. I'm going to miss you guys too. I'll let Ava go into my place. So Tim put some information in the chat. Please, guys, make sure you go, you go hear them.

>> Awesome.

>> Anybody else have anything to share? We'll stay on a few more minutes as if you just want to chew the fat, as we used to say, you can stay on and chitchat.

>> I got leave, but I just want to say happy Valentine’s Day to everyone!

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Yes.

[Applause]

>> That's the best Valentine’s Day, definitely.

>> Thanks a lot. Great session. Bye now.

>> Bye‑bye.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Bye.

>> Don't forget to take the survey.

>> Bye, all.

>> I'm trying to find the link to CISA and I don't see it.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: There's one ‑‑ Antonio put it in there.

>> Okay. He put the link to CISA and EDU/COD.

>> Thank you.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Thank you for attending. Thank you for flying flight 508.

[Laughter].

>> I might just have to keep you on just to be the first captain. Because you say that so well.

[Laughter] the first officer.

>> This was just great. This was the highlight of my day.

>> Hello!

>> This was just sensational.

>> I have to admit, I really enjoyed the story behind the story of the flight. I think that was a really good way to, you know, segue into different things and, you know, to bring a little bit of enjoyment to a topic that can be very frustrating. So I think ‑‑ thank you, because I think that was a really ‑‑ I enjoyed that. I enjoyed that part a lot.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Awesome.

>> Thank you.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Thank you.

>> Bye‑bye. Bye, Henry! Angela, they want to know what department are you in?

>> ANGELA WATKINS: I'm in Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation ‑‑ sorry.

>> Somebody asked me a question on the listserv. I'm happy to help, but please contact me by email because I can't type anything in here. The system keeps kicking me out.

>> Jeanne, don't worry about it. Did you register?

>> Yeah, I registered.

>> Okay, I'll have them contact me. I'll have them contact me and then I'll share your email, if that's okay.

>> No, it's not you, it's IT on this end. It's not ‑‑

>> No, no, no, I'm saying because ‑‑

>> It's the IT is kicking me out.

>> Right. I'm saying, if ‑‑ because you can't share your email right now.

>> Right.

>> No, I can share ‑‑ I think I can share my ‑‑ I think I can share ‑‑ I just got kicked off again. I think I can share my email, I just can't ‑‑ somebody asked me a question in the chat and I ‑‑

>> Right.

>> ‑‑ I was able to respond. He wanted to know ‑‑ I wasn't able to type anything into the chat is what I ‑‑

>> Oh, okay.

>> So if I keep interrupting people, it's because I get put back on and I have no idea where I am in the conversation.

>> Okay. No worries. Do you want to put your ‑‑

>> Humility, oh, my God.

>> Do you want to put your email in the chat so they can reach out?

>> I don't know. I'll try. I'm at FDA.

>> Okay.

>> Just Jeanne [away from mic] I'll try putting it in the chat box.

>> Okay.

>> I may get kicked out.

>> Hold on, let me see. I'll do it for you. It's Jeanne j‑e‑a‑n‑n‑e.

>> Thanks so much. You've been straight on a couple things and you made me think.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: You're very welcome. Thank you for engaging. I appreciate it.

>> All right. We have a few more people ‑‑ interpreters, thank you.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Thank you so much.

>> Appreciate you.

>> Thank you.

>> Bye‑bye.

>> ANGELA WATKINS: Thank you.

[Event concluded]