

I want to welcome everybody to the 2020 virtual government U.S. Summit. We kicked it off with a great presentation. I am looking forward to the rest coming today, tomorrow and Thursday. I want to thank everybody who helped make this possible, starting with my co-chair Wendy Stengelr. And the staff at GSA who provided logistical support. I want to thank everybody who submitted proposals and the team who review them and plan our program. It was not an easy job because we had a lot of great proposals. I want to especially thank the prisoners who took the time to put their presentations together and share their experiences with us and to the chairs hoping to facilitate each of the sessions.

And finally, thank you to everybody who is attending today. We wouldn't be here without you and I am excited to see interest in our talks this week.

We have two sessions a day, two more tomorrow and two more Thursday. Please, if you haven't already registered, you will have to register for each of the sessions independently. That information will be in the chat. The summit has been organized by digital gov and the user experience committee practice. The mission of digital gov is to transform how government learns, builds, delivers and measures digital services in the 21st century doing that by providing people on the federal government with tools, methods, practices and policy guides they need to deliver effective and accessible digital services. Part of their mission is to support the user experience community practice. Our community provides resources to help experience work at all levels of the U.S. government and is open to anyone with an interest in in UX and a U.S. government email address. There will be information about joining in the chat. They also will have a link to our website and you will see that digitalgov supports to other communities as well, many of which are of interest to folks doing U.S. work.

A couple logistics before we get started, the videos are available a couple weeks after the summit. The presentations themselves, we are not sure, we are working on that. That may be the same timeframe, but we will let everybody know. At the end of the event, you will see a link to the survey. Please take the time to fill it out so we can make our future even better. Keep your eye on the chat because there will be some digital gov that will be posting helpful links, including the link to the live captioning. If you have any technological issues, please post them in chat. Everybody is muted except for the panelists. That is how you can communicate with us. Also, that Beth our chair today and she will be monitoring the chat for questions for presenters at the end of the session. Please put all of your questions and issues in chat and we will follow up. Just a final reminder this event is being recorded.

Thank you to everybody involved. I am turning it over to Beth Martin who is chairing the session. I am U.S. lead with the FAA. Our speakers are Jennifer Strickland and Kendra Skeene.. They will talk about designing and developing accessible digital products. Their presentation is called Ohana for digital service design. Jennifer is a contractor supporting VA.gov where she serves as an accessibility subject matter expert for teams modernizing applications and services. With more than 25 years of experience, Jennifer has led numerous product teams and delivered outstanding results by prioritizing accessibility inclusive design and web performance. Kendra is also a contractor supporting VA.gov where she serves as the product lead for the agency's growing API platform. She has more than 10 years of government digital product experience and

has led a champion accessibility initiatives for both state and federal programs. So I will turn it over to Jennifer and Kendra.

Hello, everybody. Can everybody hear me okay? If you can't, I'll watch the chat. We are here today to talk about how we are going to incorporate Ohana throughout your digital product lifecycle. Ohana originated with me because I am a bit squishy. If you have ever met me, you know it goes with the curls and the art background. I saw it in the movie Lilo and Stitch and was moved by how they made sure to keep everyone included. No one gets left behind or forgotten. In my work at VA.gov, that was my driving force because we need to make sure at the VA that no one gets left behind or forgotten, especially after all our veterans have done for us. We are all disabled. Situationally, temporarily or permanently. I know saying off the bat that we are all disabled may sound pretty hot. But, if you think about the times when you may have had children into a not getting enough sleep, or you have one in your arm while trying to do all the other things, or if you have had one of those really long weeks since you are not getting as much sleep, or you're trying to multitask or have sprained your arm, there are a lot of different ways in which we might be situationally, temporarily disabled as well as the permanently disabled scenarios we think of more regularly. Microsoft's inclusive design toolkit is something I highly recommend taking a look at if you're interested in the subject. I think they have done a beautiful job, and I love their illustrations going through the various situations of permanent, temporary or situational impairments.

I think this one is really important because when we talk about accessibility, I think a lot of us default to screen readers for people that have visual disabilities. But we know that there is a wide range of why somebody may have an accessible thought that goes into their digital properties.

That is a great point. I have spoken with contractors who work in say NASA and they say we don't need to worry about accessibility at NASA. What if somebody breaks their arm and they have a temporary disability, and being able to navigate by just the keyboard instead of the mouse is going to make a big difference in their productivity.

Very true

.
So, I have a client in a presentation say recently that we are bringing Fortune 500 quality to government services, and it struck me, and I said no, that is not quite what we're doing because we are working in the federal space. We defer working in the government because of (it is coming)Section 508. This is usually the response people get when they think about what Section 5, having to worry about Section 508. This talk is going to help explain more about what is Section 508. And, what is inclusive design.

This graphic builds on it. Section 508 is built on something called with WCAG 2.0. This is the Web content accessibility guidelines. And in with WCAG 2.0, their success criteria for blindness, deafness and keyboard usage. WCAG came out a while ago but was only adopted relatively recently by Section 508. Since right after it was adopted, WCAG 2.1 came out and that adds mobile and cognition success criteria, which means more people are able to use it. It also improves comprehension for everybody through the use of plain language success criteria and other things. The next level would be inclusive design. That means accessible for all, not just people with disabilities. Think about people who maybe have old devices or are on challenging connectivity scenarios. That pesky slow 3G we often forget about in our product lifecycle

process, and then overall is usability. The ease-of-use, that makes it easy for everybody to use and it means that is accessible, usable and all of those business goals that they worry about, you are more likely to attain them the more usable your product is.

For compliance, a lot of times we are thinking of this bottom section are the boxes we have to check. When we are thinking about our goal is to serve all of the people that are coming to these government websites, we need to be thinking through this whole range that ways people might be interacting. And how do we make sure everyone gets the best experience in the end.

This is something I wanted to highlight a little bit more. Because WCAG 2.0 came out in 2008 but wasn't adopted to Section 508 until 2017, but then 2.1 came out in 2018, then they're already working on with CAD 3.0, which is referred to as silver on a digital gov call, the Access Board indicated they anticipate waiting until that comes out to update Section 508 again. For us at the VA, this is not quite enough. We really need to make sure we are thinking about WCAG 2.1 because at least half of our veteran population have an identified cognitive impairment PTSD, traumatic brain injury, anxiety, depression, etc. We really need to be pushing beyond just Section 508 compliance to doing what we call accessibility beyond compliance.

The Access Board gives a recommendation for how you might meet Section 508, if you are not sure to get started. There is a link on the slides plus you can also find it on [Section 508.gov](https://www.section508.gov). The first part is build awareness. At the VA I have done a lot of talking about how we do accessibility and inclusive design earlier because a lot of folks think that accessibility is development's responsibility and it is something you do at the end. As we will discuss more there are tremendous advantages to doing it earlier.

Then, practice inclusive design. I was told when I started that inclusive design was activism and that I should not be doing that at work. But, I come from the Jeffrey Zellman school, the designing of web standards, where doing accessibility as part of doing your job well, it is simply professionalism. We all have a lot on our plates. The field just keep giving more complicated. That is one of those things that some sort of has slipped off.

Then, how do we update the agency policies? How do we update the training? How do we communicate that in our product requirements from the beginning? Making sure that all of our documentation is accessible, then measure and monitor. One of the things about Section 508 that's often overlooked is anything that is purchased with federal monies must be accessible. So that means the videos that you may record when you are just going about doing your job, the emails, slide decks, all of that must be accessible.

We have a couple of case studies here. Kendra is going to start about her work on [Georgia.gov](https://www.georgia.gov).

Before I moved to working on federal work, I spent about 10 years working for the state of Georgia on [Georgia.gov](https://www.georgia.gov) and our web platform that served over 80 state agency websites. When we built up that platform, we made sure to check the box where we are meeting Section 508 standards. At that time, that was the old Section 508, before we got to WCAG 2.0 standards. As we were talking to people through our work, we learned that what we had was not quite meeting the bar, that we were not successful that we could be that yes we checked boxes, but that did not

mean it was easy for people using screen readers or other devices to navigate our sites. We decided we wanted to go through and do a holistic accessibility initiative to improve all of our sites with WCAG 2.0 standards. Something that I think is important to bring up here now, because we are all people working in government, is when my team first decided we wanted to do this, my director mentioned it to his boss who is the C-level leadership for the agency. He actually laughed in our faces. I mean, bust out laughing. So funny we wanted to do all this accessibility work and then said, "No, there is no budget for that." This is where I would have said that is frustrating, what do we do now? My boss taught me a lot and is smarter than me about this. He said we are just going to find the money somewhere else, we are going to do it anyways because it is the right thing to do. We did it anyways, we found the money and made it happen. Then we started getting recognized for it from different state CIO board things and then the guy that lasted us was first in line for his photo op to take the credit for the work that we did. Lesson learned for me is to do the right thing, do the right thing every time and other people will come around and take the credit, it's fine.

Nice comment.

That's right.

What we did, we did a holistic audit across the platform because we have one platform on multiple sites that supported multiple sites. We were able to remediate templates and back end code and that would flow through to all 80 sites at once. That helped check our boxes for improving design and development of all of the sites. Then, we had to talk to all of our teams and make sure we leveled up all of the agencies maintaining content and flock to them things they could do to improve their content to make them more accessible. The big thing beyond all of that was training our team. None of us knew what any of this was when we started. We didn't have to become experts to be able to do this. We were able to call and experts to learn with us and we learned through the process. Once we land, we were like we should always be doing this from the beginning. So, how can we scale accessibility best practices throughout our framework and design systems, but throughout our process? So we made sure to get those basics of what needs to happen and let's train all of our content managers so the next time we are starting from the beginning. The last thing that we did because we could do this was that we updated Georgia's standards to require WCAG 2.0 before Section 508 required WCAG 2.0. That is another thing I would like to out is for places where you have that additional clout to make change at a level for your agency that isn't matching up for the Access Board going to will take a while to level up. It does not stop us from doing the right thing and making sure we are hitting all the standards and making things as univaersally inclusive as possible.

The FEMA flood smart is one of my case studies. It was my first foray into actually getting to do federal work. I admire the USWDS 18TF USDS for years. I have applied so many times but I have not quite made it. It's okay, I am doing something now. With FEMA flood smart, I was working with a small ad agency in town. They had this project and did not know how to do UX. They didn't know how to do responses, they didn't know how to do human centered design and they definitely didn't know how they were going to prime contractor and a drupal 8 requirement. I came in and was able to evaluate things. One of the weird things about this particular project, to my mind, but maybe anyone working government longer, is there was a task order that said we could not talk to users until six or eight down the pipeline. The overall project was user centered responsive redesigned using duple eight. So, I said we have been told to do this in a user center fashion so that means we figure out how we involve users. So, starting with research that we

found a creative way to do using our networks and all of that stuff to do optimal workshops, tree studies and card sorts and ask people where would you put these? where do you call this? built our taxonomy that use plain language, their own words, and then storytelling to foster the cognitive empathy. When we started the project, our stakeholders thought they were getting a marketing site. They thought it was going to be big splashy photos, movement and all of this. I told the story of an oil rig worker in the Gulf who has a house in Houma, Louisiana, and he has worked a really long shift. He has got his little cell phone, he is tired and needs to make sure that he really has the right flood insurance for his property, because they are heading into hurricane season. That was the change and now Butch Kearney is a champion for inclusive design and he tells a story. This is the landing page. Some of the interior pages they look a little bland. But, they are performant and their hierarchy is clear and you can get to the info. He wound up being one of our champions. One of the things I haven't listed here, or anywhere in the slide, find your champions and train your champions. Not just your team, but make sure to get your stakeholders to be on your side all the time.

Another unique thing done here is that from the wireframes all the way through, we used HTML CSS JavaScript wireframes, because I happen to be a designer who codes. I use the USW DS system, the version 1 they have for you can copy and paste, and repurpose it. We build a pair program with their designer who was a talented visual designer, but did not know how to do responsive or work with CMS templates and we designed this together. We figure out things like dropping out the image when you get down to smaller devices and replacing it with a very light rate SPG texture. Different things like that. Then, moving into the test-driven design and development, because prototypes are in HTML and CSS, we can use various tooling to measure impact the design decisions and then communicate those metrics to development as these are requirements, page load speed, time to interactive must be no greater than 2 seconds. All images must be no greater than 50 kilobytes, etc. etc. The more data you can give them to put into their acceptance criteria, that gives you something to meet.

Speaking about performance, I also worked on a performance analytics tool proof of concept for this large CDN company. I was part of an independent team that was determined to deliver a world-class example for our customers to follow. The existing infrastructure was on the slow slide side. And their existing process leveraged action or, angular and bootstrap, all things that were going to render a slower turnaround time. Once again, leveraging HTML CSS JavaScript prototypes. The wonderful thing about this product owner is he was on board from the beginning. We put WCAG 2.0 AA and where possible AAA as product requirements. We put product requirements to speak to people with disabilities in our research and made sure everything we did was going to be not only responsive, not only performant, but accessible at every point. Once again, we are able to leverage test driven design and development.

And this is the kicker that I wish we could do with more teams. Because we did it this way, we could get turnaround time on design prototypes. We improved the time it took by 95% compared to what would happen with the action or, angular etc. with the process. We were able to get in more iterations.

That is a remarkable reduction. Amazing.

We did something similar previous to that, or I did something similar at another financial investment company, where they had desktop only interfaces for all of their retail financial tools. This was about 2012 or 2013. They had been stuck for a year on how do we responsive five this? How are we going to make position groups specifically, which is a data grid of a minimum of 13 columns and anywhere from one to thousands of rows of financial data that could be from people who don't have very much money all the way out to people who have a ton. So little figures tell really large figures inside each of these columns and have been leveraging a lot of JavaScript to calculate things on the fly. Every time they got down to the mobile size, the screen would freeze. The layout would break because it was too bloated. Day two, I crafted this HTML CSS quick sketch of how it might help with just using CSS and it took months because the team was dedicated to using JavaScript. Three months later the VP said I am not happy with this, what else have you got and he chose the solution. Three months later, we launched.

By helping the VP understand what it was that the users, by going into the usability lab with users and pivoting based on the information they gave us, we were really lucky because this particular organization, one of my beloved mentors who just passed away from COVID (Tom Tullis) built this magical usability lab that allowed us to bring users in and sometimes also used technology to meet them where they are and make sure everything that we do is co-created with them. And one of the things that the director of this project did in hiring me was having a prototype or I worked across the project in IA, through design through this prototyping as well as with the developers and being able to incorporate realistic data and incorporate customer feedback immediately based in our usability sessions. It is so lovely to see other people appreciate him. I am grateful for him.

And monitoring the incremental changes we make and the impact on the U.S.

I bet you all want to get started? The takeaways from our case studies. Accessibility is a business requirement. Measure and monitor key metrics, co-create with your audience, cultivate cognitive empathy across not just your team but your stakeholders to make sure they are your champions two, industry best practices all the way through and cultivate an accessibility inclusive divine culture.

Talking a little bit more about prioritizing accessibility as part of the process looks at where in every checkpoint can we include accessibility, we make sure along with thinking about the other boxes we are trying to check we are including this. I will say this every time I talk, train your team, education and awareness is key. Then when you're auditing things as an expert, ask lots of questions. We need to just keep in mind, it is okay not to know already all of the things we are not supposed to know already. We can ask questions and figure out how to get there and that is part of our learning process too. And then establishing definitions of “done” for different stages of work including accessibility audits.

This is my explanation of how you go from accessibility when you don't have accessibility in the process and when you do. If we start off without accessibility baked in, when not thinking about it, procurements take no effort to think about accessibility, because we didn't even do it. Same with discovery. If we are digging into one of the problems we are solving and accessibility is not included, it takes no effort. As we get into design, when I say cost, the time, effort and capital to

require accessibility issues, if you think of it when you get to design, you will put in some. We are still not thinking a lot about it, we might hit a few checkpoints and not digging in to make sure we have it right. That means when we get to development, we will put in more effort to fix things as we go. Testing is usually where we start to introduce this. We start testing, we say oh no, here for this long list of things to remediate and that throws off our timelines. Now you are playing this game of, well do we want to put off launch so that we can go back and fix these things or do we launch with the things broken and know we have to go back to prioritize them? Will we prioritize them? How much more is that going to cost and what else is not going to throw out? When we get to deployment without thinking about accessibility it will be a bad day. We have forgotten this key thing that we know legally we have to do, we know it really impacts whether or not the people that need our services the most and government services are getting those services. Because we haven't thought about it, we are trying to figure out how to back up and get some things fixed.

What you have drawn is the initial. You would think we are doing this to exaggerate, but I can't tell you how many times this is exactly what I have walked into and it takes a lot to get it to something else.

This is the norm. This is why it took a year to remediate all of the accessibility issues on the platform that hadn't started there.

So, lessons learned as we want to start with accessibility checkpoints from the beginning, so checkpoints and training. In procurements, you can write requirements not only that vendors do things that meet with WCAG 2.0 standards and that they have audits, you can bring in a third-party auditor. But other things I have done on the past is ask for vendors to demonstrate where they have included accessibility in their previous work. And how it is part of the process. So that way you are making sure you have got people that know what this is and have thought about how they will make this into their process.

You are also going to spend some extra effort and time if you are doing discovery, if you are including different use cases and stress cases for the people you are talking to when testing across, looking at call logs and different things to make sure you are understanding all of the problems during your discovery piece of work.

If you're actually thinking about accessibility here, it will be more of an effort than when you are not. At this point, you are thinking about what your color pallets will be into making sure your color contrast is right. It will not be a huge additional list to include this in your design process. What that means is that at development, there is less time going back to say what does this need to do, how are we getting these things right, remediating or even even making sure you are checking all the boxes here at development stage if it's part of your process, not only does it become something that your teams do, so they do it by default, every time they build new things, they know this next thing they learned last time around so each time development is going to be quicker. What that means is once you get to your accessibility auditors, and we do that final round of testing, you're going to find so many few, what's the right word here, fewer accessibility issues. First of all, you don't have developers and designers are stressed out because I have to go back and fix something not built into your timelines, but there are less things to deal with. So

everyone is feeling good about their work. We are fixing a few things because there will always be a few things, but it gets us down to a party of deployment instead of the stress we all get to celebrate. It is good, it is done, ship it, and what is the next thing we are going to do? This is why we advocate for let's bake it in through the whole process instead of something we check at the end.

Defining, measuring and monitoring key metrics is one piece for that. We can make sure we have accessibility checkpoints along the way and performance budgets as a business requirement from the start and stick to those performance budgets. How long does this page take to load? I know we want that flashy, fancy little bit of something that we put in here, but is that adding value and is that hurting our performance?

One of the things I see teams spend a lot of time on is web fonts. Web fonts are one of the things that will block your rendering time and really do a number on your performance. Using webpage test is to watch the impact and see that it takes 30 seconds for something to load, just because you have got all the fonts, helps to tell that story.

We have used webpage test a lot in the past, too. It is a helpful way to see how painful this can be for someone who is not on a quick Internet connection.

Then, we can check call center volume as a metric if call-center volumes are going down and services are not going down, that should show us that what we are doing on our websites is more accessible and easier to complete the work.

Time on site, depending on what the work is, I have looked for time on site to decrease instead of increase. We are not Facebook we are not selling ads and our goal is not to get more time on our site, our goal is to let people get what they need and move on with their day. They should not be struggling with it which means we should be able to accomplish things and it take less time. And then again looking at performance metrics. And being able to show how much we are meeting accessibility compliance needs along the way, too.

A lot of us are working for federal agencies. Congress funds a lot of the work that we do. Congress is not UX experts, they don't know about product design, but they will look at members to tell whether or not they are getting the benefit for the money. And accessibility compliance and reports that the 508 office sends of to Congress are going to make them decide whether or not you are delivering the expectations. Basically, we want to make sure everyone can get access to their information and benefits.

Involving your users and involving a diverse version of your users is super important. Every stage of decision-making, early, often real people, and make sure you figure out when and if you can involve people with disabilities. Figure out if your process maybe even needs to be reevaluated in order to involve people with disabilities. I recognize a lot of designers use Envision or a cooperative tool and that prevents, including people with disabilities. If you use UX PIN, you can include a few more people with disabilities. And if you do something I recommend, which is hiring a prototype or in between design and development, or strategically use it for just select projects, you can include people with disabilities who can test with people

using assistive technology. And conduct user research. Not just usability testing, but listening sessions to just hear how people are currently solving the problems. What their purpose is, use their language and figure out how you can take those stories to foster cognitive empathy. One of the first things I did when working on VA.gov is talk to a caregiver who is now in Fort Lauderdale. The details she told me are what drives me every day, because I know how hard she and her husband and family work with the story she told me about her friends who are also veterans and caregivers. And being able to transfer those stories onto my teams and our product owners, it really helps.

I think another thing I hear a lot is this assumption that okay but people can't access my site because it is not accessible to them, they will just get somebody else to help them. But that is not always possible, it robs people of dignity. Now they have to ask for help and not everyone can ask for help all the time. More than anything it means it starts loading of our call centers and people are still not getting the help they need.

It also puts that individual at risk, because now, they may have to share their login credentials and have another person see their personal data that they may not want to share and that, I mean, that person that they are asking for help may have nefarious purposes.

That's a really good point.

Cognitive empathy, cognitive empathy, cognitive input the. Care, care, care. I feel like I can't beat that horse enough. Making sure that you figure out how to find champions. That is the biggest thing I think. As an accessibility specialist working on VA.gov, I was originally tasked with a certain set of skills, a certain set of tasks. But, in order to be constructive and productive and reduce the amount of work happening at the end of the cycle, I have got to figure out how to get accessibility and inclusive design considered at the start. And, if my direct boss isn't helping me and their boss isn't helping me, where else do I need to go? Full disclosure, one of those accessibility champions, I have already seen this on this call and I want to say thank you so much. Now, we need to keep spreading it. You know, a positive pandemic of caring and train your team.

By the end of our accessibility initiative in Georgia, the entire C suites are on board and they remind everyone else to make things accessible. I am a firm believer so much of this is not because people they don't want to it is because they don't understand the impact.

We created ally chance accessibility. So ALLY: A 11 Y is short for accessibility sometimes. We created an ALLY chance program where we each ordered take a selection of our team members and train them on how to do accessibility. My hope is that at some point, I am a multiplier and I will hopefully put myself out of a job and then we can move onto the next one. So train, train train\.

Best practices exist for a reason. Is 18 F, GSA or hopefully VA have done something that you can follow their lead and reuse something they have worked through, do it. We have great thought leaders in the industry that have documented what responsive design means. Ethan Marcotte, Tim Cadillac, accessibility, Laura Calbaugh, Shawn Henry, you will see at the end

there is a resources link. My brain is going blank but there is a long list of resources. If you can't get an accessibility person on your team, find an expert to help identify and prioritize the issues you have. That is also included in the resources section.

The responsive design is one of the things that will help you most with accessibility, with inclusive design. You won't be leaving people out – if you're doing – so adaptive leaves people out in the spaces you have not designed and accounted for. Using progressive enhancement ensures that a baseline experience is available to anyone. For example, if the rare person exists, that still doesn't use JavaScript, they can still get in. But it is not just a person who doesn't use JavaScript, it is a person in a remote place and they have a very a slow connection, how fast is that data coming to them? If you are using only react to load everything, they are not going to get it for 30 or more seconds. And, when we are talking about critical information in some cases, you want to make sure that is available on first load with HTML and not have JavaScript required.

Then, make sure you are applying those best practices through all of the frameworks. I mentioned to react. Make sure that when you are building the components and react, angular or whatever you are using, that you have thought about those best practices as you build those components into document in your design system. In the design system, when documenting how to use things, use human centered design and inclusive design for that documentation itself. Think about if your 5-year-old niece or nephew wanted to read that design system. Are they going to understand it? I know that is maybe an out there example, but it really should be that simple. And Steve Crook's words: "Don't make me think," be pedantic in your documentation, be very clear. And be consistent with all of the patterns. For example, on VA.gov, we put a gold focus outline where focuses and when we break the usual interactive patterns. Focus usually only happens on interactive elements. Sometimes we apply focus to text elements. When focus is on those text elements, we put the cold outline, so you know exactly where focus is.

One thing I want to call out, which can be a misconception, design systems are accessible frameworks get you there. They get you a portion of the way, but that doesn't guarantee everything you do will be accessible. You still want to double check and test things even when you're using a design system.

Design systems are often a work in progress and might not have had the value or audits as well.

Time check – we hit 45 minutes.

As I've banged gong using numerous times, semantic HTML, testing prototypes. I said it it designers don't cut, they are referred to design technologists. Amazon uses them, Microsoft uses them and Facebook uses them, and to use test-driven design and development, which I think I have explained before. Just make sure you're always in violating the impact of various decisions you make and incorporating diverse people in your validation. Next slide. Prioritizing the semantic HTML. I can't emphasize how important this is. This is an insider dev joke, comment your code so people in the future understand what the intentions were. This is about applying inclusive design into your development habits, making sure that you all agree ahead of time that you are also going to be doing that in your workflows. When you are testing invalid data, make

sure it is obvious it is invalid, that it is test data. Put something in there that couldn't possibly be seen as actual data. This wonderful Jamie Knight, he's a well-known accessibility thought leader, he says he tends to use Disney villains. So, in his, if Scar shows up that means there, this is his test data.

We also wanted to give you an idea of what kind of artifacts you might want to create and deliver at various checkpoints and products. It is some of them that may be more business and operations than product. But making sure your vendors demonstrate their products are accessible, and that they have accessibility expertise in their response. Make sure you have got your accessibility metrics from the beginning. Make sure you upfront identify training opportunities upfront and agree up front in what your inclusive design and accessibility processes and tools will be. Discovery: Make sure you identify ways in which to be inclusive in your recruiting methods and research recruiting methods. I did create an inclusive research guidelines file under resources. Identify past work that is accessible. Identify whether or not the tools you are using are accessible. Review the call center logs. I can go through and read all of this. You will have this in the slides as we go through. One of the big points is most of our work is held to something called an authority launch, referred to as an ATO. An ATO says in order to launch, you must pass a series of end-to-end tests. So, those end-to-end tests include something called asked checks, which are built on the WCAG success criteria. In order to launch your deployment must pass those tests first. And then be followed up by manual test.

On VA.gov, I am focusing primarily on cultivating accessibility design expertise across everyone in the team so that I can be a multiplier and put myself out of a job and move on to the next level of it.

I am focused on strategy, I am focused on creating resources so when people have questions, they have tools and resources that are easily available to them. Setting up the training opportunities like the ALLY champs. And in the storytelling, I created a page in our repo that has veteran disability statistics so it is not just me saying there are a lot of veterans who need you to be thinking about accessibility, they are actual numbers and included videos, essays and articles to read about the actual human beings. At the end of the day, we are all in this together. That comes with all of the work we do as agile. That whole idea, if you don't know something, that is okay, ask. There is no shame in not knowing, please ask. You are welcome to find me on LinkedIn and ask. I will do the best I can.

The next slide has the resources. So accessibility.digital.gov. I wish I could revise it a smidge. It is a great place to start. [Section 508.gov](https://section508.gov), if you really want the facts. And then you as you [UX-UI.org/resources](https://ux-ui.org/resources) is a site I maintain I admit to do a little bit of work on maybe making the vast amount of data more palatable and easy to digest. It is at least accessible. Thank you.

Lots of good resources there. I am going to leave the slide up for people as we take questions if we have a few minutes for questions.

Can you hear me?

Yes.

We have about 10 minutes. I was really interested in the presentation that you made. Can you talk a little bit about how to make the case for who owns accessible digital products, especially for people who don't do web? So people who provide you content you have to incorporate as part of your overall design and maintenance?

Can you tell me more about the question of who is it you are looking to?

This was a question I was thinking of as you were giving this presentation and you were talking about training and evangelizing. We do certainly want to make certain to advocate and evangelize. For folks that say that is your responsibility, but we also in our organizations, need to help people understand the digital products they provide to us, like PDFs, need to be accessible. There is some resistance to that. I am wondering if you could speak to that a little bit if you have encountered that.

Yeah, we definitely have. For my particular project, we have a range of PDFs and some provided by the business at VA. We are able to evaluate the PDF quickly using Adobe Acrobat Pro, run a quick scan and determine is this what is this not accessible? If it is not accessible, we send it back to them. Then we refer them to the VA 508 office to help them with remediating it. If I had more time, I am one person supporting 9 – really 12 teams at present, but if we were staffed a bit, we are working on it, we are getting there, I would happily help them learn how to remediate. We have training at TMS, which I think is a VA only thing, but im not sure. People are able to take training there to learn how -- there is also Lynda.com that has training. There are Adobe Acrobat tutorials on how to remediate PDFs. There is also how to make accessible Word documents and PowerPoints and all of those other things. It depends on the relationship. I have learned there are some relationships that I know they will say no, that is your job, you do it. Depending on what kind of support I have, I may just do it for them because I don't want to deal with the headache. When possible and when I have leadership support, I prefer to send it back, rather than giving them to fish, teaching them to fish.

I try to focus on the idea of the carrots in the sticks. So what are some of the things that will make people want to be part of the solutions and part of the problem. Sometimes you can just explain to someone how them remediating this in the beginning means that it's going on the website more quickly and they won't have to find someone to they are not going to have to wait to find someone that has time to remediate or whatever it is. Not everybody is going to be won over by a carrot. Next question is, could you be talking to leadership and selling the business case that everything will move more smoothly if we built this in part of the process and expected from everybody?

OK, great.

Christina asks for Jennifer, how many other people did you work with on your FEMA project? Maybe talk about the team that you had.

We were set a prime. On the prime, there was a project manager, backend developer and front-end developer responsible for implementing in the CNS. Within the agency I work at, there was a visual designer and project manager. They call him a UX strategist, I would call what he did

more product management. He was the hostess with the mostest. They had originally wanted him to do the content strategy. He looked at it and was going to quit because he had no idea how to do that. I said don't worry about it, I got yah. He's now at Oracle. I have learned things from him that I should have learned earlier in my career, which was going into a meeting, always bring followers, always make people feel welcome and remember they are human beings. I tend to be quick to like just want to get the work done, lesson learned.

Can you talk more about the ALLY chance program you mentioned?

I think the VA.gov repo is public. I am not really sure how public that means. We set it up so that, we identify people who cared about accessibility already. We identify people who were on project teams that were really going to need somebody to take ownership of it for their team. We have all of our teams taking on what someone termed low-level accessibility testing. I struggle with that term because running an ax browser skin is not low-level testing to someone who has no idea what that report means. It is hard. But, we started off with building empathy. We showed a lot of stories about people with disabilities, including invisible disabilities and getting people bought into why this matters. And then slowly with each level, we are adding into the skill set, teaching them how to run scans and write issue tickets that are empathetic and take into account that people like Kendra, the product manager, needs to prioritize this issue and understand the human impact of it. We build out a defect rubric in helping people understand what that means. And also always providing the WCAG guidance. In the ALLY champs program, it is one level at a time up. We had originally sculpted it out to four levels. I recently added a fifth to help people learn how to do PDFs.

Do you have a web address handy for that for the program? For the VA ALLY program?

It is in the GitHub repo for the VA.gov team. I am not positive, Kendra do you know if we are allowed to share that?

If it is public you can. We can check and add it to the UX-UI.org resources page once we confirm it is public. I think it is fantastic. We have been asking new team members on our program to start up. We are calling it ramp up Fridays. They are doing things like going through the ALLY champs curriculum to make sure we are leveled up for the work.

Well, it is to 2:30. I think that covers all of the main questions we had. So, thank you so much for your time, this was really great. For folks online, Jean, did you want to mention again the registration?

There should be links in the chat if you want to register for any of the remaining four sessions. And also, please give us your feedback on the session today to improve our sessions for the future. Thank you to Jennifer and Kendra for their great talk today. I saw a lot of great feedback in the chat. Thank you to Beth for chairing this session today.

Thank you, this is great.

Ohana, everyone!