**Interview 6:**

**Interviewee: Richard Satterfield, Researcher of Assistive Technology, CIDI, Georgia Tech**

1. **1. Could you tell me a bit about you and your field?** **Education:** PhD in Instructional Technology in 2007

**Work:** I was a history major in college and I taught US history at the high school level for seven years. We came under Georgia Tech and the old AMAC accessibility, the agency that focused on accessibility and providing accessible materials to students in the university system through their disability services. Today we are part of the Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation, which is part of the College of Design. Now focusing on outcomes of assistive technology, the major focus of my research goes into mastery of assistive technology.

**2.** **In your experience, what are the challenges that students with disabilities encounter when accessing learning materials?**

1. **#1 challenge:** is that there's not a one size fits all, nor is there a label by label prescription that one would naturally gravitate toward. People need to find a tool that will do what they need to do or work the way they need it to work for them to be able to read or to write or to search or maybe it's a vision issue.
2. **#2 challenge:** A tool (researcher could not name the tool as he forgot) which is a resource hog and it takes over the computer and will undo or mess up the operation of other tools. So if a student is using multiple technologies, there's potential issues.
3. **#3 challenge:** If you are using tools like Canvas or other learning systems, there is this compatibility problem.
4. **#4 challenge:** And I think we still don't have, from an instructional perspective, all teachers, all instructors, all professors and all publishers & software manufacturers producing consistent accessible documents. When they put something out, they still don't have a really good handle, or at least they're not consistent in terms of making things accessible. Example a pdf from a publisher may have been encrypted to protect their resources which makes it harder to make it accessible.
5. **#5 challenge:** I'll mention that the transition from high school to college is really big for a lot of kids with disabilities, because when they've been in high school, they've had an individual educational plan and they've had teachers and parents who kind of hovered over that process and negotiated or advocated for them to have the tools they needed or to have things in formats they needed. In college they are on their own trying to advocate for themselves to get hold of accessible documents.

**3.** **Can you give me an example of how you apply different tools, applications, and methods to help users overcome their challenges?**

The students who come through the Disability Services Center have access to what CIDI our agency provides in terms of electronic books and Braille translations, closed captioning etc. Students can go to the student download center to download tools like screen readers and text readers, talk as you type word processor, talking spell checker, livescribe pen etc

**4.** **What aspects of creating accessible content are most challenging, why are they challenging? and how have you overcome these challenges? Can you tell me about your process when you make these changes?**

Professors think that the documents have to be pretty, but sometimes it's better off to limit what we present to students in a format that we know every type of user will benefit from with the tools they have access to. Tools built into word and powerpoint are sophisticated enough to help us 90% of the time. Most of the time the professors have piles of powerpoints or presentation materials that they load onto the learning system because that’s what they have in their computer. What they must do is to hire summer interns and retrofit the documents to be accessible. Lot of professors are hesitant to do this retrofitting. There are tools that were for example created for students with cerebral palsy like the word prediction tool, but today everybody is benefitting from it.

**5.** **Can you share any experiences where you modified content? What changes were made?**

We use Universal design as the guiding principles. I have created visually representative content to help students with learning disabilities, ADHD. Usually word documents, PDFs are made well accessible, and putting these documents on a learning system like canvas fits the bill appropriately.

1. **Do you think collaboration and feedback improve the quality of accessible document creation of the process?**

For sure, the timeliness of the feedback is kind of part of the challenge.

If I'm a professor, I won't know I have a problem unless somebody says something and if I get it at the end of the course in a course evaluation and may not be specifically tuned enough for me to say ohh it was this particular PowerPoint on this particular day that through this particular student to not be able to have an accessible document.

1. **So do you consider yourself to be a novice or expert designer? How has your thinking evolved from being a novice to expert level in designing accessible documents?**

I would consider myself more midway between novice and expert since I have been working here for decades. I have been taking on advocacy roles, promoting accessibility awareness and educating others about our guiding principles, best practices in accessible document design. We are also diligent about testing our solutions with students. We incorporate feedback and iterate on our designs to improve continuously.

**8. Final thoughts on how CIDI positively impacts student experience at Georgia Tech?**

Idea is really a unique entity in the sense that we have a team of people who are providing direct services now they do it through the disability services connection. It definitely positively impacts students here and we cater to each student's needs individually.