2D Technology, the Digital Divide, and Racial and Language Justice
April 12, 2022

Lilian Moy:

Okay, great. Welcome everybody. We have 50 fun minutes on the digital divide and access to justice. We have a great panel, and we don't have a lot of time with you. So we are going to try to start on time. I think that each of my colleagues will introduce themselves as we go along, but we wanted to start by asking a little bit about what people in the room think, who you think the digital divide is an urgent issue for. Margaret, can you go to the poll, please? Thank you. So you can vote. What you have to do is text 22333, and then you text elkesorensen012, and you can say whatever you think.

And I encourage you to vote. And I encourage you to... There's that actually a great trait in this polling software, where you can be a thought leader on this issue by texting as many answers as you want. So text. Or you can go on the website, I believe. I don't really know how to do it that way. Has anyone done it that way? No. Okay. Is everyone voting? And you can vote as many times as you want. Matt, you can vote if you want. 0, 1, 2...

Are you voting? Oh, everybody's. Shoot. Let me get it together. Was someone chatting us? Yes. Thanks, Matt. Has everybody had a chance to vote? Okay. Great. And now, Margaret, I think you can close it and you'll see that those in the room today think that all of the communities listed above in this choice in this poll are facing an urgent issue with respect to the digital divide. So rural communities, black, brown and indigenous communities, non-dominant language users, poor white people, people who read at third grade level or all of the above. So overwhelmingly 41% of our voters think that the digital divide is an urgent issue for all those groups. Margaret, can we see the next slide please?

I think that everyone probably remembers this photo that went viral relatively early in the pandemic. These are two kids in... I can't remember. It's in one of the Western states. Doing their homework outside of Taco Bell, which was the only place that they could get Wi-Fi in order to do their school work. And the slide notes that according to the 2018 American Community Survey, there's about three times as many urban households than rural households who do not have access to broadband at home. So here we are, legal services providers. Margaret, can we see the next slide, please? And most of us early in the pandemic, we closed our doors.

We began working more remotely. We had certain responses to those who couldn't access justice during the pandemic, or as I like to say, in the last two years. And so tell us how your program responded, or your organization or your court office responded to the pandemic. How did you respond so that people could better access the services that you provide? At Legal Aid Society of

Northeastern New York, where I'm the director, we had a number of different responses. Most of them involved our website and building out our website, and creating many more resources on the website. You can respond to this poll in one word or multiple words, however, makes sense. That's a good one; online intake.

Oops. I think those of you who are around in the next block know that I'm going to be talking to a couple of legal services directors who kept, pretty much kept their doors open. I am not sure what's happening here. Margaret, are you still taking responses? Okay. Yeah. Okay, anything else to say? I think we got a little messed up here with our responses. Yeah. We forgot that we have to separate social and media with two lines, if we're going to vote for that. But take a minute and send what you did in, it might not be perfect. I'm quite certain it's not perfect, but it is what we did. And it just gives us a moment to think about what we did, like well-intentioned legal aid lawyers, right?

How we thought we could reach people. And then a moment to think about all those people we talked about in the very first slide for whom the digital divide is an urgent issue, because I'm not sure that they were reached through social media. Maybe through hotlines, right? I'm not sure they were reached through online intake or through the websites that we posted so many of our materials on. Just think about it. Lisa's going to talk a little bit about another group, a particular group that was unable to access our work that was on the internet. Lisa.

Lisa Pearlstein:

Yeah

Lillian Moy:

Who are you? Tell us who you are.

Lisa Pearlstein:

Oh, I'm Lisa Pearlstein. I'm with the City Bar Justice Center and I'm the director of the Legal Clinic for the Homeless. So, are we going to get my slide up? There we go.

Lillian Moy:

There you go.

Lisa Pearlstein:

Great. Hi everybody. So I am going to talk to you today about the city bar justice centers and the New York City Bar's Wi-Fi for Homeless Campaign. Next slide, please. So in August of 2021, approximately 47,979 people were sleeping in New York City shelters. We're close to around the same level right now.

10,138 families in New York City shelters and 14,881 children. Right now, as of February 2022, 18,883 single adults, single sleeping in shelters. Incredible, right? A tremendous number of people. And guess what? Many of them don't have internet access in their shelters. Next slide please. So more facts about homelessness in New York City. About 86% of single adults and 93% of heads of household in family shelters identify as black or Hispanic. This is significantly higher than the 53% of city's population overall who identify as black or Hispanic. So this is the population that the digital divide in shelters is affecting. Next slide, please.

We realized at the City Bar Justice Center, that this was a big issue before the pandemic and decided to survey our clients about internet access, because we really didn't know from shelter to shelter, how it was... what was going on. We knew shelter case workers had internet access, but we were hearing stories anecdotally, not just anecdotally. A lot of our clients were saying they were having difficulty accessing the internet and they had to purchase costly, sell data plans for their phones using very limited funds from their welfare. So we decided to do a survey and find out what was going on and then issue... And we were going to issue a report based on the survey. All of this was decided pre-pandemic. So our surveys took place in the fall of 2019. Our Wi-Fi for access surveys, and this is what we found.

Only 6% that we surveyed. We surveyed close to a hundred people in many different shelters. Only 6% were able to access internet through their shelters. 67% wanted, but had no regular access to Wi-Fi. 75% agreed that internet access would improve their living circumstances. And how would they use it? Internet to find housing. A no brainer. Find a job, find medical care, access public benefits, access email. They all had the need to engage in all these activities and they didn't have the means to do it within their shelter, even though their shelters made them sign agreements; independent living plan agreements, where they had to be actively looking for housing and employment and become independent. Next slide, please.

And then we all know that pandemic conditions worsened, inequities for our clients who already experienced issues with food, housing and economic insecurity. All critical basic services and resources moved online; welfare, SNAP, Medicaid, Social Security offices closed, applications for benefits could only be taken online, some through telephone, but you couldn't get through on the telephone. We know all our... are the kids in shelter were having tremendous trouble engaging in remote education. They couldn't access it, even through the Wi-Fi... Education through the cellular enabled Wi-Fi pads that were given to them by the department of education. They needed Wi-Fi. Telehealth was an issue for our clients. How to even just basics like where they could get food. They needed to get that from the internet and they had no access to internet services. Excuse me. Next slide, please.

So in June of 2020, we decided to engage in the Wi-Fi for Homeless Advocacy Campaign at the city bar in the City Bar Justice Center. And we got many organizations involved. We engaged, basically had got a lot of newspaper stories about the issue and the president of the New York City Bar Association penned a letter to the mayor and said, basically the pandemic has exacerbated barriers resulting from the digital divide and raising stakes to life or death. And she basically raised the point that New Yorkers of color are disproportionately represented among those experiencing homelessness and those affected by the digital divide. Next slide, please. Following here at City Council hearings and a lot of publicity, we got the mayor to agree to provide internet access, but he only agreed to... in shelters where school children resided, so that they could engage in their schoolwork. We were not successful in convincing the mayor or the city that they should put, ensure Wi-Fi for access to, excuse me, singles and adult families.

Very disappointed. There's over 18,000 single adults living in shelters. We talked to Legal Aid because we felt actually that the City was dragging its heels about getting the Wi-Fi into shelters for the kids. So Legal Aid had to file a class action to push the City to speed up their efforts. So we're still at the point right now where, yes, we have 244 shelters in New York City that have school aged children with Wi-Fi and we're very excited and happy and thrilled for those residents of those shelters and that the City moved on this. However, there's thousands of people who do not have access to internet and shelters so that they can... in New York City and throughout New York State, because legislation that was proposed did not get passed and is not in governor Hochul's budget.

So we are disappointed and the Wi-Fi for homeless campaign continues. And just when you think about our clients and the digital divide, there are so many people who can't access internet to do, to engage in what they need to do and go about living, and that's, yeah.

Lillian Moy:

Is your project still in partnership with the Legal Aid Society or looking at litigation handles on behalf of the singles and the adults now?

Lisa Pearlstein:

No, unfortunately. Legal Aid said that their hook was the education piece. The children's right was sound education. But we are, we're hopeful that maybe with some other federal pandemic aid there, that there is a hook there that we can... We know that the Governor... We know that some of that aid is going to be used to provide internet access in schools, upstate, other places, all around New York State, libraries, other public places. And we're hoping there may be a hook where we can convince the governor and the powers that be that some of that aid should be directed at shelters throughout New York State.

Lillian Moy:

Thank you, Lisa.

Lisa Pearlstein:

You're welcome.

Lillian Moy:

Next up. How about the impact on black and brown low-income individuals? And, Tanya, will you introduce yourself?

Tanya Douglas:

Sure. Good afternoon. Should be afternoon, I think, depending on where people are. Tanya Douglas. I am the director of the Disability Advocacy Project at Manhattan Legal Services, which is part of Legal Services NYC. We have offices at all five boroughs. I have just a brief other description. I use she/her pronouns. I have worn a red jacket and there's my office logo behind me. So I wanted to talk just a little bit about what this impact has meant for a number of clients who rely on Social Security disability benefits. So we can move to the next slide. As everyone may know, March of 2020 hit and Social Security closed all of their offices.

That... Social Security closed all of their offices in March of 2020, every state, every territory. This was a huge impact for clients who are in New York City. A significant number are BIPOC clients who rely on Social Security benefits, whether it's Social Security disability or Supplemental Security Income. And so Social Security closed all their offices and relied on their phone service, which was quickly overwhelmed. And I'll talk about that in just a little while, but I also want to us to look at this from another perspective, and that's the next slide, which is you never waste a good crisis. And I think we need to look at this from that perspective. And the next one goes into a little bit more detail about why not to waste a good crisis. You never waste, you never... And I'll read it. You never let a serious crisis go to waste.

And what I mean by that is an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before, right? So it's an opportunity for us to reimagine how we do business. Going to the next slide. Social Security slowly started to do that. So Social Security has people were able to access them for either Supplemental Security Income; SSI benefits, or Social Security disability benefits based on a couple of ways, either by phone. And it's a national number that was for most of the time open from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM, because it's a national number, and also through their website, which sounds wonderful on its face. But obviously, it creates a divide for our clients who are BIPOC and low income in a number of ways. One is that since a number of people were calling, that meant the wait times went really long.

Also, a number of low income clients rely on... Well, my clients tell me, they call them the Obama phones. And those are the phones with the limited minutes. So that would be either they could not be on the phone for extended periods of time. The other time is that also a number of those phones that they had, it didn't have access to... didn't have the functionality that most of us have, they weren't smart phones. And so they didn't have the access to be able to go on Social Security's website. So that meant there was a significant number of people who were not able to get through. And I will... If you can go to the next slide. Social Security did pivot. I want to congratulate them for thinking about these pandemic changes. One is, I don't know how many of you out there have ever been to a Social Security office.

It's not the easiest place to be. And Social Security is a national agency. And so they pivot it in a number of ways. Instead of sending... In the beginning of the pandemic, they wanted you to fax them documents, which meant somebody had to go into the office and that soon became problematic. So they changed to having E-faxes. Huge difference, right? For those of us who have access to do that. They also started to make their files electronic in terms of the field offices. The field offices are... They look like my office, if I was in my office. Tons and tons of paper. Not very electronic. So this was also very huge. And then just very recently in the last couple of months, Social Security has pivoted again in terms of the field offices, and they're allowing people to come in person for 15 minutes. Those are scheduled appointments.

It's very hard to get them. But for the most part, it is allowing folks to drop off documents that need to help prove their claim. And then just very recently, about a week ago, Social Security made a grand announcement that all of their offices were open for in-person appointments either by phone or walk-ins. It's not a week old yet. So we are cautioning people not necessarily to go that route because they're very long lines, but that's post... That's still during the pandemic because the pandemic hasn't ended. Social Security also pivoted in a number of ways in terms of how they hold hearings. Hearings used to be in person for the most part. You could wait hours and hours. Social Security pivoted to having phone hearings very early on and then moving to Microsoft Team hearings, both of which are super helpful for those who have access.

One meant that a number of our clients didn't have to wait in a crowded space. Two, they didn't have to travel long distances, but of course we see the challenges, right, with the field offices and the hearing offices. To access these pandemic changes, you needed the technology to do it as well as the ability, because we do have clients who have the technology, but they don't have the ability; special folks who have disabilities. And then we'll go to the next slide. So I just wanted to, as I said, point out again. There are a number of challenges with the Social Security digital divide challenges. One, the telephone. Of course, if you have limited minutes, it's a problem. If you don't have a

smartphone, or as my clients call it, the Obama phones, or if you don't have any phones at all.

I think Lisa may have mentioned that too, right? There are some people who don't have phone service at all. Online is problematic. People may not have... They may not have internet. They may not have reliable internet. There are a number of internet deserts that exist even in New York City. And that's problematic and of course through the country. They're also unable to navigate it, if they are disabled or they're language barriers, right? The website is not fully accessible in different languages. Also, the forms are not in every language. And so that takes us to the next slide. This is Joann's, I'm sorry. Before we go to Joann.

Just to say, so what Social Security was able to do is they've been able to make some changes, but obviously these changes have benefited only a few and clearly have highlighted the digital divide. It's very helpful for advocates like us, but not very helpful for people who don't have access to this technology. So we are continuing to push Social Security to think about how to include those who've been left behind for 24 months at this point.

Lillian Moy:

We talked about this workshop being the digital divide at the intersection of race and language justice, and it's a hopping intersection. So from Los Angeles, my colleague, Joann, will introduce herself.

Joann Lee:

Hello. Good morning from where I am. My name is Joann Lee, and I'm with the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles. And I just wanted to start with this concept of language justice. There's an evolving movement around this and this concept. So there isn't an exact definition, but here are some components. The right of all people to communicate, to understand and to be understood in our languages. Creating spaces where everyone can fully participate and no one language dominates over others. A commitment to equitable communication and respect for everyone's language rights. And then with this in mind, we can take a look at language rights on the next slide and this broader context, because we know that language rights can be viewed in the context of traditional civil rights mandates that include national origin, discrimination, which includes language. Also included are rights to have meaningful access to public services and benefits as well as civic participation through interpreting, translation services and bilingual and multilingual staff.

And many of us in legal services have advocated for these rights for our clients, but there are other aspects of language rights and language justice that have to do with building, preserving communities like the right to maintain non-dominant languages and pass them on to future generations. And the right for

everyone's language to be valued and respected and not just thinking about how to accommodate language needs as an afterthought. And I think it's really important to have this perspective and use this lens, especially now with the heightened racial justice movement as linguistically marginalized communities are largely communities of color and these populations and needs can change very rapidly. As we could see, for example, with populations coming into the US from Afghanistan, Haiti, many country, many individuals fleeing difficult situations in their home countries. We see a lot of people that are going to be coming in from Ukraine as well.

And so by talking about it in this way, we can see that there are very, a lot of complex layers and intersections of identities and oppression that could present in different contexts. And so we want to promote language rights in a way that really seeks to guarantee the full exercise of fundamental rights for all individuals and communities and ensure that our spaces are equitable and multilingual and seen as essential for building strong movements for racial and social justice. And so I have a couple of slides we can just go through really quickly. The next one, I think we've all talked about a lot of the oppression and trauma that we've seen impact our communities, especially during the pandemic. These are specific to the lack of language access. I think everybody's familiar with these, so I won't go through all these, but I just wanted to provide a snapshot.

On the next slid, we see the impact on our communities, on poverty levels, education, health. In California, individuals who use non-dominant languages or with limited English proficiency are three times as likely to lack access to the internet, and a quarter of this population has no access to a computer. So, as was mentioned by my fellow presenters, during the pandemic, we just saw all these exacerbate and really be exposed. And I wanted to talk about this intersection of literacy, tech access and language. All of those things came together to exclude some of our most vulnerable communities during the public health crisis. And I wanted to focus on the issue of machine translation as it's been a very hot topic and tool being used in many different contexts as a purported solution to language access.

So if we could go to the next slide. I just want to make a quick note on terminology. Translation is described to use written communication that conveys the meaning of text from one language to another. And it's important to note that not everyone can translate. So we might have people who are bilingual on our staff, but translation is a skill. You have to learn it, you have to you be trained on it, you have to have experience and familiarity with the subject matter. So it is a professional skill that we should value. There are some accreditations from various entities like the American Translators Association, the courts, various healthcare entities. So what is machine translation?

Machine translation is automated software that translates written information without human review. Machine translation is based on probability. It detects patterns in hundreds of millions of translated documents and makes logical guesses. So some programs also learn and adjust based on human feedback that they get, but there's no understanding of meaning or context, and you have to be able to read and comprehend both languages to know if the translation is accurate. And it's also important to note that many professional translators do use machine translation tools appropriately as a starting point, but then they engage in significant human review to ensure accuracy. And I want to make a note that machine translation has not been accepted as a form of compliance with civil rights mandates to ensure language access. And so I won't go through it now, but there's a whole list of resources, even from the federal government that indicates that machine translation should be reviewed by competent humans before it goes on a website or gets distributed.

Lillian Moy:

Why is that Joann? Why? Why do we need human reviews?

Joann Lee:

Okay, well, let's go to the next slide. Here's an example. During the pandemic, the Virginia Department of Health used Google Translate to inform the public that the vaccine was not a requirement, but it was translated into the vaccine is not necessary. So this caused a great deal of confusion and mistrust in the community during a time when accurate information was literally a matter of life and death. So you'll see the example here, the screenshots of it put through Google Translate. If you go to the next slide, in California, our rental assistance portal relied on Google Translate. It resulted in many, many issues, not just confusion and incorrect information, but also offensive content. So here we have the button for back, like to go back, but it actually was translated as go back to your country applicant.

So this was the result of a lot of very poor planning, not taking into account the needs of the many multilingual and non-dominant language users in California, which we have almost seven million of. They thought that Google Translate was appropriate. And they just didn't undertake the planning needed, they had tons of money to implement this program and they didn't think about it in the beginning. They just did it as an afterthought. If we look at the next slide, during a traffic stop, the Kansas Highway Patrol stopped a driver who had suspended registration. They used Google Translate to ask if they could search the car. And you could see here, the back translation is also incorrect, but it says, can I find the car? It's very different from, can I search the car? And the court granted a motion to suppress what was found during the search.

Lillian Moy:

So we have to move to the poll right before Ray. Do you want to express any willingness to share your Ted Talk?

Joann Lee:

Yes, I will put it in the chat, but if we could just go to the next slide really quickly.

Lillian Moy:

Okay.

Joann Lee:

I wanted to just note that it's not just about confusion and accurate inaccurate translations. It really fails to center the needs of community members who may have limited access to formal education, lower literacy, little access to technology, you have things like misgendering pronouns that could be very, very offensive, register is a big deal, there's the informal tone. If you use that, you could be re-traumatizing clients who have been treated very poorly. We have a lot of clients who are survivors of domestic violence, and we don't want to speak to them with the same tone that they're hearing from their abusers or other people that they have interacted with in their lives.

We want to treat them with the same respect with a client centered and trauma informed approach that we value for all of our clients. And just to say that we're not going to use that in other languages is really inappropriate. It's not a model that we should be supporting. So with that… and in the slides, you'll see a lot of examples, good examples, New York city has a local law that requires content to be in 10 different languages. That's a great example. You could see that on their website, it's professionally translated. Many other jurisdictions as well. And so I just wanted to end with that. Thank you.

Lillian Moy:

Thanks, Joann. Margaret, can you just go to that last poll and we'll see what the room thinks after what they've heard about who should be at the table when we are designing a tech solution to an access to justice challenge. Okay. I'm sorry. I love these polls. Okay. Tell me, you're designing the solution to the challenge that BIPOC Social Security recipients experienced during the pandemic. Who should be at the table with us when we're designing that solution? And then Ray, we're going to cut into the Q and A time, so you can have a good discussion. And Matt, I'm sorry. You can just tell them that I said that we were going to do that. So what we want you to do is text 22333, and then text Elkesorensen. See, even when Elke's in Mexico, she's with us. Ooh, you can vote as many times as you want.

whatever you think, whoever you think should be there, those pesky technologists, should they be there? Should just staff attorneys be there? I should have created an option for your front desk staff, right? Because they're talking to the people at the door or on the phone. I apologize to my colleagues for that. In the interest of time, we may close the poll now. Margaret, are you able to close the poll and show us the results? I think we're seeing some of the… oh yes. There we go. So, let's see. 10% of responders think black and brown and low literate people and people with physical or mental disabilities. And there's another page. Okay. Let's just go to you, Ray. Thank you. Why don't you introduce yourself?

Ray Brescia:

Thanks Lillian. So I'm Ray Brescia. I teach at Albany Law School and use pronouns he/him/his. So I just wanted to close a little bit on the concept of design thinking or user centered design. And the idea of this approach is that we want to incorporate the many voices who may be affected by, or who may have a perspective on the problems you're trying to solve with your technology. And you don't have to use design thinking approach just to technology, but we're going to look at that in this context. And we are seeing obviously as I pointed out over the last two years, so much has been moved to the digital space, the virtual space and that hasn't been great for many people, particularly the people that legal services offices serve.

And so the design thinking approach would start really with empathy. And when you're trying to address an issue that your office is struggling to solve, a problem your office is struggling to solve, how to get services to certain population, how to deliver services in a more effective way, it's good to think about the design thinking process, which has a number of different stages, depending on which designers' theories you may want to follow. This is a nice illustration, and it really shows you the loop to loops. It shows that the design thinking process isn't really linear, but it starts out with understanding the problem with sometimes some people might call problem finding. And then moving through a process where you speak to the people who would access the technology or the system you're designing to deliver services and incorporate their voices through empathy, through observation, to watch how they might access those services to understand the barriers they may face.

And it doesn't necessarily require that you have a perfect system with all of the bells and whistles to deliver a product at least in beta or simple form, and get your product out sometimes on the business side, this is called the minimally viable product, right? So the product that in its first iteration tries to address the problem, but then you put your intuitions and your analysis to the test, you ideate your solution, and then you prototype something as rapidly, get it out to people and see how they respond to it, test it, and then loop back. Drawing, going back to earlier in the process to observe their reactions, to take their

point of view into perspective, to iterate and to change and to pivot and to update in response to the feedback that you receive.

But critical to that, the whole process is this notion of incorporating the user's perspective, the consumer's perspective, the client's perspective, really from the very beginning in helping to identify what the problem is and what potential solutions might be. Just quickly, I'll give you one example of a project like this, partnered with the Empire Justice center about a decade ago, really in the throes of the foreclosure crisis, and Empire Justice had a hard copy Guide that they would mail out to people who were facing foreclosure, who they might not have been able to represent. And this was very early in the crisis when there was fewer resources available for representation. This Guide was over 100 pages long and single spaced, but Empire Justice was nervous about posting it online because they were afraid that banks attorneys, foreclosure attorneys would get the individual, the homeowners playbook, if you would.

We worked with them to overcome those misgivings. And then we worked with law students and technology students at the University of Albany, but then incorporated individuals who had gone through the foreclosure crisis and lawyers who handled cases in foreclosure to develop a web based interface that was responsive to mobile that took the information that Empire Justice had in this guide and made it available to people in just in time basis, right? Wherever they were in the foreclosure process, they could get just the information they needed. Now, again, we brought in consumers, we brought in lawyers, we had the students, we had teams of students who met with them very early on in the process. The teams put together mockups of websites, using the information.

And then these different student teams came up with different, interesting features. And then they presented to the clients and the lawyers, and then the clients and lawyers picked the best one that had the nicest design, but then pulled features from different teams proposals, and incorporated them into the final project that went live. And we learned that thousands of not just consumers used it, but also lawyers who might have been taking the matters on pro bono to defend homeowners in foreclosure, and then lawyers who were taking modest fees from their clients to handle the foreclosure case. Because as we know, there are homeowners in foreclosure whose income or their assets put them over, for example, legal services restrictions.

So many of these lawyers were saying to their paying clients, look, don't pay me for two or three hours to describe the foreclosure process to you, go to this website. It lays out the process, you'll understand some of the things that I'll be doing on your behalf. But it really started with that initial instance where we said, look, this wasn't working, the expense of printing out hard copies, mailing them out to each consumer who called in, translating that into a website that was mobile responsive so that homeowners could access this information even in the courthouse, on their smartphones. So I want to stop

there. If you want to learn more about the design thinking process, there's lots of great stuff out there.

Stanford Design School, RISD, Rhode Island School of Design, but there are a couple of... there's a book by Tim Brown called Change By Design, and then in the Stanford Social Innovation review, a piece by Brown and Wyatt called Design Thinking for Social Innovation, which I think is really excellent. It's about 5,000 words, a really nice, quick read, and anyone you can go to the Albany law website, find my email, and you could email me and I can send you information about these resources and others. How'd I do Lillian? Did I do it in time?

Lillian Moy:

You did good. You did great, Ray. So let me ask you this. We got a question about really how to stop a well-meaning program committed to providing legal information via the internet, from using Google Translate. In this design thinking, where would we consider underlying bottom line standards, like not using machine translation? Where would it be?

Ray Brescia:

I think at the prototype phase, and we saw some of these examples-

Lillian Moy:

All the way down there, Ray?

Ray Brescia:

Well, if you got there having used machine translation, you would then share the prototype with individuals who spoke the language well, of the language to which you were translating it, and then you'd compare and you would get things like what Joann pointed to earlier, right? People would say, wait a minute, this says I should go back to my country. Right? So by bringing in, certainly if at the earlier stages, you would have a point of view, you would talk to a consumer and they'd say, well, I find often these translations are pretty bad. Or then you got, if you ended up using machine translation in a shortcut to get your minimally viable product out there, you wouldn't necessarily release your minimally viable product fully out to the community. You would share it with the consumers who then presumably would pick up on these issues. So at worst, you'd get it at the prototype phase, you'd catch it at the prototype phase.

Lillian Moy:

[crosstalk 00:47:34]. We appreciate that. Joann, you answered a question in the chat. I appreciate you want to just verbalize in the last minute. We were

asked, what else do we tell people who want to use Google Translate or machine translation, because it's "better than nothing", or because we cannot afford to really translate the website? You only got a minute, Joann.

Joann Lee:

Okay. So I said, of course the best practice is to plan ahead and find the resources, prioritize it, to get the content professionally translated, but we know that that's not always possible. So some alternatives like during the pandemic, some community groups created video content. They explained a lot of these updates in language through social media platforms like YouTube and Facebook live that were posted on their websites. Other alternatives is to make sure you have the in language support over the phone or in person to site-translate these documents, explain it, let people follow up and ask questions and really guide them through the process so that they can get through it. I think these are better alternatives to using Google Translate because you just risk too much for the reasons that I went over, so.

Lillian Moy:

I don't know of any other questions in the chat, I don't see any others, but-

Ray Brescia:

Let me just jump in on that last point a little bit quickly. We used, at the law school, my colleague, Sarah Rogerson partnered with local undergraduate institutions to do translation, of some documents, but mostly interpreting in person. But that often can be a great resource. Really obviously students who are fluent, who can help in the process and some of them want to go to law school. So they get to get some of that information early on.

Lillian Moy:

And I think what was great about when that project originated is that some of the language teachers at the university at Albany did some competency testing on the students, which was great. Unbelievable, Ray, Joann, Tanya, Lisa and Matt and Margaret. Margaret is the woman behind the PowerPoint. And Matt is the person behind our technology. Thank you so much, all of you, the struggle continues. Thank you. Take care. Bye-bye.