Sateesh Nori:

Okay, let's get started. We want to start right on time. I'm Sateesh Nori, I'm the Executive Director of Justfix, and I'm going to be largely invisible from this point forward as I turn it over to Jessica Frank and Alison Corn to discuss Accessibility ABCs in a very colorful PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation. And I will do my best to monitor the chat, so please put your questions there and I will relay them to the speakers. And in about half an hour I will read aloud the CLE code. So please pay attention for that if you're here for CLE credit. So with that being said, I turn it over to Jessica Frank and Alison Corn.

Jessica Frank:

Hi everyone. Thank you for attending. I'm Jessica Frank. I'm A2J Author's Project Manager for CALI, which is the Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction. I've been working in document automation and form building for over 10 years now. And my start with accessibility began in 2018 when we started doing our accessibility audit of A2J Author. And so I will turn it over to Alison.

Alison Corn:

Hi everyone. My name's Alison Corn. I'm so excited to be here with Jessica to talk about accessibility. I am the Legal Solutions Designer at Pro Bono Net. My work focuses on the intersection of law, tech, design and using that intersection to bridge access to justice gaps for vulnerable communities. I'm particularly interested in accessibility as a disabled person and so I'm really excited to be here with everyone today. I may get a little nervous and talk fast, so if so, just flag me and let me know.

Jessica Frank:

Sounds good. So on our agenda today, we're going to go through the ABCs of accessibility and then leave time for Q&A at the end. So A is for Accessibility. That's our first alphabet here. So Alison and I are going to go back and forth with different accessibility topics, tips and tools to make your online content as user-friendly and accessible as possible. I come again from the A2J Author side with document assembly and form automation. So many of my examples are related to that. A2J Author is used by the New York courts in their DIY forms along with 40 other states as well. So let's just jump right into our alphabet. So A is for Accessibility.

Accessibility means that all people can perceive, understand, navigate and interact with electronic information and be active, contributing members of the digital world. Accessibility also increases the reach of your content. More accessibility expands your audience. It's not just for people with differing abilities. Having accessible web resources improves the content for all people. It makes it easier to read, easier to comprehend, and easier to digest on different devices.

Alison Corn:

Great. And so now we're going to move to the letter B, which is Beta testing. So as Jessica was saying, accessibility is really for everyone and everyone's experience as they're coming to use a product or a device, but only really matters if we know that the measures that we're implementing actually work for all of our users. So beta testing is where that comes in. Beta testing is the opportunity for real users to test out accessibility features, among other things, to make sure that they actually work before a product, a service, a website, whatever, is released to the public. So an example of this would be someone who uses a screen reader. You would have them test out a site, a website, to ensure that they are able to experience all of the site's content on their screen reading device.

If they're not able to, then you would fix those issues, rinse and repeat until all of these issues are resolved and you're able to put out a product that is in fact accessible.

Jessica Frank:

So we had a question, I think it said to define accessibility again, so I'll just quickly jump back in. So accessibility allows all people to perceive, understand, navigate and interact with electronic information and be active, contributing members of the digital world. And we'll define what that means in relation to different tech areas and different concepts as we're going along. So that's the overall broad interpretation.

But let's jump then into C. C is for Color Contrast and Color Reliance. Next slide. Thanks. Color and contrast are important design elements for web content. Maybe you too have spent hours fiddling with colors to make them look just right in a PowerPoint presentation template or on your website. Web designers are paid big bucks to get that perfect color design. However, colors that don't have enough contrast or clash with others can create problems for people with colorblindness or low vision. You should have a ratio of over four to one. So the screenshot in the back shows a red warning that is too light in contrast to the white background. It's not distinct enough for color contrast guidelines. The foreground screenshot then shows a contrast of 4.28 between the yellow and the red, which is much better.

Also, color shouldn't be used as the only means to visually convey information, to indicate an action, to prompt a response or to distinguish a visual element. In this example from A2J Author, the warning of an unanswered question is in red and it also has a warning icon of an exclamation point within a triangle. So both the red color is indicating a problem and also the warning icon as well.

Alison Corn:

Great, thanks Jessica. Now we're going to talk about different types of type setting. General type setting is a critical consideration for any type of accessible design. And then one way type setting can play into accessibility in particular, is through font optimized for specific users such as Dyslexia friendly font, and that's what we're going to talk about now and throughout the presentation. I do want to preface that we are going to talk a lot about different fonts and language accessibility. So this will kind of be a theme you'll hear throughout the presentation. So a dyslexia friendly font example would be this specific font here, and I'm going to put a link to this in the chat so you all can explore it on your own. There we go. This is the dyslexia typeface. So if someone has dyslexia, they often have a hard time reading letters. They may switch back and forth, things like that. It can be quite a challenge, especially on digital devices. This particular font helps people with dyslexia by providing them with a unique typeface to make reading, learning, and working easier on any type of device.

And here is how it operates in practice and how it was designed so that you better understand why these type of considerations are really important from an accessibility standpoint. Not only does it look different, but it looks different for a reason. So there are heavier volumes on this font. There are different shapes in order to allow a person to better perceive the differences between individual characters, so that someone with dyslexia who may switch a B and a D can better perceive the B and D in this font because of the subtle nuances within those characters. There's also better spacing between the individual letters and the word is enlarged, which makes reading more convenient and avoids a crowding effect where if letters are too close together, they make run over, as you can see in this example right here.

Sateesh Nori:

There's a question in the chat about the evidence for dyslexia friendly fonts and how do we know that they work?

Alison Corn:

Sure. I don't have the research, the white paper on me, and I'm happy to circulate that after this presentation. But from anecdotal evidence in my own personal use, I have found positive results with using this font for people who have dyslexia, they have commented in user testing studies that it is easier for them to be able to read texts, especially big blocks of body text on screens. It makes it easier for them to discern individual letters, especially as I was saying in long body text when their eyes may get more tired as the paragraph goes on, it makes it easier to read and not have that effect of switching letters. That's anecdotal from my own personal experience, but I am happy to circulate some more evidence if that would be helpful.

Sateesh Nori:

A follow-up question is, are there other types of dyslexia fonts or is there only one?

Alison Corn:

There are multiple fonts. This is, I think, the most popular and the most used font, this dyslexia font. It is also open source I believe, which is helpful and helps in the use for accessibility purposes.

Can you move on? And these are just more examples. I won't read you the text here, but I just wanted to really highlight the differences in the considerations in designing these fonts and the thought behind how to make fonts more user-friendly by considering accessibility and the overall design. Again, just some more examples of how they changed this font to make it easier for folks with dyslexia to be able to read. So, continuing on to E. Jessica, back to you.

Jessica Frank:

Thanks. So E is for Error messaging. Next slide. On some of these slides you're going to see us and hear us talk about WCAG success criterion. So WCAG stands for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and will be talked about in the W section of this presentation. I wanted to give you all a preview of that because it didn't fit in earlier in the alphabet, but it does play into a lot of these slides. And the success criterion is how WCAG gives guidance and examples to content creators to help them hit the guideline goals. So for error messaging, the intent of this success criterion is to ensure that users are aware that an error has occurred and can determine what is wrong. The error message should be as specific as possible. So in the case for example of an unsuccessful form submission, redisplaying the form and indicating that their fields is insufficient for many users.

So screen readers for example, people using screen readers are not going to know that there was an error until they encounter one of the indicators. They may abandon the form altogether thinking maybe that the page is simply not functional. So per WCAG 2.0, an input error is information provided by the user that is not accepted. So for example, information is required by the website that was omitted by the user or information that the user provided falls outside of the required data format. You want to make sure that your error messaging then is as specific as possible to let the end user know why it's not accepted. So in this screenshot they are over the character limit which has indicated that they have exceeded the allotted number of characters, you must answer it before they can move on, and there's several different indicators showing what exactly they need to do to change and to fit within the parameters. Now we'll move on to font selection.

Alison Corn:

As Jessica said, we're starting off F with Font selection and like I said earlier, we're going to be talking a lot about different fonts and type setting and language access. So with the dyslexia friendly font type

setting, which includes font selection is a critical aspect of accessible design. So I'd like to touch briefly on some best practices when it comes to selecting between serif and sans serif fonts and knowing that those Latin terms Serif and sans serif isn't really the essential point here. You can think of Serif as Times New Roman and sans serif as Arial. So those are some examples of those types of fonts. So in considering which type of font you want to use, you really need to think about the final living place of whatever you're creating.

So for purposes of this conversation, let's talk about a website as our example and before we just talk about what the appropriate font used for that particular device, let's go ahead and talk about the differences between serif and sans serif and why those differences really matter. So for a serif, you're on the left-hand side that kind of Times New Roman looking A. There are decorative parts of each character. So these little tales you see, the circle there that says serif. These details guide the eye along the type of letter and they are best used in body text. So those big long paragraphs of text, something maybe if you have a really big long novel, something you would be using there. In a sans serif, so here in this Arial looking As, modern looking A, there are no decorative details, no tells as opposed to the serif.

It makes it easier to read at a glance, which is why these sans serif fonts are typically used for headings and tables and figures, numbers, things like that. So in considering accessibility needs and then thinking about using a font on a website, we need to consider the universe of users that may be trying to access this website and the different types of devices may be trying to access this website on. So on a website, if we want something to stand out and be really bold like a title of a website, appropriate use for that would be sans serif. We're just looking at a glance, things like that. So anything that's going to be big and bold, we want to think, okay, sans serif, that's not something that we need to spend a lot of time on reading.

Now if we're going to have some body tags that's maybe, I don't know, know your rights type of paragraph for someone, and we want to think about the type of person that may be coming to this website. They may be coming to it on a cell phone, maybe a cell phone that isn't like the brand new iPhone. Maybe it's an older generation phone that has low resolution. So in that instance, what we would want to think about is like, okay, what's going to make this content the easiest to digest for whoever's reading it? In that particular example, we would want to us a serif font because, and maybe a low resolution screen, a serif font with those tails and those letters would be easier to read on a device with low resolution because you could easily discern each individual letter.

Also with long blocks of text, it could be wearing on the eyes, you can get tired reading big blocks of text. So in that case it's easier to read serif fonts because it's easier for the eye to discern the individual characters. So that's an example of using or being critical about your use or thoughtful about your use of fonts and the different types of displays in which they will be seen.

So moving on to G. G is for Graphics. And so what I really want to talk about here is iconography, all the different icons you may encounter in the different spaces that you may use them. Accessible icons in particular are icons that can be understood by all of your site visitors if we're talking about websites. Regardless of any impairments, disabilities or limitations they may have, accessible icons in particular ensure that every visitor can understand and access the icons on the page and their associated information or functionality.

So icons should not only look cool, but they should also be a form of communication as well. So for people who have language comprehension, learning or reading difficulties, this particular group of people may rely on symbols or icons to understand content and navigate to content that they need. So symbols also help people who struggle with language and attention to navigate content including media. For example, a person with dyslexia or someone who has an intellectual ability to understand concepts but struggles with language, they may be dependent on the use of symbols to browse pages for

information. And so in that sense you can see these icons can actually help people experience content as opposed to just look interesting.

It could also help elderly populations who can find cluttered pages with dense texts really hard to read on the screen. Clear symbols, icons and images, connective signposts to text content and can be in that way extremely helpful for folks.

Jessica Frank:

So the next one is H, is for Headers. And on this one, H1 is the most important and is the heading for the top of the page. It typically corresponds to the title of the page. It gives the user an indication of what the page is about and you should have a single H1 heading on each page. Each H2 heading, heading two creates a section of the content and it divides the page into consumable sections, which helps to organize the content. When you get to the next heading, ask yourself, is it a new section? If so, then an H2 heading would be appropriate. If it's a subsection of the last heading, then a H3 would be suitable so forth, if it's a subsection of H3, it should have an H4 and so on. Heading header levels have a linear descending order of importance. So H1 is at the top, H6 is at the bottom.

For each section of content, the order should remain linear as you move through to the next section and always go back then if you move on to a new content to go back to an H2 heading, because remember there should only be one H1 per content. Before or as you become more specific, you descend in order, you should have descriptive words. Don't skip header levels and don't use large font for regular text, because screen readers can mistake that for a header. It's pretty easy to see in CSS or even in word what your header levels are. So just a little bit of precision when you're creating the content can help mark it up basically for the screen reader on the back so that they know what's happening in each section.

The next one is I. I is for Image alt tags. With image alt tags, they are a description of the image for those who cannot see it or who may be using a screen reader. Users of assistive technology and users with low internet bandwidth who turn off images won't understand the full context of your page content without alt text descriptions. So it's essential for your page, for your content to be marked up with these alt text descriptions, because it conveys context and it conveys meaning and context for those users of your electronic resources. Next slide please. Clear, concise, less than 125 character. The description itself should be clear and concise and about 125 characters or less per image.

For example here in Google Slides, all I did was right click and you get the menu of options and then if you, Alison click it, you're good. And then if you have that you can then see the alt text descriptor adding a quick little title chart of header order and then screenshot of order header should be in H1 through H3. Very simple to do, something you can start adding to your content so that it is accessible by the screen readers as well. The next one is L. L is-

Sateesh Nori:

There's a quick question. Why not skip header sizes? So I guess going from H1 to H3, is that the question?

Jessica Frank:

The point I was making with the headers or with the font size was not to use large font in text, in the body in lower levels because screen readers can misinterpret that as a H1 or an H2 header. So how you're using your font and marking it up on your website, you can use design and have different sizes, but just think about not having large font right in the middle of the text so that if someone is using a screen reader and you don't have it properly marked up with the headers in the CSS, that it doesn't

automatically confuse that or try to confuse that for headers. If that question needs further, let me know. All right, so if not, let's move on to language.

L is for Language access. With this one, language access is an important part of overall accessibility as well. So, within A2J Author for example, we support 16 languages. We've done the work of translating the chrome around an interview. So, the common phrases like next, back, continue, into those 16 languages. But you as the content creators are ultimately on the line for translating your content. This ensures that we have the basics of the tech covered, but we really believe in leaving the legally relevant translations to professional translators or fluent speakers of that language. There's a lot of debate in the legal technology community about using machine learning or Google Translate -- using tools to translate it. And it's problematic because there are legally relevant terms of art that have to be described, that aren't necessarily a one-to-one translation.

So, we translate the phrases like next, back, and continue, but leave it up to professional translators or fluent speakers for the content to be conveyed to end users. This is also important we believe for a full wraparound experience. So on the next slide you'll see that the popups, the additional information, definitions, are also translated. On the next slide after that you'll see that our hosting site a2j.org is translated into Vietnamese and Spanish through a partnership with Lone Star Legal Aid in Texas. They have English, Spanish, and Vietnamese content on their website. They link out to our automated document assembly tool. And so the full experience for end users going from the legal content on the Legal Aid's website through to the document assembly platform with its terms of use and we're not your lawyer and explaining how to get documents, all the way through to the interview itself, is all translated as an important component of the full wraparound.

The next one is M, is for Metadata. With metadata, we spent a lot of time in the summer of 2020 during our COVID summer, first COVID summer, doing accessibility work on the A2J viewer, which is the tool that displays our guided interviews to end users. So, we wanted to ensure that it was accessible as possible with screen readers because that was a big black box for automated forms that people would be running through them or get legal content and then say, go here to fill out your form. And the current tools weren't accessible to the screen readers. So we spent a lot of that COVID summer implementing stuff on the backend like metadata to mark up the technology for the end users. So, it's things that you all never see as content creators, but that the screen readers see.

So, the next couple slides are just examples of things that we've done on the backend like making sure aria-labels are correctly labeled. Next buttons are labeled so that it explains what it does to the screen reader. If someone is tabbing through it tells them where they're going to go if they click it. The next one after that is showing if something is required, making sure that it's properly tagged as aria required is true or required to let the assistive technologies understand which fields are. The next one is Alison's.

Alison Corn:

Great. Thanks Jessica. So now for N, I want to talk a little bit about Non-roman character sets, building off of Jessica's language access discussion. A key part of accessibility is considering all of your potential users before you build your tool, your product, whatever it may be. If your website for example may have visitors who speak Arabic, a language based on a non-roman character set which reads right to left, you'll want to consider how the layout and functionality in particular of your site would be impacted by such a translation. You'll need to ensure that your layout is responsive to these language access needs, such that Arabic users, will have the same experience as English-speaking users, for example.

Jessica Frank:

The next one is O, is for Orientation. And by Orientation, I mean the orientation of the user's device or their screen. So, this standard, the guideline states that the content shouldn't be restricted to a single display orientation for its view or operation, unless specific display orientation is essential. So you can allow for portrait or landscape orientation in CSS and you should also make sure to test your web content to ensure that it isn't cut off or sideways when switched to landscape orientation. You can test it in the browser. If you're working on a website, you can simulate different screen sizes in your browser's developer console very easily. Developer console, if you're not sure where that is or what it is, shows you, it removes the screen a little bit and you can see the wizard going behind the internet, and lets you see the CSS and what error messages might be occurring.

And you can change the orientations, you can do it in Microsoft Word if you're looking at content that's going to be displayed in a Word document. You can flip it from portrait to landscape. And if you think about, it's not necessarily just for those who might be using assistive technologies. Sometimes you need to be able to see something larger and you do that by flipping your phone to the side or you're watching a video and you move it to make it landscape instead of portrait. All of that can be simulated in the browser, should also be tested on mobile before you go live. But it's important to make sure that you're not cutting anything off.

The next one is P, is for Plain language. So, in 2002 there was a study done by the National Center for Education Statistics that found that nearly 50% of adults are functionally illiterate. That means they can't balance their checkbooks, they can't read a drug label and they can't write an essay for a job. 21 to 23% of adults were not able to locate information in text. They could not make low level inferences using printed materials and they were unable to integrate easily identifiable pieces of information. Unfortunately, 41 to 44% of US adults with the lowest levels of literacy were living in poverty. So, when we think about building content for self-represented litigants, for those who are accessing legal resources online, we really want to think about plain language, because it is clear, straightforward expressions, using only as many terms as are necessary, avoiding convoluted sentences, inflated vocabulary, and obscurity. It's thinking about how you organize your information. So, you tell your reader what the document is about, you help them find the information as they read. It's about what you write, so you include only the information your reader actually needs to know. It's about how you write. You use words and grammar that your readers understand. You speak directly to your reader with the active voice and it's how you present the information.

So, using design techniques like we've talked about today, to help people read more easily, the first tool that I have for helping that on the next slide is a tool that is through WriteClearly.org plain language online course. The WriteClearly.org has a ton of resources that are available to you to check out, one of which is a three-part course written in CALI Author, which is A2J Author's sister software and is available on our website. I'll link to it later in the chat. And that was created by Jeff Hogue, who used to be from LawNY, Transcend Translation, and John Mayer, who's the Executive Director of CALI. It was created over a decade ago, but still has really valid content and how to walk through plain language tailored to legal aid and automated document communities.

The next link here, the federal plain language guidelines have a ton of information on there for using the active voice, minimizing abbreviations, omitting unnecessary words, that comes from the federal government. And then there is Transcend Translation. They are a company that has worked pretty extensively with the legal aid community and the courts to improve plain language. They have articles on their website explaining why plain language is important. They evaluate court forms. There’re discussions of the advantages of plain language. And they also have a YouTube channel for plain language. That's it on this one.

Sateesh Nori:

Quick question from the audience, I'm going to paraphrase this here. How do you balance the different accessibility needs of your audiences in one form of content? For example, the conflict between visuals, charts, and images versus words.

Jessica Frank:

For me, I think you don't have to do everything for everyone, but if you take small steps and try and hit that balance, so you're including things like the alt tags on images. If you are using images, you're providing that alternative for those who aren't going to be seeing the images. If you're using the different headers, you're marking that up. A lot of this accessibility work isn't just for those who may have differing abilities, it's for everyone. So, if you take small steps to improve your content overall, it makes it better for everyone and you hit sort of a middle ground. I don't think you can make it perfect for everyone and people come to the internet with devices. If people need assistive technology, they're coming, for the most part, to your site with it. But if you can do as much as possible to mark it up and make it as easy as possible for them to use the tools that they're familiar with, I think that's helpful. Alison, if you have any perspective on it.

Alison Corn:

I think that speaks to the majority of it, Jessica. I would just say this is why it's so critical to understand who all of your prospective users are before you start building any one thing, to understand all the different experiences people may bring to a certain device or tool or interview, whatever it may be. And then I think how I operate in my own development work, if I'm creating something and someone may be able to access it and not have the same experience as someone else, I would rather not have that thing. So like Jessica was explaining, if she's going to put an image on her website and someone who uses a screen reader wouldn't be able to experience that or in interact with that, then if I can't put an alt tag on it, then for whatever reason I won't even include that image.

Because I don't want anyone to feel like an outsider or they don't belong to a site or a product or service, whatever it may be. That's my, I guess how I operate. I don't want anyone to feel like they don't belong there.

Jessica Frank:

We'll come back for questions because we're almost through the alphabet obviously. So if you do have them, please just put them in the chat for us. The Q is for the QWERTY keyboard and why QWERTY keyboard is not always the right choice for you. So the QWERTY keyboard is the keyboard for inputting text, literally Q-W-E-R-T. If you look across the top of your keyboard right now, you'll see those letters. On mobile devices though it's not always the best option for entering data, it requires users to switch to the number keyboard if they want to input a number or a special character. And with very little tech effort, you can designate certain fields on say your forms or your website that may need numbers as number fields. So when you do that, when a user accesses it, say on their smartphone, they pull it up, they get to that field, they're tapping to that field, the number keyboard is going to pop up.

It not only is helpful for those who may have fat fingers and can't get to that number keyboard and then accidentally hit the Z and then have to go back and then go out of it and then they're trying to tab around and move around on a small keyboard. It's also an accessibility thing because it pops up the proper keyboard, very low tech impact there. So saves a ton of time for end users, greatly improves their user experience, minimal amount of tech effort for you all.

The next one is R. R is for Reading level. So under the P is for plain language, we talked about that study that showed that most Americans were functionally illiterate. Further in that study it talked about, and other research has shown, that most Americans being at a 5th to 7th grade reading level. And so when we present content to users, it's important to keep that reading level in mind. We've built tools into A2J Author that help evaluate your content's reading level using Flesch-Kincaid grade level indicator, the Coleman-Liau index. Both of these analyze the number of words per sentence and grammar. There's an algorithm that evaluates it and lets you know if you're in the safe zone so that under a 5th grade reading level, if you're in the danger zone in the 7th to 9th grade level, or if you're in the warning zone in the 7th to 9th grade level, and if you're in the danger zone over a 9th grade reading level. Please excuse my work from home friend Lee Dackson, who is barking at the neighbors in the background, if you can hear that, sorry. You can use a lot of these same tools are built into Word, they're built into Google Docs, they're built into your text editors.

There are a lot of accessibility tools that are built into the things that you are already using. So like I said, Word, Google Docs. Adobe Pro has some really great accessibility tools. Well, it will just go through your PDF and show you all the errors. So if you do have access to Adobe Pro, which not everyone does, but use the tools that are out there that are available in what you're already using to take advantage of adding it in where you can. So back to the question about, how do you balance? I understand, I work for a nonprofit, we understand the low budgets, you can't do everything, so take advantage of the stuff you are already using to do what you can. You can just click through the next slides, Alison. It's just showing examples of the different warnings that pop up within our tool. And then I think the S is yours.

Alison Corn:

Thanks Jessica. And for all of my nonprofit folks out there, if you're looking for low cost software, go to TechSoup, T-E-C-H-S-O-U-P, and you can get discounted things like Adobe. So, check that out.

Anyway, so moving on to S for Standards. We've been talking a lot about all these different accessibility measures, but where do they come from? Jessica discussed one earlier, WCAG, and we'll talk about that here in a second. But generally, an accessibility standard is a set of requirements that are created by an organization, a group of folks that put together the set of requirements, specification, characteristics, or guidelines that can be used to measure all of these accessibility measures that we've been talking about. And it can provide an incentive for compliance and may even be required by some of your partners, your customers, your clients, whatever it may be, even though there may not be any legal requirement for adhering to them.

I want to discuss three of the big ones that Jessica and I, we pull from, that a lot of them are considered best practices. Again, some of them may not be legal requirements, but they are definitely considered best practice among the community. So, the first one was the one that Jessica was referring to. It's the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, probably the most prolific and most used. There was a new edition that just came out, the 2.2 guidelines. I encourage you all to Google all of these different standards and to familiarize yourself with them if you're interested. There's also section 508. And then lastly there is the ISO, which is the International Organization for Standardization, ergonomics of human-system interaction. This is really helpful, particularly on software accessibility.

The important takeaway here though isn't necessarily that you need to memorize these guidelines and that you need to go line by line by them and make sure that all of your content is in adherence with all of these different guidelines. The important takeaway is to have a set of standards in which you, your organization, whoever operates off of, and that you hold to those principles in considering accessibility with any of the content that you do create.

Moving on to T. I want to talk a little bit about Trauma-informed design. This is a big emphasis of my own work, especially in Pro Bono Net and the different interactive interviews that we create. The big point I really want to make when thinking about trauma-informed design, is that accessibility touches everyone. And I think this is something we've communicated throughout the entire presentation, isn't necessarily someone with disabilities, although it definitely includes that. It literally includes anyone and any experience that they bring to whatever product or service that you are offering. So trauma-informed design is designing tools that foster safety, wellbeing and healing. It's identifying how the design of tools can affect identity, worth and dignity, and how it can promote empowerment, and it's designing for the most vulnerable user. An example of this would be an interactive interview that we created, that Pro Bono Net created for some domestic violence survivors. And we found that in user testing, when we asked them to provide a description of their abuse in a really long form narrative where they had to literally write what happened to them, that that was re-traumatizing for them because they had to relive that experience telling someone who they didn't know, very sensitive information.

And we found that by using trauma-informed design, we were able to include multiple ways for that particular individual to tell their story. So they didn't have to automatically just only have one option and only tell their story in one way. We provided check boxes that were statutorily compliant with the domestic violence statute of that state. And we also provided an area for them to draw if they felt that that was the best way that they could tell someone what they had experienced. And so that's an example of trauma-informed design and how that does play into accessibility because it literally allows someone to access justice in that way.

So, what trauma-informed design isn't, is not designing tools that traumatize or even re-traumatize someone. It's designing without considering a user's experience both in the real world and as they encounter something. And it's not designing for the most powerful user, because that leaves the more vulnerable user feeling like they're an outsider to a system or a service, a product. And one way to, I guess further explain this, a way of using trauma-informed design, would be repeating a user's own language or using empowering language in a way to give a user a sense of agency. So for example, it'd be like using a word “domestic violence survivor” as opposed to “victim.” So trauma-informed design is a way in which to use accessibility to promote or at least foster safety and wellbeing for our users. Moving, I think to you Jessica.

Jessica Frank:

Thanks. So in line with the choosing the words properly, this one is U, is for Unusual words, terms of art and legalese. So please excuse the letter stretching on some of these slides. We really wanted to get as many of the alphabet letters in there, so it gets a little tricky. The unusual terms of art, the WCAG guideline for this is that there should be a mechanism available for identifying specific definitions of words or phrases when they're used in an unusual or restricted way including idioms and jargon. And the fun thing about the law is that is literally our bread and butter. We love having $100 words that we all paid for in law school and our legal forms are full of this terrible legalese. There's a lot of content in the law that is in Latin that uses acronyms or that uses words that are not familiar to the average person that's going through this, particularly in that 5th to 7th grade reading level.

So, if you remember back to that P is for Plain language and R is for Reading, we're shooting for that 5th grade reading level. Interactions with the court system by themselves are already stressful and confusing enough without adding words that people aren't familiar with, without adding the unusual words or terms of art. So where possible add an easy to access definition. The screenshot here is what we call a pop-up in A2J Author. It's a just-in-time learning tool that displays definitions created by the authors to add at the point in which the end user needs it. So, this is a real world example, so you may not be an RLTO tenant. What the heck is an RLTO tenant? It's a Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance,

blah, blah, blah. And it goes on to explain what that means in the city of Chicago at the point in which someone is going to need to know if they are an RLTO or they aren't you.

It's not always acronyms. Sometimes you have to use the legally relevant term like, are you the respondent or the petitioner? It matters for what box ultimately gets checked on the form or what path they go down. But not everyone is going to know what a respondent or a petitioner is and so explain it. If they don't know it, they can click the little blue link, pops up, definition pops up, they could read it, go back, and answer the question at that same moment. This isn't just in automated forms though. You can add this sort of definitions throughout your website. You don't have to add in any special plugins. You literally can just create pages that have the definitions if that's all you have on your website. Write Clearly has plugins for I think Google Docs and Microsoft Word and websites that can be added to provide basic definitions of things. So where possible define it if it's not a commonly used phrase.

The next one is V, is for Video captioning. So, videos should be created and delivered in ways that ensure that all members of the audience can access their content. An accessible video includes captions and is delivered with an accessible media player. Captions are text versions of the audio content synchronized with the video... Sorry, the dog's really going crazy in the background. Sorry about that. Captions are great for those who may need to read because they are hard of hearing. They also help non-native English speakers to understand video content. They make the content searchable or they help people understand technical terms and see the spelling of it as well. I'm a mom with small children and sometimes you're accessing content late at night when you have a baby sleeping on you, having to not play the video out loud and you just read the captions is particularly helpful as well. So this is sort of thinking about your user. Anyway, use captions if you can. Next one, tools, just Zoom and YouTube have, they're in there for you with tools. There's links in the slide deck for those.

The next one is WCAG. W is for WCAG. Alison mentioned this that it's one of the standards. There's a quick reference then for explaining how to comply with it, giving examples and showing you the different levels of A, AA and AAA compliance. So check it out. They have the principles pretty much laid out by the different areas of tech and the different things you can do to hit those standards. Finally, we have a cheat on X, Y, Z, because it's really hard to come up with 26 letters all the time. I tried to fiddle with these and come up with things like examine your zone, X-ray your zoom, x-ray your zone. It was terrible. So that's why it's blank.

So, you can see that we have that as a filler. And hopefully learning all these new terms and tips and tools and phrases while a bit overwhelming in the beginning, which is what I found, hopefully, using this as a cheat sheet can help you learn about the guidelines, about the suggestions and apply it to your own work and take back the idea that small steps can make a big difference. So you don't have to do everything at once. You can do little bits to get started to make your content more accessible. So the next one is just questions. So we can go back to the questions.

Sateesh Nori:

There's a couple. Thank you very much. We made it with one minute to spare. One question from before is, can a user change the font of a website to make it more dyslexia friendly, or does that have to be baked in from the beginning?

Alison Corn:

That's a very broad question, it would definitely depend on how your website was built and I would to need to know a little bit more information. And it would also, a lot of things depend on whether or not your user's browser has that font available. And so I apologize, there's not really a great answer that I can provide you right now. It is possible, but I would say the best way to start with dyslexia friendly

thought would be to be using it in your own print products. If you've got any type of print materials, you can definitely use it there as a starting point and then talk to your developer or whoever manages your website and see if that's something that you can implement there.

Sateesh Nori:

So, we are at time. That is the end of day one as far as I know. And so hopefully we will see all of you tomorrow for day two, beginning at one o'clock. Thank you all and thank you Jessica and Alison.

Jessica Frank:

Thank you.