

Disabled People Use the Internet! Building and Maintaining Inclusive Library Spaces Online

Presentation Transcript

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Welcome to our presentation. So we're here to talk about building and maintaining inclusive spaces online. And hopefully y'all are here to learn about purposeful design and the use of digital resources to improve online inclusion. And if you haven't already, take the polls that you should still be seeing on your screen. There are two different questions, they seem similar. One focuses on institutions versus you individually, and we'll discuss some of the responses at the end of our session. And our presentation including direct links and extra related resources is available for you online at go.unc.edu/cediexchange. My name is Laura March. I'm a PhD student at UNC Chapel Hill. And feel free to reach out to me @theartofmarch on Twitter and at lmarch@unc.edu. And my background is in accessible web design and instructional design, particularly helping professors transition to online learning. So I've been very busy recently. I'm interested at the around topics around the intersection of technology, education, and creativity at libraries and cultural institutions, and I'm part of the Community, Equity, Data and Information lab at UNC which was founded and directed by my co presenter, Dr. Amelia Gibson. And Dr. Amelia Gibson is an assistant professor here at UNC Chapel Hill and can be reached @AmeliaNGibson and at angibson@email.unc.edu. Her primary research interests focus on ways that information and data are used by and against marginalized communities with a focus on health and wellness and communities of color, particularly among women and girls and among disabled people. Her work explores the ways we understand and replicate systemic information poverty, marginalization, and equity in local communities and on the internet. So here's what we'll be presenting today. After this introduction, Amelia will start us off with a discussion of a few institutional strategies. And then I'll go over a few technological strategies, and then we'll ask you all to participate in an automated accessibility check activity and finish up with time for q&a. Wonderful. Thank you all for participating in that poll. I'm going to close it for now. Amelia, the floor is yours. Are you able to connect your audio?

I think so. Can you all hear me? Yes. Okay, great. All right. Can you move to the next slide? Okay, thanks. So, um, when planning any program that involves technology, there are both institutional logistics that have to be considered and there are technological logistics to work out. And some of those things overlap. Some of you, I'm looking at the poll, and it looks like a lot of you feel like your institutions, and you personally, have done some of this work to build inclusive environments. And so you might be familiar with some of these institutional perspectives, but I'm going to go into a little bit of detail. We don't have that long today. So Laura and I are going to split the discussion and I'm going to touch very quickly on how to think about some of these institutional logistics, and Laura is going to focus on the tech for today. Okay. Next slide. So before we start talking about any of that, we want to give you some ideas of the kinds of programs that this might apply to. These programs are great for reaching folks who might not come into the building for any number of reasons, and many of, a lot of

time that includes people with disabilities, right. So this might be a good list for libraries that are trying to reach out to folks during quarantine or isolation related to COVID. But there are also a number of people who are immunocompromised, who might have extreme anxiety, who might have other disabilities that keep them from coming into the library building. And so doing these kinds of programs are good for reaching those groups of people in addition to everyone, you know, so we're talking about inclusive programming, not just programming for people with disabilities; special or separate or Saturday programming, right? And doing these kinds of programs, in my opinion, helps make the experience better for everyone. Doing them well makes the experience better for everyone. And this is something that we see a lot of the time when we talk about any kind of inclusive programming. Planning programming that works well for people with disabilities or disabled people generally helps everyone right. So some examples here are online storytimes. We've seen a lot of those come out of a lot of libraries and a lot of other literature-related spaces recently. Ask me Anything sessions with librarians or community members who have specific specific interests that might be of interest to the community, online book clubs, watch parties, online sessions that answer some of the more popular seasonal questions the library staff might get. Yes, so, Amy is saying remember to include closed captions – we will get to that right. So also speaking of that, consider providing information, any information on any programming that you do consider providing it in multiple formats, right? So closed captioning is a form of text format. So basically, if you're thinking about it this way, if your program, if your content is provided in the, in a video format or visual format, also consider providing access to in written text format as well. If your program is provided in text format, primarily, consider providing audio narration of that text, right. So this is one of the sort of basic tenets of universal design for learning. Provide any content that you give in multiple formats, right. Okay, so next slide. So as with most program planning, you need to think about division of labor. And for those of you who do programming in your libraries, you're accustomed to thinking about that sort of on the fly or naturally right, but when you're first starting out doing online programming that happens online, not just online advertising for in-person programming, you sort of need to do this very explicitly to avoid overlooking important parts of your planning. So for example, figuring out who has control over what elements of the library's online presence tends to save time later on and makes planning, development and maintenance easier on the back end. Typically, library staff have to request support from the city or state IT staff to do anything to the website. Sometimes there's a specific person who's assigned to do social media from the library. And so think about the ways that the work that you're doing, if it, if the program itself happens online, might be different. Right, next slide.

So this is one example of a framework for planning an online event and thinking about division of labor, right? So you think about programming and it may or may not, may look slightly different depending on the context if you're a solo librarian, this, this might look different in terms of in terms of being able to or needing to separate this the job functions to different people. But like here we have programming administration, advertising, right? In some systems, this person isn't often connected to the programming themselves, but they do have regular access to the library social media, right? So you have to think about what it looks like if the program is conducted using that social media account what the permissions might look like. Technology, same question, right? How does this look different if the, if the event itself is using the library's technology? I encourage having community representation in any planning, especially when you're talking about being inclusive in terms of disability, right? A lot of times we have programs are planned according to the expressed desires of people who feel comfortable

speaking to the library staff and to the librarians. Those are not always people from marginalized communities, right. And then security so this might look a little different in a chat room or Zoom, that it doesn't the physical space. So what does it mean to have a security person in a, in an online open public forum that that anyone can access. Right? What does that what might that entail? Okay.

Next slide.

So here are a few questions for you to consider. What resources or support does each person need? Who normally manages these resources? And what might that mean in terms of responsibility and accessibility to the to the library's web space? What does it mean to share that access or that responsibility? Who's currently allowed to represent the library online? And does that current structure prevent the library staff from interacting with the community on the web? Maybe it might be possible to make multiple levels or accounts. So you might have an official library account and then a less official account for ongoing programs or storytimes. Do these people have the training or the the, the time that they need to do this work in an inclusive way and, and to do this remotely? And if not, how can they get that support? Right, then what happens if there's conflict between the institution's information values and the information values of the community, right, or the people or people, especially people with disabilities in the community, who's responsible for gathering information about what the community needs, how to implement that? And who deals with community feedback, right. So all of these are sort of institutional planning points that should happen when you're doing that kind of work. Next slide.

So one of the things I hear a lot holds library staff back from creating inclusive programming is reliance on third party software or platforms that don't support accessibility. So this is my call to the folks on the management side, I guess, when licensing kind of push for the, for the, at the very least, basic accessibility standards, right? Ask how, ask your vendors how to use some of their basic accessibility functions. Push for content accessibility guidelines. Function, not functions but the minimum sort of, at the very least the minimum compliance with WCAG, ADA, Section 508 and other applicable laws. In your licensing agreements asked for the freedom to develop alternative formats or people who need them. If not, if it's not available, ask why.

That's right. So Scott is saying that whole communities and consortia etc. needs to push vendors harder. It is a lot easier to do this when you, when you're part of a consortium or a group of libraries, but it's something that doesn't happen if vendors aren't pushed on this. Right.

Okay, so the final, the final thing I have to say, is set clear guidelines for inclusive programming that all staff must meet, right. So there's one thing I want you to take away from this portion of the presentation it's that building inclusive program is not just the job of your children's librarian. I hear that a lot. When I asked who in your library works on accessible and inclusive programming, people say it's the children's librarian. It's not the job of just the one staff member who has a special interest in working with disabled patrons. It's everybody's job, right? So staff who represent the library in person, but also on social media or online should have clear guidelines for everything from accept, acceptable terminology. So for example, do you use people-first language, do you say person with a disability? Do you use identity-first language? Do you say disabled person or autistic person? Different communities in different places have different preferences. And so being aware of that and having kind of common guidelines across

the library is helpful. People should be aware about things like proper photo captioning, writing appropriate texts at appropriate reading levels.

Web developers should have good content on the web content accessibility guidelines. And ensure that all the guidelines are being followed. And then one thing that we, this seems really small, but that becomes very important if you need to use screen readers etc, is that all staff who post documents, including PDFs, especially PDFs, should ensure that they run internal accessibility checks on documents that are published by the library, right? They should be, ensure that videos are captioned and whenever possible that transcripts are provided. Right.

So my last I guess my takeaway from my presentation portion is that the idea of accessibility is not something that's ever finished, right? So sometimes people try, things aren't perfect, they get frustrated, and they give up. But think and don't think about accessibility as something that you do one time or inclusion in the same way. Inclusion is not something that you do one time, and then it's done. It's something that's an ongoing process. And as software updates and changes as your community changes and grows. You need to continue to communicate with people and make sure that your strategies evolve, and that your programs are made inclusive. Thank you.

Thanks, Amelia. So, as promised, here are a few technological strategies to keep in mind as you're thinking about improving online inclusion. And I'll keep this quick, but feel free to review our online slides and reach out with any other questions. So as Amelia shared, and as we can see, if you click on the closed captions buttons here, we're currently shifting to virtual events to accommodate closures during the pandemic or are already part of our virtual events here. In Zoom, we can have live captioning without much hassle. It even has native sign language interpretation features too. And Facebook and YouTube are working on these native services. They're rolling them out as accounts to different accounts with different amount of followers as we speak. And if you haven't gotten this on your Facebook or YouTube account, or if hosting a live video event is happening for your institution on Twitter, you'll need to use a third party software system to do that captioning. I have links to how-to guides for all of those platforms along with adding captions to pre-recorded videos available in the notes sections of our online slide deck at go.unc.edu/cediexchange. So still on social media for now a little bit, many of us already know that we need to add alternative or alt text to images for people who use screen readers on our website. If you're still unsure about that say that UMich describing visual resources toolkit if you need a refresher or more ideas of what to write. But alt text can should be added to your social media posts too. And they'll walk you through this. You may have seen image descriptions like this inside Twitter posts, which really started in response to the platform not accommodating alt text at all. And I've heard that old phones using the Twitter app still don't have the alt text functionality. Let me know if yours doesn't. Um, I was just asked to give this the link again. Sure. It's right here at the bottom go.unc.edu/cediexchange, CEDIEXCHANGE. Talking now about alt text on Twitter. So again, this has evolved from Twitter not accommodating alt text at all. Now that they do, if this had alt text, it would have a little button over here saying alt. And here's how you add that. First you have to update your settings. Go into accessibility and then into this vision area over here and allow that to be checked. And once that button is selected, an add description area will pop up once you've uploaded an image, you can type in your alt tag here. They're also testing some AI here and will auto create some crazy descriptions for you whether or not you decide to have an alt text, so it might be

good for you to just check to see what they're describing your image as and compare it to what the image actually is. Interestingly enough on Facebook, you don't have to turn on any extra settings. It's inside an options link that will show on your image, see a very faint options highlight there. And then within the sub menu, you see this change alt text right over here. If you forget to do this at all, you can just Google it, how do I add alt tags on Facebook or Twitter? And so many options will pop up for you as well. So next up is making sure that your website's content is organized. And this means using a contemporary hierarchical structure. So meaning using paragraph tags instead of line breaks, and perhaps even more importantly, making sure that your headers are nested correctly. So anytime you're using an h3 tag, it must be directly after an h2 tag. And for people using screen readers. experiencing those out of order headings or lists would be like asking a sighted reader to navigate a physical book with misnumbered pages.

So also under that organization umbrella, ensure that your layout is responsive and can adjust automatically to different sized browsers. So I'd really consider using percents instead of pixel widths. And you can see why in this responsive code here.

And similarly, making sure to separate your content and your page style. So more specifically, consider using progressive enhancement. And here on this slide, you can see the three different layers of building out a navigation system. So the first step or layer uses HTML that's all the way on the left. And that would be useful for somebody using a screen reader or a mobile phone that has limited functionality like that old Blackberry we're seeing in the comments. You can change the order of pages by just putting a number into that form. And the next layer or adding CSS and styles to make it prettier in the middle. It does the same thing. It makes it look a little prettier, but it doesn't change the functionality. And the last step all the way to the right would add in maybe some JavaScript or HTML5, which allow allows users to drag and drop pages in a different order. So users who cannot do that drag and drop still have all the functionality as those who can, it's really just hidden underneath that visual editor, you'll still get to be able to interact with all that content, still be able to do whatever they can, that you're asking them to do, like change the navigation structure. It's just underneath these other layers that people with a different, with additional functionality are able to get to. And here's what the code looks like on the back end. It's starting simple, moving to the complex, but really without removing that functionality of the original foundation. Another area to double check is making sure that your text is easy to read and not an image file. On the easy to read point, Microsoft Word and even Outlook have now been offering automated readability checkers to check the grade level of your written content. Again, there's how-to in the slides as well. For checking your color contrast, my favorite tool to use here is WebAIM's Color Contrast Checker. And that allows you to see if your color combinations can pass different WCAG levels. And I'm sure as librarians, you know how to do OCR, that optical character recognition, inside your PDFs. But just don't forget to clean up any issues or mistakes, like a capital I being mistaken for a lowercase L. And you can do that straight through Adobe Acrobat. Again, those how-to links are available in the slides as well. So moving on to descriptive linking. And this is something that's not currently happening in Zoom, which is why we have to paste those ugly, long URLs, but they're on it, I've been assured. But as the name implies, a hyperlink should describe where it's being pointed. So constantly linking the words "click here," not a good practice. It's much harder to figure out where you're going to go. And some users aren't actually clicking anything. They're tapping on their phones or hitting enter on the keyboards. Similarly, having a screen reader waste time reading

out those long URLs is really unappealing to look at for those of us who are sighted, hopefully Zoom will get this fixed too. And just one quick note about creating accessible forms, which is one of the major errors caught by automated checkers. So don't forget that purely visual tests like image based CAPTCHA codes are really problems for people with visual impairments, but also users with dyslexia. And online on the slides, I have an interesting link to W3 Consortium's write up about the accessibility of CAPTCHA forms and other ideas for visual Turing tests on the web. Very interesting there. So now on to evaluating your work. So not only should you check your content using an automated accessibility checker, but also ask real users for their feedback. So a website can pass all the automated tests available, but still be confusing or unusable to your actual users. And this is another reason why it's important to build relationships and listen to disabled community members. So with all that being said, at the bare minimum, you should be checking your work. And I'd like to go through the basics of reviewing that together by asking you to do it yourself with an automated accessibility checker. So let's try running your own websites through WAVE, that's WebAIM's Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool. So pop open another browser, head on over to their website at wave.webaim.org and enter the URL of a page that you'd like to review. And I'll give an example on the next slide. Just take some notes of your results and share them in our chat.

Again, we're at wave.webaim.org.

And I put in the UNC Library's website, and you can see the contrast errors are happening on our library hours page with the gray text, you can barely see that it says closed there. Let's take maybe two minutes and try it yourselves. Again, go on to that web, that wave.webaim.org and share your results with us in chat.

Anybody see any major surprises pop up?

You can use your own school if you like, or maybe another institution that you think does a really good job or another institution that does a really poor job.

20 contrast areas, Emily! Oh no. Can you tell right away with those contrast errors are? Were there particular colors? Oh interesting with the emergency announcements on COVID-19. I've seen that as well of how institutions have chosen to put up pop up or use the cookie functionality. I know in European websites where you have to have the accepting cookie functionality as part of your website, people changing that into COVID-19 language. Again, things to think about on if you actually want to use that that way or think of other solutions.

Interesting. So a lot of low contrast errors coming from university color usage. Yes.

So actually, if you see back in here, I was testing our UNC Carolina Blue versus just a couple of degrees darker into that, cerulean blue, and there's a big difference on what it can pass on what it can't pass.

Evelyn found some structural errors. So that's talking about of, those out of line headings. Again, thinking about it like unordered page numbers in a physical book, interesting. Empty links to social

media, some null or empty alt text. Very interesting. Congratulations for Susan with no errors on her page. Same with Marianne.

Bethany asked about aria. Aria is, uh, I know that I've seen that used in WordPress pages that it's a sort of plugin, theme, back end aria.

Oh no, sorry to hear that Deborah, found an empty button. Okay. Well, thank you all for doing that. I'd like to learn more about what y'all are seeing. Thank you so much for coming to our presentation today. I'm cognizant of the time. But we've talked about purposeful design and the use of digital resources to improve online inclusion. And we're happy now to take any questions you have about the automated accessibility checker, ideas for remote programming, or anything else you'd like to talk about. Thank you all so much.

Thank you.

Thank you, Laura and Dr. Gibson. If anyone has a question, please fill it into the chat box. And Laura and Dr. Gibson are free to answer those questions.

And I see that our Bitly isn't even in here. So let me add that right now. That's go.unc.edu/cediexchange.

And interestingly, now inside, inside PowerPoint, and inside Google Slides, we have the ability to add alt text. So once you're hovered over here, you can see that I have a logos in here. Or something in for this forms, I made the alt text describing what you would want people to actually take away from this image.

So one thing I'm going to add is that it's really helpful, there are, there are a lot of accessibility settings on your own computers that you can use for screen reading. But there are also free screen readers that you can download. It's really helpful to test your your documents and your sites using a screen reader. And it takes a little bit of practice to learn how to do it, but once you do, it's easy to see why it's important to be able to tab through things, why it's important to use your headers and all that. So that's a really great way to test your, check your work.

Frank asked if there's any comments on approaching, on the approach to recruiting people with accessibility needs to participate in research or testing. So that depends on community, your community, I would say whenever you can compensate people for their time, but also including people on your board who have disabilities is, is helpful and giving them the same consideration that we give everyone else in terms of their ability to influence the library's programming.

So yes, I... One thing that I think is a pet peeve, though, is just assuming that people have nothing to do and they'd be happy to do, to spend lots of time on the library website without any kind of recognition or compensation. So just be mindful of that.

It's our favorite question from Ellen about events on doing hybrid events. So Amelia, would you like to share what, what you did as host of our class?

Yes, so I ran a course, was it last spring? The Disability Informatics course was a hybrid course at UNC. So it was a face to face class every week. But we did an open Zoom. It wasn't really a forum but we, we broadcast the lectures on Zoom into questions. What it really took was two people for, for a hybrid event. So be mindful that you will probably need someone to run the program in person and another person to run the program or to manage the program online. It's not something that is easily and well done by one person.

We had live captioning so that's something that does take a little bit of money, I think but not as much as you might think. And as Laura mentioned, there's always the option if you absolutely cannot afford to do live captioning, there is also the option of doing captioning after the fact, after the fact with with programs like Otter or, you know, there are a number of, Rev, there's a number of online captioners that will give you a transcript that you would have to clean up.

And those are all on slide 15, you can click in to see what Rev and other options are. But I think that a, facilitating an event that is hybrid takes a certain skill. So you do need to have somebody that's facilitating the in-person versus somebody that's facilitating the online version. So asking questions and getting people involved, so they're not just passively taking in the information. We're doing a great job here on this back channel. And having one person be expected to read all the back channel while also helping everybody in a physical room is just too overwhelming, but it's lovely and, and having those two facilitators

So Christopher is asking if we seek stats on the number. Do you mean, have we done this in the past? I haven't kept track of it. But um, so depending on the platform, that might be an option, but I'm not, I'm not even sure if that's something that you could have access to on most social media, it's just accepted. It's expected to be part of the part of the, the programming, right. If you, if you're making it available to the public, then it should be available to as much of the public as possible.

Right. So yeah, so I tend to take like a universal design approach to that so that I'm not necessarily looking for specific users that have, that turn on certain settings. So for example, I have the closed captioning on on my Netflix account, because I obviously can't concentrate enough. Especially if I'm listening to people with different accents. I just like to have those closed captions on. And I wonder if you can go inside the YouTube Studio and see how many people do that. That would be interesting to see. But for putting in alt tags or using other other methods, no, I really just make sure to have that, that testing with actual users that are going to be using, using this site. There's a reference to sign language help and Zoom. So if I can escape out of here, if you go into your, like your institutional Zoom settings, you might be able to see, hopefully, this doesn't broadcast everything for you. Inside your settings, language interpretation here, and that's in the In Meeting Advanced, so you can turn on the closed captioning and you can also turn on language interpretations. Save the captions believe there was sign language itself, ASL, too, but maybe that hasn't been rolled out into my institution yet. But those look like video inside video options that you see in other Zoom contexts. I do hope that there'll be more acceptance of online events post pandemic, I think they're lovely. I'm here in North Carolina and I didn't

have to buy a ticket to go to any, any place or pay for a hotel room which is difficult on my graduate student budget. And I think that they can be just as engaging if not more, on the back channel than an in person event. So I do hope.

Thank you. So F Scornia, I'm not sure the full name, said that YouTube studio does allow you to see how many people in your audience turn on captioning or subtitles and will break it down by language selected.

Only 48 degrees! No, I think it's in the mid 70s here. So, it's the 70s outside.

I'm glad to hear, Bethany, that you're enjoying your, your first online conference.

I think that might be it for us. But we do want to thank you all again. And please do get in touch if you have any other questions.

Thank you.

Thank you, Laura and Dr. Gibson. That was an informative and useful presentation. Thank you again.