

# Web and Digital Accessibility

## Video transcript

– [Rebecca ] My name is Rebecca Martin and I'm with the grant facilitation team here at Rutgers University Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy. And we have a lot to celebrate this week, and I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge that. Yesterday was International Neurodiversity Pride Day. Tomorrow we will celebrate Juneteenth, and it's the heart of LGBTQIA Pride Month so I want to wish everybody happy celebrations on all those fronts.

I'm also celebrating today the Northeast ADA Center and the excellent webinar trainings they've been providing for us all through the spring. Today we have our final installment by Joe Zesski on web and digital accessibility which we will begin after a few housekeeping notes. We would like you to be aware that we'll be recording today's training. We have enabled captions for the event and the ASL interpreters have been spotlighted for all users. There will be a time for questions and answers towards the end of the conversation today. Please feel free to add any questions that come up in the chat or to hold on to them to the end, and you can also feel free to unmute and ask directly at the end, but you can put them through in the chat throughout as they come up. And then also after the training today, a PDF of slides will be sent out following the training. Towards the end of the training today there's going to be a link placed in the chat for you to evaluate the training. Please take a moment to complete that so that they can get your feedback.

And then finally I'd like to take a moment to express our deep appreciation to Peri Nearon and her team at the New Jersey Division of Disability Services for making this training series and the IHC grant program possible. Now, without further ado, I will turn it over to Joe Zesski. Thank you, Joe.

– [Joe] Excuse me. Thank you very much, Rebecca. I appreciate it, and thank you everybody for joining us today. Like you just heard, we do have a lot of things we're going to cover today and if you have questions do put them in the chat. My colleague, Jennifer Perry, who's also at the Northeast ADA Center will, from time to time, I will pause and ask her if there are any

questions in the chat. But we do have 15 minutes set aside at the end just for questions. So keep that in mind as we go through today.

Well, first we are here to talk about web and digital accessibility. That covers a lot as you'll see as we move forward throughout today. You have on this slide my lovely photo, several years old. I hear I should really update it but that's okay. I'll take a younger photo while I have one.

First, for those of you who may not be familiar with what the Northeast ADA Center is... I do want to just briefly describe it. I know some of you have been on the other webinars that Jen or I have been a part of, but in case you haven't, the Northeast ADA Center is one of 10 centers around the country that share the common mission of providing training, technical assistance, and research on the Americans with Disabilities Act and related laws. The Northeast ADA itself is based out of Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. I am the New Jersey affiliate for the Northeast ADA Center in the Trenton-Ewing area. My colleague, who I mentioned, Jennifer Perry, is by the shore in New Jersey. Although most of the staff is located in upstate New York, we happen to be both from New Jersey that are with you today. We have a toll-free 1-800 telephone number where anyone can call for free and confidential technical assistance. That's at 1-800-949-4232. Of course you can always visit our website and contact us by email and through our website as well.

I will say here, we have a lot of time built in for questions, but if you find you think of questions after today, don't hesitate to reach out and email me directly with questions that you may have or that might occur to you later. I'm always glad to follow up and provide more information. Just as a reminder, what we discuss is not considered legal advice. This is something that the university insists that we put in all our presentations even though we try to make it clear we do not provide legal advice but technical assistance.

One of the different things we will cover over the next hour, there's going to be quite a bit. When you think about digital accessibility, it's not just about a webpage. It's not just about electronic documents. Certainly, those are major parts of digital accessibility, but there is a lot more to it. In today's day and age, there's social media that's covered under that umbrella of digital accessibility. There's video content that you might post to your organization's website. There's audio content that you might post. And so, we're going to try

to talk about all those different things and how to make them as accessible to as many people as possible as well as what are your requirements in terms of the Americans with Disabilities Act and providing accessibility.

I won't typically read the slides, however, I will read this one. It asks people to raise your hand. You can either do that through using your mouse but you can also raise and lower your hand by pressing the Alt key plus Y. Alt and Y together will raise your hand or lower it. Here's what this slide says. Raise your hand if you have trouble occasionally hearing what someone has said clearly, have had a bit of a tough time using your hands at the end of a long day at the computer, struggle to distinguish sometimes between yellow and orange, and find it challenging to read this line. Let me just wait a minute to see how many people might raise their hands.

Actually, I'm going to bring in my colleague here, Jen Perry. Jen, would you give me a sense how many people might have raised their hands? So far, I'm seeing about seven or eight people. - Thank you. Perfect. And thank you all for doing that. By the way, if you need to lower your hand, you can use the Alt plus the Y key again to do it. I'm someone who uses a screen reader, so that's how I tend to do it, but of course you can always click on it visually to lower your hand as well using your mouse.

So why did I ask that question? Well, honestly, a lot of times when we think about accessibility, particularly in the web and digital environment, it's easier to think of how to adjust or how to make things more accessible for people with vision impairments or perhaps people who have hearing-related disabilities, either being deaf or hard of hearing. But accessibility means a lot more than that. People who have disabilities have all different types. There's color blindness, obviously. That was one of the points I'm trying to get at with the can you distinguish between yellow and orange? And there's a large, relatively speaking, a substantial number of people who do have some form of color blindness. A lot of people have difficulty using the keyboard, traditional keyboard. Other people have a great deal of difficulty using a mouse. People are sometimes born with disabilities, but also often acquire them. And certainly for all of us, as we get older, we tend to pick up disabilities or acquire disabilities that we didn't have when we were younger. You may or may not think of them as a disability, but let's say someone is 70 now, and maybe they don't have what we would think of as a more severe hearing loss, but perhaps they don't hear as well as they used to, or maybe they just don't see as well as they used to. That person may just chalk it

up to being older, but it is often a type of disability. So when we think about accessibility, it's not just for those who we might more easily think of as having a disability, and it's not even necessarily for people who have a disability today. It's about trying to make products and things as accessible to people as possible both now and into the future.

When people with disabilities interact with digital content and the digital environment, they do it in a lot of different ways. Sometimes they might use assistive technology. You heard me just mention a moment or two ago that I use a screen reader, and for those of you who aren't familiar with it, a screen reader is a form of technology that reads all of the content on a computer screen, or tablet, or cellphone screen. Sometimes it's a specially purchased item. Mine is. It's called Job Access With Speech (JAWS). But other times, there's built-in assistive technology into off-the-shelf products. So if you have an Android phone, you have an iPhone, and you go into Settings, there's an area for accessibility where you can change how the phone operates depending on your particular needs. So sometimes it's built into the technology we buy.

However you use it, the important part is a person with a disability being able to access the digital space that we use. A key concept in that that sort of underlies everything else is called universal design. Originally this was intended, the term universal design, was meant for the physical space, but it applies in other situations and contexts as well, including the digital environment and technology where products and environments should be made as user-friendly as possible so that they could be used by the maximum number of people with relative ease of access and to achieve as much independent access as possible. So this concept is really going to underline what we talk about for the rest of the hour.

So what does the Americans with Disabilities Act have to say about web and electronic accessibility? Well, there are overall five parts of the ADA called Titles. The parts that most concern us today are Title II, which deals with state and local governments and all related instrumentality. So Title II covers not only things like a county office on aging, but it also would apply to, let's say, Rutgers University as the state university of New Jersey. It also would apply to public libraries and police departments, other things that are both municipal but also things controlled by a state or local government entity. Under this part of the ADA, this Title II, there are some key concepts to keep in mind. It continued an older law that required non-discrimination from agencies receiving federal financial assistance, that was known as Section 504. Some of you may be familiar with that. But Title II also required

some other things. First, it focuses on the services, programs, and activities provided by a covered entity. So if you're a library and you're offering a webpage to the public for them to access your services and programs, that is going to be something covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Another key concept to keep in mind is that communication provided to the public must be equally effective for those who have disabilities as well as for those who do not. The overall term is called effective communication. And that is important to know.

The last key point on this slide that you should be aware of is that there may be times when you have to modify the way you, if you're a Title II entity, need to do something to make sure that it's accessible. These are called reasonable modifications. And there are changes in the way things are done or in your policy to ensure that people with disabilities are not being discriminated against.

So this is sort of our first bucket, if you will, under the ADA. Things that are related to state and local government and all related instrumentalities under Title II. The next is Title III. And these are called public accommodations under the law. Essentially, a very, very, sort of, broad description could be thought of as public accommodations are businesses and nonprofit agencies that are open to the public and engage in commerce. So this does not apply to churches, for example, and other religious institutions. But almost any other business or nonprofit you can think of would be covered under here. There are actually 12 very broad categories. But they cover everything from social service entities to museums that are private, to private education, to stores, businesses, hotels, a wide range of things.

The requirements for Title III are also somewhat relevant or similar to Title II, at least in terms of our purposes for today. However, the focus and terminology is on the full and equal access to goods and services. If you remember the prior slide for Title II, we saw a focus on programs, services, and activities. For Title III, it's goods and services. People with disabilities need to be able to access whatever goods and services you provide, including any websites, any digital forms of communication, so that they have an equal chance to partake in your business or your nonprofit's activities. Again, communication must be equally effective for individuals. It may mean that you, as a covered public accommodation, might need to provide auxiliary aid or services to ensure that

communication is effective, or you might need to change or modify something in order to remove communication barriers.

So what does effective communication mean? On the most basic level, it is what it appears to be. It means that a person who has a communication-related disability, so that might be related to vision, hearing, speech, that individual has an equal opportunity to participate and receive the same level of clear communication as another individual who doesn't have a disability. This not only applies to the people using your services, but their companions as well, and so that's important to keep in mind as you think about how this might apply in your situation. There is a limit for what you must provide. There's a limit known as an undue burden. Typically, it's going to be difficult to reach in the digital environment, but essentially if something would fundamentally either cause a change in your operation or be of so significant a cost, you may not need to ensure effective communication, but again, that is very difficult to reach. Even so, if you do have such a situation, you still have to provide an alternate means of communication.

This all applies...Basically at any time there's a communication, we're going to focus on the digital communication environment today, but it does also apply in other situations, face to face, or in printed materials, or in other interactions as well. Let's begin looking at Title II in a little more detail, and let's focus on the first element, the web itself, web and general digital accessibility. First, it's important to know that for Title II, so again, this is state and local government and related entities, there is now official regulations from the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice is the federal agency that enforces most of Title II and III of the ADA itself. They came out and issued new regulations in April of this year requiring Title II entities specifically to meet a certain standard for their web and content...digital content. There's a grace period for implementation, depending on the size of a given municipality or organization. For those organizations with greater than 50,000 residents, there's a 3-year period, and for those... I apologize, I keep misspeaking. There's a 2-year grace period for larger municipalities, for those with 50,000 or more residents, and for those who are smaller, there's a 3-year period to implement these defined standards for web accessibility.

So what are these standards? The Department of Justice uses what's known as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). The Department chose version 2.1, Level AA, as the standard. I'll provide a very brief overview of that in a moment. I won't go into detail

because that could be hours of presentation in and of itself, so we won't go too much into the weeds. But be aware that there are standards, and they are going to be required of any covered Title II and III in the coming years, whether two years from April 2024 or three years from that point. Note, too, that these standards not only will apply to websites but other digital content as well. So mobile applications are going to be included, electronic documents, of course, are going to be covered that are available to the public. Social media will actually be covered in this, so we will talk about accessible social media in a moment. In terms of this rule for Title II entities, there are going to be some things that do not need to be updated to the standard, which I'll talk about. Things that already exist on your website, that are archived pages, things that are not intended to be readily accessed. Also, pre-existing documents will not have to necessarily meet the standard. However, if someone requests an accessible version, it might mean that as an organization, you do have to make an accessible electronic document available to someone who requests it, who has a disability.

What's important to keep in mind is that it's always easier to build in accessibility from the beginning and not wait until the end. So be aware that the sooner, if you're a covered organization, the sooner you begin to meet the standards, it will make, long term, the process easier on you for adapting to the environment. So again, there are some other restrictions. I won't dive into them now in the interest of time, but again, these slides will be made available following the presentation.

So that's Title II. That has a defined rule. What about Title III? It's a little bit different. There is no fixed regulation that you can point to from the Department of Justice. That being said, there's sort of a common standard that's been understood to be reached, at least in the absence of a defined regulation of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, version AA. This is through different activity of the Department of Justice. They have settlement agreements with organizations all the time for failing to have accessible web pages or other electronic communications. Also, private lawsuits have pointed to the standard, and keep in mind, people can file private lawsuits under the ADA as well for failure to provide accessibility. So there is a standard, however it's not confirmed by official regulation and well defined like it is now for Title II.

So what is this WCAG I talked about? It's referred to as the Web Content Accessibility Standards, and these are developed by an international working group that is part of the

World Wide Web Consortium. So the people that help to write the principles underlying the web itself and how it operates. They have a working group that has focused on accessibility, and they've developed these WCAG standards. It's important to know that this accessibility is not meant for a specific type of technology, so it's meant to be flexible, use that universal idea I mentioned earlier. It is tested through using different statements to see if something meets a criteria or doesn't. It has different principles called POUR, Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robust to help divide how people think about different issues related to accessibility. Then it has three levels of conformance, A, AA, and AAA. A is the easiest to meet, the simplest. AA is the intermediate level that provides greater accessibility, but unlike its AAA counterpart, it is not as difficult to maintain as the maximum level of accessibility. Currently, the most recent version is 2.2, but as we saw, the regulation from Title II points to an earlier version of it. You'll find that'll be the case because regulations simply can't keep up with the speed of changes in the web and electronic space.

This slide just describes what some of the different principles are. Perceivable literally has to do with how someone can receive the information being communicated, so that could be captions for people who may have hearing-related disabilities. It might mean what's known as alt text for those who are visually impaired and using a screen reader. Alt text, for those of you who don't know, is text that is only detectable by a screen reader. It's not visible to a screen, but it tells someone using that technology what an image is intended to convey or demonstrate. Those are some examples of Perceivable.

Operable is literally how someone uses and interacts with a given digital technology. I mentioned earlier, there are people who aren't able to use a mouse, so they may need to be able to tab through a website in order to get to the different links and elements on a page. That might mean that having things that scroll, automatically scroll, can prove to be an accessibility barrier. But again, there are different ways to make the digital environment operable for someone who may not use technology in a traditional way.

The Understandable part is literally how easy is it to...for someone to understand the information being conveyed? So, things that are important here are consistency and the way something is presented, how it's designed, using as user-friendly language as possible, being as concrete as possible, and making sure that people are able to receive your message and understand it as well as receive it.

The last part, Robust, really has to do with making sure that you're creating something to be accessible not only for today, for, let's say, someone using a Windows laptop, but also for someone who may be interacting with your website a year from now. Maybe someone using a cell phone, using a cell phone to check your website rather than a traditional desktop computer. So those are examples and concerns that deal with something being robust.

This slide has some of the common errors and issues that we often encounter in terms of making sure that someone's web page is accessible. So you see some of the things I already talked about in terms of a lot of web pages don't provide alternative text, alt text, for images and other graphical information that appears on a given website. A lot of times people have barriers in terms of accessing and moving through a page in terms of the tab content. Perhaps they may have issues with color contrast or issues that are more tied to how the web page is actually designed to be understood and read and navigated.

Another important area to keep in mind if you're an organization with a website, which I imagine almost everybody on this call is, when you use outside vendors to have things on your websites, be sure to check that they know what accessibility is and that they work to provide it. Because often when an organization hosts outside content or has an outside vendor do something for their website a lot of times things get overlooked or broken and that causes accessibility challenges.

I'll pause here to see if we have any questions so far in the chat box, Jen.

– [Jennifer] I'm not seeing any, Joe.

– [Joe] Okay. So these were issues in terms of websites that we were just talking about and you'll notice that all of them, in one way or another, came up in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, whether it's an issue about how something is perceived, operated, understood, or something being robust. So these are things to be aware of if you're a web designer or you help to post content to your organization's website. I will have...at the end there are resource slides that can help you to look at your web accessibility in more detail. I'm also glad to share additional resources as well.

But I'm going to transition now. That is sort of a foundational overview, what we just covered, between the ADA and the web itself. But let's talk about the different pieces that often go on to websites or that we often post in other contexts. For example, what about if you're posting a video? A lot of people do post things obviously on their website also on social media. If you go to post things that have video, what should you be aware of and cognizant of?

First, if you're hosting a live video or something that has a video component, it's important to have live captioning. As you know, today we have our interpreters today helping to ensure that we have effective communication. Captioning and making sure that your audio is accessible is very important and helpful... not only for people who may have hearing related disabilities whether being deaf or hard of hearing, it's also helpful in other situations as well. Captions should be provided particularly if you have archived video content. In other words, you have a video on your website, it's not live video. If you have that situation, you should have captions whether open or closed. Open and closed captioning is just about how someone sees the captions. If there...captions are always activated and seen by the public, those are closed captions, open captions give the user the ability to turn the captioning on and off.

Again, this is not an issue just for people with hearing-related disabilities. I happen to have a son who is graduating high school, does not have a hearing related disability at all. However, often he has trouble with following TV shows that may have someone with a British accent. He particularly has trouble with that. So for that, he'll turn on captions. Or, if he wants to watch something but can't have the sound turned on, he'll use captions. So keep in mind it's not just for one specific type or category of disability.

Captioning is important so that people can really understand the content being presented in multiple ways. That's helpful if you have a disability, if you have a learning disability, if you have a hearing-related disability, but it's also helpful if you don't. So be aware, as I talked about at the beginning, people use the web in many different ways and for many different reasons and that includes people with and without disabilities. If you do have a video on a website, it's helpful, if you can, to provide audio description. Audio description, for those of you who don't know or aren't familiar with it, is when the visual...key visual content in a video is spoken by a narrator so that someone with a visual impairment can get as much information from a video as possible. That is also something that is a good goal to strive for.

It probably will be required down the road in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, but be aware it's a way to make videos as accessible to as many people as possible.

And, of course, providing transcripts of videos. We mentioned the captions just a moment ago. If there's a transcript available, that can also be another helpful tool. That's not a requirement to have a transcript, but it is a helpful tool. And finally, to make sure that the video player, if it's on your own website, is accessible to people with disabilities to be able to navigate and manipulate the interface.

What about for audio content? Well, this is a little more straightforward for audio content. For example, let's say you have a recording of a meeting but there is no video content to it. Simply providing a transcript would be appropriate. If you have a podcast, providing a text transcript of what was said in the podcast would be another way to ensure that audio content is accessible.

Now social media, this is an area that a lot of us engage in but may not necessarily think about in terms of accessibility. And so, I did put together some tips and reminders related to how to make your social media, which is digital content, accessible. Some of the tips are ones that you've seen before. You see them at the top, providing alt text for images, probably one of the largest areas to focus on so that people who use different forms of assistive technology can readily identify what images are being conveyed.

Another important thing in terms of an end user being as accessible as possible is trying not to overuse things like emojis and memes. I try to use an analogy here of using salt when you're cooking. If you put a little salt in a sauce, it can really help bring out flavors and really add to the dish, if you will. However if you put a handful of salt in the same sauce, it's going to ruin it. And it's the same thing here with emojis. While you may love emojis and using them, if you have 10 emojis in a tweet or in a single post, it's going to make it difficult for those who use assistive technology to interpret for various reasons because it will be read out bit by bit by most assistive technologies. So trying to ... Use emojis and memes but in a more careful and mindful way is important.

For videos that you post on social media, let's say on your YouTube channel or perhaps you post them on Facebook, you want to avoid things that have a lot of flashing or strobing lights. That can be an issue for those who may have certain conditions that may cause seizures. So you do want to be aware of that in terms of your video and how they appear. Of course, you do want to provide captioning here too. So it's not just for videos that are on your website but also for videos that go up on your different social media channels. And you'll find, too, if you go and explore the different social media platforms, most of them either offer ways that they can provide artificial intelligent captions, which honestly you probably may need to edit. They're good but they're not perfect by any stretch. Or, most social media platforms have a way for you to upload caption transcript and add a file that way. So there are tools out there. We don't have the time to go into all of them today because there are so many different social media platforms, but those tools are out there and I encourage you to explore your social media channels when you post videos about how can we add captions to these videos and what is the process for doing that?

Social media, though, is not just videos. A lot of it is videos and pictures, and so, providing alternative text, alt text, and captions are important. It's also about writing and how we communicate our message to make sure that people with and without disabilities understand it as we're intending them to. Language is one area to focus on. First, use as simple language as possible so that people who may have a learning disability or perhaps a cognitive disability can also access the information in a way that is easily accessible. Plus, honestly, using the simplest language that's appropriate is going to make it easier for a much wider segment of your audience to understand and to receive your message. Things that you would do in traditional writing you probably want to keep in mind for social media, so not using too many abbreviations. For those of us in the disability world, there are... As in any sort of field, there are so many abbreviations and shorthand, acronyms to use, and we should be mindful... I know I struggle with this one myself... to keep in mind that not everybody knows what abbreviations stand for. And so, use them when it's clear what they mean from the context, but try not to overuse them.

Other tips that you see there on the slide are about, or concern, avoiding using all caps to write because it makes it more difficult to read. That's fairly straightforward. The last point on the slide is something that a lot of people may not be aware of. When someone uses assistive technology, let's say on an iPhone or an Android phone, to read social media, if they're using that and they have a communication-related disability, they may have difficulty understanding things that have too many hashtags in them because it's maybe

difficult to perceive and to process all the different hashtags. Or, if they're using a technology like a screen reader, the technology literally may make what you write unintelligible... difficult to understand. And how to help make your messages as clear as possible is to use either what's called Pascal case or Camel case. Pascal case, you see on the slide. That's where you, in a hashtag, would put a capital letter at the beginning of each word in a hashtag. So you, for those of you who can see the screen, you'll see #GoTeamHashtag on the slide with a capital G, a capital T, and a capital H. That would be an example of Pascal case. Camel case is where you don't capitalize the very first letter of a hashtag, but the first letter of the remaining words. And so, that would be written as seen on the slide, lowercase g for go, capital T for Team, capital H for Hashtag. Again, without those cases, people who use a screen reader technology would hear a jumbled mess. It wouldn't be words, it would be... again, almost impossible to decipher. So again, it's a small tip that can help make your social media more accessible and readable, too, for people as well, with or without a disability.

All right, let's transition to document accessibility. This is another major component of creating a digital environment that's accessible. We often share documents in our own organization, we post them to our website, and also, we share them with people who are outside of our organization. And when you do that, you need to make sure that you're using accessible materials. What I'm going to focus on is primarily Word and PDFs, however, the tips that I will share in terms of, for example, Word documents, also would apply to Google documents, for example. So depending, whatever format you use, Word documents and similar content will all share some accessibility needs and the same is true for PDFs, whether you use something other than Adobe. So I just wanted to highlight that here.

So in terms of documents and making sure that they're readable and understandable for people using assistive technology, there are a couple things to keep in mind that you see here on the slide. You want to have any images, whether they're graphs, pictures, other images in your document, you want to ensure that they have alt text images and you can insert these alt texts through using the Word accessibility checker, which I'll talk about in a moment. But you can add in descriptive text for the images that appear in your document. And again, that is the best practice. Using styles is important as well both in terms of readability as well as navigation. So having headers and headings that are appropriate that are using level 1, level 2, level 3 that both visually makes it easier to read and understand the document, but it also is important for those using assistive technology in terms of being able to quickly and efficiently navigate through and around the document.

With PDFs, my first sort of suggestion or thing that I would really recommend to be aware of is don't use scanned PDFs. I know a lot of times it's the easiest way to do something, but when you scan a page and then create a PDF out of it, typically that will not be accessible to someone using assistive technology. That's because most assistive technology will interpret that PDF that you created as a single image. And so, the assistive technology will not be able to interpret what you created. So if you're creating an accessible PDF document, first begin with the source document itself and make sure that's accessible. And you'll see that again on a slide we'll get to in just a second.

Some other tips to keep in mind in terms of a PDF, you want to always check the reading order of a document to make sure it's accessible and you want to provide, again, that alt text. I know it sounds like a broken record. I appreciate that, but it's important and it's one of the things that is often overlooked and one of the biggest issues that is often encountered is an image without an associate alternative text.

The next couple slides are just general document tips that, again, apply to any format. First, you want to make sure that your document is as readable as possible. So using fonts that don't have a lot of flourishes a lot of tails coming off of it is going to make it more accessible. So the fonts like Calibri or Arial or, you know, Veranda, those are going to be the types of font, Times New Roman, that are more accessible and easier to read. So choosing a good font is a first starting point. Making sure that you have good and sufficient color contrasts is another element that's important. So you want to make sure that people are able to clearly decipher the letters and words that you have. So providing a good background is going to be important to make sure that happens. And there are tools, and you'll see one in the resources slide if you're not sure if something is a good enough color contrast that you can use to check it for its accessibility.

Other things to be aware of, I already talked about images, won't go into that again. However, there are other things to keep in mind as well. You don't want to have too much blank space because it may make it more difficult for someone to track where they're going to next. Also, being sure to use the options to create page inserts or blank pages or a return is best. So instead of arrowing down to start another page... for example, if you're using a PC hitting Control+Enter inserts an automatic page break that will make the document

easier for someone using assistive technology to read rather than having blank space which the assistive tech will have to try to navigate and interpret.

You always want to make sure, too, in terms of the language, that people understand what you're communicating. So we talked about in the social media section about not using too many abbreviations. If you're writing a full document, you obviously may use abbreviations, but you want to make sure that when you have an acronym like ADA that you spell out when it first appears what that means. So you would write, for example, Americans with Disabilities Act then maybe (ADA). That way when you first introduce an acronym, people know what it is, and have something to refer to. So again, that makes it easier for people to understand the language that you're communicating in and what different terms might be.

Another area that can improve accessibility greatly is having well-defined links. Sometimes when you have documents, you may insert something that essentially says click here. Let's say it takes someone to a webpage that provides more information. That is not best practice in terms of accessibility because the person doesn't automatically know from the link where they're being taken to. So a better way to write that, let's say, click here... You might make the hyperlink visit the Northeast ADA website, something like that where it's more descriptive. So if you're using a hyperlink, make sure in your document it tells, or it's clear to the person who clicks on it, where they'll be going and what the intent and purpose is for having that hyperlink in the document.

We already discussed using consistent styles so I won't spend time talking about that, but be aware in terms of the issue around color it's not only important to provide color contrast for your text and its background, but also be sure that you're not communicating meaning through color without people being able to get that information in another way. So if you have a graph that shows the change in prices of a movie theater over the course of 10 years, and there's changes from darker and darker shades to represent the increasing prices of movie tickets. You want to make sure that people who may not be able to see color are able to receive that same information. So you may want to include a descriptive caption of what is contained in the graph or an alternate text version for those who use assistive technology to be able to interpret and get that same information.

The last item I will mention here before we go to Word for one more moment is be sure that when you name documents, especially when you're sharing them outside of your organization, that you have a name that is clear and really tells the receiver what the

document is. So if you're sending out an email blast to members of your organization and there's an attachment flyer for a... ..a dinner event, you don't want to have the title of the attachment be a series of letters and numbers. You don't want it just to say flyer.pdf, you want to communicate what that person will get when they open your document, so having dinner event flyer, for example, would be a better title to save for the file rather than event flyer. You want to have descriptive information provided. Obviously, you don't want to make file names too long, but you want people to know what they're opening when they get an attachment.

In terms of Word, these are just a few more tips, again, and things to be aware of and watch for. A lot of these I've talked about, but keep in mind there is an accessibility checker in Word. Always run that when you are done with a document to make sure that you can catch as many issues as possible. It's a very good tool. I highly recommend it. And always running that when you finish writing a new document, it'll make things much better and much easier for someone who receives that document to access.

These are just a few more considerations when you're creating documents and that may eventually lead to PowerPoint presentations as well. Again, I won't go into these. These will be available on the slide deck you'll receive, but be aware these are other considerations that you should look at when creating your accessible documents, particularly in Word and PowerPoint.

This slide has a screenshot of the Adobe accessibility checker. Again, much like with the Word accessibility checker, I always, always recommend running that when you're done and before you share a PDF. It will help you to check things like reading order to make sure that you are using proper styles and headings. It's always simpler, as I said several minutes ago, to start with an accessible document that you're turning into a PDF. You'll have less issues in terms of creating a PDF if you're beginning with good materials to start, so be aware of that as well in the process of creating accessible documents.

I will say, too, that I believe Google Suite has similar tools. As I mentioned, these are Word and Adobe tools, but I believe the Google Suite of products also has these accessibility checkers built in as well. In terms of things to be aware of, these are just some issues in PDFs that are worth being aware of.

Again, because I am running a little behind, I won't go into all of these and many of these you've seen in other places that we've talked about. So be aware that these slides are here and I would review them in more detail. But again, we've addressed these in other areas in one degree or another.

These are further considerations for PDFs in particular. These are things that we've discussed at least in some degree or another so far today. So these are questions that I would review before sharing out or considering a PDF final, before you share it with other agencies, organizations, or individuals.

So just sort of to wrap up and before we open the floor to the questions and answers, I do want to just share a few quick takeaways. First, as you heard me just talking about and talking about throughout the presentation, it's always easier to make an accessible product if you're starting with good material. So that means don't wait until the very end try to go back and make something accessible. Start out the process getting used to making things accessible from the beginning. It'll make it much more of a habit, much more easier to create accessible documents, or accessible websites, or accessible social media. Get into the habit and realize, too, that it's not just one person's responsibility in an organization. You saw with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines how thorough they were and the regulations from the Department of Justice that it's an organizational obligation to provide accessibility to one degree or another.

So I appreciate and I'm glad you all are here today to learn about accessibility, but keep in mind it's also important for colleagues and other people within the organization to be aware of electronic accessibility. And in some ways, more people in an organization probably have some stake, have some role, in creating accessible content than they would in, let's say, making the physical environment accessible. There's not a curb cut. A lot of times people say that's an upper management decision, that's going to be an engineering decision or issue, but almost everybody today is involved in some way of creating content for their organizations whether it's flyers, emails, social media, perhaps directly on a website, or offering presentations to the public. It's important that all those people understand how to make things accessible because to one degree or another, it's going to be required of them in very short term. And again, it's just a matter of providing as equitable and equal communication as possible whether someone has a disability or not.

I'm going to pause to give us time to look in the questions in the chat box to see if we have questions. I will say as we're going, I will show some resource slides that I will flip through, but again be aware these are going to be in the slide deck you'll receive, so don't worry about necessarily capturing all of the resources if you're interested right now. But I do want to show them as we perhaps begin looking at the chat box

– [Jennifer] Joe, there was one question from a participant who asked if government agencies receive our trainings

– [Joe] That's interesting. Well, yes, we do train... As the Northeast ADA, yes, we train anybody who requests the training from us. We don't proactively...we don't reach out to governments to tell them or solicit them to say, Oh you need this training, but if we're asked to, we certainly do. And we work with actually quite a large number of different government...state and local government organizations on training everything from school districts, to vocation rehabilitation agencies, to all sorts of others. Jen, you probably could remember other ones, but there are many different examples and types that we have.

– [Jennifer] Right, yeah the ADA center, we provide training on...to all stakeholders...

– [Joe] Exactly.

– [Jennifer] And that includes, of course, state and local government. Go ahead, Joe.

– [Joe] I know it wasn't the question, but the same is true for businesses and nonprofits. The Title III types of organizations I talked about back at the beginning, we do a lot of training with them as well. And in fact, a number of them have reached out to us about web accessibility. Depending on the nature, some businesses... How should I say this? They tend to get more private lawsuit concerns than others not because of anything that they're doing as an industry, but because of how frequently some of their websites are used. And I apologize, I'm trying not to be too vague, but also not be too specific, so it's a little bit of a

balancing act. But we get a lot of requests from them as well, so we're here as a community resource for sure.

– [Jennifer] Joe, I think we have a question. I believe the question relates to emails from government agencies' employees. Perhaps, I think, they may be wondering about the accessibility of email communication.

– [Joe] Yes, and there are ways to make sure that email is more accessible and some of them involve, really, what we focused on with the documents in terms of if you're including images, making sure that you add an alternative text so that people know what an image is. If you're using something like, if you're sharing a screenshot, I will say those are not particularly accessible for someone using assistive technology. So identifying what the screenshot is supposed to be is important. Also, using the tips around structuring the communication itself in as clear and logical a way as possible also will make it more readable and understandable. Unfortunately, I did not have time to create some separate slides on accessible emails, but if you'd like to message me after the training, I'd be glad to put together some resources and tips for you myself. So I'm certainly glad and willing to do that.

I will say, too, just as a reminder, Rebecca, has put into the chat an evaluation link for the training. If you have the time to complete it, it will be a quick Qualtrics survey. We would appreciate it if you have the time to complete it. It would help us internally as well. So I just want to also share that with you.

Speaking of social media, I will share we do have our own social media. My colleague, Michelle Alvord, is largely responsible for posting for us. I talked about the importance of social media especially as more and more information is communicated that way. Particularly if you're an organization that is community based, you may host events on Facebook, you may share a lot of information through your Twitter/X profile. If you want to see examples of good accessibility practices, please feel free to look at our social media. Plus, it's a plug for our own social media; I'll be upfront that's part of it as well. But two birds with one stone as the old expression goes.

So please feel free to use that and I guess I'll wait one more minute to see if we have questions. But as I said, my information is available. Please feel free to email me directly with questions. I'm glad to respond. And if you're not able to locate my email, please feel free to reach out to Rebecca; certainly has my permission to share my contact information if, for some reason, you can't find it other places in the PowerPoint or some other location.

– [Jennifer] Joe, this is Jen. I think there was a comment related to a lot of websites that use contact forms where you have to input a lot of data and information and perhaps also having a hard time getting a hold of somebody on the phone. If you have questions about the contact form, or issues completing that.

– [Joe] That can be one of the areas where websites often run into a lot of problems because they have what are called edit fields. For those who may not be familiar with some of the lingo for websites, where people insert information, you type in information in boxes, they're called edit boxes. Those may not be well labeled, which can often be a lot of trouble and... Because it may make it difficult to understand if you're using assistive technology and it also can be an issue... If there is too much on one single page it can be overwhelming, so if you're involved with designing or creating those fields, try to keep it as simple as possible. That's always a good rule to live by, is again, trying to keep things as simple as possible, as appropriate, so you don't want to have too many things for people to fill out, too many different fields, you want to make sure that it's efficient for people whether or not someone has a disability. That's important and certainly true there.

I will also say, I didn't talk about it, but it's also an important practice to have an accessibility statement on a website. There are examples that you can find out there of accessibility statements. In fact, the group I talked about who created those Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, they actually have a tool where you can generate an accessibility statement. It essentially should say what your organization has achieved in terms of its web accessibility and it can recognize that you may or may not have met all those goals yet, but you're working towards it. And it also provides a way for someone to get assistance if they're having trouble with your website, and that may be through email or by telephone. But again, having a statement on your web page somewhere that says accessibility statement or something similar to that is very important to include. I did not talk about that. I was talking more about content today, but be aware that's something that's really best practice and you should follow as an organization.

– [Rebecca] Thank you so much, Joe, this has been so informative. I feel like you've packed so much information into this presentation. I don't know how you did it, but we're greatly appreciative for your presentation today. Thank you so much. And also, thank you to Jen for your support as well. And I want to thank the Northeast ADA Center because I really appreciate that you all have partnered with us for these three trainings. If you missed their two prior trainings, please check them out. I believe they're both already posted on the IHC website and available to watch. I would also like to thank both of our interpreters for being here today and making this more accessible for us. And as always, I would like to thank DDS and Peri Nearon's team for providing us the opportunity to provide these trainings for you. So thank you very much. Joe, this really was great. Thank you again.

– [Joe] Thank you. Thank you all. Thanks, Rebecca, it was wonderful partnering over the course of these last three webinars. We certainly appreciate it on our end too.

– [Jennifer] Yes, thank you very much, Rebecca.

– [Jennifer] Thank you very much, it's been wonderful. Everybody have a great day. Take care.