**Title: Supercharge Your Presence: Website Accessibility and Inclusive Design  
Date & Time: Apr 21, 2022 02:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

**Host:** Hello, and welcome to our latest installment of Supercharge Your Presence. This is Peggy Mihelich, Director of Member Content here at APA. Today's webinar focuses on using inclusive design methodology to improve the usability of your site. Some important points before we get started. This program does not offer CE However, we will email everyone watching live today, a certificate of attendance. Attendees must watch for a minimum of 45 minutes to receive the certificate. This presentation is being recorded and everyone who registered will be emailed the recording in about two weeks.

We will chat out a link to the slide presentation and a resource doc during the webinar. If you miss these links, don't worry we'll include the links in the recording. During our time together, you'll be on mute. If you have a question for a presenter, type them in using the Q&A box located on your webinar screen. We'll have time to answer some of your question after the formal presentation has concluded. Now for our speaker, Amy Pearson is a User Experience Optimization Compliance Manager at APA.

She works to improve the accessibility of APAs websites and digital touch points. In 2017, she earned a Master Certification in User Experience from the Nielsen Norman Group. Pearson has been with APA for more than 25 years, working with APAs websites and digital products and services. Amy's excited to share her accessibility insights with you today. Welcome Amy.

**Amy:** Hi everyone. I'm thrilled that you have chosen to spend this time with me to learn more about website accessibility and inclusive design. Now I know your time's valuable, so I've packed a lot of information into this webinar. Now I've tried to strike a balance between covering some fundamentals of inclusive design and inclusive personas, which help create a broader lens of inclusion through which you can approach your site to make it better, and highlighting some very common, specific accessibility issues and how to fix them.

Now, if you find that I've spent too much time in one area over another, or I didn't cover something that you really wanted covered, please let me know in the feedback. There'll be a survey sent out after the webinar, or you can reach out to me directly. I'm always trying to improve and learn, and your feedback really helps me to do that, so thank you in advance. Now, by the end of the hour, you should be able to identify some common website accessibility issues.

You should have learned some techniques to both fix and prevent them, and you should have a better understanding of how people with disabilities, whether they're permanent, temporary, or situational use websites. I'm going to turn my camera off, and I'm going to turn my screen share on. I'm going to dive right in with the agenda. We're going to start with a framing example to illustrate how accessibility fits in with the overall user experience. Then, I'll briefly touch on the inclusive design methodology and inclusive personas.

The bulk of our time today is going to be spent covering the most common accessibility issues that I found when secretly touring many therapists, clinician, and small practice websites to prepare for today. I'm going to go over why they're an issue, as well as how to fix or avoid making them altogether. Now, because we're covering so much in this very short timeframe, I've also created a resource guide for you that includes more information on many of the areas we'll cover today, as well as some testing tools and image and color palette sources that I'll be sharing throughout the presentation.

We'll wrap up today's webinar with a live question and answer session. I'll also be addressing some of the questions you submitted when you registered for the webinar as we cover that content. Let's get started. It's important to address accessibility within the context of the broader user experience. Otherwise you might end up checking off boxes in a list of requirements, but still end up with something that's ultimately unusable. For example, the photograph got up on the screen, depicts a ramp that ends abruptly at a guardrail outside of a shoe store ironically enough.

How do you think this happened? My guess is that there was a regulation stating that if there are steps to an entrance, there must also be a ramp for wheelchair access. There are three steps and there is a ramp, so check, requirement met. There's probably another separate requirement that states that raised platforms must have railings. We do have a raised platform or landing area, and there is a railing, so check. Now, technically both requirements have been met, but would you consider the store accessible to someone in a wheelchair?

Could a parent pushing a stroller, be able to easily get into the store? Absolutely not. Checking off boxes or needing requirements independently does not ensure accessibility. You must address it within the context of the overall user experience. This is why there's no automated solution that's going to make your website accessible with the press of a button. While auto checkers and accessibility tools can be helpful, they're never going to catch or prevent all accessibility issues. Auto checkers catch maybe about 30% of access issues at the most.

That being said, accessibility can sometimes be a little overwhelming at first and auto checkers are a great place to start. The important thing to keep in mind though, is that you're designing for humans, and not just the more than 1 billion humans that the world health organization refers to as people with disabilities. The reality is that digital accessibility impacts everyone. Back in 1980, the World Health Organization defined disability as a personal attribute, but today it notes that disability refers to the interaction between individuals with a health condition and personal and environmental factors.

Now the key word there is interaction. When we remove the obstacles that prevent successful interactions between people with disabilities and whatever they're trying to interact with, like your website, for example, we create something that benefits everyone. When we make our websites and digital content accessible, we're also optimizing it for search engines and assistive technologies. I remember hearing at an accessibility workshop, I attended that Google is deaf and blind. When you include image descriptions with your pictures and transcripts with your videos, you're not only improving accessibility for people, you're also improving your search engine optimization or SEO.

How do we do this particularly if we're not web designers or programmers? One effective methodology is through inclusive design. Inclusive design has three basic principles, recognize exclusion, learn from diversity and solve for one, extend to many. Now exclusion happens when we solve problems using our own biases. Kat Holmes wrote this in her book *Mismatch*, which is about how inclusion shapes design. Now this is default human behavior. We have a tendency to overestimate how much other people share our own beliefs and behaviors.

It's so common, there's even a term for it, which I'm sure you know, called the false consensus effect. We assume others are just like us. Now, we all make these assumptions often without thinking about it, because our brain is taking shortcuts, which is another default behavior that sometimes really handy and sometimes not. The key is to recognize or understand what our own default settings are, and then work to expand our perspective.

We learn from diversity, and when we find an obstacle, and we solve for one person, we often solve it for many.

This is how the brand OXO was born. Betsey and Sam Farber had retired, and they were vacationing in a rental home in the south France. Sam noticed that his wife, Betsey, who had slightly arthritic hands was in pain as she was peeling apples for an apple tart she was making. This opened Sam's eyes to all the other tools in the kitchen, and how they weren't designed with arthritic hands in mind. The pain that the interaction with the peeler and other tools caused his wife, inspired Sam come out of retirement and use his background as an entrepreneur in the housewares industry to launch OXO, which is known for it signature ergonomic rubber handles.

He named it OXO, because you can even flip the name any way you want and it still reads the same. Not many people know the story of OXO, but they do know that OXO is kitchen tools that are easier to hold and use. This is a great example of solving for one, and then extending that solution to many. Now to help us broaden perspectives, to identify those potential obstacles, Kat Holmes and others worked with Microsoft to develop the persona spectrum as a tool to demonstrate how different types of disabilities can be permanent, temporary or situational.

This goes back to what I said a few minutes ago, about accessibility going beyond the more than 1 billion people who identify as having a disability. For example, this webinar has closed captioning, which enables someone in the deaf community to read what I'm saying. However, it's also beneficial if someone is watching this in the library without earbuds or a speaker, or is in a loud environment in which it's hard to hear. Closed captioning also helps those learning the language, because they can read the captions while listening to how the words are pronounced.

Captioning is also beneficial for people with different kinds of cognitive issues. Some people just learn better if they can read and hear content at the same time. A transcript will benefit not only the deaf-blind community who can use a text to braille device to read the content, but it can also help someone who might watch the webinar, but then wants to come back later to find a particular reference. For example, I've done this for webinars, if you can't remember the name of a book or a website that the presenter mentioned, but I don't want to re-watch the whole webinar.

I can just open the transcript, scan what I'm looking for, or do a find-on page. Offering the content in multiple ways enables more people access to it. Let's delve into some other specific examples using a sample site I've put together. Now, this site is based on actual websites that I found out in the wild, but it's been heavily edited to remove personally identifiable information. My goal is for you to find the site relevant and relatable, but not be like, "Hey, isn't that Bob's website."

This anonymous sample site uses a fairly standard layout with the logo in the top left corner, there's navigation to of the right, and then there's a big splash or hero image, some welcome text and a button to get started. If we scroll further down the page, we've got a section for services, we've got a section for staff, we've got a call-out and contact button, and some new patient information. In the form of three feature images and links. We've got forms. We've got frequently asked questions and we've got recent news.

All of this is followed by a footer with contact information, social media links, and the privacy policy. It's all pretty standard, right? Now, let's start with the positive before I rip it apart. What this site has going for it is that it's divided up into different sections. It's not overwhelming in terms of the presentation of information. We've got some clear headings and somewhat clear links, although we'll talk more about those in a bit. Aesthetically the color palette is somewhat calming in the teal spectrum which I believe signifies communication.

Although I have to say that some people did ask about color psychology, and a lot of research still needs to be done in this area. Color is really subjective, and it has a lot of dependencies on culture, because different cultures will think of colors in different ways, and then also the value or the vibrancy of the colors, and not all people see all colors the same. I think I would argue most people see colors very differently, and some don't even see all the colors, and they don't even know. I'm not going to talk too much about the color palette other than saying it's a relatively soft color palette, and the colors go together.

Now we've also got a lot of breathable space in this page. For example, the text isn't all squished together, and we don't have huge walls of text. When people navigate websites, the perception or the frame of mind is usually that they're coming to get a question answered, or to complete a task. Most people will approach a website because it's interactive, and they're looking for something. They are less likely to read, and they are more likely to scan looking for the answer to whatever question it is in their mind.

That's why we don't really want to have big walls of text unless it's clear that this is an online article, or a blog posting, or something that they know going in is a lot of reading. A landing page like this is not that, so having it broken into different sections that can be scanned is better for usability. Now let's tackle some of the accessibility issues that are going on with this page. I'm going to start with the images. The reason why I'm going to start with the images is because about three years ago, we were conducting a series of user studies with people with disabilities.

One of our testers, Amber was blind and she used a screen reader, but at one time she had been sighted. She had lost her vision over time. When we asked Amber, what is the most number-one annoying problem for you, or what is the biggest barrier on websites? With regard to accessibility, Amber said without hesitation, "Images that didn't have descriptions," or images that she didn't know what it was because there was no underlying description and her screen reader couldn't read it, and would just say, "Unlabeled image," and then she had no idea what it was.

For example, the logo that is on this page says, imagine a rainbow health center, Inc and then underneath that line, it reads therapy for individuals, couples, and families. All of that text is in an image. If I were to open it in a new tab, for example, it's just pixels on a screen. Now, if you're visual, you can see what it says, because the image has the text in it, but if you are not, or if you're Google, you have no idea what it is, you just know that it's an image and nothing more. In HTML coding, we have what we call an alt attribute, which stands for alternative text, and then we can populate that alt attribute with a description of the image.

The alt attribute is part of the HTML image tag, and it's read by screen readers. It also displays on a page if the image doesn't load, and Google accesses it crawling your website. The descriptive alt text can improve the search relevancy of your page. You can check the alt text of the page with a variety of plugins in Chrome, or there's a website that I'll put in the resource guide where you don't even need a plugin, you can just put the URL of your site in and it will check it for you.

I'll show you this in two ways toda0y, although believe me, there are many more. The WAVE checker, and this is the one that has a website you can put the URL in, will show me that there are 19 errors, and if I click on the details, it says linked image missing alternative text. I can click on the little red box that highlights the logo with dotted lines around it and that is the logo, and it's saying there's no alternative text. The reason why it says it's linked is because it links to the homepage.

This is common standard practice. It's good to do linking your logo to your homepage. People expect it. Most people will click on a logo thinking that takes me to the homepage. That part is fine, but there's no alt text. It means that the user using a screen reader or Google doesn't know what that image says. The other way that I can check this is just a different plugin will display a different way but essentially says the same thing, which is the Siteimprove plugin.

Now the Siteimprove plugin will map the issue to the web content accessibility guidelines criteria, which is what 508 compliance points to the **[unintelligible 00:16:54]** for the legal standards of how to comply with accessibility. They rate these in A, AA, AAA, and to meet compliance overseas, as well as in the United States you want to have A and AA. It shows me that the image with no alt attribute is an A-level requirement. If I click on it, it will do the same thing essentially that the WAVE plugin did which is put a red box and highlight that logo, and then it tells me the image does not have an alt attribute.

Those are a couple of different ways where you can check from the browser side, whether or not the image has alt text. Now you don't need to be a programmer to include the alt text with your image. Many content management systems include a description field when you add your image to the website. For example, I'm going to pull up WordPress, just because it is a really common content management system. A lot of people use WordPress. I'm not saying to use WordPress, but I'm saying a lot of people do.

If I pull up WordPress and it's fairly standard again, I have up here on the screen, a WordPress site, it's hardly a site. I haven't given it a name. It is just a very bare-bones site that I created just for you, to show you when I add an image where I can find the alt text. I'm going to click write a blog post just solely to get to where the image is, and I'm not going to write a blog post. I'm just showing you where I add an image. The way WordPress works is, there are blocks. You add blocks of things. I'm going to add an image that I uploaded earlier, and this is the same logo image.

When I insert the image, I've got alt text on the right that I pre-populated just for you, but normally if I didn't have any alt text, I could click on the image, and then over to the right where there are image settings, there's a box that says alt text or alternative text. That is where I'm going to type in every word that's in my logo. If it says, imagine a rainbow health center Inc. therapy for individuals, couples, and families, that's what I want to type into the alt text box, because you're trying to create an equal experience accessing content in multiple ways.

Now I did check Wix. I'm not going to demo it just because we don't have a lot of time, but that operates in much the same way. Even the content management system we use at APA, it's very similar. It's by the properties of the image. That's where you add the alt text. I'm going to go back to our website here, and let's check out some of these other images. Now, the main image on this particular site is in the background. There isn't any alt text. That's probably okay since the image doesn't link to anything and it's mainly decorative.

However, it's also an opportunity to include some diversity in the photo you choose for this spot. You don't need to try to show every single person in the world, just pick one or two, and then you can either switch them out occasionally or leave them as is depending on how well they work for your demographic, and your goals, and what you want to communicate. Now, if we scroll further down to the page to the services area, we've got four images here with text on top that is extremely difficult to read.

I would not put the text over an image like is done here, just because I think it makes the readability really challenging, and I'm not sure everyone would know what it says. It's helpful that it's shadowed, but the text is very small, and it's just very busy. The other thing I wanted to point out, and this goes back to the wheelchair ramp example, is we've got a picture of a lady here with a little boy kissing her cheek, and it's cute. Sure it works for family counseling, and it doesn't seem to be a problem if we were to move the family counseling labeled down beneath the image.

If we scroll further down the page to where that new patient information is, the exact same image is used for frequently asked questions. This is a huge no-no, because you're essentially using the same picture, but clicking on them takes you to different places. That's really confusing, particularly for any users with cognitive issues and also if you've got the same alt text for both, but if they're going to different places, that's a huge usability issue. That's a huge accessibility issues. Do not use the exact same image to mean two different things.

We don't want to send mixed messages. Now we've got a lot of images in this site already. You might not even need images for every single thing. You could just have the button for frequently asked questions, or perhaps you could have text for family counseling, but not necessarily an image. If you want to go with images for both, switch one of them out, so that they're not too identical images going to the same place. The other thing about images is they should relate to the context.

For example, there's an eye for EMDR, that's communicating for those who might not know what EMDR is that, Hey, it probably has something to do with your eyes. That's helpful. If I scroll back down to recent news, there's an image of adorable children, and we've got diversity in the photo. They're all smiling. It's a creative image, but it's for recent news. Now I would wonder, is the news having to do with children? If it isn't, if the news is about the practice, or the news, as it says here is related to anxiety or depression, and maybe it's in the entire population, then don't use a generic image that has nothing to do with what you're linking to.

That again is confusing, because I then am struggling to understand what children have to do with recent news, so make your images relevant, make them have to do with the context, so that they're supporting much like, I don't know if they're even around anymore. I remember when I was a college student, periodically you'd go to Denny's. Sometimes if you go to Denny's at say 2:00 in the morning, there's less reading of the menu and more just looking at the pictures, because your brain might not be working at its best at that time.

Again, it's having images that support what you want so that you can say, oh, okay. If this is an image of someone checking news on a phone or something news-y, then I might know, without reading the label that this has to do with news. It's a similar kind of concept. The last thing I'm going to say about images, and this isn't done on this particular site, but I did see it out in the wild, that was cases of images that have movement in them. I would discourage you from having images that move, particularly if you cannot stop the movement.

It is really detrimental to some users to have movement, depending on how fast it is, depending on if there's a flicker. Is it necessary? If it is not, don't do it. I'm coming to your website, because I want to know what services you offer. I don't need to see clouds going across the screen, particularly if there's text on top of it, it makes it really challenging to read. In some cases with some people with epilepsy, or with some cognitive issues, it can trigger headaches. It can trigger a seizure, and at the very least just triggers unhappiness because it's really hard to read and it's very distracting.

Please do not include a lot of movement, or really any movement. If you do have some sort of carousel that cycles, I can tell you that usability shows those are not all that effective, but if you do use them, and we use them for years on the APA site, make sure that you have a control area so that people can stop it. They can pause it, they can play it on their own, on their side, give the control to the user. Okay? That is all I'm going to say about images.

Now let's talk out colors. Colors are always interesting and challenging, because not everyone perceives them the same way. In fact, I think there are a lot of people with color contrast and colorblind issues that don't even realize it. I'm going to share with you a clip from user testing on our APA style site. This was really fascinating to me because our tester, Timmy mentioned the links. He was testing our mega menu, which we have since changed. I know it was busy.

We learned this through user testing and we did change it, but I'm going to hit play so you can hear how Timmy describes the links. Okay? I'm also going to point out that the links are teal, and they underline when you hover over them. It's a 30 second clip.

**Host:** Okay, so I'm going to click on something right now. These words look small. I could read it, but it seems small. I would prefer it a little bit bigger, to make it easier to, because especially with the gray color, it doesn't stand out too clear on the black, on the white, sorry, the white background, but the black, those stands are fine, but the gray one, it's not that clear. I think a bigger font would be better.

**Amy:** When Timmy was referring to the links, he didn't say, "These links look gray, or I'm not sure what these links are supposed to be." He just said, matter of fact, that the gray links didn't stand out enough and they should have more contrast, because not everyone sees all colors, and people do have contrast issues, there are a couple of accessibility rules when you are using color. One rule is that links and functional images like buttons or alerts should have a contrast ratio of four and a half to one.

There are color contrast checkers online that you can use to make sure that what you're using has enough contrast. I'm going to show you those. The second rule though, is that links and other information should not be communicated by color alone. For example, underlining your links in addition to a color or presenting the links in a clear navigational menu are great ways to provide multiple cues that they're links. Similarly, if you have a form and you have required fields, a common technique is to flag the required fields with dark red asterisks, so you can have both the asterisks and the color, provided has enough contrast, to serve as the warning that these are required fields.

You can check color online by using the same plugin checkers we used for the images. I'm going to click on the Siteimprove one, because what I like about the Siteimprove checker, I got to the color contrast by going to the distinguishable section, and these again are matched to the web content accessibility guidelines, but in the distinguishable section there's a contrast heading. It shows me it's a double A level requirement and there are 41 issues where the contrast is insufficient.

When I can open that panel to see which ones, to learn which colors don't have enough contrast, and it might be too small to see this on the screen, but it gives a little square of the color. Then next to the square of the color, it gives me the six-character hex code. This is what's used often in HTML to denote color. It gives me the hex code of what is not accessible. In the case of the first example on this particular website, it shows me that the text color, which is all six F-F-F-F-F-F, that means white, that on top of the background color which is this teal is not accessible.

It does highlight it, similar to how it highlighted the logo with a box around it, but what I can do, is I can highlight the six-character hex code, and I can copy it. Then I can go to an online checker. For example, one of the ones I really like is called accessiblecolors.com. I like accessiblecolors.com because when I put in for example the text color of F, which is white, and I put the background color, and I'm just going to paste what I had copied, it tells me not only that it fails, which I knew, but it gives me two alternatives that would meet the criteria.

I could either darken my background, just a hair. That will give me the new ratio of four and a half to one, technically it would be 4.55, or I could darken my text. Then that would give me a contract ratio that meets accessibility standards. It also tells me what my contrast ratio was. It was 4.43 to 1, which is close, but does not meet it, or I could just darken it a smidge. Then that would meet the color contrast guidelines. There's another website. Again, I'll put these in the resource guide, but there is a web contrast checker on the web Aim website.

This is a group in Utah for-- I think they're a part of a university of Utah actually. They do a lot with accessibility, and they have this online checker also where they do not give you the alternatives, but what they do give you as a slider. I can see that the normal size text and large text with the white, it looks like even large, bold text would pass, but the normal text would fail. What I can do, is I can use sliders to darken the background, and then that will give me a new color that I could use.

That's another option for checking the color and finding one that works. Back to our practice website, the colors might be attractive, but they're not accessible. We need to boost the contrast of the teal colors and use darker text for them to be visible to everyone. Particularly, if I scroll down to that call out and I don't even know if all of you can see, it is so low contrast. It literally says, are you in crisis? Get help now, but that is white on a very, very light teal background.

This definitely meets a boost in contrast. The text should just either be darker or the background could be darker, and then you could keep the text as white. This is a big area that would be changed. Now, if we go back to our site, another important aspect of your website is the semantic structure, which consists of your title and your headings. In our sample site, the title simply says, my homepage, which is really no help to anyone except maybe you [chuckles]. When you title your site, you should make it descriptive, and also make it specific to the page.

For example, your homepage might be titled, Imagine A Rainbow Health Center Inc. Your about page should be about the imagine a rainbow health center. Then your services section would be titled something like services offered at the imagine a rainbow health center. There are several usability and accessibility reasons to do it this way. First of all, if the user has multiple tabs or windows open, they're all going to look the same, unless you have the key differences in the beginning of the title run rather than the end. The more specific information being in the beginning, is helpful for those who are visually looking at the tabs.

Also if someone's using a screen reader, they might not want to listen to the entire title when they're navigating between pages. They could just hear the first words being about the or services offered by. Then they could navigate to that page quickly. The descriptive page titles will also boost your SEO on Google, because Google will use that title element about 87% of the time. Now, within the page itself, it's important to use the heading tags to communicate the structure of your page.

Remember at elementary school, when you had to create that outline before you started writing your paper, the same rules apply, your H1 is generally your title. Then you might have an H2 for your introduction. Then another H2 for your staff. Then H3 is for each individual staff member then H2 for contact information, et cetera. If we go back to the WAVE tool, we could click on the fourth tab over which it's structure, and see the structure of this particular site.

It tells us that there is no H1, and the staff as in H2, but then it jumps to H5 when it gives us the individual people. That is an issue. You don't ever want to skip headings. Okay. It should be H2 for staff and then H3 for each of the staff people. Then for services, these aren't headings at all. I would completely change this up and make services the H2, is fine. Then family counseling should be in H3, couples counseling should be in H3, EMDR H3, and so on. That will give your page the corban semantic structure.

Now, this is important because not only does it help with Google with SEO, but it also helps because say a blind user has using jaws, for example, can use the headings and a have jaws pull out the headings to get a sense of what's on the page. Just like people will sometimes like a visual user might come and visually scan the page and look up and down and see what those main headings are. What blind users may do is pull out what the headings are, and have jaws will read them to get a sense of what the structure is.

That also brings me to the second point about headings, which is make them descriptive, because not only does Google use them, they can also be used as navigation. For example, if I'm using jaws, I might say, what are these headings on this page? Then when I hear services or staff, I could jump right down there, like use it as a table of contents through jaws, to go right to that section. That saves time it's more efficient. It's less frustrating.

It's more user-friendly. Include descriptive titles with the more specific information in the beginning, make your headings semantically correct, H2, H3, H3, H4. Don't skip heading levels, and make your headings descriptive. Next, let's talk about the text. On our sample site, the text isn't short digestible chunks, I might reduce it further. Right now, it's hard to tell, because I've replaced it with Lauren if some text to make it anonymous and so that we don't focus too much on exactly what it says.

The text is center-aligned and that is problematic for all users, really, but it's particularly problematic for those with dyslexia because, in the United States, we typically read from left to right. Our eyes are accustomed to jumping to the same spot when we reach the end of a line. When our text is center-aligned, then what happens is we read one sentence, and then we jump back to the same spot and up. That's not the beginning of the next sentence.

That causes us even if it's just a fraction of a second, it's still increasing our cognitive load to figure out, wait, where does this sentence start? Try to avoid center-aligned text, or just reserve it for sentences that don't wrap or just don't even use it, or use it sparingly. Last but not least, let's talk about links. Links should be descriptive much like headings for many of the same reasons. Just as visual users can scan a page, looking for relevant links, blind users can often tell the screen reader, just pull out all the links and read them.

However, if all of the links say, learn more, learn more, learn more, or click here, click here, more info, then it's difficult if not impossible to know what to click on, because they all sound the same. It's also going to reduce your SEO, or your search engine optimization. You can simplify things by either just linking a descriptive headline. In the case of our sample site, we've got the therapists, and also, by the way, don't put content coming soon, please because that just means, "Hey, I'm not done with this and I'm just going to put it up half done."

Usually what happens, [chuckles] let me be honest with, usually, people put this up, and then they forget about it because they've got this placeholder stuff, and then years go by. Then it's just hanging out there, like, "Hey, it's coming soon," and then you just, it looks sloppy and it doesn't look very professional. If you don't have content, then don't put content. Just know that, write it on your sticky note or your to-do list. Make sure to add content, but don't say, "Hey, here's what my intentions are," because then you're creating expectations that you may like, you may not meet those expectations.

Someone coming here and reading content coming soon might come back and think soon might be tomorrow. Then they're checking and then you never fulfill that expectation. It makes you look bad. Don't include things like content coming soon, check back soon. In the case of the headings and the learn more, you could just link the names. In this case, Benjamin Howard LPC candidate, I could make his name as an H2. I could make that the link if I wanted to, or I could put the blurb, and then link in the blurb. Having to learn more is not very descriptive.

Then one last bit of advice, which is I understand that it is challenging to make everything accessible all at once. It's a process. It's a learning process. There are different areas to implement. One recommendation I would have is to add an accessibility statement or link in your footer. Then that can go to a page that has a nice, clean, simple statement that lets people know that the goal for your site and your practice is to be accessible and inclusive. If someone has any trouble using this site or needs any assistance, just reach out and contact you.

Sometimes just being open about your efforts and just being available to help is what the person needs. Remember with inclusive design, we're trying to provide multiple ways for people to get information. Okay? Now, let's recap what we've learned because we have so, so much. If we go back to our slides, and I can show you a side-by-side comparison of what we went over. A before and an after of the sample website. We made the title more descriptive. Instead of my homepage, we've got imaginary health center.

We darkened some of the colors so that we boosted our contrast to meet the four and a half to one ratio. We added alt text for our logo image, and we darkened the links so they're easier to read. Then we left-aligned our text. Now, in the case of the after, I actually took out the, you are not alone from the middle of the text and made it a heading because sometimes welcome isn't yes. Okay. You can welcome them to your site, but sometimes you can just make it a little more descriptive, and you don't have to have the, "Hi here's our website, nice of you to join us," you don't have to do that on a website.

You can really make it welcoming through the text without technically having to say welcome. In the case here, I have literally just changed welcome to you are not alone. Then you've got your text. I abbreviated the text a bit. We made the button darker, and we left-aligned it just for ease of reading. Now let's recap the different areas that we touched on today. With regard to images, we learned that we should include those alt descriptions, those alternative descriptions.

We know we're not to use the same image for two different links or features, because that sends mixed messages. We want to choose relevant images that match context. I've got a picture of news with someone just checking the news on the phone or something as an example of what kind of image, if you needed an image with news, something you could use that would make sense. Then avoid movement in images, particularly if a user can't stop or pause that movement.

Be aware of using text over images because often it's very difficult to read. With regard to colors. Don't rely on color alone to communicate important content. Check your colors using a contrast checker. I've given you two and they'll also be in the resource guide. You need to meet or exceed a four and a half to one contrast ratio for the web content accessibility guideline criteria. With regard to title and structure, you want to include a descriptive title with the specifics first.

Remember we were talking about about the imagine a rainbow center or services at the, because that should be in the beginning. We don't want to skip heading levels and we want to make those headings descriptive. They're like a table of contents for what's on the page. With regard to text. If we left-align it, it's going to be easier to read not just for everyone, but in particularly for those who use zoom text and anyone with dyslexia, but really for everyone left-aligned is easier.

You want to avoid jargon and chunk your text into those easily scannable sections. The sample site did a pretty good job of that, but I'm putting it in here as a reminder. Then you want to provide enough breathing room, avoid walls of text. The other thing I did want to say that we didn't go over, but I'm going to say it here is with font size, make your font scalable. That is generally a default on the WordPress sites, and on many of the platforms out there. You don't want to specify a point size. You want to make it so that if I zoom in on the page the text gets bigger.

With regard to links and buttons, avoid generic links that use the same words. For example, more info, learn more click here. The links and buttons should be descriptive and unique. You don't want to repeat them, unless they all are going to the same place, but even then you don't want to be redundant. The link should be descriptive and go somewhere unique. Don't rely on color alone when links are within the text. Add a secondary indicator, such as an underline. Remember, we talked about the asterisk that might have also been red.

With regard to videos, and we covered this in the beginning. You want to provide closed captioning. You want to include a transcript. You want to describe on the screen in your audio. You don't want to give a presentation and say something like, "Well, you see the figure on the screen tells you everything you need to know." No, describe what it is that's on the screen. That's why I described that there were steps going to a shoe store, and there was a ramp that ended in a railing.

Just describe what you're showing so that if someone's not looking at it, that person understands what's going on. Then don't start your videos automatically. Give control to the user, so that the user can press play or pause or unmute et cetera. Okay. That is what I have. Now I am ready to hear what questions you have.

**Host:** All right let's get to these questions. Can you be actually sued if your website is not accessible?

**Amy:** Is a great question. Any business open to the public should be accessible. That being said pre-COVID, the department of justice had kind of put reworking the 508 guidelines on hold, but the pandemic has changed how we all live and work. They have now turned back to reexamining and putting a focus on accessibility. I'll put in the chat, they just revamped the ADA website, and they've got a lot of great clear guidance in that. I would say that you should have your websites be accessible.

That being said, do not panic if someone's trying to use some scare tactic and say, "You're going to get big sued unless you use my special plugin." Don't give your money out to someone trying to use a scare tactic to apply some quick fix, because there isn't. The majority of the lawsuits currently are for larger retail places and universities. The best you should do right now is work to make your site accessible, and make sure that you can accommodate.

That's why I put in the when I was talking about adding an accessibility statement at the bottom, you really want to just provide equal access. If someone has trouble using your site, filling out a form, I saw this when I was looking at the websites to create the presentation, they were some who said, "You could fill out a form online or you could fill it out during your first visit." That's equal accommodation. That's really what you're trying to do is provide equal accommodations for people.

**Host:** Okay, great. How do you make your website accessible for international and cross-cultural audiences?

**Amy:** The good news is with regard to accessibility across, in the UK and Canada across the globe is a lot more accessible. There's more steps to making things accessible. When you have your site with different languages there are certain things you can do in the code where you specify what language it is, so it'll read the particular language. Essentially, a lot of the same techniques apply, make sure your images have descriptions, make sure your links are descriptive, and make sure your headings are in order. Some of this is the standard and global.

**Host:** Great. Here's a question about the background color, is white the best option? Will different colors work as well as long as the text is a better color for the background?

**Amy:** You always want to check your contrast. That's your number one of making sure that you have enough contrast so that the text is readable. There are some sites that are dark with a light background and that's fine too. Some of it depends on your audience. There are some, for example, with mild traumatic brain injuries, those softer colors are going to be easier than a much darker color. Some of it depends on your audience, but if you are talking about, "Oh, I want to have a light gray, or I want to have just different muted colors in the background," as long as you have the darker texture, as long as you have enough contrast, you should be fine.

I just would not try to hit mid-tones with different things, because then now you have to think about why are people coming to your site? What do you want them to see? Do you want them to be reading the content, and be able to find what they're looking for or do you want them to come and say, "Oh, that's a nice background color?" Think about the purpose of what your color scheme is doing, should be enhancing the purpose of coming to the site and your content.

**Host:** Here's another question, what would be an ideal text size? Maybe this is a question for an ideal font that is easy to read and assessable for everyone. Is there a one-size-fits-all? Probably not?

**Amy:** That's a good question. Yes, that's one of the things that's interesting with digital accessibility versus accessibility in physical spaces, because if I'm sculpting it in concrete, yes it would be a one-size-fits as many as I can, but when it's digital, then as long as it's scalable so that if someone does the text size large, underneath in the code, you want to make sure that you're not setting it in stone. You can use, I think it's like EM, and it's not pixels, it's point size.

It's the equivalent of about 16 points that the code will, and it's a lot of times in content management systems, or if you're working with a programmer, they can set it for you so that you can set the default to be around the equivalent of a 16 point. Also, you also want to have enough breathing room in between, so that it's not all squished together. It's called letting, you want to make sure that that is adequate to the size that you use, but make sure that you don't disable the ability to make it larger or smaller on the user side.

**Host:** Is there a font that you would recommend or fonts?

**Amy:** I would say that there are some fonts that work better online. Microsoft originally created Verdana, which is a sans serif font, and Georgia, which was the serif font, years and years and years ago, because they were web-friendly, and they're installed in the browsers by default. I just found out they're reworking those accessible fonts, I don't know what they're doing to them, they're modernizing them, but what I would do is, I would think about the fonts, if you look under Google Fonts, I would choose something that is widely available.

If you try to pick something that is really specific to your screen, what happens is not everybody has it. If you're really that wed to something specific, then you have to install it on the server or someone might not be able to see it the way you want them to see it. I would opt for more readable fonts, we've got stuff on APA style in the accessibility section there where they recommend some different kinds of fonts that are standard.

The biggest thing too I would look at making the A's so that they're distinguishable from the O's because sometimes when you have the cursive A it looks very much like the O, so that thing where it's distinguishable and widely available.

**Host:** Here's some questions about images and alt text, I think. When adding alt text to images, should you identify the type of image, photograph, logo, and then describe?

**Amy:** That's a great question. When we first started using alt texts, I personally was like, "Oh yes, we should put the image of and photograph of," you don't need to do that because, first of all, it adds time to the person listening to it, the screen readers already going to say image. You don't need to say, "This is an image of such and such," or, "This is an illustration of such and such." However, it is important to the context.

If it is a photo of someone you want to know, this is the picture of this is a photograph of such and such, or this is an illustration that depicts blah, blah, blah, then you put it in there, if it's related to the context, if it isn't, then you don't need to.

**Host:** I think this is probably similar when describing headshots or candidates do utilize descriptions of skin color, gender, age, or other physical traits of individuals.

**Amy:** Again, if it's related to the context, if it's important to your content, where you would call it out, because it's relevant to what you're saying, then yes, but do you need to every single time if it's just, "Oh, I'm just gonna have a decorative image here," but do I want to say that this person looks this way, and that person looks that way. If it's not critical to your content, then you don't need to, because if you think about someone using a screen reader has to listen to everything.

I remember there was a publishing conference that was about accessibility, and they showed this one book translated to braille, it took up a whole closet. Some of the speakers are blind, and they were talking about when they were listening to screen readers, it takes so much longer. That's why they're sped up. If you ever listen to somebody listen to a screen reader, it goes so fast, because just like visual users don't want to read walls and walls and walls of text.

When you're listening you don't need to listen to, "A single blade of grass that had popped up across the blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." People don't want to necessarily hear all that. Keep it relevant but keep it brief, Google will only look at the first thing which is 16 words of the alt text also. You want it descriptive, but not overly so.

**Host:** What about the accessibility of websites displayed on smartphones? Is there anything we should do differently than what you have already explained?

**Amy:** If you're starting a site from scratch, it's helpful to design mobile-first, because on mobile everything shrinks. If you have it right for mobile, then it makes it a lot easier to get bigger than it does smaller. Keep in mind with mobile there is no mouse, there's no hover state, or it's really just you're looking at it, or you're talking to it, you need to make sure your hit targets or your buttons are big enough to where you can press them. You need to understand how things are scaled down.

Sometimes if you've got an image on one side, and you've got the text on the other then it all shifts around. That's a reason too then, in your text, you don't ever want to say things like select the options on the right, for example, because the right could change when you get down to mobile when responsive environment, things will shift all around the page. That's where you want to use your labels, select the forms button to get to the form or that thing.

**Host:** Unfortunately, we have to wrap things up now. Thank you so much for joining us, Amy, and thank you to all of our listeners for your participation. We're sorry, we couldn't get to all your questions. A recording of this presentation along with the slides, and a very useful handout resource guide on accessibility and inclusive design will be emailed to you in about two weeks. After this webinar has ended, a short survey will appear on your screen.

We hope you'll take a few minutes to complete the survey and give us feedback, and how we did and how we can continue to improve. Please be on the lookout for more supercharged webinars in 2022. We thank you for your attention, and have a great day.