**Accessibility Insights with Susanna Laurin of Funka and IAAP – Transcript**

>> Hello, everyone and welcome

to today's webinar.

It is 1:00 so I am going to give everyone a chance to join.

Do feel free to drop into the Q&A box and say hi.

We have disabled the chat feature as we discovered it can cause some

problems for people using screen readers.

I can see the numbers going up.

Just give it a few more moments for more people to join.

And hello Patti saying hello from Guelph in Canada.

Okay I think we will make a start now.

Hello and welcome to the 15th

session now in our accessibility insight series where AbilityNet head

of inclusion Robin Christopherson hosts a chat with individuals who are each

working to improve digital accessibility and digital inclusion.

This month he is chatting with Susanna Laurin who is chief research

and innovation officer at Funka and representative to EU for the

professional the IAAP.

I am Annie Mannion digital communications manager at AbilityNet.

I will be running you through today's session.

Just to go through a few bits of housekeeping.

We have live captions provided by MyclearText. Slides are available at slideshare.

net/abilitynet and also at our website.

If you have any technical issues you need to leave early, don't worry you

will receive an E-mail in a couple of day's time with the recording and

transcript and slides.

Depending on how you join the webinar you will find the Q&A.

If you want to ask Susanna or Robin any questions,

drop them in the Q&A area for them to address.

They will do that after today's session.

Then we also have our feedback survey that you will be directed to at the

end which invites you to tell us about any future topics you would like us to

cover in our webinars.

So please do fill that out.

So that's all for me for now.

So over to rob Robin and Suzanna.

>> Robin: Thanks for joining

us, Suzanne A p >> Suzanna: No problem.

>> Robin: I'm looking forward

to this one.

What is your hot beverage or early drink to help you get through this

ordeal.

I have boring tea which we call builder's tea very strong you can

stand the spoon up in it.

>> Suzanna: I have a

Café latte.

So the spoon could stand a little bit in the beginning.

It just takes one second and it floats away.

I also have water it is a very hot day today.

>> Robin: It is.

If people can hear my phones, apologies.

I tried to turn it over.

Apologies there.

So of the many hats that you wear we have mentioned a couple, IAAP

obviously the association that is trying to deal with accessibility.

You are the representative to the EU.

The first question is where do you think accessibility and the profession

of accessibility how it will develop in the coming years across the whole of

Europe?

>> Suzanna: That's kind of a

big question.

I don't want to correct anyone but I'm not the chairman of Funka I'm one

of the members of the board I am not a chairman.

I just wanted to clarify that.

Otherwise my chairman would be angry with me.

Where is the accessibility profession going?

We see an enormous raise in demand because of the legislation in the UE.

I know most about the UE.

I can't speak about all of the geographic Europe.

In the UE we see an increasing raiment of expertise.

What IAAP has changed or are about to change is the fact that the

professionals can be certified in accessibility.

So that will make it much easier for people who are recruiting

accessibility expertise and organizations that are procuring or

buying accessibility expertise.

We see more and more examples of advertisements saying that it is

merits to be certified in one way or another and also more and more public

procurement.

What is rewarding is the monitoring agency and some of the member states

that have been procuring expertise to support the monitoring of which is

arguably the most important part.

Some of the -- more of the member states mention IAAP to get extra

points for getting that assignment.

So I think it will be more professionalized.

It will be more fun as we grow.

We still need much more boots on the ground.

Many more boots on the ground and there is an opportunity for anybody

that wants to work with this.

I don't see the end of this increase demand.

All of the member states that we work with with the monitoring agencies and

European commission where I do a lot of my working days, there are many states

where the demand they lock everywhere for expertise.

There is number to be found.

Anyone that wants to work with this and they want to learn more, we have

to keep the quality high.

But we need to be welcoming.

Hopefully we will get many more friends in the community and grow the

community.

I really only see positive the future

for the accessibility professional or the profession of accessibility

experts is really a very bright future for anyone.

And right now I think everyone should try to raise their salaries because we

are so scarce that everyone should pay more especially people with

disabilities of course who should be paid for their expertise even if they

are just doing short user testing.

They should claim money for their expertise.

>> Robin: Absolutely.

Yes.

For people the IAAP the international accessibility association of

professionals there was a lot of variability.

This is widely recognized.

It does go towards your career progression you can get CPD

qualifications that will help you level up in your particular career path.

This is a thing, guys.

This is something that you should sit up and take note of and look at

incorporating in your o organizations if you are not doing that already.

It is absolutely brilliant.

So across Europe you have already mentioned that you are not necessarily

familiar with exactly what is going on on the ground in different localities,

different nations.

Do you have an idea about which areas are doing things particularly well,

some accessibility hot spots where we could look at how they are doing

things well an really learn from best practice there?

>> Suzanne A.

We do work with all of the member states.

We tend to think that Switzerland, Norway and UK is so close to us so we

want to have them in the family still for different reasons.

So that's kind of my market, if you will, where I can say something.

I think it's difficult to say exactly what is happening in each member state

because there is so much going on at the same time.

But we do see a lot of interesting things for example in Belgium and the

never lands are doing an interesting thing where they try to make sure the

monitoring and take and procurement is in framework context and we try to

push each of the public sector bodies to do things in a good way and

supporting them from the top down so to speak.

We see in the Nordic countries the opposite direction more of the

organizations be very strong and pushing for movement and end user

participation in all sorts of things.

So that's more of a bottom-up perspective.

We see less good things in all of the members space, something that is

lessen occur abling.

We have a few countries, I won't tell you which, because there are some weak

spots as well where they seem to think that the reporting back to the

commission is something that is lowering their willingness to really

perform a good monitoring exercise.

So we have had very serious discussions with some of the

monitoring agencies saying if we do a good job they be the results will be

in our country we can see that there are inaccessibility in a lot of places

if we report that to the commission then the commission will tell you you

are doing a bad job an then we will have problems.

It is better for us to do a light weight monitoring so we don't find all

of the problems so we report something to the commission and we look good.

I have been so much involved in this legislation and the implementation act

and the discussion.

I couldn't in my life imagine this discussion

to happen but here we are.

We need do something with the culture around accessibility and the whole the

set up the way you approach this so that it is not something you need to

do just because it is legislation.

But you really understand inside of your body that this is the right thing

to do.

We need to do it and we try to do it in a good way instead of doing it

because somebody is telling us to do it.

That will never work.

A long answer but I'm so much into this using the legislation in a good

way and not making people just want to work around it.

I get so provoked when people approach me.

Can you give us a tip how not to make it accessible and still look like we

are compliant?

It is an amazing question.

But that's still what we get sometimes.

>> Robin: We could have a

huge conversation about the business case, the very compelling business

case because absolutely it ticks all of the boxes, ethical, hard-nose

business, return on investment.

The legislation is definitely an area that -- here in the UK the web

accessibility directive that you mentioned a moment ago is coming up to

an anniversary soon it was brought into UK law under the guise under the

accessibility regulations.

Because it was enforced for the first time in the UK legal history, there

was a requirement in the law for them to proactively monitor and report and

find organizations.

We have seen a massive shift in public sector bodies here

unfortunately browse of Brexit the next one that would have come along that

would cover other sector hasn't made it through there.

The European accessibility act are you thinking that's going to make

these the cool spots across Europe.

Do you think that will heat them up a little bit?

>> Suzanna: Definitely.

There are so many positive things around the accessibility act.

Many people in user community or the disabled person organizations are

disappointed that we didn't get everything into the act.

I understand that position.

But really, I mean from the UK perspective you will be affected even

if you decide not to include this in your implemented -- in the UK.

This will cover so many products and services and companies if you want to

sell to the EU which your industry will, you will be affected.

That is the beauty of the accessibility act.

This will spread much wider than the web accessibility directive ever did

or has been doing.

But we also see already that focusing on the public sector that may seem

like a small scope, but the enormous purchasing power of public sector

means that is a very big scope in the web accessibility directive and all of

the IT companies that want to sell to public secretary tore most of the

larger and mid size ones wants to sell to the public sector

they need to comply with the regulations or they can't sell to the

public sector.

We see this is spreading much more than before.

In Funka in our numbers and bookkeeping, I worked in the company

for 20 years almost.

We have seen -- we have been serving the public sector and the NGOs mostly

and then we have 1 or 2% ICT companies as our clients for many years.

When the procurement directive entered into place it started growing.

We have seen a steady grow.

The proportion of our clients that are ICT companies are more than 25%.

And we haven't done anything.

They come to us.

We haven't changed anything in our marketing or anything like that.

That is proof that this regulation -- already the regulation focusing on

public sector is changing the private sector part of it.

And the accessibility act I think the most rewarding thing from my point of

view is that the banks and E-commerce and some other sectors they are so

much aware of this.

They are act being much faster and

they are already asking for training and they want to know exactly what to

do and have a long term strategy for the enforcement and compliance and the

Organisation and set up.

They are so much more forward thinking.

We have been talking about it for years.

They were not interested until it really happened.

Then they tried to run.

They were left behind.

The private sector is much faster.

They have somebody who is working on compliance.

They are used to dealing with legal things.

They don't want to have a product or service that is taken off market

because it doesn't comply with accessibility act.

Even if it won't come into place or be active until 2025, we have still

loads of organizations, large organizations mostly that are already

preparing themselves for the accessibility act.

I am absolutely sure that that is a big wave that will grow even more or

snowball effect.

>> Robin: That leads nicely

into the next question.

Does this massive up tick in activity right across our often now,

over the last 2 decades maybe the U.S.

has been pretty active certainly from a litigation point of view.

They have had legislation in place all that time.

Those guys very keen on bringing claims et cetera.

So the kind of activity from a litigation point of view has been over

there.

Section 508 has really helped and that sort of thing.

Over here there hasn't been the appetite to enforce it.

now as you have been saying we have all of this extra activity and people

are really sitting up and noticing that yes, okay we have now got to do it.

Everything is pushing towards digital particularly with COVID.

What do you see?

Do you see our often being the next area in the world where the most

activity and the most progress will be happening over the coming years?

>> Suzanna: That's a very

good question.

It is much more than 20 years that the U.S.

has had the leading T-shirt the yellow T-shirt.

Now I'm partly paid by the commission but I really do believe that we are in

the lead now.

I think it is a big difference.

We are pushing the standards forward.

We are pointing -- and the U.S.

is not.

We are now the leading place where research and innovation and new ideas

and also from the enforcement perspective and enrolment we are now

the leaders.

You can see that in also the global self or the third world countries are

looking towards the EN standard for implementation.

And all sorts of emerging markets that are looking to how Europe has

done this instead of looking to the U.S.

I work on both sides of the pond.

I would like us to collaborate and harmonize and do things together.

I don't want it to be a competition.

Maybe a healthy competition.

I do see Europe take being the lead now definitely.

I think it's a good thing.

And I know some people don't like when

I say it.

I don't think we should harmonize in a way that we go backward.

We need to push and make sure others follow us.

We need to have more confidence in that we can do things.

It is a difference.

Litigation is not us.

It is not comparable to what is in the U.S.

But from a legal standpoint, we have nothing to be ashamed of.

We do this in a slightly different way.

I really think we have gained a lot of momentum right now.

I would say, yes, we are in the lead.

>> Robin: You mentioned work

act 2.1.

I am going to look ahead let's look to 3.0.

You have been leading Funka's work in the importance of using end users in

the testing process.

Do you want to say why that is important and the context of that

going forward.

>> Suzanna: That is the

reason that end users should be at of the heart of this and any other

self-claimed experts.

To me it is obvious if you create a product or a service or anything that

you must test it with users and that it should be based on user requirements.

That should be obvious I think to everyone.

If you don't, then you will create products and services that don't work

for everyone or just works for small proportions of your potential clients

and so on.

So that's kind of obvious.

Still we have made a series of research projects around this at EU

and nationally and Nordics.

It is amazingly low the numbers people that involve users in different

ways.

That is on a general level.

If you keep asking that part of the Organisation that do user testing and

user involvement, if you ask them how much end users with different

abilities they include, then it becomes even lower numbers.

So no -- how do that ever be good?

How could that ever succeed?

You need to test it.

There is no chance.

We work a lot with standards.

I'm part of a special task force with standards.

Standards are super important they are never enough.

That is the baseline.

If you want to know something is working you need to test with users.

To me it is the most obvious thing.

Still we need to tell people to do it.

It's amazing.

Again, I would go back to the money thing.

I think you need to make sure that you the user involvement.

That can be done in many different ways.

You need to do it early if possible and you need to make sure you have

people with different abilities, age, sex, green, blue, red one we have

tried to put it that way.

Thin these people neat to get paid.

Some companies claim that we can't find any users.

We tried to find users but we didn't find anyone.

Did you tell them just to quit their day job and go testing for you without

being paid?

Of course they say no.

Who wouldn't.

So I think that is one of the most recent projects we have

done is really to make -- for organizations to sign up for okay, we

understand the importance of including end users.

Yes, we are going to treat them as the experts they are.

Because I think that is kind one of the key factors to make this work.

>> Robin: Absolutely.

The professionalization of end users as well.

We should make that a clear message a clear take away.

There is a massive gap between technical come my answer and real life

accessible products.

That's where the users come in.

Shift left that's a thing.

We talked about it before on the webinars.

Bring them in right from the beginning.

Make sure your personas are diverse and make sure their involved in every

stage in the project.

This won't be any surprises and any costly retrofitting, et cetera, et

cetera.

Absolutely.

It kind of comes down to the compliance thing that we are talking

about.

If you approach it from the compliance point of view you will do

the bear minimum and look at the technical compliance, okay, we are now

AA or there abouts.

What is your feeling on the kind of carrots and sticks approach?

Are they equally important?

How do you win hearts and minds when you are in a business argument with

your clients or with perspective clients, et cetera?

>> Suzanne:.

We try to stay out of the argument part.

>> Robin: That is not the

right word.

Conversation.

>> Suzanna: On a society

level legislation is a good way to move forward.

We see already the positive parts of legislation and so on.

But for me personally and I think also from a business perspective the

stick can never ever be the way forward.

I just don't believe it.

Many people argue against that.

But we never tried to say you have to do this or you should be are a shamed

or we never use that argument.

We always try to see it from a positive side.

You want to reach as many people as possible.

This is good for design.

It is making it easier.

You have all of the positive arguments that I think many of the

listeners know of.

Stressing that and making people feel that accessibility is cool, sexy and

nice to work with.

It is beneficial.

That is to me the only way I can sell accessibility.

I never met anyone who woke up in the morning and said whoa, today I am

not really going to break the law.

That's my goal today.

Maybe they are out there but I never met

anyone.

The carrot that's where I want to stay.

>> Robin: We are rapidly

running out of time.

I had the privilege to talking to last month's guest CTO of the British

heart foundation a very valuable charity in the UK.

She has something to pass on to you.

She wants to know, she has a question, what do you think is the

biggest challenge and opportunity for helping with the next steps of

embedding the culture of accessibility across Europe?

Just a small question for you there.

>> Suzanna: Very smart

question, Thank you.

So I think human is the response to both parts of this question.

Humans.

The challenge is I think fear.

People are afraid of dying.

Afraid of getting a disabled child, a fear of getting ill.

Fear of their loved ones being in an accident or something.

I feel after many years in this business when people don't want to

listen to reason around accessibility.

It is that they fear death.

That is really difficult to get through.

So I think fear is the most challenging thing.

So I would need another 20 minutes to get in depth with that.

The other part the opportunity or the big thing is the best thing,

opportunity possibly is technology.

I don't pretend that technology solves every problem.

Mainstreaming like speech, the translation automatic translation even

automatic captions these days, we see all sorts of technology artificial

intelligence many things that we can use in accessibility.

I know there are a lot of problems with this, but really if we can auto

mise and make it easier to make things accessible in a mainstreaming way that

will make it so much easier to get all of this happening.

Technology would be my number 1 hope for making it happen.

>> Robin: I am really excited

and looking forward to the technology of the next 10 years.

Humans will always play a part and hopefully they will be less afraid as

accessibility becomes more professionalized and more embedded in

the day-to-day work that people do.

Thank you so much indeed.

The next month's guest that we got we are lucky to have Jonathan Mosen.

He is CEO of New Zealand's largest inclusive employment agency called

Work Bridge.

He is in technology and employment opportunity space.

He is also blind myself.

Is there anything at all that you would like to pass on to Jonathan?

>> Suzanne: I love New

Zealand.

My question would be when can I visit or find something with sheep would be

nice but I couldn't connect it to accessibility in a good way that you

would accept.

I think me personally getting disabled individuals into the

workforce is one of the key factors for inclusion.

I have done a lot of work on myself.

So congratulations to him for doing that fantastic work.

My question would be how do we make sure that children and young people

with disabilities get the same question as every other question as young

person gets, what do you want to become when you grow up?

What job opportunities?

I see so many children with disabilities who don't get that

question because society around them don't think that they can have a dream

about the job they want to do or that they become pilots or whatever or

secret agent that's I wanted to be when I was a young child.

I'm not a secret agent, by the way.

>> Robin: So you say.

>> Suzanna: I have to say

that or I have to kill you.

I would like every child no matter ability to get that same question.

How can we work together to make that question from France to New Zealand

and everyone else.

>> Robin: What a brilliant

question that we should have equal assumptions about our prospects and

opportunities.

I love it.

People are always surprised.

The number of times when people I get into conversation with them.

I am married or they see my wedding ring.

They say well done like you managed to achieve something as basic.

It is absolutely brilliant.

Thank you very much indeed.

Brilliant conversation.

Hope everyone really enjoyed that as much as I have.

I will pass it back to Annie for a final bit of housekeeping.

Thanks, Annie.

>> Annie: Thank you so much

to Suzanna and Robin and there are lots of questions that we hope to answer

online in the next few days.

So you will receive an E-mail with the link to access them.

I just wanted to share a bit more information that might be of interest

to you.

We also run online training sessions on digital accessibility.

You can find out more about them at abilitynet.

org.

uk/training.

We have a special back to school on our training courses that you can use

in September.

So use backtoschool10 before the end of the month.

10% all of our courses.

Coming up we have accessibility for copyrighters on the ninth of September

and how to do inclusive use ability testing on the 16th of September.

One of our new courses is how to develop accessible inclusive

recruitment on the 22 of September.

Popular course is PDF accessibility on the 23 of September and then

another one a new course, how to develop accessible, inclusive

onboarding.

Just other resources available you can sign up to our

newsletter for the latest announcements and visit our YouTube channel and

download our pod cast and we have a suit of accessibility services to suit

all organizations.

Don't forget about our next webinars free webinar that's you can access at

forward slash webinars.

As Robin mentioned in October you can meet Jonathan who will be joining us

on the 12th of October and before that on the 28 of September you can find

out how to create an inclusive workplace and that's with speakers

from the National Trust and CIPD.

That's all for me.

Thank you again, Suzanna and Robin and everyone who joined us.

Please complete the feedback form that you will be directed to.

We will be in touch very soon.

Thanks very much.

>> Suzanna: Bye, everyone.

Thank you.