Transcript of Business case webinar 20 July 2021

**Sarah Botterill, AbilityNet:**

So, welcome everyone to today's webinar which is going to be looking at the business case for accessibility. I'm your host for today. My name is Sarah, and I work for AbilityNet and just allow a short amount of time for all of the participants to arrive, and then we'll run through some brief housekeeping, and introduce you to our panellists so we'll just wait another minute or so for everyone to come in.

It's a great session that we've got lined up for you today and then I wouldn't want anyone to miss anything. So, yet you will just wait a tiny bit and just make sure everybody has arrived.

Okay, great. So, today's webinar is on the business case for accessibility. It's a topic that is close to ability nets heart, and I know it's something that the panellists are all hugely passionate about and I'm really delighted to have representation today from Accenture from Intuit, from the Business Disability Forum, and Robin Christopherson.

So just some brief housekeeping, and you should see captions popping up at the bottom of your screen. And please use the Q&A window for any questions that you have.

My colleague, Annie is helping me out, and would be happy to answer any questions you've got in there. And the chat window is turned off, and that's to make things easier but also because there can be some issues with screen readers in terms of reading out everything that goes in there so it can be a bit distracting in terms of accessibility and post webinar we will be making available slides, a transcript and a recording and everyone will be notified by email about that will also be popping up a variety of useful links that the panellists have provided for us today on to that web page as well. And so please do check back there we look rich resources there.

And then also be a feedback form to let us know how, how the webinar was for you today and we'd really love to hear your feedback on that so please do watch out for that as well.

Just in terms of the structure for today I'll be introducing you briefly to our panellists in a second.

And then Lori will introduce the business case for accessibility, Lucy is going to talk about measuring the impact of accessibility, Robin will talk about the case for inclusive design, and then Intuit providing, almost like a bit of a case study in inclusive design, and I hope we'll have some time for a bit of a discussion at the end.

So, as I say, I'm really delighted to have a high calibre of panellists today. So, we've got Lori from Accenture and the US, and so it's morning there good morning to Lori.

And she's going to be talking about some research that Accenture has put together which is quoted everywhere high-quality research.

I'm delighted to have Lucy from the Business Disability Forum, and she's telling me she's got a bit of an exclusive announcement for us today so that's really exciting.

And so, I'm looking forward to that.

And, Robin is our head of digital inclusion at AbilityNet, and it's just so inspiring when he talks about inclusive design so I'm looking forward to that.

And then last but not least we have Reuben, who is from software company Intuit and who is living and breathing this stuff and everything that they that they do so it's been really fantastic to hear from him about how into it, bringing this stuff to

Just briefly, I wanted to give some background to AbilityNet, we're hosting the webinar today. We're a pan-disability charity, we provide a range of services. So, we provide free services that support older and disabled people through a network of fantastic volunteers, and we've been offering accessibility consultancy and expertise for way over 20 years. And so, yeah, and, and we also provide support in education, and at work.

And then finally, we run a world class accessibility event who very recently was gone and hosted the tech for good awards an amazing range of winners there. And, yeah, volunteers’ people are doing amazing work in terms of sustainability of technology so. So that's just a little bit about us and there are a range of links at the end which will also post on the website for further information.

And in terms of our impact, and there's a picture of our impact report here with just pulls out some of the results from last year and there's a link which again will post on their website so last year, 929, and texture pro delegates registered, and that

was hosted on Microsoft Teams platform, fantastic man, Lucy, you were a speaker at the event last year, just bringing together the accessibility community, to share messages like the one that we have today to keep pushing that agenda forward, and

to really drive change within organizations but importantly for customers of websites apps, etc.

**Laurie A. Henneborn, Accenture**

And so, I will now without further ado I will stop my video and audio and hand over to Lori, who is going to talk to us about the business case for accessibility.

I'm happy to do so Thank you Sarah, and hello to all our participants. Thank you for joining us today.

I am a white woman with blonde hair pulled back. I have hazel eyes wearing glasses and I'm wearing a pink blouse under a black sweater, I'm sitting here in my home in New York and I'm presenting against a light green and purple background that says, enabling change. Next slide.

So as Sarah mentioned I'm a managing director at Accenture where I've been in the essential research organization for over 20 years were a leading global professional services company with over 500,000 employees and more than 120 countries, and we are proud of our rankings are excellent rankings and scores related to diversity and disability inclusion for the past several years, one role that I'm most passionate about is my role as executive sponsor for research and thought leadership in the area of disability inclusion, and we'll talk about some of that research and the data coming through that research during today's discussion.

But beyond the research aspect aspects of my role I sit on the board of directors for the American Association for people with disabilities and I'm the executive sponsor for our Metro New York disability RG. I'm especially passionate about coaching and mentoring colleagues with invisible disabilities drawing from my own experience since being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, in 2004.

And if you're interested in that story and some of the research, we've conducted around the topic specifically of invisible disabilities and disclosure self ID please read my new article in Harvard Business Review, titled make it safe for employees to disclose their disabilities. Next slide.

So, I was very excited when Sarah first approached me about this session, as it, I think it was around the time of global Accessibility Awareness Day The 10th anniversary so very timely.

And before we begin, a few things. First, due to the continued diversity in language and phrasing. You may hear I'll be using person first and identity first language throughout the session interchangeably.

Second, I am going to be drawing from a few studies that Accenture research, partnering with our inclusion and diversity team have launched over the past several years, including the ones listed on this slide.

And they're all available through Accenture. com for further reading and you can see the link there at the bottom [www.accenture.com/pwd](http://www.accenture.com/pwd) is the quickest way to get there.

And third, while most of this content and the insights are based on surveys of medium to large organizations, I think you'll find that much of this is very relevant and applicable across the board.

This is a very human issue after all.

Next slide.

So first, it's important to ground this discussion in the scale of disability and how employment is trending around the world that this is not a niche issue.

Persons with Disabilities represent about 15% of roughly 1 billion of the world's population with $8 trillion, and disposable income, making us the third largest economic power in the world, above Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

And it's important not to forget 80% of disabilities emerged when people are working age like mine.

It means any of us could acquire disability at any time. This is not a matter of them, but a matter of all of us this is not again, not a niche issue, and participation in the workforce, it's disproportionately low, it's estimated that across the world

close to 80% of persons with disabilities are not employed, and most developed countries the official unemployment rate for persons with disabilities of working age is at least twice that of those who have no disability.

And this is despite the qualitative and quantitative business case that exists.

Yes, it does pay to be inclusive, which Accenture in partnership with disability and, and the American Association of People with Disabilities showed in our study from December of 2018.

Next slide.

We all agree that creating an inclusive workplace and accessible workplace is the right thing to do. Yes. I mean, there are several studies and reports on what a culture of inclusion can bring to organizations, large and small, including increased innovation, empathy, enhanced employee, and customer experience, but we wanted to see if there was some way to also land with a quantifiable business case, we needed to shift to the mindset and dialogue, the one that was philanthropic to truly foundational.

And what we what we set out to do right this this this meant tackling an important fundamental question, especially among the C-suite. Is there a correlation between how inclusive a company is of persons with disabilities and its financial performance?

Again, can we get close to articulating and quantifying that business case for why it's also good for business.

And this is a question we discussed with disabilityIN and the American Association for people with disabilities APD who have their annual disability Quality Index study.

And at the time of this research, we were able to analyze the 140 unique companies who had participated in the index over those past few years of the study, leading up to our project.

And we identified 45 of them that were raising the bar for disability inclusion.

This included heavy focus on dimensions and criteria related to employment, culture, leadership, accessibility accommodations and this is just a few.

And we called these, these companies that the disability inclusion champions was 45 that we're raising the bar.

And for example, in the area of accessibility, we found that champions are using multiple ways to audit the compliance of both their internal and external websites.

Ultimately, what we found was that these champions performed better financially across measures related to value creation and profitability.

And they do this better than the other companies obviously in the index, on average, they achieve Next slide.

28% higher revenue. Two times higher net income and 30% higher economic profit margins, but it didn't end there. Next slide.

We also wanted, we needed this study to also resonate with investors and the investment community. So, we went a step further, we took a look at correlations to shareholder value, both for the champions, but also, we looked at those who had improved actions and scores over time and again we were pleasantly surprised. For example, we found that improvers, on average, were four times more likely to have total shareholder returns that outperformed those of their peer group, compared to other companies.

So that's the business case for implying and advancing people with disabilities and aspects and criteria like accessibility and accommodations. But as discussed persons with disabilities continue to be less likely, and paid employment than their peers.

What of those who do make it into employment. What about us.

Well barriers persist and the harsh reality as our enabling change study of 2020 shows is that culture within the organization, could be to blame for many of these barriers.

And let's take a look at that data.

Next slide.

So almost so one of one of our findings from this global survey of nearly 6000 employees with disabilities from almost 30 countries, is that employees with disabilities, 27% less likely to feel included in the workplace compared with the average, and by included, we mean that they feel like a key component of the team with real influence over decisions.

And we're at 60%, more likely to feel excluded, and by excluded we mean ignored, with little to no voice in the team.

So the bottom line here sobering reality, employees with disabilities are less likely to feel included more likely to feel excluded. Next slide.

And through the same survey. We asked executives and employees about whether they feel that the workplace they operate in is is enabling thriving among employees with disabilities in terms of having the right technology and fireman and support 67% of executives say yes, this is what we do.

But that drops to just 41% of employees who agree.

That's significant gap.

One which executives must have top of mind for when the technology, their solutions that platforms are not compliant with accessibility regulations or when accessibility features are added late in the design process, businesses find themselves exposed

to legal, financial risk, lower engagement among their employees and their, and their excluding, clearly, excluding a vast array of employees, customers, clients, and so on.

However, by providing this increased access that meets the needs of persons with disabilities the organization can lay the foundation for inclusive cultures that enable all employees to thrive, presenting a tremendous opportunity for what may be necessary for some is ultimately beneficial for all. Next slide.

And I should note that accessibility is embedded across the journey to disability inclusion which Accenture framed in that 2018 report, which spanned employing me willing engaging and empowering and persons with disabilities and we've already talked about the importance of implying among a diverse talent pool.

The role of accessibility and what it plays in boosting performance we talked about what it means to advance engagement among employees with disabilities.

So why don't we turn that focus now that more on accessibility and the role that it plays when it comes to, enabling that culture of equality and inclusion and the simple reality is this.

If digital technologies and solutions like those incorporating AI blockchain extended realities advanced technologies, if they're good to be adopted by the masses.

Accessibility is not just the right thing to do. It's a must have beyond being that right thing to do. We have a commitment. Right. Businesses technologists, researchers developers to ensure that no one is left behind.

And keep in mind that there will be backlash due to lack of inclusion, or compliance things as simple as adding alternative text, images will go a very long way.

Here I can share that Accenture has been on on a journey, right to inclusion and accessibility for several years now we're constantly striving to ensure that our employees with disabilities are thriving right alongside appears.

I've listed some of the Accenture related initiatives and outcomes here on this slide, one of which I am. I'm very excited about and it's the new accessibility Centers of Excellence which serve to provide a safe space where our employees and clients,

I, right, we can explore a test accessible technology and accommodations.

I actually attended a launch recently here in in New York City, and I was, I was again very excited by some of the solutions that I saw some of which I intend to try like there's this, the seat the seat cushion, or overlay right that that helps to maintain posture and avoid discomfort while seated for long periods of time which for me. Those become an issue.

So now what I'll do is turn it over to Lucy. Lucy Ruck from the Disability Forum, to go deeper on that accessibility business case, and more importantly, how do we measure the impact of accessibility, Lucy.

**Lucy Ruck, BDF:**

Thank you so much, Lori and I just want to say we reference, some of the Accenture research in our materials here so I'll touch on those as we go on but thank you for that Laurie fantastic.

Um, so yeah so that just leaves me to introduce myself so I am Lucy rock on the task force manager business disability format has real quick description wife out for you.

I am a white female in my mid 40s I've got a navy blue top on with a necklace and I've got a virtual background which makes it look a little bit, a little bit like I'm starting our London offices but I’m not I’m setting up a warm office in my house.

On a sunny day up in the north of England, and what also I'll just touch on very briefly is one of you can see as I moved to a right leg below knee amputee so I have a live experience of disability over the last 28 years.

We are a non-profit based out of London. And we believe that the 26 million people in the UK and over 1 billion people worldwide with disabilities and long-term conductance enhance the social and economic health of our societies.

We exist to remove barriers and the business structures and government that prevent disabled people from thriving and continuing in this way. And we've been around for nearly 30 years, and we're kind of depressed, a friend of many businesses, you know we're there to support them and work with them and help them get things right for their disabled colleagues and customers.

But like I'm in Downing Street briefing doing that right you know, we're talking about the technology for today, and this is sort of one of our focus groups within business disability for obviously focused on technology.

And with the group is the technology passport is about organizations working together to make technology accessible for everyone. So that's all sort of raison d'etre that is what our aim is.

And it's about making sure that technology enables rather than holds people back.

So one of the things that we've been looking at over the last year within the technology passports have been the why we need to focus on accessibility so the business case.

So it's the accessibility business case, we've kind of nicknamed it the ABC, because it's you know a very good place to start, as they say, And we know there's some great content out there.

But you know these conversations. So, how can we hit the mark more effectively what can we do to appeal to the widest range of people.

So today, I'm actually posted on our website at the end of last week, especially for this event today is our sort of five themes of the accessibility business case that they defined areas that we think will help embed this within your organization.

So we've pulled this together from the members of the technology transfer, and their kind of insight and knowledge and experience of what could work for them around the accessibility business case.

And they provided you with these top five themes. And what we want you to do is use them as great colleagues and stakeholders on why accessibility is critical to your business.

I'm just going to be for these brand and inclusive brand outperforms productivity inflexible solutions boost productivity for everyone. And then finally compliance, raising the bar reduces the risk, that's been going on with this we've got a web page with a lot more detail underneath that we haven't just given you like a one slide and then Off you go. And we've also created a slide deck of 28 slides that you can download for free all this stuff is free for you to use.

And, I mean you know we've come up with these five areas but you might get you know what compliance does not hit the mark my organization but we're really interested in brands that want to move that to the top of the priorities, and I'm going to have four areas, that's fine. You know, this is all editable stuff we want you to use it for what works best for your business, because we know that it's not one size fits all.

So you know that's now available for you to download and we will be posting links to all this information in the past as well. So they've been designed to be flexible so that you can adapt them to work for what works best for your organization.

Find please.

But we also realized that at 28 slides might be a little bit too much information for some people and for every scenario that you're in. So we've also done a bit of an elevator pitch for you as well, so that you can, you know, touch people on the hop

elevator pitch would come up with is, without accessibility, you are excluding people with disabilities, the largest minority group in the world that anyone can join at any time. This will impact your brand productivity and compliance companies that are intentional about intentional about accessibility locked into a talent pool that sparks innovation developed products and services that are inclusive by design, improve customer engagement and increase revenue and reduce the risk of litigation.

It's not only the right thing to do. It makes great business sense. So that kind of sums up everything in a really concise sentence, you know, all together by that.

And we've talked about the why it's important that we do this but I think it's also really critical. We don't just leave people hanging okay so we're getting out why we need to deliver what we need to do next.

So, I'm just going to very briefly touch on how I'm moving on to the next slide, and within the Technology Task Force we've created an accessibility Maturity Model again it's a free thing for anyone to use and download and it's very much designed around. What does good look like? So, when you started off doing accessibility if you don't know where you are and you don't know the things you should be looking at how do you know what the next step far. if you're actually progressing. So it's an Excel spreadsheet it's kind of like a grid, you score your maturity against in different areas around digital download it, have a look at it I use it within organizations.

by me sat in a room by myself because it really wouldn't have been that good if it hadn't been. And it was developed by organizations such as shell Barclays KPMG or Banking Group. Government department NatWest and many, many more.

What they do is they use this within their business because that's how they how they're doing. And look at the areas that need to improve, and they do that in the UK and on a global scale as well. We've also got lots more resources as well, that you can download for free whole point is we've developed it we want you to use it so please go ahead and do that.

So, let me just go to the next slide. I've got some five minutes and this which I realized won't work. I hope you've got some links in the chat if not they'll be posted there afterwards where you can access all these things to the website the business

case the slides, the maturity model and generally all the great stuff we've created. So, without further ado, I'm going to pass you over to Robin who's going to talk you through the next section.

**Robin Christopherson, AbilityNet:**

Fantastic. Thank you, Lucy that's absolutely brilliant just turned my video on.

Hopefully people can see that. And when we were asked to do audio description of ourselves, I agreed but then I didn't really think it through. Because I'm blind and I'm just gonna have to guess. So I think what I know that I'm a middle aged or kind of older middle aged man, white male, and I've got I think mostly grey hair.

Don't know what colour shirt I'm wearing.

And I may or may not, I don't kind of my eyes are either. Let's guess Brown, and I may or may not be on an ability net virtual background which is either blue or gray.

So, there you go.

I should have asked beforehand. So, moving on, we're going to look at the case for inclusive design, and we're going to do numbers as well so apologies for that but we're also going to do some really powerful cover some really powerful concepts as well which hopefully you'll take away.

So, moving on to the next slide. Why design inclusively got a couple of images here of pound five-pound notes one coloured grey and the other coloured purple so not surprisingly, we're going to talk about the purple pound, and the grey pound as well.

One of the accommodations or adjustments, I use as a blind person is that I listened rather than read so if there are pregnant pauses and apologies that's me just getting the next nugget of information to convey to you guys, so apologies if there are any little gaps between what I say.

So, let's look first at the purple pound. We've heard about some of these numbers but 16 billion is the disposable income of people in the UK.

This is online spending power. And it's really vital, you know this is we've heard is the biggest sort of minority group, spending power wise we had the global figure from Laurie earlier.

Approximately 2 billion pounds each month is lost to UK businesses, this is the click away, pound research, research that we'll talk about a little bit later run 249 billion pounds is the estimated average spending power of disabled individuals and their

households so this isn't the income.

This is the disposable income over and above. You know, the expenses of life, etc. This is what is available to them to spend on your website.

You know in your store, if you are doing things in an inclusive way. That means they'll be able to get into the shop or the online website and fulfil all of the things that they need to actually go away with a product or a service and be a happy customer.

This number of the disposable income goes up every single year, as does the number of disabled people in 2014 it was 11.9million people 13.3 in 2018.

And it's estimated around 14 million. Today, we heard from Lucy just then 26 million. That is when you don't just consider people with a registered disability.

But such you know so many other groups that have huge potential to be your customers, they've got, you know, an enormous amount of disposable income, and they want to spend it on your website.

But, you know, if you've got dyslexia, for example, which wouldn't necessarily fall under a registered disability.

If you've got, you know, early onset age related conditions of memory etc which isn't you know hasn't got a formal diagnosis. If you've got a set of RSI for example which means that you defer to the keyboard rather than the mouse there are so many impairment categories that AbilityNet we provide advice and information and resources on all the time.

To enable you to get the most out of technology and to adjust the equipment that you already have to make sure that you're able to do things effectively, your end, but then obviously if you visit a website to use an app that isn't designed in an inclusive

way, then you can be locked out.

So let's look at the great pound. The International Longevity Centre said that if you don't address the opportunities associated with aging.

Then, 2% of UK GDP is lost. So, there's an additional potential 2% of GDP. If we really embrace inclusive design, which, as we've heard with previous speakers, makes it extremely usable for everybody, including people in this agent category.

The great spending power. 54p in every pound in 2018, rising to an estimated 63p. in every pound in 2040, so already, the grey pound is the majority of the spending power of the community.

In the UK, and that will rate rise significantly to 63 pence and every pound by 2040.

But digital design is bad business.

So again, let's look at this scope, click away pound survey.

73% of disabled users reported experiencing barriers or more than a quarter of websites and I can absolutely attest to that.

I would say most websites that I visit cause me significant challenges and I would probably say I'm a power user and apps, slightly less so in fact considerably less there and that's because if you just build an iOS app for example using the

custom controls and following the, the normal developer guidelines, then chances are it's going to be reasonably accessible. So, the tools on mobile devices are really very good for an accessibility point of view, as they are on the desktop but with the

use of, you know, JavaScript and various other things that turn websites into web applications, you really do need to consider the accessibility very carefully and test as you go along, shift left obviously is a really important concept these days.

born accessible Larry Goldberg likes to say, you know, don't create anything that isn't accessible. Out of the box, you know, in its inception, and thereafter, and do not regress with any updates etc so it's really, important to think about this

community and to make sure that you're catering for their needs.

For point 3 million disabled shoppers click away. Every year, click away from websites that are challenging to them.

Losing a potential revenue of 11, and an estimated, 11.75 billion each year.

75% of disabled people and their families, walked away because of inaccessible websites or poor customer service when it came to came came to making inquiries about their particular requirements to do with a disability, we move on to the next slide, poor design disables us all. And this is one of the takeaways I'd really like you to consider. And basically, we're saying that accessible design is just good design.

It's obviously aimed at, enabling people that have extreme requirements, if you put a motor difficulty, then you need to have a good size of topical areas you need to have them sufficiently separated so that you don't accidentally get the wrong one with

either your finger or a mouse. They need the content needs to be speech friendly for someone like myself, but also for people that are stripping out ads, and then reading an article with the Immersive Reader, that's available in all browsers these days.

Click on that play button and you'll have it spoken out to you, just like you're smart speaker will read a Wikipedia or a recipe article for example. So, in the age of extreme computing, which is what we're talking about with mobile computing, every single person needs those exact same requirements because I would argue that everyone is computing on the edge, if you, if you've got no disability or impairment whatsoever.

But you're using your mobile phone one handed then for those minutes you are in exactly the same position as somebody with a motor or dexterity problem, try typing on the small keyboard with your thumb, for example, you will make more mistakes than if you're doing it carefully with both hands.

time dependent functionality is an issue if you're walking along keep glancing at, make sure you don't walk into other people or lamp posts, etc. bumpy bus. Also, or car also dexterity impaired for that duration, noisy cafe, and to be able to turn on subtitles, YouTube, a speaker from YouTube in a recent event said that 60% of videos, watched on YouTube, the subtitles the captions are turned on.

And obviously not all of those people have a hearing impairment, it's because they're in noisy environments. I asked my daughter if she'd ever done this and she said she had or not just YouTube but Netflix and others as well, because it just makes it easier to hear what the people are saying, and I think we can all appreciate, or are familiar with the fact that in TV and films people don't always talk very clearly and enunciate, say, you know, that can really help as well.

I know my wife, whenever she wants to hear people, she says let me put my glasses on, so I can hear you properly. So yeah, that's a common accessibility requirement that people have that if we don't build in, then we're not accommodating for those

people for who's, it's a preference, or it just makes it easier for them to use 85% of Facebook videos are watched on mute. That stat from 2016.

And I'm pretty sure that hasn't changed so in any notable extent maybe it's gone up, I don't know. But yeah, certainly, with the increase in people with disabilities and impairments generally that we've seen over the years that numbers probably going

up as well. So, I would say I would argue that in this age of extreme, extreme computing. We're all in need of accessibility and we should probably not even think about accessibility, as being just for disabled people.

Even though the requirements are obviously built around their needs, if we flip that around and think about inclusive design, then we are you know that's a much more appropriate term, we are catering for everyone who slides up and down that spectrum of impairment, on a day-to-day basis.

This lady who's in front of the window I think if the sun is shining on a small sheet of shiny glass reflective glass, then she's got exactly the same requirements of sufficient colour contrast.

Good default font size and font style choices for example, as somebody on a larger screen would have, you know, with a vision impairment say, so I could go on and on.

Hopefully you get the idea that we really do need to think about all of our users and I would argue in this mobile first world that doing things in an inclusive way should be table stakes.

It should be something that would just make sure that we were up with our competitors and that our products will fit for purpose in the, you know, multiple platform smart speaker age that we're living in now.

If we go into the next slide.

So we can watch a video in a second. I'm just going to quote Christie Barrick here.

She's head of digital influencing scope, being locked out of the online world is the same as being locked out of the world.

And I can certainly relate to that because as a blind person, the digital is my channel of choice. And the world is so inextricably interlinked with digital doing essential services, or, you know, even getting groceries delivered to your door etc.

This is important stuff online banking, staying connected being part of an active world where you are a fully engaged member who is able to participate fully is really important so I can absolutely relate to that.

Let's just watch a quick video of a colleague of mine Adi Latif at AbilityNet who will also give a brief insight from his personal perspective

**Video:**

“As a blind man, why is it more challenging to our direct so online, then do my online banking. Surely it should be simple. Hi, I'm Adi Latif, and I am blind. Sometimes I'm not able to complete that transaction on a website or an app. Because it's not been designed excessively.

I feel like I'm being locked out. I use a screen reader to access websites and apps on my phone, which I read to me. There are loads of digital tools out there, so the digital world should be accessible, but it's not

Robin Christopherson:

So, if we move on to the next slide.

So, add value by showing that accessibility is important. There is a huge amount of brand value to be gained by being vocal when it comes to prioritizing accessibility, we see it with huge names like Microsoft, apple, for example, Microsoft here, we've

got a picture of the ribbon and they recently announced that they are upping the same posting the positioning of the accessibility checker, to put it in line on a par with the spell checker and I think that's absolutely brilliant.

It will really help with born accessible if people who are creating Word documents every single day and we're not just talking about developers or designers obviously this is all of us, and could be prompted to add in really essential accessibility information like alternative text on images, etc. So that's brilliant news and they're very vocal about that they've recently announced a raft of other accessibility changes as well.

Apple also did this in WWDC, and they have followed it up with a lot more information about what's coming out in iOS 15.

They also recently brought the accessibility settings in iOS out from underneath general so that it's now on the top level, which is absolutely brilliant.

We should all play with the accessibility of our own devices, we're all different shapes and sizes. If you take on board that we're all sliding up and down that scale of impairment, hour by hour minute by minute then we absolutely should know how we can optimize the experience for us. Generally, but also how to quickly, perhaps toggle on high contrast easing the accessibility shortcut on your phone, for example, to be able to quickly do that we should all be extreme users of the accessibility features on our devices as well.

And live transcriptions that we can see on all of the, you know, major platforms like teams and Zoom's etc. etc. Have hugely helps, although obviously a lot of events do provide live transcriptions as well by a human which, for the moment for the foreseeable future are always going to be superior but we're really seeing organizations prioritizing in a very visual way.

Inclusive Design and doing things excessively, and obviously home working and covert has really put a focus on this. And for people who are able to do things and inclusive way, which zoom has done right from the beginning, you can really see them reaping the rewards of inclusion for that particular business.

We go on to the next slide.

We're going to go straight over to Reuben of Intuit. Sorry accessibility lead at Intuit UK, and he's going to give us a quick case study.

**Reuben Evans, Intuit:**

Thanks Robin.

Thank you, Robin.

It's always great to hear you talk about any aspect of accessibility and following you is no easy task, but I'll try my best.

So, hello everyone my name is Reuben and I'm here today from Intuit, so quick physical description. I'm a white man I'm in my late 20s with short brown hair, a beard and glasses.

I'm wearing an internet accessibility champion t-shirt which has got nine dogs on it, and each of them has got a different disability.

I've got a virtual background up, which is of the accessible web design on Peters Hill outside the front of supposed Cathedral, and there's a quote from Tim honestly which reads the power of the web is in its universality access by everyone, regardless of disability is an essential aspect. There's also interrupts the accessibility champion logo, my background.

So if we can jump through to the next slide.

So a quick bit of background about myself and interests, in case you haven't heard of us. So, internet is best known in the UK for QuickBooks which is our financial management software for small businesses and self-employed.

And that's there's a desktop and online version and ensure it is a 38-year-old tech company which is headquartered in California. And we're also known for our other products Turbo Tax Credit Karma, and Mint, are probably the biggest.

You may have heard of them, ensure it has a network of over 950 accessibility champions. This slide is my bad is slightly out of date.

And the core accessibility team relies on this network in order to scale the accessibility expertise across the company. So I'm one of those 950 accessibility champions, I'm a senior software engineer, I work from our London office.

I've been at Intuit for three and a half years and my focus has been on developing the tax capabilities QuickBooks Online so mostly working on VAT the construction industry scheme and self-assessment.

So Robin's just given us a great introduction and overview of inclusive design, and what it means, what some of the benefits are, I'll be touching on some of that and really focusing in on what that's meant for us in practice, and ensure.

So if we can just go to the next slide please.

And I think it's natural for organizations and teams to begin their accessibility journey with engineers, because when this journey starts probably their stuff that needs fixing.

There are folks that are raised or discovered and engineers are the ones who fix them. So engineers learn if they didn't already know about proper HTML markup, how different screen readers interact with a page about Aria tags and so on.

But as anyone in product development could tell you the cheapest time to fix an issue is before it even happens, and the most expensive time is after it's happened and it's in a customers, and or put it another way, the best time to fix the roof is when

the sun is shining.

So as part of our shift and interrupt from talking about accessibility is talking about inclusive design our core accessibility team is now part of the design organization within the interior design systems team.

So it switched from being an engineering lead core team to a design lead core team. And this makes it easier and more natural for us to ensure that the components that we use now UI.

The real foundational blocks of user experience are accessible on their own. But then, we all know that user experience is not just a collection of components, it's how those components work together.

And so, it also means that our accessibility experts are working closely, more closely with our designers and helping produce the design guidance across the company.

So, Billy Gregory famously said that a user experience which doesn't consider all users should be called some user experience, and a consequence of user experience a user experience specification and not considering all users, is that those design decisions are still being made, but they're not being made with the rest of the decisions. So, for example, an engineer can decide what the tech should be for an image, they can decide the tab in order for the page, or they can figure out what the keyboard interaction should be on an accordion.

But the engineer is doing that, and the designer is no longer in control of that decision. And no designer wants to only design for the mouse user and let someone else design for everyone else.

So part of our shift from talking about accessibility to talking about it inclusive design is to help designers ensure that they're designing for all of our customers.

So, I've got a few things on this slide, as well as an introduction to inclusive design. I've also mentioned universal design and accessibility design.

So, inclusive design as a process for us is how we ensure that we're producing universal design that works for all. It means that when we go to a customer's place of work to conduct what we call a, follow me home.

We don't just go to our friends, or the same people each time or the same type of business, you know, for example, we go to see how a landlord who's got poor vision finds the right subcontractor for a piece of work, how a single mother with two jobs,

complete self-assessment, how a carer complete self-assessment, we research more than just, you know, a self-employed software engineer who we've personally worked with before.

So, this inclusive design processes how we aim to produce universal design.

So, universal design is where we want to end up, we want our design to work for everyone. A good example of universal design to visualize this is bathrooms airports.

So you go around a couple of corners and you're in there are no steps, there's no barriers, there are no doors, it's universal everyone can use it.

We see inclusive design is how we produce universal design by including a broad spectrum of people in the design and research process right from the very start.

And, and this idea of, including right from the very start.

And this is a way for us to kind of stress test what we build or think about problems that might occur before they occur, as we build a new feature. So, we asked, How does someone, where who has x or y disability going to interact with this feature, what would their keyboard interaction be to use the carousel that we're building for example, what will the screen reader announce when the the image changes and the carousel moves, and the the idea of this is for it to lead to better design for everyone,

consider this example, if you can make a complicated tax one easy for someone with severe dyslexia to use, then it's probably going to be a lot easier for someone without dyslexia, to do the same process, so you can really challenge yourself by thinking accessibility first to still end up with universal design that works for everyone.

And this really is the same advice that you hear a lot you know test your work, can you complete the task without using a mouse. And if you can and you've probably done a fairly good job, but instead of testing for accessibility after the fact, we include

it right from the very start with accessibility first design, and that allows us to improve what we build and move faster and what we build with less rework back and forth between designers, engineers, and customers.

So I hope that's given a bit of insight into how we're viewing inclusive design and interrupt, and how we're shifting our conversation from talking about just accessibility to inclusive design but with the same end goal in mind, building products are accessible and work for everyone.

So if we go on to the next slide.

There are some links here which we share them.

Sarah Botterill: I'll just invite the other panellists to come back we are fast running out of time which I knew he would unfortunately.

But we have had some Q and A's come through. And so, I'll just pick the one at the top here so I wonder if there's a question from volunteer saying who are the leaders in providing truly accessible and inclusive website development services for small scale charities in the UK who would like to start with that one.

Oh, Robin you're on mute.

**Robin Christopherson:**

Sorry. It depends if they're talking about build, or, you know, an organization that will pray, a provider an assurance role, you know auditing and consultancy and disabled user testing say not hundred percent sure which that I wouldn't know about the former.

But there are various organizations that will provide Consultancy Services for ensuring that who you do choose or will be inclusive, it's really important if you're trying to identify a provider of services, whether it's building your website, or you

know, buying in some digital service application or whatever it might be that you ask the right questions about whether they are inclusive, whether they have created accessible websites before to look at recent examples so that they don't, you don't just sort of take their word for it.

And I know ISO three double oh seven one dash one is the last word in covering all your bases when you need to have inclusive procurement practices.

Brilliant thanks Robin. And there's another question here which is a broad question, given that we've only got five minutes time left but it says, what would you define as an inclusive company I was wondering if I could throw that over to you, Laurie because you've talked about that intersection of accessibility and culture so what would you say in terms of being a truly inclusive company, what does that look like and feel like to you.

**Laurie:**

Yeah, so we've done quite a bit of research right and published a lot of thought leadership on this idea of culture of inclusion or culture of equality right one that leaves, every single employee net better off and so I encourage obviously some reading of those materials but for us you know when I think about a culture of equality, it's one that has bold leadership right it has a diverse leadership team that sets and shares and measures equality targets openly so our own CEO Julie sweet has said openly right that disability inclusion is really personal for her. She shared this through major global platforms as recent as an event last week, global, you know, the World Economic Forum, etc and she talks about our goals our action plan and how we measure our progress, so you know that's important. It's one that provides that empowering environment so that trust employees respect the individual offers the freedom to be creative, and work flexibly. And then one that takes comprehensive action so this is about your policies your practices. Are they family friendly do they support quality for all people regardless of the background gender disability, etc.? And are they bias free right and attracting and retaining people.

**Sarah Botterill:** That's a fantastic and very succinct answer. Thank you very much, there's a specific question here. And I'm glad to have him back, and it says, how do you deal with multiple needs. And so where for example where somebody might one person might need plain text and others find a wall of text overwhelming How are you balancing all those needs when you're putting together an inclusive design.

**Reuben, Intuit:** So, that's a really good question. I think ultimately the answer is you know you have to test it with people, you have to go and test it with those customers and make sure that, you know, and find out what it is, how they would like to digest information. But if we think about the example of say, you know, graph showing financial performance of your company which, you know, they're there isn't QuickBooks. You can show that information visually in the graph with lots of color and so on. But you can you can also have a legend which describes you know the real data behind or the message that the user can take out of it. With digital accessibility I think often you can provide both options, you know, you don't have to pick one and make it work for everyone you can provide the option for people, and you see this with, you know, reduced motion settings and so on and browsers.

**Sarah Botterill:** That's fantastic. Thank you. I'm really mindful of time and we've got one more slide to go but as we're reaching the end of our session, I wonder if everyone could just give me a couple of words on your top tip on creating a business case for accessibility just to make us aware, so I'll start with you, Lucy. No pressure.

**Lucy Ruck:** I was gonna say is get your senior leaders on board if you've got your senior leaders on board, you will get a trickle through, and it will make your life a lot easier. So that would be my one quick thing to do.

**Sarah Botterill:** Robin How about you?

**Robin Christopherson:** Download the damn toolkit of PDF AbilityNet has one too and self-serve your way to a more mature process practices tooling documentation support resourcing within your organization, and testing.

**Laurie:** Gosh, those are great answers but I you know I just always go back to what gets measured gets managed. So, again yes Lucy is resources incredible, the disability Equality Index incredible right so lean on the existing research and data and frameworksand partner, right, use the ecosystem reach out and engage others in and helping right to shake that business case.

**Reuben Evans:** I think my advice would just be, you know, towards your customers, your customers, first and foremost, you can, you know, I think the the best companies are customer obsessed. And if you tell a story that that can be what what gets those people on board that you need on board to make that business case that's all-great advice.

**Sarah Botterill:** And I just like to wrap up we've got a couple more slides but what I'd like to say personally first is that I think we've had a really phenomenal panel today I feel very privileged to be part of this webinar I hope everyone's enjoyed it.

And so as I said we'll be lots of resources coming your way. Please do look out for those and there'll be a link to the website coming in on email, and a business unit is running a series of online training so there's some listed here on screen that are

coming up. And there's a code to get a 10% discount. So, understanding accessibility evaluations and testing and mobile apps, accessible mobile development and accessibility for designers, so please do join us on any of those if they are of interest to you and feel free to share.

And then we similarly have put together a list of useful resources which I won't read out now but we've recently put together an infographic and it's got lots of the numbers that Robin talked about earlier in terms of building a business case for accessibility, a brochure about us and what we do training catalog and more on our role based accessibility training, and also some information there on the shows that I mentioned earlier, including texture Pro, where we'd love to see you.