**Transcript of Accessibility Insights with the BBC webinar, 6 April 2021**

ANNIE: So hello everyone and welcome to the 10th session into the accessibility insights series are

Robin Christopherson hosts an online chat and this month he is chatting to Emma Pratt Richens, Accessibility Specialist at the BBC.

I will be running you through today's session.

So just to go through a few bits of housekeeping we have live captions provided by MyClearText and you can

turn the captions on using the CC option on the control panel.

Additional captions are available via Streamtext.net

and slides are available at slide share.net and also on the website.

If you have any technical issues and you need to leave early don't worry you will receive an

email in a couple of days time with the recording and transcript and slides and depending on how you join the

webinar you will find a Q&A window.

If you want to ask any questions do drop them into the Q&A window and Emma and Robin will answer your questions after the webinar.

And then we have a 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 that's all from me and now over to Robin and Emma.

ROBIN: Fabulous, thank you very much, hi Emma.

EMMA: Hello.

ROBIN: Thank you very much for joining us, really appreciate it, the

BBC have been so active in the area of accessibility.

So you have been with the BBC for quite a while now.

EMMA: I have, over 15 years, not always in accessibility but yeah.

ROBIN: I had a lot of people congratulate me over the weekend.

So we start with the same question what beverage have you got to help you through the ordeal.

EMMA: I have a little mug and I have a hot cordial,.

ROBIN: That would be Garrett would it.

EMMA: Indeed.

Tigger.

ROBIN: Anyone who knows Garrett, will appreciate that kind of yeah.

EMMA: He did a great talk all about Tigger.

ROBIN: Great another question I usually open with which is about how

many accessibility has changed if it has in your in my opinion, so over the last 10 years what do you think are

the main change that is you have seen, I know you haven't been in an accessibility role for all that time

so maybe in the last four years.

EMMA: I have been with the BBC about 15 years and I started off as a web

developer front-end.

So dealing with what the user interacts with and I had been in a development role probably five or six

year and I came from a council.

So I worked at a government council when the laws came in around the government council's being accessible

I was working on a council website at the time.

So I brought my interest in accessibility with me to the BBC and that was one of the things I think

helped me get the job and that I had an interest in that because it was something they were thinking about.

I think it's one of the things that changed.

When I joined the BBC was very much the remit of the front-end developers and nobody else was think being it.

And I met Garrett way back then because he was the person coming in asking the questions about that kind

of stuff.

But it was very much in that front-end where that was getting talked B I specialized in

accessibility about six years ago and having worked in BBC children where accessibility really matters because

children have a whole bunch of different accessibility needs from adults.

So you do have to think about it because some of our audience don't particularly read well and they are

not scared to explore.

So those were things we could kind of be very much mindful of in the interfaces we developed for them.

So I brought that with me.

And I definitely seen it change from that kind of very much the concern of the people who are building that

front-end.

These days it's the concern of the whole team from the people creating the requirements and developers and

through to the people testing and even through to the editorial and adding in things they are thinking about.

So I have seen that change happen in the time I have been at the BBC and it means accessibility gets thought about

much early.

ROBIN: And that culture shift is key because you have it think about it

every stage of the process and in the tools you choose.

I remember going into the BBC about 15 years ago and every, accessibility was high lie prioritised to the extent

they are grappling with flash base games and we have moved on to HTML5.

EMMA: Yeah and still trying to make them accessible and having a really

accessible thing.

ROBIN: Would you say sorry, going native is, has been a massive jump.

EMMA: There are definitely things you have to consciously think about and

it's very easy too build it and not accessible but I think you have a lot more capability to make is accessible.

You still have to think about.

It's interesting because flash got to a point where you could make it accessible but you had to think about

it and various things put in nail that.

Those things you have to think about you still have to think about if.

So you have to think about how you create ghost elements that can still be interacted with by people like

yourselves that are using screen readers and interact back.

ROBIN: And other technologies like silver light didn't stick and I am

glad a lot of this is deliver in the browser but the tools are one thing.

I don't think the jobs become any less simple in delivering accessible content.

There is still a lot of knowledge and commitment and resources that have to be employed but yeah at least the

tools we're using.

EMMA: Tools are definitely good and I think knowledge is possibly the real

key in delivering it.

Making sure that people know what they should be doing.

I think the wider that knowledge can go the earlier that people can start learning about that stuff.

It then becomes built into what they do and becomes natural.

And I would love to see more of that coming back into degree level.

And earlier education so that people aren't just learning it on the job.

ROBIN: We did a module on accessibility in the computer science

course and it was one electric tier.

I hearing that a lot.

EMMA: I do that one lecture for one of the universities it's not stuff.

That's all I have three hours and if that's all they get in four years it's not enough.

ROBIN: Absolutely.

So something that's really focused people's minds and helped unlock budgets and increased priorities is

the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations.

PS bar which semi applies to the BBC but we have certainly seen a massive up take in interest and activity in

wanting to be compliant and accessible to everyone.

Particularly in higher education for example and local authorities so how is that impac

EMMA: The newer regulations at the EU and the UK around public sector spaces so they definitely are affecting

education.

They affecting councils and government bodies and NHS and all those organisations and I guess

anybody who is making stuff for them needs to be very aware of that.

But those regulations don't apply to public service broad casters and one of the reasons is there is other

regulation that do apply and for the BBC in particular.

The charter that we have and policy we have already include that.

So our own policy and charter are also expecting a lot more than the regulations.

ROBIN: I strongly suspect because of the shape you are in that when was in

shrined in UK law, there wasn't the same, it wasn't applicable as much to your organisation as to other "public

sector" bodies have you seen an impact in third party suppliers and providers in the general discussions that are

being had around accessibility.

EMMA: There is definitely more conversations conversation and I think

there is definitely a greater expectation, when we're procuring and things like that.

And certainly the policy we have recently brought in is requiring that now of procurement.

So anything we're procuring in for staff to use we're expecting that to be accessible for our staff.

I think that kind of, that's definitely one of the things that's changeds that diversity of staff is

something that's getting talked about more now and how you make your place of work more accessible.

Not just the thing you are producing for other people to use.

And that's definitely something the BBC are kind of really looking at a lot at the moment.

About how to make the place a better place to work.

ROBIN: We gate lot of discussion around prioritization.

So there is a challenge there as well.

We had Caroline on last month and she definitely wants to make sure that disabled employees, the value they

bring to the organisation is truly treasured.

So that nicely brings me on to the next question around COVID and speaking of changed in recent times.

What would you on a personal level and as an organisation do you think what has the impact been of COVID and

homeworking.

Talking of the work place, it's at home for a lot of us new.

What is the impact been for you?

EMMA: I am certainly working from home a hundred percent of the time.

I was fortunate to be working on a team that are flexible and I can vouch for working with people come with

different lived experiences, because I work with a number of people with different disability ins different

ways.

And I can vouch for the different point of view and the value they bring.

So we already had quite a flexible way of working to allow for people within our team to work in a way that

worked for them.

And so, having everybody working from home a hundred percent of the time has just validated that I think.

That it's a perfectly okay way to work and people are just as capable of doing their job and can be trusted to

do their job from home.

I was working closely with a different team supporting them and they have been really spear heading

even before the pandemic, really spear heading working remotely and working across multiple sites.

So they had already figured out some good practice by trying things out.

And that good practice that they pull together and figured out has been really beneficial for a lot of other

teams across the BBC as we moved into working from home in the pandemic.

So even just little things like, if some of you are all in the office and there are two or three online

somewhere else for zoom meeting, everybody just is in the zoom meeting, they are not sit inning the office

with one person on the screen and everybody sits at their desk on the screen.

So you are going to be remote everybody was acting like they were remote whether they are in the office

or not.

So things like that were good practices.

I think for people who are disabled that extra flexibility.

I think people have been much more willing to flex around people's home life.

Children, care demands and you know, dlifer deliveries and all the day-to-day things and the fact

they can flex around that we can flex around disabilities and doctor appointments and flex around I am not

feeling so great today and mental health challenges and often you are in pain.

Or just having a brain fog day.

And I think there is just a lot more flexibilities around that stuff that people are more appreciative of

because of the pandemic and different situation people had to work in.

And that greater flexibilities is a big benefit.

ROBIN: Is there an expectation that that will continue.

EMMA: Definitely and not just within the BBC and those same expectations

are coming elsewhere.

Obviously in the BBC there is some that can't flex that way.

But then the rest of us are working from home to make sure they can do their job that requires them to be in

a particular place at a particular time.

So yeah, I think a lot of companies who are doing office based work are going to have workforce that is in

future are doing a large amount of that work from home.

And being very flexible around that.

ROBIN: I think last week started a soft return to work and they

anticipate by the end of the year they will have 40% of staff back to work.

But it's a Ghost town at the moment.

But there is definitely people feeling the lack of support.

IRL is going to be important for a lot of people going forward as well.

EMMA: Yeah.

Definitely.

It is challenging because it throws up a whole bunch of things people wouldn't normally think about as being

impaired and disability as well.

But it's also underlined that actually the things that benefit people who have disabilities will

benefit a whole bunch of other people and if you but the that in it's like improving paternity leave.

I know so many people where the mother and father shared those and so they would maybe flex the time so they

are doing a few days each or week on week off.

So those same flexibilities that allow people to work from home or work from the office or whatever it is they

need to do.

Those same flexibilities benefit a lot more people.

And we can still work in that way.

ROBIN: Yeah, absolutely, it's always been a more mature approach to

catering for people's needs because that's how you get the best out of people.

If you accommodate them for really small adjustments.

Has the BBC adopted new technologies and are you aware of how they would mandate accessibility in the choices

they made there.

EMMA: I know when they first flipped over to the homeworking the IT support

department had a huge job on their hands to help everybody get up to speed for people working from home.

They had some things already planned for had to happen a lot faster.

So we have better ways of connecting into the work network if home than we did before, we're used things like

zoom which we were using already.

And messaging systems and that kind of thing, so yes a little bit but most of them were already planned already

because we were, the BBC isn't just as you will be aware, it's not just in one place.

The BBC is in lots of different places and I know myself that, for a long time as part of my work I have

supported or champions network.

And I have visited people in Bristol and Cardiff and Belfast and London and Salford and I have even had a

conversation with someone in Africa who became a champion.

So we have because of BBC news, the BBC has a lot of different offices all over the

country and around the world.

So that kind of remote working is already a little bit of what we did already.

I think it just ramped up a bit.

ROBIN: We talked about new technologies, I have to ask you about

chrome and the auto captions available on any video that you play.

That's obviously going to have an impact within the BBC that you have an opinion on it.

What are you thinking about advancements like this which potentially have great benefits but

also some down sides as well and what other emerging technologies are you seeing around the corner or

particularly excited about.

EMMA: , it's interesting the auto captions and speech to text

translation it does offer up value where it hasn't been before.

So to be able to have live transcription within a zoom setting is brilliant without having to employ a

captioner.

But it means that in your day-to-day work meetings where you are not necessarily going to pay for somebody

to come and do the captioning will be a lot better but it just means where you wouldn't have had that accessibility

you have something that's getting you part way there and it's really impressive what it can do.

it's never going to be a hundred percent accurate and it's not going to be great with accents like mine and

it's not going to be great if there is multiple overlaid voices and it will struggle with background sound but

it's a bit better than nothing it's definitely an interesting area and seeing where it's coming.

I am aware that our professionals s subtitlers have been using that technology just to help out where it

can.

It does have to be reasonably good to be worth using, I have done a bit of subtitling and if it doesn't work well

it can take longer.

So it's not a hundred percent there yet but it's definitely better than nothing.

And there are some definitely interesting technologies around the corner and we have been paying

attention to voiced technologies, the conversational devices and chat bots and talking technologies.

That's a really interesting area, definitely a platform that is accelerating very fast.

So being able to talk to whatever technology while you are driving down the road to take phone calls or send

messages or change direction on your map.

That kind of thing without having to use your hands and just to do it conversationally.

It's really powerful for people who struggle to read or maybe don't have sight.

I am aware of your other podcast.

ROBIN: The daily podcast.

Absolutely and the BBC has a brilliant presence on the echo.

EMMA: We're paying attention to that technology and also to where the

barriers are and what are the things making it more difficult and I am aware for quite a while that signing

on to the App wasn't most accessible.

Even though once you got in there it was good but getting there was hard.

So little things like that where are the barriers and my colleague Jamie has been doing some great work looking

at virtual reality and augmented reality and having a look at what the barriers are and what are the things

people need to be thinking about.

So we've happy to share that out with other people around the barriers and it's really interesting and it's great

disabled people, virtual reality can take people with physical disabilities somewhere where they couldn't go

otherwise.

ROBIN: I would love to talk more about that.

just to finish off, ask you the question put by the previous speaker, Caroline casey of the valuable 500 is

about getting disability recognised so the Beeb what plans do you have better enter grate the people.

EMMA: I am aware of that work and I have been following that she has been

doing.

But the BBC I guess last year started a creativity and diversity inclusion strategy.

And they brought on jean as a head of diversity and inclusion and she's just been making great strides and doing

some fantastic work so there's whole creative diversity strategy and there is budget commitments not only for

what is happening in front of the camera.

But that budget is impacting on who is behind the scenes and who is working on it as a camera person and

recording artist the and they are putting together some great events, CDX is a conference they did last year

and we have a head of disability in terms of staffing doing reframing disability strategy work and includes

things like passports, disability passports they are kind of what you need in terms of adjustments.

So that it's easier for you to move and if you are working in production that could be every three

months.

So it's just a thing that can follow you around that let's a new manager know what adjustments you need and how

to go about doing that and get them in touch with the right people to make the adjustments possible.

So the BBC are definitely accelerates in that area.

ROBIN: So final question to pass on.

Jennison and Joe Devon they are co-founders of GARRD.

So what would you like to pass on to them.

EMMA: First up, well done guys, it's a fantastic movement.

We have benefited so much from it in the last few years and look forward to doing so again.

But I would love to know what their thoughts around are, how they are feeling about conferences.

The past year all of that happened online and how do they feel that's going to impact on things going

forward.

Will things stay online, will they go hybrid.

It's an interesting thing because a lot of the GAAD stuff has happened online, not only in person.

So I think they have quite a good unique point of view on that one.

ROBIN: Thank you very much Emma, brilliant.

We could have talked for another half an hour.

Thank you very much.

Back to Annie.

>> So thank you so much Emma and Robin, we have had loads f questions

come through we we hope to answer online in the next few days and he will receive an email with a link to

access the answers.

Finally just a bit more information that might of of interest for you, we also run online training sessions

and you can use a ten percent off discount code available to registrants of the webinars. AbilityNet10

And training courses are available for various roles including coming up later on this week.

On Thursday 8 April we have How to create accessible documents and presentations and on 22 and 29 of April we have two

accessibility for developers courses and you can sign up to the newsletter, visit our You Tube channel and

download the podcast and we have a suite of accessibility services and don't forget about our next webinars

and we have our latest higher education and public sector update next Tuesday joined by the university of Derby and

on 4 May we have the accessibility insights session.

So that's it from me.

So thank you Emma again and Robin and everyone that joined us and do please complete the feedback form you

will be directed to at the end of the webinar and we'll be in touch with you soon.

Bye everyone.