**Transcript – Accessibility Insights with Verizon Media June 2021**

ANNIE MANNION: So hi everyone and welcome to the webinar. It’s just gone 1:00 so I will give everyone a chance to join. Do drop

into the Q & A box. We disabled

the Chat feature as we discovered it causes

problems for some using

screen readers. We are going to make a start now. Hello

, everyone. Welcome to the 12th session now

in our Accessibility Insights series

where AbilityNet head of digital inclusion, Robin Christopherson hosts a monthly online chat with individuals

who are each working to improve digital accessibility and digital

inclusion. This month he's chatting to Larry

Goldberg. Head of Accessibility at Verizon Media. I'm Annie

Mannion, digital communications manager at AbilityNet and

I'll be running you through today 's session. So just to go through you a few bits of housekeeping. We have

live captions provided today by MyClearText -- you can turn on the captions using the CC option on the

control panel.

Additional available captions available via Streamtext.net/player?event

abilitynet.org.uk/Verizon-webinar. If you have any technical issues and you need to leave

early don't worry you'll receive an email if a couple of days' time with the recording, transcript

and slides.

Depending on how you joined the webinar, you'll find a Q &

A window. If you want to ask Larry or Robin any questions, do drop those in the Q & A area for them to

address. They will do after today's session in a follow-up blog on our website at /Verizon-webinar.

We also have a feedback survey you'll be directed to at the end which invites you to tell us about any

future topics you'd like us to cover in our webinars.

So that's all from me now. So over to Robin and

Larry. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: Thank you,

Annie thank you Larry for

joining me senior director

of accessibility Verizon Media. First question, ask all of our

interviewees, guests, what drink do you have to

get you through this ordeal. LARRY GOLDBERG: You know it's a

dangerous question for my explicitly. Your advance

question hade hot beverage I am kind of a coffee obsessive. If you warrant to

take up the entire next half hour, I will tell you

about the dark oily African

whole beans that I buy fresh every week, put them

through my Cuisinart grinder do a power over in Ken

Kenmex and drink only one couple of cough a

day I barely can handle it. That is my world

of morning coffee Everybody, I'm stickin' to it. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: I have a cup of tea. The Cuisinart wasn't that the spaceship on Space

Balls? LARRY GOLDBERG: (Chuckling) yes.

ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: Have you been into cold brewing at all?

LARRY GOLDBERG: Where?

ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: Cold brewing.

LARRY GOLDBERG: As a matter of fact we will change our seasons. I will be switching over to

ice and pure over ice is a nice taste too.

So, saw yeah, we do switch to cold

right around now. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: Wow, brilliant. That

is good. that was the most comprehensive answer

so far. Top marks you are doing well with. To the actual

questions then this is when I always start with

let's look back at ten years it happens

to be the duration of

global accessibility awareness Day and over a period, so much has

changed in the landscape of accessibility.

What for you are your sort of

main takeaways what are the biggest changes that

happened. LARRY GOLDBERG: I totally agree with you. I have been

in the field of

accessible technology over 30 years and we have seen a remarkable

change not just in the past ten years, the past

five. Even the past one has been remarkable

. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: Mm mm-hm. LARRY GOLDBERG: I think it starts

not with technology but people's hearts and minds and aware

ness. Awareness is growing,

who's using technology and who is being left out. With

that, greater attention and understanding. We are seeing

lot more involvement from companies large and small. When

they're developing their technology there is a greater

chance not an ultimate chance but a greater

chance that they will take into account web accessibility,

app accessibility, media accessibility from the beginning.

So I'm really just

basking in the flow of the fact that accessibility is having its day.

I hope it's not just a day. I think we're here to

stay. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: What do you attribute that to .

I agree, by the way, completely. It's been

a massive shift. Is it legislation;

is it the fact that accessibility is increasingly built in these days? Is it the business

case? LARRY GOLDBERG: I this it's part of everything and

a new generation. I will aid. Add

that the technologies are making it

much more readily couldable to make sure you

build accessibility.

Axe. Access ably. The business case is the

carrot to. I tell you, one of the things that is most

meaningful to me and I spend a lot of time with college

students is to see how much they are embracing the negligence of

designing accessibly and how much they actually have been

there and they ask great questions and they think

very forward. So, I

am very much looking forward to working

with all . . . recent college grads and P

46789 H D's because they are really showing they have what it

takes. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: Are they coming out with an appreciation

of accessibility broadly or if they had one module

or seminar on it. LARRY GOLDBERG: More broadly

and beyond accessibility it is the diversity issue. As we probably

hear as the world is newly grappling with issues

around diversity and racial justice, this

generation doesn't think twice about someone being different

from them sitting next to them. Different in any

number of ways and they are just like:

Sure! You can't use the mouse,

let me come up with a different way of operating your device.

It just feels like it is a mindset

much more willing to understand the differences among people and

therefore how that translates. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: Absolutely. Is

there a recognition within Verizon Media that

the teams working on your projects, products and services need to be diverse, you know we

have seen

tech faux pas' major hick ups in the past where

the teams were not diverse enough. Is that a concerted

effort, policy within Verizon Media

. LARRY GOLDBERG: It sure is. It sure is. We just put

together our very first product inclusion team. What's interesting a add

. About this and other companies who have done it certainly at

Google and Adobe and elsewhere that this

isn't just about the division within

HR, diversity, equity and

inclusion and hiring; it's about how we build things

. How do we build our products that is

inclusive and accessible. And we've actually now have a team that's doing that. It is part

of almost every division of what the company

does from procurement and human

resources and marketing. It's

really pervading the company. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: Absolutely. Yeah and you

can see that in how seriously

you take accessible accessibility. Is there within a

company like Verizon Media, unique or kind of specific challenges

around the content, the services that you

deliver to try and make them as inclusive

as possible because they are very varied. LARRY GOLDBERG:

Well we learn from a lot of others if the industry. It's

great, accessibility executives, managers

, would be errs, all of the big tech companies in the

US and throughout the world, we all talk to

each other and we all learn from each

other. Our unique immediate and approach is that

we generate a lot of media and we create a lot of app

s. We are very much mobile oriented

and a lot of what we do is live. Like we

do a live Yahoo finance

show bell to bell. From the time the stock market

opens in New York until it closes.

Live eight hours. Okay so we need to make

that all accessible to people who can't hear. We need to make

the app accessible, the video controls. So we have got kind of

a broad range of things that we need to focus on to assure

that we are being fully accessible; then we have

partnerships left, right, up and down so we are working with

a lot of people outside our own company that we need

to influence and that's an added challenge. But it's an

added opportunity. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: Mm-hm. And that makes

me think of shift left which is kind of a

buzz phrase at the moment. So, if the

most extreme instance, accessibility is kind of an after thought

, a bolt-on, just for that group over there in the corner

so let's kind of think about it in those terms whereas

we both know that it's for every single

users, sliding up and down the impairment

spectrum, using your phone one-handed, noisy

cafe whatever it might be sunny day on a shiny sheet of small glass.

This is for every person. The more you can embed it

in your processes shift left or right through to procurement

and your vendors and suppliers, that you can then, you know,

make it an effective, efficient

manageable process that you can

deal with going forward and it is not

just bumpering

one cries to another. LARRY GOLDBERG: We love the two words shift left and

the two words born accessible. That is right from the

get-go we think about accessibility. We added

two new words: No regression. Way too many

companies work hard to make an app or

website to make it accessible then change it

and Breck everything. It is important that we have

no regression on top of born accessible. And luckily

because the engineering mindset is to do things

really efficiently and achieve operational excellence.

When you look at the end result that you want, it just

makes too much sense to start

59 the very beginning. Bolting on is

in elegant and engineers should be ashamed if they have to

slap something on at the very end. Nor do they

want their product held up from launch because

there are some accessibility bugs and we are

actually instituting something called the A

Bugs programme: Everyone of our accessibility

bugs will be reported

on labeled as stuff

such to match S security bugs. We are right up there with

security. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: Will an A bug hold up the release of

a version. LARRY GOLDBERG: That is the intention that we can put a

pause. It hasn't been instituted, in development

now but that 's the plan. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: That is brilliant

. About. Apple \*\* areas of

accessibility gets an all of lot of

stick when they put a point of

\*\* has regression in there. That is because

there is so much value they have built up over the

years and loyalty within their users

that they really do feel betrayed if they bring

out something that breaks something for them and

there is a huge conversation around whether those

should be bug s that you know prevent the publication, the release

of it, even if it's just a

point software. LARRY GOLDBERG: Apple set a very high

bar for themselves. I don't think they are problem-ed or troubled

by that. They know they will have issues once in a while

but they are so high up in terms of their consistency

and how they build out.

A bugs will be assigned levels

of property. A 0 A-1

numb A 2 and have timelines for fixing

. Because a low-level bug,

won't necessarily hold things up but certain things are stop

pers. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: That makes sense, absolutely

. Let's talk about the time frame you mentioned how things even in the last year, have changed a lot

and that won't surprise anyone of course because it was

2020 after all. Where everything changed. So, with

the advent of COVID, homeworking,

everyone, you know -- the enhanced focus

on digital, the ever-

increasing laser-focus on pushing

everything to digital: How has that impacted

Verizon Media, you personally and what

takeaways have you or Verizon Media

had from the experience of the last

12 or 16 months. LARRY GOLDBERG: It is interesting: We have our roots

in Silicon Valley so we have a California

mindset of take risks, build fast, fail

fast, fix, let's keep moving and moving. You know

, pretty progressive in that way. This past year taught

us a lot. We always learn from

the community, you know, why have things changed

so radically in the past five years is because the users community

is stepping up, making sure they are heard. Loudly

. Clearly. In many ways.

The social media has helped tremendously.

For us, the past year has been

of course interesting in that the idea of working from home in

some ways means we better up our game on the tools

we need to use when we're working from home. Our parent

corporation Verizon bought a video conferencing

company called Blue you Jeans and as

soon as that acquisition started we immediately were talking to them about making sure their tools were

accessible. Immediately. And we knew that they

wanted to be a very big

enterprise level tool. Well if you are going to be

reaching people in particular Lothaire their workplaces you

better pay attention to accessibility. So our working

from home has absolutely impacted our employee

s with a hinted focus on accommodations

. And for our users, it might

have been somewhat seamless. this show I told

you about Yahoo Finance Bell to

Bell. They pivoted from in- studio to

in-home studios I think over a weekend. It

was amazing. And with virtual background

s, a lot of computers moving

into people's living rooms. They didn't miss a beat. So

, in many ways they were able

to pick it up and make the best of it

. For my team, for us, once again, we are learning a

lot for the community we are serving

. And very interesting feedback we are getting that

for some people with disabilities this has been

a boon, this actually has been better for them because of the transportation,

the workplace, the fact that everyone's interactions

are digitally mediated, means maybe a

little more of a level playing field and that

has been fascinating to hear about and we are paying attention to

that as well. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: Yeah, absolutely. It is a double edged sword in many

cases for me I have been working

from home for years for now and it is preferred for me. I think I am going

to push back on any event where they ask me too

come speak in person. There will probably be hybrid

events going forward for sometime. I am hoping that always will

be an option because it is so much more productive,

less stress and like myself -- you can't see

-- there are always logistics involved. So it is

a less stressful, more efficient way of working but you

at the same time I appreciate this isolation, lack of on-

hands support, particularly physical -- LARRY GOLDBERG: I have a good example about

how hybrid works. The first time I

met someone from AbilityNet was at

your event in London November 2019 and it was a fantastic

gathering of people, especially because I was getting out

of the US, for once, to meet a cohort

of people from all over the world

. Those relationships were lasting and they

really did open our eyes to a whole different community.

So, I will always

feel drawn to probably a lot less

mum of in -person events.

But our scale can also be so much wide

er. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: Yes. LARRY GOLDBERG: I work on

this collaborative

Teach Access working with college students, universities

. We brought 20, 30 college students

at Silicon Valley, have them spend the

day at Apple, Verizon Media

, Google \*\* et cetera. Wonderful

for the students to have total immersion. This year we did

it virtually and quadrupled the number

of students involved because we could do it online so we have

to balance them both. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: Absolutely.

If femme want to do face to face that is fine.

Obviously I will make an exception for TechSharePro. Absolutely.

LARRY GOLDBERG: (Chuckling). ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: We will

revisit your trip to TechSharesharePro.

Let's go to what's next for accessibility in your

opinion or what needs to change next. What's

perhaps the next one to ten years

going to look like? What do you think needs to

happen to keep pushing the agendas

forward? LARRY GOLDBERG: We are very interested in whatever is

the next new or emerging technology, particularly mass market. So a couple of years ago we began

seeing how virtual reality, augmented reality looked

like after many attempts was going

to be the next big thing. Now it was become going to

be the next big thing a number of times let's

recognise that and in the gaming world it absolutely

is. We looked at it

not lust like oh look it is a shiny new toy but

a template for how to deal with new and emerging

technologies. When was the last time we had such

a disruption of how we interface

with technologies? For many of us, thinking

back it was the iPhone. This was

such a paradigm shift.

And how we all

at Apple in in particular, dealt with accessibility there

, was a learning experience.

Now we are looking at how that happened and applying it to

XR access we call it. Formed

an organisation XR access.or

g and we are having a big symposium June

10. Everyone's invited. And we are

also using this as a template for what's next

next? Let's be prepared the next time we

spot something on the horizon that looks like it's

going to really enter all of our lives.

Our work lives, our school lives, our entertainment

lives, our social lives and get ready. Be

prepared next time so that, when adoption

is at the better than 50% level,

it will have -- it will be born

accessible. So I can't predict what might

be next. So many possibilities coming at us.

Right now we are putting our effort into virtual

reality. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: Absolutely. I mean, virtual reality and augmented

reality have huge question marks over them

for both inclusion, what real inclusion

looks like and what will they offer to us in

two, five years

time? Just niche applications or

will everybody benefit from that? What will it look like.

I am really excited for that space. Okay. Let's

finish off, then, by first putting to

you some comments in the question from

guests last month. So we were really lucky to have Jennison Asuncion and Joe Devon

co founders of global accessibility awareness days. The tenth anniversary is this

year. They were full of praise for you, who you are, the energy

and enthusiasm you bring to your

role at Verizon Media. But also just you what a

brilliant guy you are. Honestly go back -- I don't know if you

heard that one -- go back and listen to

their prize it was fantastic . Jennison mentions about Tech Share Pro

two years ago and never forgets the time you

guys went to the jazz concert and what a brilliant time

you had and brilliant guy you were. You don't have

need to comment on that at all. But you Joe he put you a

question to you. And it was around also captioning.

So, hopefully, you will be able to respond to this:

Auto-captioning, obviously that's

built into many platforms these days and

does more or less a good job but the specific question

he had was: When there are

ex pleat I haves swearing or hate speech: What should the

auto-caption algorithms do

? Should they bleep those

out, censor those, is that the job of a broadcast company

, for example, to make those moral decisions, if

other people, if if hearing people can

hear those then is that something that hearing impair

ed people should have access to as well. And he

also said: If it's auto to, it's going to make

mistakes so what happens if it

accidentally bleeps out other hinges that it missed --

misinterprets as offensive language and that that

might change the meaning of the content as well?

LARRY GOLDBERG: I love Joe's question. And first of all, I

did watch Jennison’s comments to me and I teared up.

Because he is such a good pal and we loved that

concert we went to just across

Thames saw you Rhiannon Gibbons, amazing night

. I appreciate what

again son had to say. Joe, when I ran the

caption centre in WGBH in Boston where it was started we had to deal with the

question of censorship, editing do we go

verbatim. This is when humans were creating all of the captions

. This was a hard-and-fast rule: If it's

in the audio, we have no role whatsoever

to censor to cut it out. If hearing people are exposed to

the swear words, and it's

funny \*\* so good at profanity

, really the tops, so, always admire

your facility with edgy language. But

you we who caption have absolute

ly no role to feel like we somehow have to

protect deaf and hard of hearing people

who rely on captions. If you can hear it, you should see it. It

might be a little more stark when you see that pro

profanity in text but we're just trying to

translate what's heard. Now when you applied

Automatic Speech Recognition

where they

put f \* \* \* when

the f word is said in the audio -- no, if

it's heard it should be seen. If that censorship

is done in ASR engines

in order to a

void mistakenly using those words whenever

it isn't heard I say improve your

damn speech recognition and don't make such mistakes. This is

a back workaround. to me it's just an

indication of you know what before you start

pushing S. ASR captioning on the

worlds maybe you need to improve your product so you

don't run into pulling up words that weren't spoken,

are misheard because people are talking over each other, because the

audio is bad. You need to get up to speed because

people need it and are relying on it. Put this as a

priority on your development plan. but

don't censor. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: I like it

. I wish that were applied. I don't say this lightly. I don't

often watch slashes material on TV

but the audio description is a million miles

away from describing what other people can see.

Saying that there is major censorship going

on there or delicacy at least on the part

of the scriptwriters there. It is not an

equal experience for blind TV watchers. Just

saying that. Can't believe I am advocating for

more graphical descriptions. Anyway . . .

I don't think there is quality there. Brilliant. Thank you very much

. Finally then our

next guest next month is Richard mortgage on from the central

digital and data office this is like the body that monitor

s and reports on

inaccessible websites here in the UK. Finally they are doing some proactive enforcement

of the legislation and it's really helped, you know, raise

the level of activity in that sector anyway

, in the public/

government sector. So, have you got anything you would like

to pass on to Richard for him

to comment or respond to. LARRY GOLDBERG: Well, first of

all I have to say you have our total support: Go for it

. I think education's essential. People

may feel uncomfortable with government having an over

riding rule over internet content and

technology but in fact once they XXX we are

talking about that you are you just trying to broaden audiences

and make sure everyone has equal access, I

think that as that office begins reporting

on inaccessible websites which we know

are plenty, I think the educational aspect and being sure that people with disabilities

are front and centre in the process will

also be a tremendous help for to any of the

companies who are called out to really understand

this is good for society

and is good for business as well. And embrace the

fact that if they are not voluntarily

doing a very good accessibility check, then they

need to understand why they

need to. ROBIN CHRISTOPHERSON: Great information.

It is hugely important in this area. Thank you so much, Larry

, really, really appreciate it. Thanks for

. (Giggles) Us half an hour of your valuable

time. Keep up the levels of energy and enthusiasm and

keep doing brilliant things. Thank you so much. LARRY GOLDBERG: Thank

you, Robin really a pleasure to be here

. I will hand it back to Annie. Thanks, Annie. ANNIE MANNION: Yes, thank you so much

, Larry and Robin. There were

lots of questions that we hope to answer online in the

next few days and you will receive an email with a link to access

them as well. So, just a bit more information that might

be of interest for you. We also run

online training session on digital accessibility and you can

find out more about those at

abilitynet.org.uk/training and can use

ten% discount code which is AbilityNetWebinar10

and training courses are available for various

roles and coming up later this week we have

tenth of June accessibility for designers then Wednesday

16th of June How to to deliver and

sustain accessible digital learning

and that \*\* and HE professions:

Seventeenth of June how to use a

screen reader for accessibility and training. And

\*\* how to produce accessibility videos. You also can sign

up for the newsletter for the latest announcements

about digital accessibility. Visit our YouTube channel

and download our podcasts. We have a suite of accessibility

services to suit all types of organisations and finally don't forget about our next webinars abilitynet.org.uk/webinar.

As Robin mentioned next month you

can meet Richard mortgage on head of accessible at the central

government's digital accessibility

office and he will join us sixth of July. Thank you

, Robin and Larry, everyone who joined us.

Please do complete the feedback form that you will see

at the end and we will be in touch with you