**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