Transcript for How accessibility improves SEO webinar

EMMA: Hello everyone.

Welcome to today's webinar.

It is just gone one o'clock so I'm going to give everybody a chance to join.

Do feel free to drop \into the\not a Q&A box and say hi.

We have disabled chat feature as we've discovered it can cause problems

for some people using screen readers.

So, I can see more and more people R just coming so in I'll give them a few

more minutes to arrive so great, we'll make a start now so hi everyone.

Welcome to our webinar.

How accessibility improves SEO where AbilityNet's head of marketing and

portfolio Mark Walker will have a panel discussion with guests from

Skyscanner and access.

I'm Emma Wheeler at will be running you through a few bits of housekeeping.

We have live captions provided by MyClearText, you can access captions.

Additional captions are available on Stream text.

Slides are also available at slide show dot notice net and our website

Abilitynet.org/seo-webinar

If you have any technical issues and need to leave

early don't worry, you will receive a recording and slides and depending on

how you joint webinar you will find a Q&A window if you want to ask the

panellists a few questions do prop them into the Q&A area, any that we don't

have time to today will be answered online in a few days at AbilityNet.org.uk/SEO-webinar

so that's all from me now, over to Mark.

MARK: Hi everyone.

Welcome and thanks Emma and thanks for setting this up.

I think it will be a great session.

SEO and accessibility both are broadly equivalent to witchcraft,

people not directed involved in it, so we'll draw the veil back little bit on

those 2 subjects and find out how they connect at why they are related to

each other.

We'll hear from people with both sets of expertise about how we can make the

most of making content more accessibility but make it more

accessible in terms of SEO.

We have a great panel.

Kim, Gryff, Jack and Nathan.

We'll hear from AXA that Skyscanner and we'll get to the root of what are

the possible connections between SEO and accessibility.

Why would they be discussed today at move into top tips and some

suggestions from either side about that conversation about how they join up in

terms of best practice.

Emma mentioned the Q&A.

Please do ask as many questions as you like.

We can all see the questions and answers when you are putting

them in there and even if they don't get answered in today’s session, we

always do an FAQ afterwards.

This is a juicy topic we'll not get through everything that we even

planned because there is a lot of stuff to discuss so we want to hear what

your questions are and try and answer them and if we can't then we'll do our

best to offer that up in an FA question so without further ado we'll go over

to Jack at and Nathan.

Hi guys.

Over to you.

NATHAN: Good afternoon, everyone so just

wanted to start today by highlighting some of the overlap we see between so

on and accessibility.

While AXA typically ensures our website is accessible for [inaudible]

the first we have is title tags.

We know there is correlation between the use of key words in a title tag

and Google ran Kings.

They are not visible in the page itself but located in the code.

The screen reader hears this when load din the page we want to describe

what the page is about for accessible you since the title tag and

this correlates with our title tag for SEO.

He we see the title tag for a small business displayed in the Google

search it tells our users the page is all about small business health

insurance.

The next overlap we see is heading tax on the next slide so screen

readings use headings to navigate on a page so they can jump from one to

another easily.

Shea Google spot see what's sections of the page are about, so we have

1H1 on the page then the Ross should flow down in a logical manner using

H2s.

H3s and H4s which makes it easier for a screen reader to decipher.

That is heading tags.

The next we want to want to look at is links.

Google sees external links from other websites as votes of confidence from

you from when you get to earth websites so we can see from the diagram with

page rank and the first Google algorithm if you go to the yellow site

you would rank the highest because you have the most back lines and the most

bank links from other websites.

Those in the blue and red so it is really important to have external back

links from other websites but it is important to have external links

optimised from SEO and how you link the pages within your site back to each

other's suppose external links and internal links are really important

but when it comes to accessibility the text of the link known as the anchor

text is really important because this is what is seen by our screen readers.

We avoid click here because it is

unhelpful for our accessibility users and our SEO so instead we include key

words telling the user what the page linked to is being the in turn this

helps our SEO because Google gives more weight to ranking what is in the

anchor text of the link itself.

The next one we want to look at is Alt-Text of images.

So finally, we've got Alt-Text.

If there was no Alt-Text, the screen reader would not know what the image

is saying so it is important to name the image appropriately describing

what I manage is showing using hyphen to separate words so our last overlap

is Alt-Text.

I want to highlight the few areas where we see SEO over lapping so we

see multiple ways of finding content on the site.

We try to use text instead of images where possible.

We tried ensuring our URLs are readable by humans and presenting a logical

format.

We extra and present a clear and consistent nav guess.

Page structure for our you seniors we define abbreviations and

acronyms and spell them out so it is easier for screen readers SEO.

We have good search engine optimisation for website users and end

users.

I want to highlight a couple of tools we use.

Wave is one of the tools we use to go through what errors there are at what

we need to do.

Second one is Google I'd house and the next slide.

So like wave you can simply enter any web page you want check, and it will

give you a score out of 100 then give solutions on how to fix the issue so

they are the 2 tools we use to go over our web pages and ensure we've got the

best accessibility scores possible.

Ok, that is all my slides.

I want to handover now to my colleagues from Skyscanner.

KIM: Hi guys.

Cool.

Hi, that was great so now that you have heard from Jack and Nathan on an

overview of some of those synergies between SEO and accessibility best

practice Gryff and I are going to go through how we have been working

towards accessibility and our SE pages and some ideas we have for the future

and how we can validate the impact accessibility has on SEO. first a

bit about us.

If we go to the next slide.

I'm the senior content writer and I work across all of our transactional

landing suppose it is my job to interpret assault EO team's research

and work with designers to build out content for landing pages and write

all the optimised copy.

Gryff?

GRYFF: I'm an SEO software engineer so I

work on the back end of basically data for SEO but I'm also huge

accessibility advocate.

Being an accessibility user myself so I'm heavily involved with company

culture and accessibility running various events in the stuff like that

so, they merge into one thing for me really.

KIM: Yeah, we're both members of the

accessibility champions network if we just hop over to the next slide.

We're probably going to talk a little bit more about the

accessibility champions network at Skyscanner a little bit later on in

the Q&A in the interests of time right now but if the next slide just, we

have it is a big, basically a huge cross discipline army of advocates

that our fantastic disability lead set up.

The main idea is that we get accessibility embedded in Skyscanner's

culture.

We're working towards ensuring that accessibility is embedded in every

area of our external facing product.

We're getting there.

We'll talk more about that in a little while.

Inform we just go to the next slide.

So, some of the ways we try and make our landing pages more accessible.

Some of the workflows and processes.

First of all, in the design process I will work with designers to ensure

that we're annotating our designs in the clearest

way suppose you can see on the right there are some examples of how we do

this in our design tool figma.

We use labels we can get out of fig ma's public library we have different

once to call our alt tags, empty alt tax what should be H1, 2 and 3 and

this highlights how the fundamental accessibility considerations we need

to highlight for engineers are also SEO best practice so you can really sort

of like capture all your accessibility needs and SEO ones in

that same fig ma file which is handy to remember.

You can also see in the red, red labels in the bottom right hand

example is how we highlight focus right, so screen readers are able to call out

the, all the information and things like tables in the right order.

We try go one step further than this as well.

We use the same components across multiple landing pages and parts of

the products so what I've started to do is bring in some brilliant

engineers from around the business who are, you know,

really good accessibility experts.

We all get together in a room and actually just sort of flesh out the

exact documentation and nodes on how each component should be built so that

when it is time to hand over designs to engineers to build everything is

there and ready for them to work on and nothing is missing.

We are trying to streamline this more at the moment and we're piloting and

testing a fig ma plug in called Stark.

We don't have any, I mean we've just \got a\good couple of product

designers testing that out at the moment, but we'll share what we think

of it once it is a little bit more hopefully implemented within our

processes.

In terms of the copyrighting process, I always ensure all of the

accessibility labels areas tags we do need are submitted at exactly the same

time in the same documentation that my copy is and this way it can never be

an afterthought it can't be missed by any of the engineers sending that off

to translation or for implementation.

Then anyone who is in a medium to large size business I'm sure you are

all really familiar with your sort of sign off processes.

It is very normal to have the usual legal sign off for any of the work you

do.

A peer review from a senior writer or you know in this case I always get

sign off from an SEO manager to make sure the text is all optimised as best

as possible for SEO.

I ensured we have accessibility sign off for all things copyrighting too so

we know we're not missing anything.

GRYFF: Yeah, we kind of do the same with

engineering as well so anything that goes through to production is peer

reviewed before that and we embed the peer review of accessibility before it

goes out to products production so we can deal with problems before they

become a problem rather than fix them afterwards which can take 10 times

longer.

KIM: Cool.

I think we can jump on to the next slide so we're now obviously hopefully

you are all a little bit more familiar with those synergies between SEO and

accessibility.

But we do know that accessibility is not an actual official ranking factor

that Google takes into consideration yet, so I guess the big question is how

do we actually evaluate the accessibility can positively affect

SEO.

We had some ideas on how we could do this earlier this year.

I'm keen to share them with you guys just to call out to be complete

transparent we haven't had a chance to try any of these yet, but we want to

share anyway at maybe that way someone can beat us to it, try out there own

testing and then share with wider community to see if there are any

interesting results.

So, a couple of the ways, if we just go to the next slide, the first thing

we thought of is well basically at Skyscanner we're lucky enough to work

with a really fantastic piece of software called Search Pilot.

It allows us to actually A/B test changes

to content on live landing pages then over a period of 2 or 3 months upon

yourselves monitor the impact that content might have had on are ga nick

tara quick to see if we can see a lift in organic sessions or at the very

least do no harm so we can roll out that content.

When you think about how we can use that to see how accessibility

improvements my impact organic traffic you could first of all just try with

some basics if you find a page that is sort of doing ok for organic traffic

and its H titles could be clearer.

Text more readable and accessible, Alt-Text being optimised things like

that you would be able to roll that out as an experiment and see whether or

not that had a lift, we Sue a lift in organic sessions on that variant.

Another thing you could do that you could try is if you have any content

that ranked quite well that features a video or podcast you might want to try

A doing transcript below for users who may have

a hearing impairment if you haven't got that already.

Obviously, this is the correct thing to do for accessibility but we also

know that extra word count and relevant key words on opinion could really give

it a boost in the search so you could test that as well and finally we

marking up things like lists and tables of information can really help

us if we're on the first page of Google because it can improve our appearance

within the search by getting that snippet of information within our

appearance.

But if you were to build that list and table in a properly accessible

way and test that you could see whether or not that actually impacted organic

sessions as well.

The second thing we thought about testing copy to see if we can make it

more readable.

When you consider that people with dyslexia, a short attention plan, even

though people who are not native English speakers they might really

struggle to understand S some of the copy on the website if it has been

written in a complex way, the average reading age we should all work

towards as around 9 and we know that readable content and understandable

contains the something that Google also takes into account.

Now because of this there is loads of great tools out there that SEOs are

probably familiar with like Writing Assistance or the YOST plug in your

can get for WordPress which gives you a readability score so there is nothing

to stop you finding some legacy content on one of your landing pages that good

be rewritten in a more readable way and have a go at running through one of

those tools to see if you can really simplify it, get it live aft see a

whether or not your accessibility score will increase but see whether you get

any extra organic sessions through that by arrange sting it on matrix.

That wraps up our part of the session.

MARK: I was coughing that's why I

disappeared.

So, I love the fact thank you started at the back there and worked backwards

from how you could prove it, there is a question that has come in here but to

catch up a little bit on what we saw there.

There is lot of stuff coming at us.

The first question is can we get the slides after.

The answer is yes.

The other thing is I think the reason we write up notes found AQ is is there

is lots of detail, when we got together at started talking about it, we can see

the collections we started to lay them out for you.

We'll look at the questions in here but just to summarise a few things.

Something about workflows.

Kim started to introduce showing some of tools about how people are working

collaboratively and embedding accessibility into their workflows

then at entered thinking about whether you can prove it and whether you can

learn from the data what is working and not working on both sides so that is

a very quick run through, some juicy topics there I think and the reason

we're switching to Q&A mode is it is interesting to see what questions you

have but so that we can pick out themes we think are important in terms of how

this is implemented.

Because it is not just about that, this is the science if you like, if

you get your headings in this order then a screen reader can do it and

Google likes it as well, that is the theory about how do you make that

happen on your pages.

What is the practical reality when you are working across this divide?

So, I'm just going to just ask a question firstly about workflows and

maybe back to you Kim, firstly, you talked about those tools.

Can you just tell us a bit about who is involve in that process in terms or

your teams.

Do you have an accessibility specialist for example@off, do you

then have sop parallel process because that is quite messy on a day-to-day

basis, how does that play out for use a workflow thing.

KIM: In honesty we don't have anything

in terms of a proper workflow other than just our usual workflow board.

What we do is, I mean first off all you asked about which kind of

engineers and who is involved, so Gryff is one of the engineers who usually

gets involved to spec out those components.

So, we work on this workstream together.

He helps out and then we have Heather our fantastic accessibility lead.

Some people who may have joined an AbilityNet webinar in the past might

have heard from Heather.

She usually is involved and then we will have maybe potentially one or 2

other engineers who might have some expertise in this specific type of

design who jumps on in an loaded time to just note down and discussion anything

that is needed so it can be quite dynamic and ad hoc if I'm honest.

And then once that is all captured, we kind of hand over those finalised fig

ma files to engineers in a formal handover process and those annotations

are, it is all clearly signposted and

documented to those guys.

We do have a lot of engineering teams in

Shenzen offices so we have a limited of time to check base with each other

in the morning so I think that is everything.

Gryff I'm not sure if you have anything to add around processes and

workflows.

GRYFF: Yeah, like obviously you can have

the best laid plans of mice and mend you get to the end of if the and don't

fully complete so everyone we do have an end of the process to be fully it

ran, so if you always find problems at and so we have user testing and have

like engineers like myself who are very good on testing products will test the

product before it goes out to market and just to make sure it is accessible.

Our engineering teams are self-managing, then we act in consultation

with our content writers and designers at Heather herself who I believe

listening, who will help us deal with these problems as they so a it is a

very fluid and dynamic process rather than being a rigid linear process,

which is really good.

So yeah.

MARK: Nathan or Jack I'm not sure

which, where to start but access, I don't actually know in term of scale

how big the teams are at AXA that you are working width across teams I know

but that and what we've heard there from Gryff, and Kim is like an organic

process.

We just don't impose this from day one and it worked ever since.

I'm guessing your workflows and solutions to crossing this divide are

equally fluid and flexible.

Jack is that something you can talk to a bit.

JACK: Yeah, I can jump in there I

didn't introduce myself before.

I'm Jack Smale, the website officer for AXA.

uk and swift cover motor insurance which are the AXA retail products but

AXA has multiple sites cross the UK.

Within my wider team I sit within the digital centre of excellence so we've

got a sister team which looks after basically digital quality management

and within that there is a guy called Mark Rossiter the digital quality

manager and Carl who is our digital consultant.

They spend time carrying out V pack testing.

Voluntary product accessibility.

It is product they go through for all new user journeys before they are

rolled out now and this is something they developed, and it is going to be

actual conditioning forward.

If anything, new that is developed in the future, and so Carl is actually,

he is visually impaired himself so when he tests the journeys, he uses a range

of screen readers.

James, NVDA and also voice over for Mac and what effectively he

will do is highlight any issues he encounters then Mark goes away and

effectively puts together a spreadsheet will hand that over to the digital

product owner and it is effectively left to them how they prioritise ro

solving these but where there is a particularly complex issue effectively

he will make sure there is a screen recording which shows what Carl is

seeing when he is goings through the screen reader and that gives the

developers’ insight they need and gives them a bit more information about how

they might go about resolving this.

And then obviously it ends up on a stack and they either fix it there and

then or they build it into a future release.

Then I guess on a more personal level, you know, that is more kind of

on the side where people are actually getting quotes for our insurance

products.

We also have a main brochure website so whenever I'm creating a new

components or building a page that uses an element of customers code I

find that using just voice over for iOS is the

most convenient way of checking how a page appears to a screen reader.

The Beth device you have got its one available to you and I know there is

an equivalent for android as well.

MARK: Cool so Nathan, I Jack I talking

there about the engineering, where does SEO come into that a because of the co

and architecture and all a that is mixed together.

To what extent are the SEO team aware of accessibility.

Do you train them and provide support, so they are thinking of that truth

heading structure stuff.

Some of the most simple content and some of the key word stuff that Kim is

alluding to.

NATHAN: Exactly yes.

My job would be to train up the content team who are writing the

content so I give them training sessions just going over the best

practice SEO techniques.

The title headings and the keyword density and key words we want to

get in our copy that would be where I come in to train them up and they go

away and write the content the come back to meet a I have a final check

over and make sure everything is aligned and as optimised possible so

that's the way it works for our team.

MARK: As a check in process as part of

the workflow.

NATHAN: That's right.

MARK: I'm guessing that part of the

challenge there is you are trying to have people get it right first time

rather than findings load, like the paternal accessibility problem on one

of the slides was talking about how much better it is to get it

right at the beginning rather than trying to fix it lady and I guess that

challenge is true in SEO as well and is there anything in particular that you

have seen work for the SEO people that you are connecting with.

What do they latch on to first.

Is a heading structure a nice simple thing for them to get their heads

around or are they other tips that you offer that land for them?

NATHAN: It is training them and getting

of the into their head what they need to include and how they format the

copy and the titles as well, thinking about what they want to put in the

titles and headings so it is just really the training and just trying,

it is lots of back and forth as you say so it will come back to me and I can

edit it in the it goes back for approval a so there is lots of

approval and reapproval as it goes backwards and forwards and it does get

there in the end and we're usually pleased but lots of back and forth.

MARK: How recent is this accessibility

combination is this relatively new for you guys or is this something you have

been a building over time.

JACK: I can jump in, the whole, we've

had people in the business really interested in accessibility for many

years.

But I'd say it has really come to the fore in probably the last 2 and a half

years.

That is probably as a result of the fact that Google lighthouse report now

does include accessibility within it so when you are looking at your

lighthouse scores there are accessibility in parallel to SEO and

you can see over time if you are optimising for one you kind of see an

almost direct correlation on the other.

It is not perfect bud better you get the better it is all round.

MARK: That wins the argument hands down

presumably before you get into whether using a screen reader.

Oh look, my corps has gone up.

Good!

JACK: That sort of instant

gratification is always good.

MARK: What about conflicts between SEO and accessibility.

I'm guessing there are certain points in time when despite your best efforts

you are seeing someone wants to go one direction and you know that is going

to negatively effect the other area?

How common is that and what sort of issues does it raise?

I don't know whether anyone has a particular thing to add to that one?

GRYFF: Yeah, I'll jump in with that one.

You are always going to have conflict with providing accessible content

because it is seen!

A cost.

Is there something that gets in way of developmental product which is an

unfortunate thing that happens in this modern world and it does but the

easiest way to deal with the conflict for me is looking at not a cost.

It is pro fit because most people look at it oh the SE assays need to do

there is and we look at it as having to adapt to make it accessibility for

people but people with accessibility problems are consumers and we got to

cater to them A give them the product they need.

SEO is part of that in what we can give people by allowing them to be

consumers and thinking this is a profit thing and selling it in that way, we

want to attract the purple pound, you sell it much better that way and

people can acknowledge that much better.

To actually make the difference and so the legal stuff becomes a side

thing.

So, if you build a culture around that they are our consumer and not

just someone you are trying to help.

KIM: Yeah, just to add to Gryff's

point I think if you sort of really start to understand those people with

accessibility need as genuine consumers width money to spend, and you picture

it to senior stakeholders.

Product managers that way they really will start to listen because there is

a 5 or 10% increase on your profit margin that you could potentially

achieve you were to make these pages more accessible.

MARK: We've got 2 interesting examples

in terms of industries.

You have the travel industry, there is all the travel' all sorts of

needs and requirements a every one of us have different preferences when

we're searching for everything and making sure they are brought out and

everyone can have those, and insurance is a basic need for us tall have

reassurance a every single one of us needs to insure something at some

point so they are not things in customers that you don't recognise.

So, they are not going to give you their money so that its point, same

with finding you an SEO.

They are looking for words and terms and phrases that appeal to then an

that has to be taken account of.

JACK: Carry on Kim.

KIM: I was just about to say, just

going back to your question Mark about whether or not there has ever been any

conflicts between SEO and accessibility, I am a content writer

so, I don't have that depth of expertise and knowledge in terms of codes and

page builder.

Others on the call might but as a writer who has a lot of specialisms in

SEO I've never seen any conflicts whether or not it is like making sure

your copy is complete readable, or you are optimising H titles or tags and

even looking at site maps and ensuring your navigation your on page

navigation cross every page is cohesive and consistent, absolutely everything

a like.

That SEO best practice and accessibility, best practice seems a

to be one and the same within my experience.

MARK: The thing is it is quite a neat

one someone came up with.

We seem to have a tension needing lots of links for SEO, but these are

making the text harder to reach because the digital team have made so many so

in the screen reader you are hearing a flurry of links coming at you can

see a that tension you said it was really good to put external links in

for SEO awe don't put too many on because they have to be announced

every time someone is coming in on a screen reader.

That is the type of example where you are trying to balance out which one of

those levers you are pulling at which time.

I don't know if anyone has any experience.

The question is there a difference between internal text for

SEO versus button links.

GRYFF: I've been working A lot with

internal links in terms of cross linking. The main way.

If you want that you can link through to the next.

If you just have a bunch of links that just have no relevance to what

you are doing it is not going to make sense if you are just normal

consumer so make it make sense to product.

It is relevant to the products and can be a helpful to the consumers

well so get the 2 in one essentially.

MARK: We had a phrase I remember

picking up when we talked about Google as a screen reader.

It is a little bit more than that, but it is essentially a screen reader

and over time with SEO Google is mainly trying to worked out how you are

trying to trick it so if you think stuffing loads of links in your page is

going to win it is probably not.

It is too simplistic, and you do get a balancing act.

What is good for your customer is the screen reader easy to use.

Not try to catch it out but work your way around the parent rules.

Make good quality content with good linked it will probably escort way you

are expecting.

So, and we Were talking about those conflicts in terms of the recipients so

on I'm also wondering whether there is a 5% figure someone had in there.

I don't know whether that invalidated in any way, but we do obviously

know that SEO may be seen as more of a commercially orientated answer

so, we'll get more air space, airtime terms of then kind about

priorities when planning a project.

Is that your experience, that the people are the product managers saved

in we can prioritising it would be SEO over accessibility.

Or is that different now you have crossed these lines.

I don't know whether anybody has any experience of that improving the

picture of accessibility costs and investment and seeing them as a

equivalent to SEO.

JACK: So here is perhaps doesn't

necessarily address that but there is a growing acceptance that accessibility

is just a core about of good UX and historically.

If you talk about optimise for accessibility there is a temptation

by business leaders to say what actual value does that have but if you are

saying to them this is great UX and this is good for everybody then I

think they are much more likely to buy into it, one example that I've heard

before is when you talk about people who have temporary disabilities and the

impact you can have for them.

I'm sure Nathan would agree but for AXA health it might be someone

coming to your site with a broken arm a how usable is the site for someone having to

scroll on a phone with 1 finger for example and I think that is the best

argument you can make that says why SEO is important and how you should embed it

with projects from the outset.

KIM: Just to add to that I think that

any great SEO recognises these days that anyone who is paying attention to

Google updates understand it is highly likely in the future that accessibility will end up

being a real factor that Google takes into account in its algorithms.

They already measure accessibility on Google lighthouse.

They already measure a lot of other UX metrics so there is probably going

to be a lot of attention to from the SEO community in coming years on

accessibility.

MARK: I guess you want to get I clearly

am on the accessibility side of this discussion.

So do you get that people Kim in and say I've heard accessibility is

important, an than you say they are coming saying I want to sort out my SEO

awe is that happening.

NATHAN: Sadly, not yet but hopefully in

the future.

A lot of the colleagues are not aware of it when I do my training with

them so in the future they will get to hear about it more and will come

naturally to us directly as you said.

KIM: It is a funny one.

We're still having to be very proactive and a cautionary envelope

to make sure we're listened to, and we get product owners and squad leads of

developers to put aside time to implement accessibility into our legacy

languages however I'm hoping that we don't reach the stage where there is

suddenly a panic and SEOs are coming to us saying we're going to have to

retro fit accessibility in a huge way and we've only cot 6 months until a

Google update comes into effect.

That would be a nightmare so I hope we can get more of the SEO community

to pay attention before it gets to that point and there is some update that

means we've got to do everything, very quickly.

That way.

GRYFF: We have got to a stage of the

company where we are proactively thinking about accessibility now so it

is not something that is an afterthought which it was around 3 or

4 years ago.

We changed our culture and disability, and inclusion is a build in big part

of our company now it is built into our firm so as part of that we think

about accessibility and we actively trying to change our landing pages so

we include that so we have product bugs, but we actually put in and consider

accessibility a product bug so we have to think about that so rather

than just an accessibility championed someone who is really passionate about

it does it, this is a bug we get from users, and we spend 25% of our time dealing with

that as engineers.

It is not just accessibility, but it is factor in there and that is why

we're improving those landing pages and in the new content we have coming in

people are consulted.

I've been brought into meetings by Kim quite a few times as an

accessible user myself.

We try and get training for people like Adi who works for ability net and

we have empathy labs because we can never get one 100% of needs covered

but we can simulate what it is like to have those disability so people can

think about what the problem is and how can we fix it not just for screen

readers but for all accessibility content so we move in that good way.

KIM: Just for anyone who may not

necessarily be familiar with what an empathy lab is, it is also like an in

personal workshop that Gryff, Heather and a couple of other peeps at Skyscanner set up in

each of the main offices where there is workstations set up that will

simulate different types of disabilities.

Goggles simulate visual difficulties and then slings where you right hand

is strapped up and you can't use it, laptops and mobile phones set up and

then there is a task you have to try and do on the Skyscanner app or

website and complete it and it can sometimes be a struggle and it

helps people empathise with people who do use screen readers and we had the

CEO come and have a go at it all a and it has gained so much traction that

way.

MARK: Nathan do you know that approach

is active in AXA.

You are winning hearts and minds, so people have a bit more empathy and

clarity.

Jack, you talked about using a screen reader.

The step before is why would I do that.

Is that part of bringing those two communities together?

JACK: It is quite interesting.

We have had, similar to the empathy labs.

It come as no surprise that we've got a lot of spare office space now a

there are more people working from home.

We thought it would be nice to set up a little dark room and get people's

experience on what our screen reader users are experiencing.

But yeah, I think going forward we want to encourage engineers to just at

least be thoughtful bet the kind of challenges and the pain points that

people with disability have and that is why we try and run a couple of

workshops each year with yourselves at AbilityNet.

We invite people from across the business that we know are involved in

the delivery of content designed building digital experiences and

effectively just trying give them a basic understanding of why it is

important and we try and give them awareness of the resources out there

to help them so there are some fantastic accessible patent libraries out there

and that can help them demystify what accessibility actually is all about on

a practical level and the ultimate aim of that is to try and make those people

the accessibility activists themselves and then they will pass that on and

spread the word.

Marj: First to emphasise this was not

set up an advertisement for ability net lab but it is worth mentioning that

having.

Wearing a pair of glasses that simulates a particular disability is

literally no substitute for the person's experience but on the other

hand you find people dealing with that making sure this is not meant to be a

substitute for actually listening to disabled people a that is often a

contentious point about those labs.

The thing I was going to mention was you mentioned the champions Kim and

the stuff you are doing in Skyscanner is exemplary and we know what Heather

is working on and she has been involved in various sessions we run but can you

describe how that champions network has evolved and how it plays into this

coming together and cultural change.

KIM: Yeah, I can try and list a few of

the main things so basically, we are all split into different pods a I'm in

the makers bought there is engineering pods a Gryff keep me honest here and

jump in at any time.

We're in this focus groups.

We can all a learn together.

We have slack channels set up to share tips and in see and ask important questions

about day-to-day stuff and then we have regular meet ups, work shares and

talks and training and another thing we also do.

We've just started doing recently we find really helps is kind of setting

personal goals so every single advocate within the network and there is like

dozens, will set goals.

I think it is just each quarter or it might be each half, things like

implementing accessibility on a specific project that we might be

working on at the time or even just getting up and presenting the benefits

of accessibility and getting buy in from a particular group of

stakeholders for an upcoming project.

Things like that.

And this goals actually feed into our overall like

development reviews that we have with our line managers which means that

everybody is really incentivised to do it.

But yeah, like we also recognise that just because accessibility is embedded

in every aspect of our culture and every particular subject people are

working on it doesn't mean our products.

We still have so far to go and we're all like really trying still.

Then yeah, we've already talked about the empathy labs.

MARK: Would you say they had a

particular effect on the take up of that a having it in your review your

management review is going to have a particular impact because someone is

pointing out that you have got an empty box where there should be I tick for

example but empathy labs is more of the hearts and minds stuff when it works

well, is that something that you think, a moment you remember the first time

you saw it working?

I think in Skyscanner the reason I ask is that there was a question at

one point about why we are doing this and showing people what the actual

output of this would be was a turning point in some way.

GRYFF: Yeah, I'll quickly chime in with

that other empathy labs.

Idea is we don't want to create pity.

We don't want pity.

We want to create compassion.

We want someone involved in the process and move to resolve that

problem someone has and make them a consumer, so it is not trying to create

an atmosphere where we're like people understand what it is like, they can

understand how to fix the problems they may have and because we can't get live

users for every accessibility needs it is a good alternative way of doing that and so

ingraining that is part of the culture we do to; it needs to be reinforced

about other things that are happening we also have the champions network to

allow that culture to be embedded in other parts and it is part of our

review.

If you are showing you are part of the culture, you are more likely to get

a good review so that feeds into that so it is a holistic different amount

of things and empathy lab is one tool we

use for that if that makes sense.

MARK: I'm wondering whether SEO has an

equivalent, how do we know what SEO's problems are.

Is there a missing bit here?

Nathan your day is taken up trying to hit these goals which are very

explicit and commercially oriented and metric feels driven and the challenges

of doing that in the SEO world they are well documented but coming to that

from an accessibility point of view, that is question I wonder whether

that is a missing link to be clearer about what SEO's challenges are day to day.

one of the questions it says, well there are 2.

Matthew, I hope we've answered your question about the empathy laps as

well but I read research that using click here as a call to action has

more engagement than an accessible alternative.

That is an SEO saying I want engagement.

I read click here gets more clicks then of course the challenge is that

accessibility team are saying hang on a minute, that is not really going to

work for us so that is being driven by the SEO concerns quite naturally

then the other one, in really like this one because I see this a lot.

We have conflicts with writing headlines in the new office D the

writers want to write clever lines and do not necessarily want to use the

lines.

Accessibility is going to gain from that but that must be part of your

day-to-day reality I'm guessing so what are the main points for SEO that you

see more routinely so we get a sense of where your priorities lie on the SEO

side.

NATHAN: Sure, we find product data in

different areas they are not really curled into SEO and don't under

sentenced the importance of key words so they just introduce copy and

heading at titles what they think the page should be without thinking about

what SEO and what the users are searching for.

They fi just see the from their pace so you need to consider SEO and what

our users are searching for, not what you think will be coming up when you

are writing the copy yourself so that is one of my biggest challenges there.

KIM: Just to chime in there I've come

across a couple of examples in the last few years where that comes to light a

having calls to action that sound fun and bring out brand personality mat be

a super engaging but it is not great for Google’s crawlers, and it is

definitely not great for someone who has autism and won't understand where

that link will take you.

That it is not just CTAs or headlines.

It is all running copy text on a page.

I've had I think I remember once working with a stakeholder who really

wanted us to move away from our brand being associated with just really

cheap flights and instead we wanted to be known for a breadth of different

ways of, like different value, like all round value and they actually wanted

us to remove any mention of cheap from all of our top of funnel pages.

Hope pages, et cetera which obviously would have proved quite disastrous for

SEO since it is one of our biggest key words and people actually search for

cheap flights more than anything else so

what this highlight is how like the synergy between what copy should look

like and read like for SEO and how it should read for accessibility is

one and the same.

For SEO people need to understand it, it needs to be written

in their language and not necessarily the brand began as that is the

foundation for good writing for accessibility and for SEO awe we've had

situations before where key words have been a swapped out for nicer sounding

synonyms and no this key word is more important we need to get this back

in guys.

Things like that.

JACK: Can I say that we've road to

tried to optimise our CTAs.

It works a lot better because it is a lot shorter, and it means your button

is more succinct so one way we got round that was we had a simple basic

spam with a class called visually hidden and it moves the text off screen.

But it means it is still there and it does mean we're able to give that a

bit more context to someone who is a screen reader user or potentially

crawler will understand it because the crawler is inspecting the code

primarily so that is one way we've dealt with that challenge but the

click here one, we try and avoid that at all a suffers costs because it is

simply not true that people click, there is a lot of people who are

bussing button pressers or voice activated command hence it is not a

click, it is factually inaccurate.

MARK: Yeah.

As suggested by all of us we've run out of time.

There are loads of talk about.

What I've deliberately left out there are some questions here about headings.

What its bays way to do that.

Quite a lot of the what we skipped over at the beginning we talked about

the information of setting up headings and the best practice use of headings

which is a really obvious cross over between the 2 areas where it is about

trying to get the best practice embedded into the structure of the

page and using H1 and H2 and H3 as a hierarchical approach.

Questions were asked about that along the way and some more detailed

questions that will be shared with panel at we'll come back to those for

part of the FA question we've talked about the challenges of working across

2 teams really and 2 distinct parts of most organisations where we're

thinking about the marketing and the use of Google as our shop front, the

one place we know most of our customers are going to find us as some

point then on the other hand as accessibility and all the

considerations which can feel incredibly are Kate and difficult to

arcane and difficult and Griff you talk about product of the work of the

culture shifts and that takes time, and you have to have those connections

made, you have those connections and offer training, Jack using some of

those tools and people seeing a tools in use and beginning to see the penny

drop.

They are all a part of that mix, but I think we certainly see that SEO is so

different to accessibility that it is a very interesting route into the

conversation.

It is size so churn able when you are change sing after something it is

driven by what Google wands and that is also what an accessibility advocate

wants as well.

That is the key lesson.

More and more speculating about what happens with Google that accessibility

ranking is important in the waiting and therefore has a pay off in SEO, a

think that is a key thing to look at as a move forward.

So, thank you so much for your input, Kim, Jack, Nathan and Gryff, that is

great we’ll come back round afterwards ask you to fill in some of

the questions popping up here, I don't know whether you have been keeping

track on them a weeping those back to you and share them back round about

FAQs.

We have got training a couple of different things we \ought

to\thought\today were relevant.

We do I training all the time we have embedding at every stage of your

project.

That is next week, and accessibility copy writers you can find out about

our courses at AbilityNet courses/training a there is a

disability code which gets you a 10% discount on our training courses.

Next slide the other thing that I'm well a asking if on now, AbilityNet

TechShare Pro.

The lead sponsor this year is Google.

There are lots of other sponsors.

It is in the middle of November.

15, 16, 17th November.

It is online and you can get tickets at TechShare Pro.com.

The early bird tickets are available this week.

We'll get a programme out next week then the ticket price will increase

slightly.

There is a champions’ network price as well so you can buy a bundle and

distribute that code internalise many times as you like because that is

where that change comes from a slide you said, Kim, that network of people

engaging with this, they may not turn up push to conversation, but they may

see this session and therefore you can troop ticket in, and say come at see a

this one we’re really excited about TechShare Pro so take a look at it

his week then next weekly reveal the programme and hopefully a lot of

interesting things in there including a further discussion about SEO.

So, thanks everybody for joining us.

If you have found it interesting and useful the recording well be a

available afterwards as will all of the transcripts so on, if you are not

signed up to our newsletter yet you can do that, at the

sign up or newsletter as it says here.

There are plenty of website nears.

There is always something coming through on our web latter stuff.

Next week we'll hear from Netflix about their approach to accessibility

which is always interesting to hear how those big companies are building exact

accessibility into their solutions and file we talked about the important

that in the needs of disabled people.

Put them at the centre of the designer processes and think about all

users and come on one of our courses called don't disable me and bringing

to life the reality of that and giving an insight into some of the challenges

you are creating when you make pages that are not accessible and trying to

show the challenges through our decisions as digital producers.

Cool.

So, thanks everyone, wonderful to have you here and we'll look forward to the

FAQs and a further round of information being shared out and look forward to