

Transcription for the Webinar

>> Kun: Good morning, everyone. Thank you for participating in today's webinar. Terrill Thompson is our speaker today with title of event being Accessibility in Procurement: How to Read VPAT. Terrill works at the University of Washington developing resources, delivering lectures and workshops and accessibility evaluations, providing consultations and support to a wide variety of constituents. And conducting research with at least 30 years experience in the IT accessibility field and has presented internationally at numerous conferences and local and state government, private industry and K-12 Postsecondary Education.

Before I hand the mic to Terrill, I'll just go over some logistics of the webinar. We'll have a Q&A session at the end of the presentations. Please post any questions you have in the chat.

We will be collecting them and discussing your questions during the Q&A sessions.

We do provide captioning for today's webinar. You can, you can turn on the Zoom's embedded caption viewer. We also have a link for a page opening in your browser, if you want to watch for the full-running -- full run-down of the captions.

I will be posting the link in the chat.

We are recording today's sessions and recording will be posted on our website shortly after and we will send out brief survey for today's webinar after the event.

Please fill it out, it'll help for future programming.

The link to the presentation is also posted on our website right now. If you prefer to download the presentations and follow along, you can head to our website and download it right now. It is already there.

Okay, so, without further adieu, I'll be handing the mic to Terrill. Go ahead.

>> Terrill: Thank you, Kun. I'll go ahead and share my slides here. Did that work? Are you all seeing the PowerPoints?

>> Kun: Yes, I can see your screen.

>> Terrill: Excellent. Well, thank you, everybody. This -- as it turns out, is quite a hot topic. I'm going to be giving the same presentation tomorrow at the UW. And that's where it all got started. I was invited to give a presentation for our tech talks, which is a campus-wide focus on technology that we do periodically.

And I think it was Andy Andrews from UW Library that got wind of that and proposed it for this group. I'm also giving the same talk to two other groups as well, over the next couple weeks.

So, this is a, an important topic, a lot of people are making purchasing decisions related to IT and they need to ensure that what they're purchasing is accessible and that can be very challenging to do.

We have a department at the University of Washington that does review products for accessibility, but we can't possibly review everything. There are thousands of purchases every year that are IT-specific.

And so, we're really on a mission to try and empower the people that are out there making purchasing decisions and taking purchasing risks to understand what accessibility is all about and how to, at least at a basic level, evaluate products for accessibility, even if you're not an accessibility expert.

That's the nature of this talk. As Kun said, I'm manager of the IT Accessibility Team at the University of Washington. We, within UW-IT, within the central IT organization, we have a department called Accessibility Technology Services and our role is to ensure our technology is accessible.

So, we're not providing individual accommodations for students with disabilities, that's what disability services does, and then there's another group that provides accommodation for employees and for the general public.

But we're more-focused on the technology infrastructure and just working to make sure that is as accessible as it can be out of the box.

I've got a web URL on the slide here. That's our main site for communicating all things relating to Information Technology accessibility. Check that out for additional information.

I'll be using a few acronyms. I thought I'd clarify those up front. We'll get into more details about each of them. W3C is the World Wide Web Consortium, that's the organization that manages and authors most of the standards related to the worldwide web.

So, HTML and CSS. These are W3C specifications, as is WCAG. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, which we'll be talking about extensively and ARIA, another W3C specification, which plays an important role in technology accessibility.

That stands for Accessible Rich Internet Applications. We'll talk, in a bit, about what that's all about and what you need to know about it, in order to evaluate technology products for accessibility.

And we're also, the title of this presentation, the acronym VPAT is there and that really is the focus of this. We're going to be looking extensively at voluntary product accessibility templates, which is a form that vendors fill out to describe the accessibility of their product or service.

And so, we'll talk more about that and we'll look at several example VPATs during the course of this talk.

I don't like to talk much about the law. I'm not a lawyer. I'd like to think we want to be accessible because we do, it's the right thing to do and we provide benefits and services and activities and resources because we want people to access them. And you know, if there are people that can't access what we're providing, then that, you know, that shouldn't be a concern for us, even if it wasn't the law.

But it is the law. So, we need to talk about that. That, most of us, if we receive federal funding, then, we need to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, that goes back to 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which is federal funding, society as a whole, that needs to comply with that.

Both of these are Civil Rights laws that prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities. And, in hundreds of legal complaints that have been filed against Higher Education institutions for having inaccessible IT, it's become clear that the, the expectation for technology accessibility is that we meet WCAG 2.0 or 2.1, the more-recent case law and resolutions, settlements point to the more-current standard, WCAG 2.1. A lot of the older ones reference 2.0.

We'll talk about the different versions and what WCAG means as a whole in a moment.

We know, from the legal complaints and the resolutions that WCAG 2.-something, level 2A is our expected level of accessibility compliance.

We also, those of us who are in the state of Washington have Washington State policy, policy 188 requires that all state agencies including our education institutions meet WCAG 2.1 level 2A. That reinforces what we already know from all of the case law and the resolutions and settlements that are out there.

So, really, the purpose of this slide is just to sort of build up this knowledge and awareness that WCAG 2.0 or 2.1 level 2A is an important standard that we need to be familiar with.

So, what is WCAG 2.1? Or 2.0? Both of these are in the 2.X family. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. This is an international web accessibility standard that was published by the W3C, way back when. The W3C was actually formed by Tim Burners Lee in the early 1990s.

They, pretty quickly, became aware that accessibility could be an issue with the web and that was not at all their intention.

The web was designed to be this great equalizer. Suddenly, the world was going to have information available at its fingertips and unprecedented access to information and resources and sharing knowledge.

And the idea that some people would be excluded from that and the web, itself, could create barriers, was completely contrary to the vision.

So, they created a group within the W3C called the, I didn't include this on the acronym slide, but, the WAI, Web Accessibility Initiative, began working early on in the '90s on the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

It took many years, as it does with standards and guidelines development. Version one was finally published in 1998. It's taken even longer to get upgrades. This is a constantly evolving standard.

So, version 2 was published in 2008 and version 2.1 was published in 2018. The more recent version is 2.1.

And if you drill into the WCAG, at its lowest level, we have success criteria. These are kind of the nuts and bolts of what it takes to have an accessible website and it is web content, the W in WCAG is web. But really, a lot of the success criteria apply to technologies in general, digital technologies.

So, anything with a user interface, there are WCAG criteria that apply to that interface.

So, this really helps us -- this is the standard that really defines accessibility and helps us to understand what accessibility means.

There's a lot of detail. There's, there are 78 success criteria, each of those has a level assigned to it, that responds with the, the priority, it's a level A or the highest priority issues, if somebody, if there's a level A violation, then there'll be groups of people that just cannot access your content at all.

That's super critical, level A.

But there's also a difficulty consideration that goes into the assignment of levels. Level A are not only high priority, important issues, but they also are relatively easy to implement. Level 2A are kind of a middle ground. You know, also important. Maybe not as important as level A. Or maybe not as easy as level A.

But, some balance between difficulty and importance. And level 3A are either the less-important or more difficult, still.

So, total is 78. Early on, when WCAG 2 was published, there were questions about how accessible we need to be. Do we need to meet all 78 success criteria? That'd be pretty challenging. There are tough ones. For example, we caption all of our videos. That's a level A issue.

But, you also have to add sign language for all your videos in order to meet level 3A. So, much more challenging to meet level 3A.

That was a question for a little while. As it sorted itself out, through policy and through legal cases and you know, resolutions and settlements, it became clear that level 2A was the expectation.

So, that was the bar. Those 30 level A and 20 level 2A success criteria are what we're expected to meet.

So, I want to give just three examples, so you can get a better sense of what these success criteria are. And hopefully with three examples, it becomes a little less overwhelming than having to think about 50 different success criteria or 70-some, if you're trying to meet level 3A.

So, let's look at one example, which, in my opinion, is the most-important example, the most-important success criteria in all of accessibility.

And we're not supposed to cherry pick. We're not supposed to say that any of these level A success criteria are more important than the others. I really feel this is probably the most-important. That is 1.3.1, info and relationships. This is the one that says in your mark-up, if it's a

website, you know, you got tags that represent heading structure, that represent labels and associate those labels with form fields.

You've got tables that need to have you know, TH tags for the table header.

So that the column header is explicitly identified. Basically, you know, using the tag structure that's available to you, in the mark-up language, so, websites, we're talking about HTML, using that properly, so that all the parts are very-specifically identified and the relationships between those parts are identified.

So, headings need to form an outline of the page and labels need to be explicitly associated with form fields and column headers need to be identified as column headers.

So, all that is built in to the web application. That's what 1.3.1, info and relationships is all about.

Second one. 2.1.1 is simply titled keyboard. Both of these are level A. So, the highest priority level.

This says that all functionality of the content is operable through a keyboard interface. If you're unable to use a mouse, then you should be able to tab through the page and access all the content and maybe some other keys play a role as well. Enter or space or escape or the arrow keys.

Everything should be accessible with the keyboard. I like to include this, because it's easy to test. You don't need testing software. You don't need special skills, you just need to be able to use a keyboard and you can, then, take the no mouse challenge and just try your website or try you know, any web application that you're testing. Just try it without a mouse and see if you can do everything.

Things you can do if you were a mouse user. That's the second one. Finally, 4.1.2, name, role, and value. This is also a level A success criteria.

This really comes down to proper use of ARIA. Now we need to define ARIA in order to better-understand what we're talking about here. ARIA is a W3C specification. Stands for accessibility rich internet applications. This evolved from a document delivery format. It, you know, technology evolved and now we have very sophisticated web applications where there's just a lot of stuff happening on the screen at any given moment, in response to user behaviors.

And so, users, then, imagine somebody who has no eyesight, they're using a screen reader, navigating around using a keyboard and listening to the user interface through an audible speech synthesis interface.

And they need to know, they just landed on something, they need to know what that thing is, they need to know what its current state is, and if they -- if it's an interactive component, like

maybe it's a button, and they press enter to click that button, they, then, need to know what just happened. If something happened as a result of them clicking on the button, they need to know what that was.

Something has changed that needs to be communicated to them. This isn't possible with HTML. So, ARIA filled in that gap and communicates all of those interactive things in a way that assistive technologies, then, can access that information and pass it on to users.

So, it really is a critical piece of the accessibility puzzle, if we're looking at complex dynamic-rich internet applications.

Which is, you know, often we are, these days.

So, I want to give you an example, to give you a little better sense of ARIA. I apologize if anybody's not a coder. Hopefully this is a simple enough example. This is HTML. Let's imagine that we have a button and that's coded there, with a button tag. It has an ID, button 1 and that button has a label that says more info.

The user hears that it's the more info button, if they're using a screen reader. They, then, know they can press enter or space to trigger that button.

And when they do so, there's, perhaps, some JavaScript behind the scenes that responds by showing the content in this div. There's a div element with an ID of info 1.

So, when somebody clicks the button 1 button, then it shows this content that otherwise is hidden. That gives us this section and has more info.

So, for a screen reader user, when they click that button, they need to know, then, that something has happened and as coded with this example on the screen, they're not going to know that. There's nothing here that would communicate to them that something just happened.

This is where ARIA comes in. If we add a couple things to this, if we add ARIA controls to the button, then that explicitly points to the ID of that div and says, this button controls this div.

So, there's a relationship that's formed, then, between the button and the div. And then, also, if you add ARIA expanded and set that to false, by default and change that to true, when it actually is expanded, then that, that can be -- both of these things can be used by assistive technologies to understand what's going on, what the current state is and to relay that to the user.

With this mark-up, in place -- the screen reader user will not only land on the more info button, but they'll hear more info button collapsed and when they press enter, they'll hear expanded.

So, they know that whatever this thing controls, just expanded. Some screen readers may provide additional benefits to allow you to jump right to that expanded content.

So, ARIA, then, does play a key role.

Now, my thinking here is not that you'll, you'll become an ARIA expert, and to review products for accessibility, ARIA is very complex, it's unrealistic, for most people to become ARIA experts.

But, just to know that ARIA exists and it plays a critical role in making rich internet applications accessible.

So, I want to talk, just briefly, about how we do procurement at the University of Washington. If you're not at the UW, this won't apply to you, but you may have similar sorts of processes at your institution.

We do have our procurement Policies and Procedures are documented on our website. If you just add a slash procurement to the end of that, you can get details that I'm talking about here.

Essentially, we've got three steps, in a -- in an abstract sense. We need to solicit accessibility information.

Whenever we're about to purchase a product, we're just approaching vendors, we need to ask them about their accessibility. If we don't ask, then, they're not going to hear that and they, they need to hear it from every single one of us, that accessibility is important. And that's going to drive them, hopefully, to, to change and understand that this market potential and accessibility, everybody wants it.

Therefore, we need to develop an accessible product.

Number two, when they respond to that question, when you ask them about their accessibility and they respond, you need to be able to validate their answers. You need to be able to validate accessibility of information received. That's what this presentation is all about. Giving you some foundation with which to do that validating of accessibility information they provide.

And finally, you, you need to include accessibility assurances and contrast. Most-likely, the product or the service is not accessible. Very few products are, unfortunately. I'd love to be able to say that half of the products are fully accessible, then you get these others working on it. The state of things, currently is that ever seen has some accessibility problems. Some are more-significant than others, but those, that need to improve, need to have some motivation to improve.

And if you can get accessibility requirements built into the contract, at least they're working towards you know, WCAG 2.1, level 2A compliance, at some point.

Maybe just doing baby steps. Working on addressing a few really high priority issues on a certain timeframe.

You know, get that built into the contract so that, you know, they have some incentive to work on it. Even products that are pretty accessible now, but have a few things to fix, they, too, should be held accountable for fixing those few things.

And for ensuring that they remain accessible. So, they may be accessible today. You want to ensure they're still accessible when they roll out an upgrade. It's pretty easy for them to break the accessibility.

So, this is a big block of text, I'm not going to read all of this. You can read it on our website. This is the, the content that we recommend for RFPs. If we are soliciting information from vendors, this is the language that actually procurement services has, that they plug into RFPs and then, yeah, sometimes it gets customized a little bit.

At the heart of it here, is mentioning, letting the vendor know that we need to meet WCAG 2.1, level 2A and we will accept a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template as a means for you, communicating how well you meet WCAG 2.1. That's what a VPAT is. A form that they can tell us how well they meet the accessibility standards.

We have some additional instructions here, in our statement, that we have expectations that they have a recent VPAT. VPAT version 2.3 or higher is necessary because, that speaks to WCAG, rather than old, Section 508 standards, which is not what we're trying to meet. They need to -- it needs -- VPAT 2.3 or higher and they need to follow the instructions.

So, we explicitly state that, because we've seen a lot of VPATs over the years where they haven't provided instructions, they haven't followed the instructions, including some key pieces that we feel are important.

So, what is a VPAT, then? It stands for Voluntary Product Accessibility Template. It's a standard means by which IT vendors can provide documentation on whether and how they meet accessibility standards. The latest version is 2.4, I believe. I don't think that's been updated since February 2020, when that came out.

Again, 2.3 is the version for reporting on conformance to WCAG 2.1. Within that, within the VPAT 2.3 family, there are different editions. The WCAG 2.1 version, 508 version, European Union version and international version that incorporates all the above standards.

So, we accept WCAG 2.1 versions and again, that's the standard we're trying to meet. But, we accept the international version, because that also addressing WCAG 2.1.

So, this is what a VPAT looks like. This is an uncompleted VPAT. It has the WCAG success criteria over in the left column. And, there are links, so you can, you know, if they don't know -- if they need to be educated about or just need for a reference, they need to look at the WCAG success criteria, they can do that, via the links.

Then you've got a conformance level column and a remarks and explanations column. If they read the instructions, they'll know the conformance level is a multiple choice question.

You can either -- they can either -- their product either supports the success criteria, supports with exceptions, doesn't support or is not applicable or they don't know. It wasn't tested.

So, the conformance level should be one of those things and then the remarks and explanations should be an explanation of why they chose that conformance level. Give us enough detail, assuming this is our sole source of information about this product. We're putting ourselves at legal risk, if we deploy a product that's not accessible, we therefore, need to be informed when we make this decision and this form provides us with a -- you know, as it's envisioned, the information that we need in order to make an informed decision.

So, that's what we're hoping for. And, this is just a little bit more detail about the various options. And this also, some required metadata, again, it's in the instructions. It's in bold, in the instructions, there are 11 required fields and we believe that there are five for our purposes that are the most -critical of those eleven.

Those are the name of the product and the version, particularly the version, usually they'll provide the name of the product, but we want to see the version, so we know exactly what, you know, what we're -- what has been evaluated here.

We want to see the report date. So, you know, if this was done five years ago, with an old version, then that probably is not going to be current. Therefore, we need an updated VPAT.

We want to, so -- contact information, for follow-up questions. Ideally, that'll be a person. I've seen a lot of VPATs lately, where it's just the generic health contact information, which I don't feel, probably, is going to give us a direct line to somebody who can answer our accessibility questions.

There's a required field that is the evaluation methods used, we want some specific documentation so that we know how they've gone about evaluating their product and the applicable standards or guidelines.

If they're using the right version of the VPAT, we know it's WCAG, you know, 2.1, level 2A. But that should be explicitly stated within the metadata.

So, this is my quick guide to reading a VPAT. This is -- you know, if gets pretty complicated and there are lots of WCAG success criteria. So, it can get a little overwhelming for people, but it doesn't have to. This is something everybody -- everybody can review a VPAT, just by looking at these few things.

First of all, did they follow instructions? Did they include all of the required metadata? You know there, are 11 required fields. If they didn't do, that did they at least require -- did they at least include the five required metadata fields that we feel are really important?

Did they fill the form out properly? A lot of this is sort of elementary school level grading. This is a multiple choice question. With five options. If their answer is not one of those five options, then they didn't fill it out properly.

So, that's the kind of stuff to look at. It's just, you know, understand how this form is supposed to work and look and see if they, if they filled it out properly.

If they didn't, then that actually communicates something. That tells you that either they're new to accessibility and they just, you know, have not really put a lot of thought into filling out a VPAT and did so, kind of hastily in other words to get their product through this process, or, they, you know, they just don't care that much about it chlt. This is a formality. VPAT is required. Let's crank this out and satisfy the need.

And you know, I can tell you, if that is their attitude about accessibility, that's probably going to be reflected in the accessibility of their product or service.

Finally, for a little bit of a deeper dive, I suggest looking, just at those three issues and you may want to explore beyond that. But that makes it a little bit easier to digest. If you just focus on the three issues that we talked about, info and relationships, because it's so critical. Keyboard, because it's so easy to test. And name, role, and value, that's the ARIA piece, because it, too, is so critical, if what we're looking at is a dynamic-rich web application.

As you're looking at those things and sort of looking at those -- ask yourself, first of all, who completed the VPAT. That should be stated up front in the metadata. Was this an independent accessibility consultant? That'd be preferred. For our purposes. We'd rather them be coming from an independent source, as opposed to their marketing team filling out the VPAT.

If it is them doing it internally, then, you know, what sort of skills do they have in order to do that evaluation? That's where we really need to know more in the metadata about their methods and how they went about filling out this form. Did they follow instructions? Do they seem to be knowledgeable with accessibility?

Even if you are not super skilled at accessibility, if you just have the basics, you can often tell whether somebody else, you know, has, has accessibility knowledge.

And probably the most-important questions, after reading their VPAT, do you know more about the accessibility of their product? That really is what this is all about. You need to make an informed decision.

And after reading the VPAT, what follow-up questions do you have for the vendor? We like to say this is not, this is not the end result. Their VPAT is not truth. It's not saying this is an accessible product or this is not an accessible product, it's giving you a foundation and it, that is a conversation starter.

So, use that -- try to find questions within their answers that you can ask them in order to better-understand the accessibility of this product. Ultimately, the fourth bullet, knowing more about accessibility of the product. That's what it's all about. That's where you want to get to. You probably won't get there by -- you might get a little bit there by reading the VPAT, then there's gotta be a conversation afterwards.

So, some questions you can ask vendors. Don't ask is your product accessible? That is a yes-no question. Much too easy just to say yes. Without justifying that.

But, be more specific, for example, in your VPAT, you said this, related to 1.3.1, info and relationships, I don't quite understand. Somebody's using a screen reader, what are the implications? Based on what you said, can you elaborate? Provide some specific examples of how your product meets the success criteria?

Try to be as specific as possible. And you know, maybe even ask them to demonstrate those things. Show us how this can be used if, if a person has no eyesight or if a person is using speech input or physically unable to use a mouse.

Also, let's think beyond the VPAT, let's think beyond this particular version of this product, and tell us about how your company addresses the need for accessibility throughout the product lifecycle.

So, if they can talk about their approach to accessibility, that, again, is not a technical conversation. This is a conversation that anybody can have. You know, and, and what we're hoping is that they have something built in to their, their culture.

Trainings for, for engineers, and designers and developers and accessibility that's built into QA process. So forth.

What is your methodology for testing your products for accessibility? Hopefully they've documented that a little bit in the VPAT. We want to know more. How, how do you do this as you're designing products and developing products and testing products? And who does that testing? And which tools and assistive technologies do you use?

What sort of training do your designers, engineers and quality assurance personnel receive on accessibility? Again, it's all built in to understanding the company, understanding that a culture, is this somebody I'm comfortable doing business with?

I'll be honest, a lot of these, a lot of small companies and probably, you know, this is true with library databases, more than anywhere else or as much as anywhere else, but... they're not going to be able -- they don't have accessibility built into their culture and they're not going to be able to answer these questions in a way that is meaningful.

So, the idea here isn't really just to corner them and shame them, but just by asking these questions, you will help to elevate accessibility, you know, make that part of their -- put it on their radar so they can start addressing those.

I want to look at a few VPATs. If we were face-to-face, I'd probably want to do this interactively. In the interest of time and because we're remote, I'll just kind of walk through this. Be thinking through these examples, and maybe I'll move slowly enough to come up with a response on your own and compare that with my response.

These are all actual VPATs, they're all pretty recent. Things that I've been encountering. This was somebody's response. They've got the criteria on the left, they've got the conformance level on the right. They're conformance levels all sort of meet the multiple choice options that are available.

But, they chose to omit the third column. There are no remarks or explanations anywhere, so, we know that they partially support the first item, non-text content. That's the item all about adding alt text to images, and that sort of thing.

Partially supports -- not supports, what is the, the significance of the partially?

We have no idea. We don't know how far they fall short. We don't know how relevant the failures are. They also, they say they support keyboard accessibility, 2.1.1, but there's a partially supports on the keyboard trap question. That suggests that somewhere there's a keyboard trap or a keyboard user will get stuck and they won't be able to get out of that.

So, whether that's critical or not, really depends on the details, how, how likely is a person to encounter this problem?

How significant does it -- you know, a person's ability to perform the intended functions of the product.

So, this, this is a classic case of not following the instructions. They seem to have done some sort of evaluation and they were able to give themselves conformance-level ratings, but didn't give any details to help us understand that.

Next one, we actually have a remarks and explanations column. That's better than the first. However, the remarks and explanations are not meaningful.

So, the only time they actually filled anything into that column is when it was not applicable, which is probably, arguably, they don't need to say anything for, for marks and explanations if it's not applicable.

We want to know more detail, if it supports, we want to know how, tell us how it supports. You know, we're not just going to take your word for that, we want to know more-specifics about how you came up with that conformance level.

If a proceed noun looks this good where everything supports or isn't applicable, 100% accessible, I've never seen a product that actually can say that. That's a red flag for me. 100% accessibility is a red flag.

Next example, looking just at the keyboard success criteria, they said it partially supports all functionality, if the content is operable through keyboard interface, however there, are minor exceptions. The calendar widget on the manage section is not keyboard operable, however, alternatively, the date can be directly entered into the date field.

So, this goes on to another page, there are several items where there's a particular widget that's not keyboard accessible. They all sort of follow this pattern of "however, there is a workaround." The question, then, is that workaround sufficient and in the case of a calendar widget, that seems perfect, if somebody can enter the date manually, rather than picking it from a pop-up calendar widget, that seems like the perfect solution.

So, as I review this, a couple pieces of information come out of this. They seem to know what they're talking about, they understand the success criteria and are speaking to it. And they're not just identifying problems, but they're also identifying solutions.

So, this is a good example. When I look at this, I'm pleased with what I see.

Here's one that focuses on that ARIA success criteria. Name, role and value, they say it partially supports and they say the web application provides the correct name, role, state, and other important accessibility information for most form controls with the following exceptions. Dynamic filter results are not announced to screen reader users and some calendar widgets are not using appropriate roles.

So, with this, again, it seems that they are knowledgeable, they're being transparent and they partially support and there are some specific cases where they, they've got some problems.

I have two questions, based on this, though. Not knowing the product, how important is dynamic filter results? And how important is that calendar widget? And... the, you know, we saw another calendar widget in the previous item, is it possible for a screen reader user to use, to enter a date into the calendar? Is that an accessible experience if they can't access the widget, itself? And the dynamic filter results, I just want to know more about the impact of that. Is that going to prevent somebody from performing a critical function. Of the product of the application.

Also, I want to know what their plan is.

So, it's one thing to identify problems, but, that should just be the starting point, okay? You've identified these problems, when are you going to fix these problems?

And let's get that -- let's get a roadmap. I want to see a roadmap that has the problems prioritized and some dates assigned, when they plan to fix these problems. And this is where building that into the contract comes in.

You know, if you've got a roadmap and you and they agree to this roadmap, then, there can be some expectations built into the contract, that they're going to continue to make progress on accessibility, as documented in this roadmap. This example includes several items. There's one for captions, one for audio description, the two video-related success criteria and then the 1.3.1, info and relationships.

So, for the first two, they say supports and then they say, this web app doesn't contain prerecorded and synchronized media.

So, I included those two items, even though it's not one of the three items that, you know, that I say, you know, focus on just these three items. You can expand the scope a little bit and look around and see if you notice anything peculiar.

In this case, this is a little bit peculiar in that, it really is not applicable. This is a product that has nothing to do with video. Therefore, they say that, in the remarks, this, this doesn't deal with prerecorded synchronized media.

They're saying in the remarks, this is not applicable, but they said supports in the center column. That seems like, maybe I'm being a little nitpicky, but, that, to me, creates a little bit of mistrust. Maybe is this an innocent mistake, but, to me, it seems like they're trying to -- they're trying to pad the -- you know, that center column with a bunch of supports. If we just glance at it, we're going to see, support, support, support and come away thinking "wow, they're really accessible," when many of those shouldn't be applicable.

Kind of the same thing with partially supports, on info and relationships.

They say their web app has proper information, structure and relationship text, but there are exceptions. And then they have a bulleted list of exceptions.

So, actually, I really like this VPAT in that it is transparent, provides a lot of detail, for the exceptions. We come away knowing exactly where the problems lie. And this goes on and on, it's actually several pages of exceptions and the thing that jumps out at me, given that, given that there are so many exceptions, is that it's debatable, whether they can really say this partially supports.

That again, it feels like they are, you know, kind of nudging that multiple choice up a little higher than it actually is. It seems like, if you've got -- well, yes, this is accessible, except for these 100 cases where it's not, then, probably, that is, doesn't support.

So, again, it feels a little misleading in my trust, you know, is compromised a little bit because of that. So, those of you that downloaded the slides in advance, this is actually a bonus slide. This wasn't included in the, the initial set and this is one I just received yesterday. VPATs are coming in constantly to my office and so, I got this one, and I thought it was an interesting case.

So, I added it. This, too, is the keyboard success criteria and they say partially supports. Because, users can operate all functions of the product using a keyboard through standard controls. A rating of partially supports due to the following isolated issues that do not substantially enter use of the functionality.

And they identified the two places where there are keyboard problems.

I like that they, they answered, you know, the question I raised throughout this, how significant is this problem, they addressed that, at least from their perspective, this doesn't substantially hinder use of the functionality.

I may or may not believe that, you know, the functions that we intend to use this product for, may differ from what they're assuming by saying that, but I like they did say that.

And I also like, with their rich text formatting toolbar, it's not operable in keyboard alone, but there are keyboard shortcuts and so, that, you know, sort of speaks to the fact that there are workarounds here. It's possible for keyboard user to use this, they just need to memorize the keyboard shortcuts and so, hopefully, you know, those are discoverable and a person can easily figure out what they are.

The reason I selected this, was because of that last statement. They say a roadmap has been identified to remediate these known issues. They say this throughout their VPAT. Every time they say partially supports, they provide the details and mention this roadmap.

So, I want to know more about the roadmap. That wasn't something that they provided with their VPAT. That's my follow-up question to them. Where's this roadmap? Can we see the roadmap? And does include dates? By which you know, these issues are going to be fixed. Which ones are going to be fixed first.

And you know, let's get them on the hook for continuing to, to address their accessibility and improve their accessibility.

So, that, we're, I didn't leave a whole lot of time for questions, but I'm willing to answer questions in however much time we have available.

>> Kun: All right, thank you. Thank you, and right now, we already have two questions. In the chat. If you want to address them. The first one about how can vendor comply with WCAG 2.1 AA standards and yet their VPAT states 2.1.1 keyboard navigations. It's only partially fulfilled.

>> Terrill: They shouldn't be able to. To complain full compliance. (?) The VPAT doesn't have a place for declaring full compliance. It's, granular, it's down, you know, each success criterion is weighted separately. That is what -- I wouldn't expect full compliance. So, the question is, then, which items do they partially fulfill or not fulfill at all? And how significant are those problems?

>> Kun: Okay and the second question. Do you have an example of suggested contract languages that binds the vendor to address accessibility gaps identified in the VPAT? And like something more than the general statement, that will meet or exceed compliance?

>> Terrill: Check out our procurement page, again. UW.edu/accessibility/procurement. We do have some contract language. It is boiler plate language that'll be customized, you know, given whatever the interaction has been with that vendor. But, we also have at the University of Washington, an IT accessibility rider that's included within our terms and conditions. It's going through procurement services and vendors have that rider, which is a very detailed contract about their commitment to accessibility.

And a lot of vendors will actually red line that. They'll send it back to us and say "we're not agreeing to this as is, but we'll strike out all the stuff they feel like, they're concerned about." And then, then it becomes a negotiation game. How much risk are you, the person making the purchase? How much risk are you willing to assume if the vendor says no we're not going to agree to these conditions.

We've got pretty extensive documentation on our website for where we start. Our starting point in these contract negotiations.

>> Kun: Will you be able to say again the web address so they can find the documents?

>> Yep, it's in the slides. It's UW.edu/accessibility. That's our main site. There's a link there to procurement so you can find it in the menu.

>> Kun: Okay. So... the next question, being new to reading and interacting with VPATs, what should I focus on, familiarizing myself with first and effectively assess a VPAT?

>> Terrill: I'd say, just the things we talked about in this presentation and feel free, I think the slides are available. So, feel free to review those and you know, look again to make sure they

followed instructions. Because, often, you know, about half, do not. And so, that, in itself, is very telling. Just focus on those three success criteria that we talked about. Is that, really, can narrow the focus a lot and you can learn a lot about focusing on those three.

>> Kun: What will be your question here, the remarks to 2.1.1 states. One reported instance where a function cannot be achieved via keyboard alone, user impact is critical and will not be able to perform the functions.

>> Terrill: Okay, we've got a, a critical issue, just one, their product is overall, mostly accessible, but they've got one critical issue and some users are not going to be able to perform a function because of that critical issue.

So, this, then, in our role at the University of Washington, is advisory and we will tell the people that are making the purchasing decisions, that this is pretty serious and you know, think about that function in the great scheme of things. You know, what people are going to be using this product for. And where are you seeing that function? How critical is that function from your perspective?

And is it possible to come up with some sort of workaround? If somebody can't perform that function, can they do so via some other means? Not using this product?

You have to be thinking about equivalent alternatives. And if, ultimately, it can't be done without this product, and therefore, a keyboard user is just not going to be able to do it, then that's a huge problem and a huge risk and it comes down, then, to, you know, what's the scope of this purchase? Is this going to affect you know, students, faculty, staff, throughout the entire university?

Or just a departmental thing? All those questions come into play. And you know, that usually, have pretty strong recommendations that you really, you know, this is a significant risk, I wouldn't do this. Unless they fix it. You know, get them on the hook to fix it.

And ultimately, it's up to them and, I have no authority, unfortunately. We're getting more and more people that are listening to our recommendations.

So, that's a positive.

>> All right, thank you. That's all the questions I have so far in the chat. Thank you so much, Terrill, for doing the presentations and thank you, everybody, for showing up to the webinar today.

And, right now, I just -- I -- also, we will be sending out a brief, a brief survey right after the webinar and we'll also be posting the recording. We also have another webinar coming up June 9th titled grade, grading, inclusive classroom spaces in which students thrive. It'll be presented by Kathryn Olson, Dean of faculty and professor of psychology from [indiscernible] college. Head to our website if you want to sign up. Thank you, everyone, for participating in today's webinar. Thank you.