GABRIELLE O’BRIEN: Okay. Hello everyone. Thanks for joining us today. My name is Gabrielle O'Brien, Senior Project Officer at the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training, or ADCET for short. This webinar is being live captioned. To activate the captions, click the CC button in the tool bar that is located either on the top or the bottom of your screen. We also have captions available via the browser and Kylie will add that link to the chat box now.

I wish to acknowledge Lutruwita country, Tasmanian Aboriginal land, on which ADCET is hosted and I'm coming to you from Meanjin, Brisbane, on Turrbal and Yuggera and Gubbi Gubbi lands. In the spirit of reconciliation ADCET respectfully acknowledges First Nations and pays respects to elders’ past, present and emerging and to the many Aboriginal people who did not make elder status. I also acknowledge our countries participating in this meeting and acknowledge their elders and ancestors and their legacy to us and any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples participating in this webinar today.

Today's webinar is called a Practical Solution to increasing accessible content with Anthology Ally, and it is presented by Michael Garner, who is the Head of Solutions Engineering Asia Pacific for Anthology. Michael will be taking a look at Ally for LMS and Ally for Web; how they have helped organisations improve their accessibility and how they can help you improve your user experience and continue that universal design learning journey that we are all on.

Before we begin, a few more housekeeping details. This webinar is being live captioned by Helen from Bradley Reporting and will be recorded. The recording and transcript and slides will all be available on the ADCET website in the coming days. If you are having any technical difficulties, please email admin@adcet.edu.au.

The presentation will run for about 40 minutes or so, then we will have a Q&A at the end for about 10 or 15 minutes. Throughout the presentation, please feel free to use the chat box with us, but please remember to choose all panellists and attendees so that we can all have a read of what you are going to say. Michael will be happy to answer questions at the end, and if we run out of time we will try and answer those questions offline. If you have a question you would like asked in the Q&A session, please put it in the Q&A box, not the chat box. Now over to you, Michael.

MICHAEL GARNER: Thanks, Gabrielle. Hi everyone. Thank you for taking the time today to join us on this webinar. I'm Michael Garner, as Gabby mentioned, and I head up the Solutions Engineering for Anthology Ally for the Asia Pacific region. I've been with Anthology Ally for a little over 10 years coming from the education sector, in terms of managing enterprise applications, managing learning and teaching environments, and helping to drive adoption through those institutions.

So today we are going to be talking about Anthology Ally and how it affords the ability to create and provide more accessible content. So just a little bit about Anthology and Anthology is the largest education technology provider in a global scale there, servicing around about 150 million users ‑ there is probably a few extra now ‑ throughout 80 countries globally and across a wide range of over 60 SaaS products. We are very extensive in terms of that.

We are relatively young in being Anthology. We are made up of a number of organisations that have been or a number of companies that have been around for a considerable amount of time. Blackboard you may be familiar with, CampusLabs and Campus Management and IModules. You may have heard of them. They have been more predominant in the US, but there are products ‑ you may be aware of Chalk and Wire Portfolio solutions, those type of things. They have been around in the game for a long time. We've come together as a larger company and are delivering these solutions across the education sector globally there.

Okay. So when we think about accessibility ‑ and I'm saying this a little bit ‑ I'm guessing that there's a lot of people on the call here who are seeing this webinar and they have accessibility in the forefront of their minds. This might be preaching to the choir in terms of this but for those of you who are kind of new or feeling your way around how do we create accessible solutions or how do we get on this universal design sort of journey, I'm hoping that you can get some takeaways from this information. So giving everyone the same level of access to information doesn't necessarily generate an inclusive environment, and by just giving the same level of access, it's not recognising diversity. If we give everyone the same box to stand on to watch a game, if you have a different range of needs, it's not going to meet your needs and you're not going to be able to watch that game.

So, you know, when it comes to creating accessible environments, there is not a one‑size‑fits‑all approach. We as providers of those environments, we as providers of content, we need to be flexible, we need to be adaptive and we need to be accommodating to those needs.

When we at Anthology think about the definition of inclusive practice when it comes to education, it's probably best laid out with something that Hockings in 2010 said which defines inclusive learning and teaching in higher ed as ‑ and I will read this out verbatim. "The ways in which pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all. It embraces the view of the individual and the individual differences as a source of diversity that can enrich lives and learning of others."

That's kind of a mantra we sort of use when we are thinking about things at Anthology and we are looking at what are we doing and what are we delivering that can enrich the learning and ultimately the lives of our users ‑ not just our clients but their users, their consumers.

So when it comes to digital accessibility we are really talking about those digital artifacts, whether it be a document, web page, application, and are they able to be navigated and understood by a wide range of users, including those users that have various disabilities. The Central Digital and Data Office in the UK considers meaningful accessibility means "making your content clear and simple enough that most people can use it without needing to adapt it, whilst also supporting those that need to adapt things." So it's really about understanding and thinking about everyone in terms of when we are designing and creating content.

Now, why is this important? From an Australian perspective, when we look at the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare website, they are reporting that 1 in 6 people in Australia have an impairment or disability. I think the UK figures, they were reporting 1 in 5 people have an impairment or a disability or a lifelong illness. With the AIHW website they are also reporting ‑ so that 1 in 6 is about 18% of Australians. They are reporting another 22% have long‑term health conditions, not necessarily official disabilities, but long‑term health conditions, which we also know can create temporary impairments or long‑term impairments that need to be supported.

So when you look at those sort of percentages, that's a large percentage of our population. So thinking about ways in which we can create content, thinking about ‑ from our perspective thinking of ways we can create technologies that support, ways in which our technologies out of the box are, have the capability to be able to support diverse needs, whether it be learners or whether it just be the public that might be visiting your website and having a look at those sort of things. Taking this into consideration really does prepare ‑ when I'm thinking in terms of the learning management system, it really does prepare learners to succeed in very diverse working environments and it is that inclusive approach. It benefits all of your users, consumers, all of your learners. And it's just the right thing to do, right?

Then that flows on to, you know, the why it is important and we also find ‑ and I find this also, too, in dealing a lot more outside of Australia and New Zealand, and when we start to look at other markets and other areas, that people often think about accessibility related to people with a visible disability. They are not considering the whole range of different diverse learners when it comes to ‑ or users when it comes to modern day. When we think about ‑ for many institutions, only a small number of learners, a small number of their users identify. If we are thinking about public websites, none of your users are going to self‑identify and say, "Can I have that in alternate format, can I have that in this format, can I have this page so I can read it on my screen reader?" It is something we need to just build into the way that we present and deliver items for our consumers.

So we have, you know, the diverse range of learners or users when we think about 21st century modern day consumers. Then there is also the challenges for the institution or an organisation in terms of building that inclusive environment. So there is a range of those, and especially when we ‑ the number of institutions we've spoken to, there is, firstly and foremost, is we have a limited visibility into how or where the problems might lie. We know ‑ if I'm thinking about the LMS, we know that our instructors are uploading content, we are creating content, we don't know whether it's accessible, and that leads on to the next one about their lack of awareness. I come back to the public web. A lot of organisations are good, are getting better with their public web infrastructure and the process they go through to make sure the content ‑ the infrastructure is accessible, the content is relatively accessible and they are adhering to a standard of some sort when it comes to web accessibility.

One of the challenges there, especially as organisations are larger, is the lack of awareness, the lack of understanding of how not taking these simple steps into consideration can affect users. That sort of dovetails into a lack of ‑ when we think about learning and teaching, the lack of instructor guidance on how to improve accessibility. Depending on the organisation, the teams responsible for accessibility and supporting disabilities within the organisation can often be small, and so they are resource poor, they're time poor, they're pulled in every which way. So having ability to get the insight to be able to improve awareness, to be able to provide training and guidance on how to improve content is paramount, not to mention increased legal requirements, expectations, governments looking at how they can change organisational or education institution funding models based on their Disability Action Plans, how they are accommodating accessibility in those type of things, and in students looking for more universally‑designed content and flexibility. Coming back to that previous slide about diverse users, diverse learners, people are looking for alternate ways in which they can consume content and that's just about, you know ‑ it's also about being able to consume it at the time in the format when they need it, but it's also about supporting special needs and accessibility requirements.

So with all that said, Ally has something in it for everyone. Just a bit of background on Ally, and Ally have been in the market from around about 2017, and currently sort of serves around 1,300 institutions from around the world. So we do have a lot of organisations who are using Ally, leveraging Ally and taking advantage of it. And because of that, we've processed a considerable amount of courses. When I say "courses" I'm talking about the individual subject units, specifically in the learning management system. That's where Ally primarily ‑ its inception was about, the learning management system. So we've processed 81 million courses over the time, and that's resulted in a phenomenal amount of content items as well that have been processed.

Ally is really around creating that more inclusive learning environment for everyone. We've also extended that now to creating more inclusive web ‑ public website environments as well.

Now, I'm really excited about this. We hold it every year. It's for people who license Ally from us. It's sort of ‑ well, it is, not sort of ‑ it is aligned with Global Accessibility Awareness Day, or GAAD, in terms of the Fix Your Content Day. This is a competition where people can sign up and compete in terms of creating accessible and more inclusive digital learning content. So, yeah, it's not too far away before that's actually happening but if you want to ‑ if you do currently use Ally, if you want to join in the challenge, it will be great to get some more people participating from this region. I think last year Charles Darwin University took out an award with regards to it. So the links have been pasted in chat, so please feel free to visit it or just have a look at the communications pack associated with the Fix Your Content Day and get a bit of an understanding around what it's about, how it works, all of that.

Okay. I wanted to pause there for a moment, and just with the people that are on the call, I'm very interested with regards to do you have Ally for LMS? Have you heard of it? Ally for Web is not really used that much in ANZ at the moment. We don't really have many clients, if any. So it's predominantly Ally for LMS. You can either put it in chat or if you want to go to Menti.com and put that code in, you can just click on the response and answer that. Thanks, Darren. I will give that a few minutes if anyone wants to access it. I see there are a few comments in the chat already. Awesome. I see Tracey is using that. Okay. We have a few ‑ we have some that are aware of it, we have some that aren't aware of it. Okay.

So as we step through this next section, you may ‑ those that are aware of Ally for LMS may see a lot of familiar stuff but for everyone else I'm hoping that it actually goes through and gives you a lot of insight into how Ally actually works and supports the creation of inclusive content. So there is three core components to Ally. There is the alternate format component. There is the content creator feedback. So if we think back to those challenges for an organisation, a couple of those is awareness and guidance. One of the other ones ‑ if I think about alternate formats, one of the challenges for institutions is where we have users who identify and require that support, there can often be challenges in providing exactly what they need, there can be challenges in providing that in a timely manner as well. You've got to think about is the SME available to work with us in terms of getting that alternate format, et cetera, et cetera, how many requests are we getting and all of those. And then the accessibility report, when you think about the challenge of the insight, how do I know how my course, how my website, how my institution is performing with regards to accessibility, having the ability to see that, to be able to drill down into departments or the domains, the sub‑domains of your website and see when those accessibility issues arise. It's incredibly important so you can actually take strategies to mitigate a lot of those things.

Coming back to the alternate formats, you know, Ally generates alternate formats out of the box. So it's not relying on you to go and create those alternate formats. It's taking the initial content that was created, uploaded to the platform and it's generating an alternate format for that. Our primary alternate format is really around Semantic HTML. So it uses algorithm based on the WCAG guidelines. It looks for the various components. Makes a couple of assumptions based on if there's certain things in documents or in content that are missing, but it traverses through that information and then it starts to build out a Semantic HTML component, so a version of it. It takes headings, makes them Semantic HTML heading tags, takes paragraphs, et cetera, takes tables, even takes mathematical formulas and converts them into MathML and does all that type of stuff, so that what you end up with is a Semantic HTML version which is much more accessible, makes the document much more navigable, and readable for people using assistive devices. And that format also works extremely well on mobile devices and using their capabilities as well.

What Ally then does is takes the Semantic HTML version and also allows to generate alternate formats of that version. So you might be able to create an ePub from that, you could generate an audio version, you can generate Electronic Braille, Immersive Reader, all of those things. We also have a translation engine so it can actually translate it into alternate languages. If you are thinking of supporting users who are a language other than English, they can choose from a dropdown list of supported languages and perhaps choose that language that's there. So it goes through and does all those type of things which is ‑ I think is fantastic, it's really great.

And it also differs, too, when it comes to the types of content items. So there are some items that will have a smaller number of alternate formats and others that will have another one. For instance, if you upload an untagged PDF, it may generate a version of that with extracted semantic information to make it more accessible, et cetera. So I will take you through some of those options in the demonstration around that. And that process is not lengthy, which I will show you in the demonstration as well. You know, the engine behind the scenes, based on the selection, it goes through and processes and generates that format on the fly. It keeps some of the format ‑ to get technical now, it keeps some of that format in the cache of the application, in the cache of the Ally SaaS application so that if you have users who are clicking on it and wanting ‑ multiple users requesting it, the delay in providing that is a lot less. The first time it gets generated it might take a minute. The second time someone requests it, it's down in, you know, 15 seconds depending on the speed of their internet in terms of that and the size of the file. So it really does work through that.

When a new piece of content is uploaded which is a new version of that is uploaded, the way that we integrate into the platforms there that triggers Ally to discard the previous versions and do another scan of the new version.

So as I mentioned, instructor feedback ‑ actually I didn't mention instructor feedback, really. When we go through instructor feedback, that awareness, that guidance, so when they create some content, Ally will process that in line with the 2.1 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. We are currently working on the 2.2 capabilities. It will give guidance on how to solve that, so it starts to touch on why is it important that I think about this? What does it mean to users when I actually have something that supports this, and how do I fix it, so it gives some step‑by‑step guidelines through that, and they can fix the issue as they work through their content creation.

I have just got these slides here in case we had technical issues to be able to show you, so I will skip through those. Lastly the reporting. I mentioned earlier on, really, there is reporting at the course level that can be seen by the instructor, in LMS the reporting at a system level as well, and then also in the web environment.

Okay. Let's have a quick look at the demonstration. I will just make sure I'm ‑ there we go. Okay. I am going to use the Blackboard Learn environment here for this demonstration, but I do want to preface it with the fact that Ally is supported on a number of platforms. Let me ‑ I have had a bit of a mishap. That's what I was after. Ally ‑ I will just put this in chat ‑ on the accessibility checklist, you can visit that if you wish to, but it talks about the various checks that it performs, but it also goes through for the LMS platform the various LMS solutions that we support at this stage. So it's not just confined to Anthology products. We actually are working with Moodle and Open LMS, Canvas, DZL Brightspace, and there is also, for anyone using Schoology, there is an integration for Ally out there. That's not to say we can't work with other LMS platforms. We just need to have a conversation and probably spin up a proof for concept around that. The same thing with self‑hosted Moodle. We just need to have a conversation, because we often find there is a big variance in how they have implemented their self‑hosted Moodle or even a managed‑hosted type approach to Moodle, the types of themes, the types of plug‑ins, the way they have structured it all, so we just have to have a bit of a conversation to see how that works.

Jumping back to the learning management system. I'm in here as an instructor. And with Ally ‑ I had that logged in before ‑ with Ally what I notice when I'm in my environment here, where I've uploaded content, where I've uploaded files ‑ and this is where Ally came from originally, was about traversing files and making file content more accessible. We've since evolved that to be a little bit more ‑ to work across a lot more of the content creation when it comes to documents, activities and that within the LMS. So when I add a file, add a document to the LMS, Ally processes it and, as an instructor, as a content creator, not a student, I get access to the accessibility score. So I can instantly see on the dial here what my accessibility score is. And I can have a look at that content and I can see ‑ it starts off with the first issue but we might have a whole heap of issues associated with this particular file. This document itself doesn't have any headings, it doesn't have a correct language set, it has tables that have missing headers, it has insufficient contrast.

If I was to click on the insufficient contrast, it tells me there is a number of text fragments here with insufficient contrast, and I can step through each of those items, and have a look at what that is. We are making an assumption in the fact that we've uploaded the document, you would have the original. If not, you can download it from there. What you can do is once you have gone through and had a look at that, you might have your Word document open as well ‑ and I will just grab the one that I've just fixed a couple of items in ‑ you can just re‑upload that version and that goes up and gets replaced in the system there. Probably slow upload because I'm on video as well. It's uploaded it, but I haven't fixed all the contrast issues, right. So I fixed some of them. Might have increased it a little bit. But if I am to have a look at all of the issues again and have a look at all the contrast issues, you will have noticed that those first couple of items have been changed. So I did go in and change the colour of those headings a bit. So you can work through and change a lot of those items in that particular document itself. Upload and do that.

So the guidance is taking me through what does it mean to have insufficient contrast; why is contrast an issue; what does it mean to a user? And then it takes me through how I can fix it. So it might be Microsoft Office 365, I am working through that, and it will go through and it will take me through steps on what I need to do, or I can print those instructions out and keep them on how I can fix that particular document using Microsoft Word. It gives you that guidance. It's focusing on that awareness. It's focusing on that guidance.

Equally, too, you know, some of the simplest accessibility issues, especially around when we upload images, we are going through and having a look at the descriptions related to images. So, again, why is this important? Why should I care about this? And how do I write a good description? I did have one before and I don't know where I put it. There we go. That's where I put that description. I don't have to type it. Or alternatively I can make this a decorative image. Obviously if I have just put an icon up in my content, to actually ‑ it doesn't actually serve a purpose. I could mark that as decorative. However, this particular one is part of the content, so I want to make sure that this content actually has a really good description for it. Once I update that, Ally does a process of whether that fits in with it, and marks it as correct. So my accessibility score is good then.

I mentioned about dealing with ‑ well, before I jump into that I will talk about one other one. Another thing might be if there is imagery that actually could cause seizures, okay. So, you know, this particular gif here I might load up, I might have thought it's great to have a flashy gif that brings attention, but Ally has checked it and gone this is seizure‑inducing. I won't show the image. It's one that's bright colours and it's flashing. You know, takes me back to the blink tag days of the early HTML for anyone who can think back to that. And so, again, it assesses the content, it takes a look at it, what is the problem associated with it, what does that mean? Why can I not use it? Or why shouldn't I use it? I will admit, Ally doesn't prevent you from using that content; it's just guidance and awareness. We don't make any decisions no, absolutely cannot use it, but what it does is it provides guidance and awareness around those type of things. So if I decide ‑ actually, I did upload it incorrectly. I can remove it straight away from there and deal with that issue.

Just coming quickly to creating content, because obviously from a learning design perspective, if we have any learning designers in the audience there they would be going, "Yeah, but you don't just upload files. Your LMS should not be a file repository." Correct. We want to create engaging content that promotes active learning. So upload is one thing but creating documents that structure things in a particular way, that is paramount in the LMS. So Ally also supports, whether it be Blackboard Learn, Canvas, Moodle, DZL where you are creating rich content, and that could comprise videos, that could comprise images, that could comprise PowerPoints and other files intertwined with context hyperlinks, all of those things, it goes through and processes that. So the Blackboard Learn Wizard Editor, not so much a challenge in terms of creating HTML that is accessible because we have ‑ as you can see up here, it's fairly limited in terms of what you can use. So we've purposely gone about making it so that you can really only create accessible content. So it's using that properly, down to all the tables and how you structure that and insert that. But obviously you can add additional content, whether it be via an attachment, whether it be via some of the other plug‑ins around, YouTube videos, those type of things. So when you are creating those, you want to be assured that that is processing and making stuff ‑ bringing to your attention the accessibility level of that content.

So you can see here that the accessibility of this particular image is not very high. The reason being that I was very lazy when I put that content in and made the description the same as the file name. So I will go back to the one that I have the description for. So, again, you know, it's taken the Starry Night jpeg file name, done that. Let's just replace that and the content has now been fixed in terms of that. I will take that hyphen out. I can go through again, very quickly and easily, and correct those issues around that. Again, the PowerPoint can bring through some, again, highlighting the various problems associated with some of the content in the PowerPoint. I can open that up, I can correct those issues, go through and make that file more accessible. Again, with guidance from Ally, uploading the PowerPoint here and doing it, not having to go back and replacing that there. Ally uses that within your course platform to replace that content.

Okay. The other added value there ‑ I'm just mindful of the time ‑ the other added value is the alternate formats and the reporting. So alternate formats, as a learner, as a user, I come in and see this alternate format capabilities here. I don't see the indicators. So I will jump in as a student preview. So I'm in here as a student. You will see that I don't see any of those indicators, I just see the alternate formats where that is available. So remembering that I just created the content here and uploaded the images. I can go in, I can choose from here as to whether I want to take that as an ePub, Electronic Braille, audio, BeeLine Reader, et cetera. I am hoping my audio still goes through the system here. So if I was to ‑ if I downloaded the audio version, just for time‑wise I downloaded one earlier.

VIDEO: Title Vincent Van Gogh. Begin paragraph text. Vincent Van Gogh is one of the most celebrated artists of all time. His bold use of colour and innovative brush work made him a leading figure in the post-impressionist movement. One of his most famous works is Starry Night which depicts a village with swirling stars and a bright moon. The painting is ‑ ‑ ‑

MICHAEL: Hopefully you heard that. That just came up with the audio for the entire document that's there. Equally, too, if I was to download the ePub version of it, what that creates for me is this here. Let me just go back to there. So it creates an ePub version of the content that's in the learning management system. So I can load that up on my device, go through it, make annotations that I need to, make notes against that, read that at my own pace or use any other device that I might need to for that as well. So it creates that straight out of the bat, likewise as well with all of the translated versions in terms of that content.

I will take the opportunity here to ‑ because Ally does have some similar components from web and the LMS, I will take the opportunity to dive over to the web version to just give you a quick demo of that, and I will dive into the reporting. The reporting is similar within the LMS as well, in that as an instructor I have the ability to look at the reporting from my entire course or at an admin level I have the ability "all admin", or could be the accessibility office have the ability to look at the LMS across the entire institution. So all of the courses across teaching periods, across faculties, et cetera, et cetera.

Okay. So pause for a moment. We are diving into Ally for Web, and probably the easiest way to do this is… you can also have a look at this if you're ‑ because this is a public web. So we are talking about Ally for Web and this is how it works on public websites. Our help.Blackboard site is a public website, and the link I placed in chat. You can see how I can access it on the screen here. What we are doing is Ally ‑ the implementation provides a plug‑in that snaps into your content management system and there is a bit of code that resides on all the web pages. What that does from a public user perspective, it provides this alternate format. So on any of the pages there, it has a look at the page, it comes up with, "Okay, we found some individual files on there. Do you want to grab an alternate format of that particular file or do you want to grab the entire page as an alternate format?" So it processes that and says, "Okay. Well, I can give that to you as ePub, Electronic Braille, et cetera, et cetera. So you can choose ‑ again, you are providing alternate formats in a particular way that the user wants to consume that information. If it's an individual PDF, I might have that Semantic HTML capabilities, et cetera, et cetera. I may also be able to dive into a translated version that I might want from that perspective. So I might select Danish, not that I speak Danish, but it gives me the version that you will see is now in Danish. If we have any other Danish people on the call there, they could probably validate that these sentences make sense in terms of translation. So that appears for any of those translated versions on the system there, they can easily generate content for that.

The placement ‑ from a placement perspective, when you are going through your implementation, you can change this at any time based on your website. You have the ability to have the small ribbon there, you can have a slightly larger ribbon, you can have a bottom bar which just puts that on the bottom of all the web pages and allows you to generate those formats, or you could specify a particular custom element that it sits in a particular way, and you have access to be able to do that. So it's very easy to apply that on a website template and deploy that across your entire website.

If we take a look at the reporting side of Ally ‑ again, mindful of time here. So if we are having a look at the accessibility report ‑ and this is the same ‑ similar ‑ the reports are available within the LMS where you have Ally for LMS. Ally for Web, there is an URL that the admin can go to. And instantly you are greeted with a timeline where you drill into historical reporting of the accessibility across all of the domains that you have licensed in terms of Ally for Web. So you could have a look at that. You can go through, you can start to drill into all of the severe items or you can have a look at each of the various accessibility issues and drill into those as well. So you may want to deal with the items that are very, very serious. As you can see, it takes me straight to the area of that particular content item that has a problem.

I will go back to the overview. We can go through some more there in terms of that. That's at a higher level. You can also go into individual domains. If we are thinking about ‑ I will look at ‑ if I was to look at Blackboard Ally. You would expect that Blackboard Ally ‑ it should have 100%, but you would expect Blackboard Ally has a high accessibility rating on its documentation. But instantly I see there is 246 content items within that Ally domain. We've got a 93% accessibility rating. And I can drill into the data that shows me how is the overall accessibility score ‑ it said 93 on the back one; it's 94 here ‑ and have a look at the breakdown of the content. We have a lot of PDF documents, we've got some Word documents and some other documents up there. Thankfully, Ally has no severe accessibility issues, but we have some other ones that we might need to consider. So we can dive into this one. And this is another thing that the HTML checker does. It checks links. If you have links on your web pages that 404, then it will pick that up. So if we go into that and have a look ‑ actually, if I go into the guidance screen, again similar to the LMS, goes through that guidance, you can check on that.

Lastly with the reporting, you have the ability to look at usage. So if we wanted to have a look at the usage across a particular time, you can generate those statistics. I will drag that on to the screen. I will minimise it a little bit so I'm not having to switch between screens. If I bring that into view, this is a typical download for ‑ this time for this particular domain. It gives me a list of all the details here. We can start to have a look at alternate formats over time, their access, their downloads, and et cetera. So it gives you access to all of that data. It does the same thing, too, in the LMS integration as well. So you have the ability to access that usage data for your own organisation.

All right. So lastly, going back to the presentation, using Ally and Ally checks, Ally itself is an application that we will try and make sure that it is itself accessible. So I will just quickly switch again here. Again, if you are interested in it, I will put that link in here. That's our ‑ a lot of our accessibility templates. So when we are thinking about VPATs and those compliance documents, we can ‑ we have all of those for our products on the site there. So we do run through VPATs for accessibility ‑ for Ally, sorry, and make sure it is accessible for our end‑users, and I did share the checklist, or one of the checklists URLs that actually talked about how Ally checks and what it checks against, but really Ally does check against, as I mentioned, the 2.1 standards. We are working through additional standards as they are made available.

GABRIELLE: Michael, I might just interrupt you there. We are about to run out of time, so we only have a few minutes for some questions.

MICHAEL: Absolutely.

DARREN BRITTEN: I might jump in. Thank you for that Michael. That was a great overview there. We've had a few questions come through. One of those is around the alternate format generator. Who owns the intellectual property of those converted? I notice there is a terms of use at the bottom of the box when people go to select an alternate format. Is that covered in the terms of use?

MICHAEL: Yes. The terms of use, there is ‑ it covers off on the fact that when you are actually downloading an alternate format, the reasons are that you are accessing it because of a disability or another approved reason or you have ‑ you have permission to access that material. So, again, it's not preventing you from accessing it, it's asking you to accept those terms and conditions and that you are taking ownership of that permission to do that.

DARREN: Yep. So the intellectual property remains with the original, of course.

MICHAEL: Absolutely. Absolutely. Because, you know, when you look at a lot of copyright law, intellectual property resides with the original author unless it's passed over to someone else. So that stays the same. We don't gain any ‑ we don't gain any ownership of intellectual property in terms of that.

DARREN: Another quick one here from Rhonda, and I assume this was with WCAG 2.3 and with 3 coming out. Will you be updating just to 2.2, as you mentioned, or will you be looking at the most current version when that happens?

MICHAEL: We are currently going through the process of 2.2 at the moment. I'm just having a look quickly at our roadmap. 2.2 updates should be coming out probably within the next 3 to 6 months. And then ultimately when any further update come out, we will be working on incorporating those ‑ ‑ ‑

DARREN: So get the current WCAG.

MICHAEL: Yeah.

DARREN: And Amy has asked can Ally be implemented with other programs such as MS Teams and SharePoint?

MICHAEL: We do have a component that we personally haven't built any integrations into those platforms. We do have an Ally API component which allows organisations to build their own. So we are sort of doing some work with some of the repository‑type organisations. So at the moment no, but anything could be possible. The merger with Anthology from Blackboard, Anthology has a very big global market of partnerships. So from that perspective, who knows what could be happening.

DARREN: Okay. Watch this space.

MICHAEL: Yeah, watch this space.

DARREN: Speaking of repositories, there is another question there on if the resources are ‑ I assume this is LMS ‑ from a repository, for example, Aquela, will Ally still give that a score?

MICHAEL: No, not at this stage. It doesn't traverse ‑ the only external links that it traverses is ‑ actually, I should back up. From an external linking perspective, if you are linking external applications, it will traverse sort of YouTube videos at the moment. We are working on some other external linking. It does process some LTI links, to a certain extent, where we have sort of worked with those clients on that ‑ with those clients or with those partner technologies on that side of things. So I will have to check with Aquela. I don't believe it works with Aquela, or some of those other repositories. I know we've had some quite in-depth conversations about some of the library reading repositories and how might that work with those as well.

DARREN: Thank you. Another one here about the speech synthesiser that's used in the demo. "It's very nice", was a comment that was there. What is that? Further to that is that selectable? Could you select the voice, if you didn't want a female, you wanted a male voice reading it, or is it one‑size‑fits‑all with the audio books or the MP3s at the moment?

MICHAEL: The MP3 I will have to check on whether we can change whether you can specify. I haven't seen a configuration item to say whether you can specify or give that user choice. I do know with the Immersive Reader ‑ and I didn't show you the Immersive Reader version, you have the option ‑ when I was playing it before, you have the option to choose whether it's a male or female voice, from that perspective. So on the Immersive Reader, yes you can. That's using probably more the local device capabilities as opposed to the MP3. I will check on that one, though.

DARREN: And a query: Has Ally fixed ‑ there was a bug for semester reporting and it was pulling out historical data and timing out. Do you know if that's a bug that's been fixed?

MICHAEL: No, I do not. I will check on the bug, which is semester reporting.

DARREN: If you can answer this, and it maybe varies, what's the cost to add Ally to the Blackboard platform?

MICHAEL: It depends on the size of the organisation. So I can certainly take that offline, have that conversation. We certainly do provide preferential pricing to existing users around that. So, yeah, it is based on the size of the organisation. So similar to the LMS implementation.

DARREN: One last very quick one, because Gabby has some bits to wrap things up. Is there an accessibility score in alternative format provided for YouTube links and embedded YouTube clips?

MICHAEL: So there was a delay in us getting that out. I am just looking at the roadmap now. It should have been out beginning of the year. The video scoring has been delayed. Should be coming out I would say hopefully by latest July. June. It is scheduled ‑ yeah, they pushed it to Q4. So this is our Q4 which is ‑ Australian taxation ‑ so let's say June 30. The end of our Q4. We should have it out soon. I will get a more defined date around the support for that.

DARREN: Excellent. Thank you. I will throw back to you, Gabby.

GABRIELLE: Thanks, Darren. Thanks, Michael, that was really informative. Even though I don't understand all of it, I'm sure that our participants will. Thanks everyone who attended today. Please look out for an email that will tell you how you can upload this presentation and share it with all your colleagues who weren't able to make it today. Please also go to our events section on our events page for future webinars. And speaking of accessibility, don't forget again on Tuesday we are announcing the winners of our Annual Accessibility and Action Awards, and we've got some great examples of inclusive practice and accessibility in amongst those. So thank you again everybody for attending. Thank you again, Michael.

MICHAEL: Thanks everyone. Thank you for the opportunity.