DARLENE MCLENNAN: Okay. So thank you for joining us today. For those who don't know me, my name's Darlene McLennan, I am the Manager of the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET for short). To let you know this webinar is being live captioned. You can activate the captions by clicking on the cc button in the tool bar that is located either on the top or bottom of your screen. We also have the captions available in a browser and we'll put the link into the chat now if you would like to access it there.

Okay, I'm on Lutruwita (Tasmanian Aboriginal land). In the spirit of reconciliation, ADCET respectfully acknowledges the Lutruwita nations and also recognise the Aboriginal history and culture of the land. And I want to pay my respects to Elders past and present, and to the many Aboriginal people that did not make elder status. I also would like to acknowledge all the countries participating in this meeting, and also acknowledge their elders and ancestors and their legacy to us and any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in the webinar today.

Today's webinar, Access for All ‑ Championing Accessibility in the University Context, is presented by Dr Agata Mrva‑Montoya ‑ I forgot to practise the name, so I do apologise ‑ and Julie Ganner. Agata is a lecturer and a degree Director of Masters of Publishing at the University of Sydney, and Julie is an accredited editor and coordinator of the Institute of Professional Editors Disability Initiative. I am very fortunate that I got to see this presentation or a similar presentation at the Print Disabilities Conference in Sydney this year, which is a very powerful event. If you get a chance to attend that conference in years coming, please do, some great sessions were held.

Agata and Julie will be offering practical suggestions on how to write and publish with accessibility in mind in both research and educational context. Topics include planning and writing for accessibility, communication with publishers and the importance of accessibility considerations when choosing publishing formats and designing educational matters.

Before we begin, a few more housekeeping details. This webinar, as we said at the beginning, is being captioned by Helen from Bradley Reporting. The recording will be made available on ADCET website in the coming days. If you have technology difficulties, you can email us at admin@adcet.edu.au. Our presenters will talk for around 45 to 50 minutes, and at the end we will have 10 minutes or so for questions.

For those who have been here before, you know we use the chat box to chat with each other and it's great because I forgot to mention that if you would like to put the country you are on into the chat box, please do, and people are doing that already. We've got you so well trained, so thank you. But if you want to ask a question of our panellists, if you could add that to the Q&A box, as that's where I will be getting the questions for our presenters from. Also just a reminder that if you want to have a conversation with everybody, that you choose all panellists and attendees so we can all have that conversation.

All right. That's all for the housekeeping and the acknowledgements. Really excited to have both of our presenters here today. Thank you so much for joining us and giving your time so freely to this really important topic. Really looking forward to hearing the presentation again. Okay, over to you both. Thank you.

DR AGATA MRVA-MONTOYA: Thank you, Darlene. Thank you so much for the introduction and invitation to talk about interests of publishing practices and how they can be used in a university context. And I have to tell you the presentation is completely different to what we talked about at the roundtable because this was around guidelines and today we will go into far more practical details about how you can use them in the University context.

And I would also like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, waters and sky which we have been privileged to live and work, and on our behalf, I would like to pay respect to the Dharawal, Gadigal and Garigal people and their elders, community leaders and knowledge holders past and present.

So what we are going to talk about today. First, we want to talk briefly about the accessibility turn in the publishing industry and provide a bit of context to our guidelines, the Books without Barriers, practical guide to inclusive publishing which we co‑authored with a couple of colleagues. Then I will talk briefly about how academic library and disability staff can contribute to implementing accessibility in the University context. We will spend most of the hour today on practical suggestions of how to write and publish with accessibility in mind in both research and educational context.

Julie will talk about planning and writing and I will take over and talk about inclusive design, formats and platforms. So that's the plan. As Darlene said, it should take us about 45 minutes and we will have plenty of time for questions.

So accessibility turn in publishing. In the context of publishing, as you well know, the needs of people with print disability have been traditionally relegated to alternative format providers or disability organisations and the access to content is usually provided by specialist library organisations, such as Vision Australia and people who require medical diagnosis to access those resources. Now, the growing interest in accessibility implementation in the publishing industry is the result of the confluence of three trends. The first one is the increasing recognition of the rights of people with print disability, the second one is opportunities created by digital technologies that transform the capacity to produce but also to read content in accessible format. And the final one is the changing legal framework.

First, the Marrakesh Treaty to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled which came into force in 2016 was a pivotal point in improving access to books. Even though the Marrakesh Treaty didn't directly affect how publishers produce books, it has stimulated in accessibility implementation in the publishing industry globally and this includes Australia.

But before I talk about Australian context, I want to mention the European Accessibility Act which was adopted in 2019 and which will enter in force in June 2025. Now, in contrast to the exception‑based Marrakesh Treaty, the new European Accessibility Act requires publishers to produce digital publications in accessible formats for the European market. But not only books. The entire supply chain will need to be made content accessible and available to use through accessible services.

Now, while this directive is important to European publishers, it will affect any organisation wanting to sell books in the European market, hence its influence is much greater. Of course, as global publishers are improving workflows and producing accessible content, this accessible content will also come to us, so this is really, really exciting.

Now, coming back to Australia, following the implementation of Marrakesh Treaty and the adoption by government, in November 2016 representatives of the publishing industry, libraries, copyright organisations, disability associations, government and accessible format producers met for the first time as part of the Marrakesh Treaty forum in order to identify the key challenges to making published material accessible and build industry capacity. A year later, the forum was named Australian Inclusive Publishing Initiative and both Julie and I have been involved in this initiative.

In 2019, Julie published ‑ initially published two guides. The first guide offers publishers a set of workflow strategies to create accessible books and Julie was co‑author of this guide. The second one explains the environment for making books accessible for those with print disability. If you would like to understand better what Marrakesh Treaty is about there are ‑ I would highly recommend looking at both.

But there was a need for more practical guidelines on accessibility implementations in the publishing industry. A team of editors led by Julie embarked on the task in late 2021. And in April 2023 we released Books Without Barriers, A Practical Guide to Inclusive Publishing.

The guidelines are based on our professional experience, review of international literature and existing guidelines including those focusing on accessibility. We also carried out surveys of readers with print disabilities and consulted broadly with accessibility experts, people with print disability, alternative format producers, editors, publishers and even audio book producers.

The guide contains four parts. The first one, Planning For Inclusive Publishing we focus on the diverse ways in which the audience reads how to develop accessibility policy for publishers and planning the publishing workflow. In the second part, which focuses on developing content, we talk about writing and editing, creating accessible tables, and considerations for mathematics and sciences content.

Now, the next part focuses on describing images and tables, and how to write image descriptions, and we also include lots of examples of descriptions for different types of illustrations in different contexts.

Finally, the last part focusing on producing accessible books. It looks at design digital format, audio books and testing and reviewing for quality assurance. There are also a couple of appendices which includes a style sheet template for accessibility best practice and a glossary.

Now, in this talk we are going to focus on practical tips on how academic, library and disability staff can embrace inclusive publishing practices that are based on industry best practice and which are covered in the guidelines in detail.

Okay. So while publishers are ultimately responsible for the creation of accessible content, they operate in a complex book value chain with other stakeholders such as authors, librarians, book sellers’ distributors as well as hardware and software designers who all needed the access to books for readers with print disability. There are three areas where academic authors, disability staff and librarians have an important role to play to improve access for those with print disability in the University context. The first one is acquisition and curation of content and resources. We should consider print disability when making, purchasing adoption decisions. Publishers, especially education on Scholarly, have been making progress on accessibility implementation globally and it is really exciting, but not all on board yet.

Regardless, librarians should raise the issue of accessibility when making purchasing decisions and educators should take accessibility into account when making decisions on adoption of textbooks and learning resources for their units. Asking publishers about accessibility will provide them with another incentive to implement inclusive publishing workflows. Now, those librarians who provide research and teaching support should perhaps and could raise the issue of accessibility when talking to academics in relation to their publishing practices, and educational materials they produce.

But most importantly, researchers and educators should be thinking about accessibility when writing, publishing or creating educational content for their students. And it is not just researchers. We are all content creators and publishers, whether we are academics, library or disability staff, so we need to make sure that our websites, catalogue services, resources and marketing collateral, including social media, are accessible to people with print disability.

Now, many libraries support library‑based publishing programs, scholarly monographs, open educational resources, some support publishing platforms such as open journal system. Inclusive publishing practices should be embedded in all these initiatives to make the content more accessible. Now I will hand over to Julie to talk about planning and writing with accessibility in mind. And I'm just going to stop sharing my screen and Julie will take over. So bear with us a second.

JULIE GANNER: Thanks, Agata. Right. I will start off talking about ‑ ‑ ‑

DARLENE: Sorry, Julie, it's not in presenter mode.

JULIE: Not in presenter mode.

DARLENE: We are seeing all the slides. If we can hit the full screen.

JULIE: I will just check which one it is. I think it's ‑ ‑ ‑

DARLENE: Sorry, we didn't test you beforehand, did we?

JULIE: Is that all right?

DARLENE: That's perfect, thank you.

JULIE: Okay, thank you. All right. So planning for accessibility. The first thing to think about, which I'm sure you're all aware of, is that not everyone reads visually. Some people access information through hearing or touch or a combination of senses. So we need to ensure that the information we publish is flexible enough to be perceivable and understandable no matter which sense or senses are used to read it. In other words, think about reading as a tactile and aural activity as well as a visual one. Your work as a writer may be read in a variety of different reading formats, including audio, tactile formats such as Braille, hardcopy including large print, or digital. If you haven't seen them already, UTS has created really terrific videos about the many different ways their students read and the assistive technologies they use. These are available on YouTube and we've included an example in our resources list. If you go to the first one you will find the rest of the suite on YouTube.

There are three areas for writers to look at when considering how to make publications accessible. The first is writing. Again, think about how readers may access your publication. Instructions, descriptive elements and symbols still need to make sense when the reader can't see the text, and we will look at ways to do this in more detail in a moment.

If your work is complex, such as a research paper, you could also consider adding a plain language overview. This will allow readers with learning difficulties and disabilities to understand what it is about, the main findings and even if they might struggle to follow more rigorous language used in the publication itself.

The second is writing image descriptions and captions. You need to ensure that readers who can't see the text can understand what's in the illustrations and make sense of cross‑references to them. All illustrations, therefore, need a figure number as well as a caption and an image description, which is often called Alt text, which conveys the key information in the illustration. The third area to think about is the choice of images in your publication. When you are thinking about illustrations for your work, remember that someone, which is probably you, is going to have to describe what's in the image in order to make it accessible to readers who can't see it. Ideally, you want illustrations that are as uncluttered as possible, such as a photograph in which the subject obviously relates to the topic in hand without there being too much extraneous information in the background.

So, for example, if you were providing an illustration of a Brontosaurus, you'd want a picture that features just a Brontosaurus rather than an illustration with lots of other types of dinosaurs in the background that will need describing too. Not only will this make the image description easier to write, but you will usually end up with images that are better for everyone because they are clearer and much more focused.

Also consider people with low vision when choosing illustrations. A cluttered graph with tiny labels is going to be very hard for anyone to read, particularly a reader with low vision or perceptual difficulties. It may be better to use a key than lots of graph lines. Don't forget that some of your readers may be colour blind. You will need to consider their needs too when choosing chart colours and avoid problem combinations such as red and green. Agata will talk about this more in her part of the presentation.

Right. Let's start with writing. Again, remember to consider different ways your material may be read. You can use this as a mental checklist. Will my material still make sense if it's heard or accessed by touch rather than seen? Is it still perceivable and understandable if it's provided in different formats? Of course, this consideration affects not only documents but also websites such as learning management platforms.

The first thing we need to consider ‑ sorry, I just need to move on. That's better. The first thing we need to consider is how to structure your manuscript. The correct use of document styles and formatting is key to ensuring that all readers can find their way around ‑ easily around your final publication. I can navigate my way around a publication by referring to the contents list. I can use the page numbers. And I might refer to an index at the back. And I can just flick or scroll through pages to see the headings to find what I want. A reader with print disability may not be able to use the publication like this, though, either because they cannot manipulate the pages in this way or because they can't see the information. The only way they may know what and where things are and find their way around the document is if you use styles in Microsoft Word to identify the different elements. Word styles identify what everything is. For example, if you use them to identify your heading levels, you immediately get a working overview of the structure of the whole manuscript in the navigation pane. Not only is this important for readers with print disability, but it's also handy for you while you work. It can help you move around the manuscript easily by clicking on the headings in the navigation pane. That will automatically take you to that point in the manuscript.

Another thing to remember is that your formatting is information that some people may hear even though you can't see it. Screen readers read all page content, not just the text. If you use visual cheats, you may be inadvertently passing on a lot of clutter and meaningless information that can make it harder for some readers to engage with your writing. You can check what extraneous information may have crept into your manuscript by turning on the show/hide formatting tool which is the paragraph symbol in the tool bar. Some common visual cheats include using a string of character spaces rather than word styles and the indent tool to create new paragraph indents, as I have done here. Hopefully you can see in this image; using an extra return between each line of the text to create additional spacing rather than the line and paragraph spacing function; and using lots of returns to start a new page rather than a page break function which you can get through using insert + page break or control + enter on the keyboard.

Visual cheats like these look okay when you hide the formatting but the text won't sound okay if formatting information is read aloud, so always use the correct tools. Another formatting issue is text boxes for callouts. Screen readers, including the read aloud function in Microsoft Word itself, skip text boxes effectively making them invisible to a person who doesn't actually read visually. If you want to box text elements in a Word document, use the paragraph borders function in styles instead.

So that's enough about formatting. Let's move on to language. The language you use should aim to enable and include all readers helping them to understand your work. This means making sure they don't miss out on key information because of instructions given in language that has no meaning for them. The most common problem arises when items or objects are referred to solely by their visual appearance. For example, if your manuscript contains illustrations that are referred to in the text, are they numbered so the reader listening can be sure which one is being referring to? Here the photo would have a figure number and a title such as "figure 2 roses in bloom", rather than just being referred to as "a picture of roses on the right".

If you do need to describe something by its appearance, provide other details about it as well, as well as its colour, such as "the blue AC curve" rather than "the blue curve" in a graph. This will allow readers who can't see the graphic or can't perceive colour to distinguish it from the other objects or features in the illustration.

Another area for writers to think about is their style choices. First of all, don't rely on visual cues such as italics and bold for emphasis or visual effect. These increase the information load for Braille users as they have to be typed in the Braille manuscript creating additional Braille cells. Large blocks of italics can also be tiring and challenging for anyone to read, but especially for people with low vision or perceptual disabilities. Instead, try restructuring sentences or rephrasing to provide emphasis and colour.

This doesn't mean italics should never be used, of course. They are fine when following established conventions such as titles for publication, Acts of Parliament and species names. However, they might not always be needed, so avoid them whenever you can. This includes italics for quotes. Quotes that are longer than a couple of sentences can be styled in an indented block and you can use quote marks around short quotes so you don't need italics as well for either of these.

Another form that's hard to read is text that's styled in all capital letters. This includes headings. All caps can be difficult for most people to read, particularly for those with visual or perceptual disabilities. Again, avoid them wherever you can.

You also need to factor in accessibility considerations when making style decisions about punctuation and using symbols. In particular, avoid using closed en rules, which are long dashes, before clauses providing explanation, description or further information. Closed dashes can be difficult for people with low vision and some perceptual disabilities to see. Instead, use spaced en rules which are smaller dashes with a space either side.

Use double quote marks around short quotations and single quote marks only for quotes within quotes. This is another really important one. First of all, double quote marks can be easier to see for people with low vision. Second of all, double quote marks save a huge amount of time for Braille transcribers. Closing quote marks are visually indistinguishable from apostrophes and the two symbols share the same key on the computer keyboard but have completely different Braille codes. After the text has been transcribed into Braille using specialist software, every quote mark and apostrophe in a proof has to be checked and manually corrected where necessary. This is intensive remediation and it uses up precious resources that can be better spent elsewhere.

Style decisions can also affect references. Of course, writers and editors don't always have a choice about referencing style as many disciplines, publishers and Universities follow specific style guides rigidly. However, if you do have any say in it, please advocate for minimal capital letters and punctuation. Unnecessary caps, full stops and quote marks could create a lot of additional Braille cells, significantly increasing the information load for Braille users.

Symbols are another area that can cause accessibility issues if they aren't used appropriately. Ensure you use the correct symbol rather than something that just looks like it, such as a dash or hyphen instead of a minus sign. You may not be able to see the difference but the result will be very confusing when read aloud by a screen reader or transcribed into Braille. An X might look like a multiplication symbol but it certainly doesn't sound like one. If I said to you "3‑x‑2", would you immediately know I mean 3 multiplied by 2? Probably not. Symbols in circles, such as the copyright and registered trademark symbols, can also be difficult to interpret for some readers with perceptual disabilities, so write the word in full before the symbol to make sure the meaning is immediately clear.

The final style issue we will look at today is abbreviations. Shortened forms can be difficult to read and interpret for people with low vision, cognitive disabilities and perceptual disabilities such as dyslexia. While common acronyms, such as that for the World Health Organisation, WHO, are often recognised and read correctly by screen readers, less common ones may not be especially if they contain vowels. To help avoid confusion, explain the acronym the first time they are used, giving the full version first before the abbreviation in parenthesis, such as Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training, in brackets ADCET. This will help readers understand what the abbreviation refers to even if it is mispronounced by the software. This also makes it easier for readers with dyslexia who often struggle to interpret acronyms. Avoid Latin abbreviations in the text where possible too. Screen readers may try to pronounce abbreviations if they contain vowels. For example, the letters i‑e may be read as "i" and e‑g may be pronounced egg. Instead, write "that is", "for example" or "such as".

Where you must use Latin abbreviations, such as in tables and charts, write them with full stops so they will be pronounced correctly. Such as A stop, M stop instead of a‑m.

Another important consideration is how to convey the information in illustrations in your work to readers who can't see them. Image descriptions are useful not only to readers who are blind. For example, non‑visual learners may use them to help understand illustrations such as complex diagrams, and anyone listening to an audio version of your work will need an image description if they're going to understand any cross references to the illustrations. How much detail to provide in the description will depend on the context and the purpose of the image. Image descriptions can be provided in two forms.

Alternative text or Alt text is a brief description of images that are simple or of medium complexity. In some contexts, just a few words might be enough. If the image is context or the context requires further detail, then an additional long description might be needed too. There is a fine balance between providing too little detail in the description and too much. A reader who doesn't have a visual learning or cognitive disability may find the illustrations can help them understand the text better so there is less stress on their short‑term working memory. As a result, it takes them less effort to process the information than if only text is provided. However, the opposite experience can be true for some people with disability. A reader who can't see the illustration has to construct a mental image of it from the image description. This significantly increases their cognitive load. Too little information will create gaps in learning, in understanding, while too much detail creates mental clutter that impedes understanding.

So here are some basic tips to help you describe your graphics. Describe all images unless they are purely decorative, such as borders. Think about the purpose of the image and then emphasise the key information in it that will convey this. Keep the description as brief as possible. Leave out any details that are unimportant and don't help the listener understand what the image is meant to convey. Provide information and concepts in small chunks, such as using succinct sentences. You can also provide the data of some graphics, such as graphs or flow charts, in bullet or numbered lists. Provide each piece of information only once. Don't repeat what's in the body text or caption and don't repeat in the long description what's in the Alt text. Be objective. Don't make judgments or assumptions or attempt to interpret the image; just describe what you can see. And include any text that's part of the image, such as signs or speech bubbles, unless they are irrelevant.

We've kept it really simple here but all of this information and more is in Books Without Barriers with lots of examples of image descriptions for all types of illustrations, including diagrams, graphs and tables.

Finally, speaking of tables, these can be one of the most difficult elements to follow for some people with print disability. Readers who can't see the table must remember information that sighted readers can see at a glance, in other words which column and row the value in each cell relates to. A screen reader will read each cell in the order in which it is set up. If the table isn't set up properly, the reading order may be jumbled and it will be difficult to understand the contents. So instead of using tab stops to create columns of information which look like a table but which won't sound like one, use the create table tool. That's the insert + table in Microsoft Word. Don't create tables that have only one column. A single column of information isn't really a table at all, it is a list, and it should be treated like one so readers who can't see it aren't left wondering where the missing columns are. Ensure all columns have headings, even if the heading seems obvious and could be inferred from the table caption. Headings help readers track what the data in any given cell refers to, so they should never be left out. Don't leave empty cells either. A reader listening to the information may find an empty cell confusing as they don't know whether they've missed the data because it's not there or because they accidentally skipped it. If there are no values for a cell, signify this by using a zero or a convention for null data for numbers, or NA or not applicable for text.

Finally, avoid creating large complex tables wherever possible. If the table's too big, the Braille transcription of it won't fit on one page so the table will be even harder to understand. It is also very difficult to create a mental picture of a huge table by listening to what's in it. Instead, consider whether a large table can be broken up into smaller simpler tables covering individual aspects of a topic rather than condensing all the information into one big table. This is an improvement that can benefit all readers again, not just people with print disability as it makes the information more digestible.

Finally, just thinking about working with publishers, as an author you have the opportunity to champion accessibility best practice not only with your own writing but also in your interactions with your publisher. So ask lots of questions. In doing so, you may be able to encourage the publisher to think more carefully about the accessibility of their publications if they are not doing so already. And some examples of the kinds of questions you could ask include: will the publication be made available in accessible formats, such as EPUB or Microsoft Word, rather than print or PDF which are not accessible to all readers? Will accessibility considerations be taken into account in editorial style decisions, such as punctuation choices and the referencing style used? Will graphs and charts be drawn in such a way that people with colour blindness can still distinguish the different elements? Will image descriptions be provided? Am I expected to write them or would it help if I provide notes about the key points in the images and someone else will be writing the descriptions?

Thank you. I will hand over now to Agata who is going to talk about educational materials.

AGATA: Thank you so much. I will quickly share my screen. Here we are. So I will talk about design and formats. I am aware we are sort of running a little bit out of time but I will be fast. So inclusive design is about designing content thinking of the needs of people with various disabilities from the moment the design is conceived, and there are several areas which we should think that apply to both print and digital format. And there is comment in the chat around the use of the right correct typeface for both print and digital definitely helps. We should think about hierarchy, consistency, proximity, legibility and readability, colour contrasts and colour-blind friendly palettes. And Julie mentioned the properties of images and graphic elements.

So hierarchy. In visual design, hierarchy in text is conveyed through variations in weight, colour, spacing, size, placement and other signals. And this is particularly important with the design of textbooks and other educational resources which tend to be really complex. And here is an example. So we've got just a row of headings and just paragraph text in two columns. On the left we've got a logical and clear visual hierarchy with consistent heading formatting, consistent colour, the font, and every heading is followed by a paragraph text.

On the right, the example has stacked headings, so there is no paragraph under heading 1, it has inconsistent hierarchy, the colours are used inconsistently, spacing is inconsistent. It just looks really illogical. So it is best to evolve that.

It is best to structure similar information together to distinguish between section and visual guide readers. The principle of proximity states things that are close together appear to be more related. So when, for example, with headings, the space before the heading should be bigger than the space after the heading. It is important to place headings and page numbers in a consistent location and the design of pages in learning environments, such as Canvas, should also be consistent.

Captions, they should be placed above images ideally so when read by assistive technology they would be read first before the image description and definitely consistency across the publication. Now, in terms of legibility and readability, legibility relates to the design of the typeface and the shape of the glyphs. Readability is influenced by how the text is arranged or typeset on a page. And I'm just talking about readability in the context of design.

Now, it is important to point out that the Sans Serif versus serif debate is redundant. We know that in both these categories there are problematic typefaces. What's important to avoid those typefaces with extremely light and heavyweights, with complicated or decorative appearance, with extreme stroke contrast, with very small counters, closed or semi‑enclosed, those with small apertures, and those with imposter letters or mirroring letters such as I, 1, d and b, q and p.

Julie already mentioned it is best to avoid formatting text in caps and italics. Yes. Now, we also should look at ligatures. Ligatures is a special character that combines 2 or sometimes 3 characters into a single character. These are problematic to read, not only for people with poor vision but also for people with assistive technologies.

We also should pay attention to font size, leading or tracking, left aligned text is best rather than justified, and we should pay attention to the line length. It should be between 45 and 80 characters. And now the use of ‑ I am just getting a bit confused.

Now, colour. We need to pay close attention to the use of colour. Make sure there is enough contrasts and there are a number of contrast checkers online you can use. It is important to encourage consistency, as I said before, and important to use colour blind friendly palettes. As mentioned, red/green colour blindness is the most common format and it is best to avoid it. If needed, it is good to make one colour much darker than the other.

It is also important to make sure that colour is not the only distinguishing attribute. This is particularly important in maps, charts and graphics. So choose an unambiguous colour combinations, that is colours with strong contrasting, use additional visual variables such as shape, size, pattern variations, provided they can be easily described, and annotate features directly, such as labels and keys or extra legends. I have got an example here of a chart that ‑ in which each line, apart from having a different colour, has also a different texture, and there is also a legend. If in doubt, it is very good practice to convert the image into grey scale and check if it still makes sense.

Now, in terms of images, as Julie mentioned, they should be meaningful and clear and it is also best to avoid placing text above busy images. On the right I have an example of a bushy background with "backyard basics" written over it. The image on top is not very clear, not very visible. In the lower image we have got a navy blue band, and the text is much more visible. It is also good to avoid placing watermarks or complicated diagram elements.

Tables ‑ again, Julie talked about the need for them to be simple and avoid empty cells. There is also things we can do in terms of design to make them better in print in particular. So this should have clearly defined header borders, good colour contrast, adequate space between text and border, so that the cell contents do not merge visually with the borders of the table, no empty cells and correct alignment.

Here I have a slide with a couple of examples. In the example on the left, the text is really hard to read with cramped cells and no shading. While the same table, same information in the table on the right has better spacing around the texts in the rows and columns and light blue shading on alternate rows of data. So you can see it's much more legible to everyone.

Now, in terms of producing formats, if you provide ‑ if you provide just the manuscript to the publisher, MS Word remains industry standard for books and journal articles with the exception of maps. In terms of formatting ideally it should be formatted using the styles, as Julie mentioned, but it is important to follow general guidelines which may require specific formatting. What's important to remember is that if you provide alternative text, they need to be provided separately to publishers, not embedded in the document. This is different if you produce documents for the final if you publish them yourselves, on the website or in your learning management system. In this case, the accessibility features need to be embedded in the document.

Now, when you are producing content for learning platforms such as Canvas you have a choice of Word file to use. While PDF unfortunately remains the default choice, please know that this is not accessible format. It is very hard to make it accessible and just not good. Hence, Microsoft Word is better choice or even HTML. And PowerPoint slides are better than PDFs so it is better to distribute PowerPoints to students to make them accessible.

Why PDF is problematic? Well, even if compliant with accessibility guidelines like 2.1, PDFs are not customisable. They are not easy to use with students with poor vision. If you really need to use PDF it is best to implement as many accessibility features as possible in the source document. This is really time consuming. And then export ... distribute in Word and best as accessible PDF in end design. And check it. The file will need further remediation in Adobe to make it accessible. Of course, PDF needs to be editable to be accessible via screen readers.

Now, in terms of long form documents ‑ I am thinking in especially in open education resources ‑ Microsoft Word, HTML and EPUB3 is better than PDF. EPUB3 is particularly recommended because users can change the reader experience ‑ can customise it by changing typeface, font size, spacing, margins and background. They do need to include a lot of accessibility considerations, such as Alt text descriptions, heading in logical order, HTML 5 tags, page list, landmarks, ARIA coding, role page title attributes, metadata, and so forth, which sounds really complicated but the plus is much of the coding can be implemented by using the right tool, which brings me to the list of tools that are available.

So the DAISY Consortium released a tool called EPUB3, which is free and it can be downloaded, unfortunately only for Windows operating systems. I haven't been able to check it using Mac, so I couldn't, but I'm sure it complies with all the accessibility considerations and produces a really good EPUB file.

Now, PressBooks, which some of you might be familiar with, it is a WordPress‑based platform for publishing books in multiple formats. It produces e‑books, web books and printed PDFs. It has a choice of different templates and results in accessible EPUB3 file. This is a really good one to use. In terms of the industry, the publishing industry is still wedded to Adobe in design, which is very complex and unfortunately at this stage the EPUB3 file requires complex remediation to be accessible. And there is a software called CircularFLO which helps to check accessibility with In Design export. If you really want to use In Design, you might want to look at that. If you really want to use In Design, get in touch with me and I can send you some handouts about how to implement accessibility properly, what can you do.

Whichever way you produce your accessible file, whether it's Microsoft Word, or PDF, or EPUB3, or HTML, you need to make sure you carry out quality assurance, and it consists of both review and testing. The review processing designed to check the content for accuracy, clarity and completeness, while accessibility testing focuses on checking that the file works as it should. So ‑ and this is really important, because digital formats need to be validated and tested to make sure they are machine readable.

In Microsoft Word, we've got tools ‑ embedded tools, so there is check accessibility button in compatible PDF, you can do accessibility check then follow the recommendations and the DAISY Consortium released Ace by Daisy app which checks accessibility for EPUB3. It is very important to do those accessibility checks first before you carry out a manual test using read aloud function or screen readers. Then at the end if you have an opportunity, test it with users with print disability for very important documents.

So first automated to get rid of all the minor issues and then check the documents manually.

This brings me to platform accessibility. So Canvas and Moodle, and I presume other learning platforms that are available, they all have guidelines on how to publish those planning platforms, how to be accessible in those learning platforms. It is very important to pay attention to it. And open journal system that I mentioned before that is widely used for the production of open access journals, they also have a very extensive guide for journal editors and authors. It would be good to remind editors and authors to use it and implement it so that the journals produced are accessible. It's not just about open access, it is also about making them accessible.

And this brings me to the end of our presentation. If you haven't had a chance yet, please download Books Without Barriers and check them out. There is a link here. There is a couple of other resources you might find useful. Accessibility Toolkit 2nd edition is an open education resource, Accessibility Libraries Canada has an enormous amount of resources and checklists, including how to produce an accessible email.

Someone in the chat already mentioned the CAUL checking accessibility of open textbooks guidelines, which is really good. And at the end you have a link to the UTS Learner Experience Lab that Julie mentioned before.

So, yes, we would love to hear from you what you think about the guidelines and also if you can find something if you have any comments or suggestions, let us know, because both Julie and I are very committed to working with the industry to make sure that we help them to get on board with accessibility implementation. It's not easy. I know, I'm speaking from experience. I have worked on this in Sydney University Press. Together we can make things happen.

So thank you so much. Please let me know if you have any questions. And here are our contact details as well. I am easily findable at the University of Sydney. And Julie can contact at aipi@iped‑editors.org.

DARLENE: Brilliant. Thank you so much, Agata and Julie, that was an absolutely brilliant presentation. As always, you think you know so much until you realise you don't know a lot. I learnt quite a few tips and tricks today. Thank you so much. There has been fabulous chat, which is great. I love when our audience really chats away. So have been sharing resources and knowledge and so forth. Thanks everybody for sharing that.

We have a couple of questions. One is from Darren: can you share some of the common misconceptions and myths you have heard about accessible publishing?

JULIE: Well, one that I have certainly heard a lot is that accessibility issues only affect quite a small number of people so is it really worth it? And that's obviously, I think, used as an excuse not to do it because it's perceived as being too difficult to do, which is also not necessarily so. But, yeah, you know, I think there is that ‑ a misconception that it only affects blind people.

DARLENE: Yes.

AGATA: The other on the format side is that it is accessible because it is digital which it is not. You have to make good impact to be accessible. The inclusion of alternative text is first consideration. If you don't, it's not accessible, apart from the extra, extra coding. Also, I guess, in publishing there is still this thinking ‑ it's going that it is not our business, that it is for disability organisations to produce these formats, but it is so much more expensive and time consuming to remediate documents instead of actually starting with accessible or conceived accessible publications in the first place. Industry is moving. Different companies are working. Since we've been involved with Julie, like I have seen enormous amount of guidelines and materials and initiatives globally working on this. So we will get there eventually. I'm positive.

DARLENE: Brilliant. That's great, that positive attitude. Somebody asked about a suggestion for a good font. "I struggle to find a common font that avoids mirroring characters."

AGATA: Lots of fonts are useful for that. I want to point out that we designed our PowerPoints with Atkinsons hyperlegible which has been a font designed especially for people with print disability. So I don't want to multi‑task ‑ maybe I can send ‑ you can Google it to find it online.

DARLENE: That's fine.

AGATA: It is really good and perfectly designed ‑ ‑ ‑

DARLENE: If Jane is listening, she might be able to Google it and put the link in while we're talking. One of the things that James, who was fabulous in the chat, thank you, James, is that with the table design tab, Word to tick last column. If this isn't done, screen readers can get caught up in a loop because it keeps creating another tab, so a really important tip and trick to use when creating tables.

So the other question from Zina: do you have any advice for teaching referencing in an accessible way? How do we ensure all elements of a reference entry are conveyed by a screen reader in a way that allows the learner to understand the different elements and then replicate them when creating their own referencing?

JULIE: Referencing, yes.

DARLENE: I think we might need another webinar just on that. That would be great.

JULIE: It's always difficult because what works for one person with disability might not work for somebody else with disability. For example, we advocate taking out as many full stops as possible. Obviously, that can create problems for someone listening, which is better for Braille users, minimal punctuation. It's difficult. I think, really, it is just everything is down to context. And it is really involves thinking about all the different types of disability for people who might be accessing the reference. And, yeah, trying to accommodate as many as you can. So, yeah, and keep it simple. That's the main one for me. Keep it as simple as possible.

DARLENE: That's great.

JULIE: Did you have anything else to add to that, Agata?

AGATA: It is complicated because publishers ‑ lots of publishers, different disciplines are attached to specific referencing styles. It is really hard to move people away. They treat it as a Bible. It is not. It is just a system that we agree on. Like, we have done so much research into referencing, and there is not really appetite for ‑ I guess maybe no research so far done on which system is more accessible. So we know that, you know, some are more complicated than others, but how we can simplify it and make sure it is accessibility friendly, something like that.

JULIE: We do have something in Books Without Barriers that compares briefly to different systems, so using end notes, footnotes, and so on. Again, it's very context dependent which one is going to work.

DARLENE: Excellent. There is probably three more questions left. I don't think we are going to have time to answer them all. It depends on how short your answers are. Somebody is after if anybody has had any experience with Springshare LibGuides. I'm currently redesigning our referencing guides. Have either of you come across that?

AGATA: No, sorry.

DARLENE: No one has answered that one. This one probably could be a long answer. Would you be able to provide a clear explanation for how the WCAG guides relates to published documents, Word and PDF. Is it an issue that comes up from time to time? There is an issue that it comes up from time to time and I don't have a clear way to respond.

JULIE: Do you want me to take this one? It's difficult for us. We did reference WCAG Guidelines, but apart from anything else they are designed for web designers. They don't always cover everything you need to know. Sometimes they can almost be inappropriate for certain types of publishing. So judiciously and with common sense. With all of this, it all comes down to common sense, when you think about it, is this going to work or not. Yeah.

AGATA: Some of the ‑ like colour contrast is really useful. It's been developed ‑ it's easy to check on the web. It is particularly relevant for digital publications. I am thinking here of EPUB, not PDF. PDF is...not digital. So we actually use guidelines quite a lot but as Julie said, not all is relevant to publishing and it has heaps of gaps. So definitely check it.

You know, the other thing is around content accessibility, not all relevant for publishers, for example, Scholarly publishers, they have other audiences, so making sure that the content is written in plain language is not relevant. So, yeah, it is very complex.

DARLENE: No, that's great. Well, we actually had a couple more questions come in as well. We won't get to all those. We forgot to ask at the beginning if you are okay to answer them separately and we will put them on our website, so we will do that. Thank you everybody for participating in the chat and the Q&A, it is absolutely brilliant. We will be doing a short survey of this webinar. We really encourage you to take that survey. We currently are looking at our future and our funding and your feedback on these and future webinars assist us in that argument.

We also encourage you, if you don't already, to sign up to our newsletter. And we have some brilliant future webinars coming up. One is ‘Making Labs Accessible for All’ and also the next one after that is ‘Enabling Inclusive Employability around Work Integrated Learning’. So, yeah, lots of great stuff coming up. This was a brilliant presentation. Thank you so much, Agata and Julie. It was lovely to have such practical demonstrations. You can see from the chat that people really valued it and we valued what you have done. So thank you so much.

AGATA: Thank you, it's been a pleasure.

DARLENE: Take care, everybody, have a great day. Bye bye.

JULIE: Bye.