# Technical Approaches to Upgrading the Backlist, T-339 Days – webinar transcript

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<https://daisy.org/news-events/articles/approaches-to-upgrading-the-backlist-eaa-t-339-w/>

Welcome everyone to technical approaches to upgrading the backlist. My name is Richard Orme and I'm delighted to have you join us today for another webinar hosted by the Daisy Consortium. Across Europe and globally, publishers are not only ensuring the accessibility of their new releases, but also undertaking the substantial endeavour of revising their previously published titles. This involves updating formats and enhancing accessibility features to align with the requirements of the European Accessibility Act and other accessibility regulations. We're fortunate today to have assembled 3 experts to share what they've been working on. We'll hear some perspectives on the EAA and round off this session with plenty of time for questions, so feel free to use the Zoom toolbar to submit your questions throughout the webinar, and we'll get to as many as possible. First up today, we're delighted to hear from James Yanchak at Taylor and Francis, sharing some of the challenges that they faced in updating their back list and some lessons that can apply to publishers of all sizes. Over to you, James.

My name is James Yanchak, and I'm the Production Technologies Manager at Taylor and Francis Group. When Daisy contacted me about this session, I saw it as a great opportunity to share the revelations of handling the conversion of a backlist. So let's get into some background. Taylor and Francis formed our Internal Accessibility Working Group in June 2019 to oversee the accessibility issues across the company. When the group learned of the EAA and realized how it aligned with our purpose, we committed to supporting it by June 28th, 2025. This was a massive goal. With a backlist of nearly 200,000 titles published over decades, we knew their accessibility would be severely limited. We had a huge volume, no budget to speak of, gaps in our knowledge, and unknown costs. We set priorities and immediately moved forward with the task because our accessibility working group had representatives from every part of the company. Each group focused on their areas, but we met regularly. Marketing handled hundreds of websites, Legal looked at the EAA contracts and emerging merging legislation, Sales queried customers and their expectations, Editorial looked at author responsibilities in the submission process, content handled metadata and inventory, and my team focused on the actual e-book creation. The first thing my team did was take a deep dive into the standards of the time. EPUB 3.2 and WCAG 2.1. This revealed our existing ebook specifications to be very much out of date. We immediately rewrote them to set a common target for vendors and internal staff. At the same time, my team increased their attendance and participation with industry groups focusing on accessibility. This provided a vast amount of knowledge on the general accessibility landscape and kept identifying issues we had missed and providing us solutions. From those two things, we changed our evaluation system for ebooks. Previously, it was no more than a visual pass through of the files. This changed to using EPUBCheck and DAISY Ace on all titles and a manual inspection of random titles. The results revealed our vendors had knowledge issues or failed to support accessibility in our files. A period of continual checks and vendor education followed, but without positive results. We shifted focus and developed an internal automated checking system to report mechanical errors in the epub file. Things like missing alt text, alt text which duplicated captions, commonly mistyped content, incorrect semantic allocation were all reported. We shared this with the vendors and eventually made it an automatic check for all files before they were accepted. While much of what we did was targeted for front list, it was needed before we could work on the backlist. As my team worked on the specifications, our content team conducted multiple inventories of our archives to ensure the files, specifically epub files, matched our business system records. Cross checking found and corrected inconsistencies and occasionally led them to track down or rebuild missing archive files to cover nearly all of our backlist. Evaluation of the inventory revealed 65,000 files in EPUB2 format, all of which needed remediation with my team rebuilding our evaluation system. The content team used these numbers to plan a budget for the next year and requested vendor quotes sharing the samples we had and the latest ebook specifications. Evaluation of the quotes took time but allowed us to plan out the upgrade process and stagger delivery to produce a steady stream of corrected files. Even the staggered approach, the vendors had to bring out extra staff and it took months for them to train them to our standards and to the specifications. Vendors performed the conversion several different ways, but all the material was checked by their internal quality teams. Our newly created EPUB checking system provided validation review before accepting the submitted files. Once submitted, my team did spot checks on the files. Issues were reported, corrected, and it added to our review system to prevent future occurrences. For our simple titles, vendors converted from EPUB2 to EPUB3. Everything else used a conversion from XML to EPUB 3. All conversions had manual oversight and manual corrections using the print version as the master source. Given the volume of the project, our evaluation had not gone into any significant depth regarding the files or their structure. Once work started, problems presented themselves. Communicating closely with the vendors, we prioritized the titles requiring the least amount of work to speed delivery and to limit costs. This required constant communication to identify and resolve specific issues like missing math ML, tables as images, missing images, missing files, scanned text, and bad or inconsistent tagging. By the end of the process, almost 30% of the files would require complete manual rebuild. Since the change from EPUB 2 to EPUB 3 could not be easily bridged, this forced us to delay the work on those titles. Our content team was already well versed in redistributing corrected content. The scale of correcting 50,000 titles and resubmitting them was easy for our business systems, but less so for our distribution partners. Careful coordination with the downstream partners was needed since we could only deliver so many titles at once. At least we overwhelmed them and impact their systems. We worked in batches limited to about 3000 files a month. In a few cases, distributors refused to use the new files, citing impact on the customer experience. We encourage them to replace the outdated files, but eventually it is up to them to do so and not all did. The content team also maintains and delivers title metadata to the supply chain. The distribution is via an Onix feed with semi regular updates. In 2021, the team explored Onix accessibility metadata. Until this point, the accessibility details we collected were sparse and manually entered. The review showed we fell short in accessibility reporting where still our business systems could not store the data even if we had it. Our automated checking system already generated details about submitted files and was extended to identify what metadata was appropriate for each title. A year long effort was undertaken to update our business systems while the content team mapped the accessibility data gained from the epubs to the relevant Onix fields. It wasn't a complete fix and gaps still exist, but a plan was developed to catch the remaining metadata items with new automation and procedures. With such a large backlist, the metadata distribution was just as problematic as the file distribution issues. Most downstream vendors could not handle the sudden update of nearly 200,000 records, so careful coordination was needed to ensure batches were agreed upon and sent using only a subset of the records. Today we sit 339 days from June 28th and still have a lot of work to do. New routines are being developed to correct one off issues in our backlist files and our metadata is being refined for distribution later this year. Our journey revealed several things. One, be prepared to work with your vendors to ensure they understand the accessibility requirements. 2 Participate with industry groups to bolster your accessibility knowledge. 3 Review and update internal practices to keep them up to date with best accessibility practices. 4 Make sure your accessibility metadata is captured and distributed. And finally, always test and review your files because at the end of the day, you are the one who must make sure it is really accessible. I hope you found this general overview to our process helpful and I look forward to your questions.

Thank you, James. You've raised some really important and interesting points that I'm sure we'll dive into in more detail in the Q&A. Next up, we'll hear from Gautier Chomel of EDRLab. Gautier has been part of an EU funded project looking at the accessibility of back list titles. Gautier, we're all eager to hear more.

Hello everyone, I am Gautier Chomel. I've been in book production for 1/4 century with more than half dedicated to making accessible ebooks in all formats, including building tools and workflows. I also lead an international training activity. I am now managing project related to the flexibility and quality of ebooks for EDRLab, the Europe Digital Reading Laboratory and Membership Association dedicated to open source software and stand up for the publishing sector worldwide. We count over eighty members of the more than 30 countries and all disciplined from the digital publishing landscape from conception to consumption. I've been coordinating the accessible Backlist ebook laboratory project short name ABE Lab, which aimed to provide publishers with information about options and cost for remediation to make blacklist ebook accessible. The European Union funded the Small Scale Projects Cooperative from January 2023 to June 2024. Partner of the project were us as technology expert, the Lia Foundation as accessibility experts and the National Library of the Netherlands for their data expertise. All information about the project is available from the website ABElab.eu that includes the public. Deliverable you can load as an OPDS catalogue into good reading application, you can download an epub or PDF or you can read online as HTML. First, deliverable is a report on backlist data in Gap analysis that provides stakeholders with two set of information. An insight into an overview of the number of ebook actually on the European market and they're repartitioned by categories, formats and years of production. Secondly, a view of the gaps to be filled for the title in the back list to reach conformity to the European Accessibility Act. Second deliverable is a guideline for remediation to producer that provides high level information for developers of remediation tools. This part of the available work will be presented in more detail during this webinar by Chiara De Martin, who will lead this work package. The final reports sums up activities, main findings and outcomes as well as leverage proposals. It notably proposes consideration on how to triage files and evaluate costs. Three keys for now. There are 3.5 million ebooks on sale in Europe, less than 1% claiming something about accessibility in Onix. The collection are diverse and there's no average. Some countries have more than 60% of PDF to deal with, while other markets are already filled up with the majority of free flowable EPUB 3, which is much more easier to update. Of course, the heavy presence of images and visual resources appears to be the main criterion of demarcation between categories that will reclaim more effort to remediate. The more concerning point, in my opinion is the lack of robust open source tools apart of course from the validators build by DAISY, namely EPUBCheck, ACE and SMART. Aside from the ABELAB project as a membership association, we are collecting insight from our members who are working on the subject at different levels. Here are 4 feedbacks that reflects some concern related to dealing with the backlist. From De Marque we heard in 2023 that only 3% of the claims we in Onix metadata, while 9% had information in epub, and simple Batch file analysis was able to provide information for more than 90% of the titles. An interesting use case is the one from Fenixx, a lightweight course professional structure dedicated to the digitalization of 20th century titles that are unavailable. Of 70,000 epubs, 30 have been produced with the first level of flexibility and 40,000 will be assessed soon. This is challenge for a 1% company with a very low net turnover, but stakeholders still decided that it was a priority from the bookselling platform provider TiteLive We hear that they see fast growing titles with accessibility information since they started to display it as part of a proof of concept in a sign posting project related to implementing the W3C display guide. That mean that when publishers see information display, they release it. Almost all of the distributor and service providers are on the front line taking their part in helping fewer technical production If you don't have the resources, there are companies ready to help Looking at this picture, we want to encourage progressive enhancements, just as a climbers assend mountains one step at a time One technical approach to upgrading backlist is to simplify the starting process, Prioritise gradual process progress, promote transparency around efforts, foster understanding and empower ownership. Our recommended action list for stakeholder looking to upgrade the backlist is short 3 point one. Use the tools available. Support the organization who maintain them. Involve your organization in the building of new tools through open source projects. Then technically you can engage with low hanging fruits. Easy to implement action that should be applied today to all ebooks. First enhance and send information as Onix. You can get part of it from EPUB files and you can infer more information using the Readium Go Toolkit. Secondly start some triage and identify decorative images in your files which probably include covers and logos. You can extract list of image with ACE by DAISY as an HTML table, meaning you can copy and pass them into an Excel for example. More details on this low hanging fruit policy recommendation are available in the Video from 2024 Digital Publishing Summit called High Impact Action items for your accessibility workflow We at EDRLab have some projects on our launchpad. An observatory because without consistent data there is no visibility of the effort made or the work to be done. Visualizer because there is a need to move beyond abstraction and visualize the strength and weakness of files concretely in the reading experience. Wizards to implement known logics and methodologies in easy to use tools that points most probable errors and facilitate human assessment and correction activities, which for now can be very repetitive. Enhancers or production helpers as toolkit that can be included in your workflows, but probably also as online services. As we know there is a need for smaller and less tech companies contextualise generative models to provide access to a safe and high quality level of content generation for visual resources. For those project we are looking for partners, so contact us, join us, we'll be happy to to talk. Thank you for your attention. Enjoy the webinar.

Thank you, Gautier. Some great points. And as you mentioned, the first of two presentations today related to the Abelab project. To help us explore the state of tools currently available to update digital publications. We hear now from Chiara De Martin of the LIA Foundation. Over to you, Chiara.

Hi everyone, I am Chiara De Martin and I am a web accessibility expert at the Fondazione LIA. Fondazione LIA is an Italian nonprofit foundation which was created in 2014 by the Italian Publishers Association and the Italian Blind Union. In 2019, the Italian Dyslexia Association and the Italian Library for the Blind, Regina Margherita of Monza also joined the foundation as institutional members. Members of the foundation are 17 publishing companies, which includes 76 publishing imprints, and MLOL, which is the leading digital lending platform in Italy. Membership of Fondazione LIA is not limited to Italian publishers, but is also open to international publishers. The mission of Fondazione LIA is to promote books and reading in all its forms through education, information, awareness and research, with the aim of expanding access for printing impaired people to publishing products through research and technological innovation. With the EDRLab and KB, we've been part of the ABELab project, the accessible backlist ebooks laboratory. And as Gautier mentioned before, a key part of this project was focused on researching and testing remediation tools. So what do we mean with the remediation tools? In the context of the ABELab project, we use this expression as an umbrella term including different wide variety of technological solutions and IT products from web and cloud platforms to stand alone desktop application to API and more. These tools are sometimes referred to as a conversion tools, and their aim is to ingest an inaccessible ebook or digital document and to output an ebook that should be accessible, which means compliant with accessibility requirements. Knowing what's currently available on the market and on the open source community, which means which remediation tools are currently available, which their performances are, and which are also their their shortcomings, is crucial for publishers, but also for all the other actors of the publishing chain. We've seen that remediation tools can be really different. They can support different input and output formats, and for the purposes of the ABELab project, we focused on the two mainstream formats for ebooks, PDF and EPUB. They can provide a different level of automation, which means that they can provide us a different level of human intervention. They can be specialized to fix a specific accessibility issues, which may be, for example, automatically tagged tagging and untagged PDF. In this case, this kind of tools can be integrated into remediation workflows alongside with the other remediation tools to be sure that all the accessibility issues found in the titles are properly addressed. They can provide the different types of licenses, subscription plans or access methods, and they can support batch remediation or on the contrary, they can support and manage the remediation of one file at a time. So we've tested multiple tools in the context of the project. The tests were carried out by experts from Fondazione LIA thanks also to the technical expertise acquired in more than 10 years of activity in the digital publishing field and especially in the field of checking and certifying accessibility of ebooks. The tools were tested to assess their performances but also their shortcomings and we have tested different remediation workflows starting both from EPUB files with the aim of having an accessible EPUB 3 files. But we will so tried to remediate PDF files with the target being an accessible EPUB3 file or a PDFUA compliant file. The question that we tried to answer is the following. Are the currently available remediation tools actually able to fix the accessibility issues and problems that that can be found in the backlist ebooks? And the question is, it depends Actually there is not such a thing as a magic tools, maybe yet, we don't know. But what we we've seen based on our tests is that the quality of the output files was applied quite variable. Some tools perform better than others. In general, we've encountered many technical issues which lead us to the conclusion that tool development still lags behind accessibility requirements. And what we've seen is that human intervention and human review is unavoidable, especially when it comes to checking the quality of the output file. We also know that tools are based on AI actually need to be trained on representative samples of the ebooks that we want to remediate. And as Gautier mentioned before, there are still few open source tools available. So what were the highlights of the tests that we've done with the tools? Starting from PDF, we've seen that remediating a PDF with the aim of having an accessible PDF that is a PDFUA compliant or an accessible EPUB3. It's actually really complex and really long, so the best solution in this case would be to create a born accessible EPUB starting from the PDF source file instead of trying to remediate the PDF. We've also seen that the remediation of EPUB 3 fixed layout with the objective of having an accessible EPUB 3 reflowable is poorly supported. But it's actually not surprising since there is a still no consensus on what an accessible EPUB 3 fixed layout is. And all the works that we have done as lead us to produce the ABELab guidelines for remediation tools producers. This document defines high level guidelines for developers, publishers and stakeholders. And it includes two different levels. On one side, we have technical functionalities necessary for remediation tools which can be summarized in Find, Fix and Check, which means that the tool must be able to find the error, fix the error and check that define the exported file contains no error. It should also be able to properly inform the users about its functionalities, its target and its condition of use. And this guidance also includes a checklist for EPUB remediation tools and PDF remediation tools. So what to do while we are waiting for the European accessibility act? For sure, keep monitoring the market and the open source community. We know that the landscape of a remediation tools is rapidly evolving and we already know of some tools that are under development. We can also expect that the artificial intelligence may bring some interesting changes in desire too. But for now, based on the results of the tests that we perform in the ABELab project, we can say that more development is still needed to have remediation tools that are really performant and that that can allow for a time and the cost effective verification of back list books. So thank you very much for your attention. If you have any question, please don't hesitate to ask.

Thank you, Chiara, for that really excellent summary of the work you've been doing and for the timely reminder that we have our Q&A segment coming up in a while. So please submit your questions for our presenters and we'll get to those shortly. Before that Over the course of the series, we'll get perspectives from different stakeholders, what they hoped for from the EAA, and we'll hear what they feel is an important focus during the countdown to implementation. Let's hear now from Thomas, Katie and Daniel.

Hello, I'm Thomas Kalish, I'm the chair of the Medibus organisation, media association for the blind and visually impaired in Germany. Medibus is an umbrella organisation for all libraries in Germany, serving the people with print disability. My name is Katie Durand and I work as a digital accessibility expert for the French Federation for the Blind. My team is responsible for raising awareness and providing consultancy and training to ensure that blind and partially sighted users are given equal access to digital products and services, including books and reading. My name is Daniel Frelen and I work as a strategist for the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media, MTM. Yeah, Medibus as an organisation is working together very closely with the publishers organisation in Germany. So we hope and we are pretty sure that we can have more reading materials accessible in the next year due to the fact that we started early. So we developed together guidelines and courses to help publishers to get used to to accessibility and to help them to bring more reading materials, make them accessible. In simple terms at the French Federation for the Blind, we hope that publishers, booksellers and reading app developers and device manufacturers will factor the needs of blind and partially sighted readers into their regular workflows and road maps, and that digital reading will become progressively inclusive by design. Ultimately, we hope that reading impaired users will find the books they want as and when they need them. Well, my hopes for the European Accessibility Act is more equal opportunities to read, participating in society, and we hope that the Accessibility Act will level the playing field in the society. And if the directive is implemented in the same way, it will also help creating a European market for ebooks, which is beneficial both for publishers but also for readers among EU. And a positive side effect of the directive could also be that the rest of the world is paying attention to what the EU are up to when it comes to accessible formats and follow the standards that are being implemented, which will be increase the level of accessibility even outside of Europe. While the French Federation for the Blind evidently supports the push for born accessible digital publishing, we need to continue to support users so that they develop the skills and the appetite to read digital books. Stakeholders often take this as a given, particularly when working with expert users, but many users have a very basic grasp of the technology needed to read digital books. In the coming months, Medibus is looking for more collaboration with the publishers to help them to create more accessible content. So we have learned that we are really needed in the work from the publishers. They looking for people who are experienced in the creation of accessible content. For us as the Medibus organisation, it's very useful because we can use this. Digital documents are transferring into braille, which we also want to improve in the future. MTM will be the supervisory authority in the field of ebooks and is building our organisation towards that task. But on a more general note, what is key in the implementation process is that it's being streamlined so the interpretations of the demand of the legislation translates into the same standards all over EU. We do not benefit from 27 different interpretation on backlist or different interpretations when it comes to format that would deliver on the legislation. Here a more intense dialogue with and among the EU countries is needed. And if the Commission will publish a delegated act pointing to certain standards for ebooks, it will also be a clarification, avoiding speculation. And this will make it possible for organisations like DAISY to develop ebook checkers and validators that could be used all over Europe in order to make sure that the ebooks deliver when it comes to accessibility.

Well, that's the end of the presentations and we've covered a lot of ground there. So I'd like to invite our audience to ask their questions to help clarify anything or to explore a topic in more detail. So please keep your questions coming and we'll cover as many as possible in the remaining time. So I think we're just being joined by our presenters now on the stage. So why don't we start with a question to James, if you're here. And I wonder, James, if you could just tell us about the organizations maybe that you reached out to for support as you were going through the process you explained. So we reached out to DAISY. That was the quick and easy one. Eventually we added on and got certified with Benetech with their GCA program, and that actually provided a fair amount of insight on several areas that we had completely missed. We also went and attended quite a few W3C committee community meetings to get a better feel for where things were going and how things were being decided. So it was across the industry as a whole. More recently, we've been involved with the Publishing Accessibility Action Group, PAAG, and then other parts of our business are dealing with like BIC and BISG, depending on which side of the Atlantic you're on. Thank you, James, quite the alphabet soup there. I wonder, Chiara, is Fondazione LIA maybe working with publishers, helping them evaluate their backlist remediation process and offering services there? Yes, Fondazione LIA has been active in this field in the field of digital accessible publishing for more than 10 years and which means that Italian publishers are already publishing born accessible ebooks. So their backlist for greater part are already accessible. But of course there are still titles which are not accessible. And moreover, LIA is also working with the international publishers which have inaccessible backlists and we can offer support in evaluating the remediation needs of their titles and also to identify the best strategies to make these titles accessible. Right, thank you. And why don't we complete the set with Gautier? I wonder if you could tell us about any services or supports available to folk from EDRLab? Well, as a membership association, we are not providing direct service nor direct support, but we are working on the standardisation at W3C level with friends from DAISY and LIA and other organization and we see in the landscape that tools are missing. So another of our work is to develop open source toolkits. So we'll probably we up to work and to propose some more tools in the in the incoming months and some of them may be attached to some kind of service, but it's not the the main goal of building tools. Right, well let's stick with the topic of tools for a moment. We've got a number of questions come in related to those. When people give their names, I'll mention them, but we've got a couple of anonymous questions, so maybe, Chiara, this is for you. There were tools mentioned. I wondered if you could mention, is it possible to mention some of their names? And I think Bruce asked the question specifically. Do we have any examples of the tools available, especially for PDFs? I wonder, Chiara, can you take that one? Yes, we have a public list on the ABELab website. You can find it under the section which is titled The Tools for Remediation Tested in the context of the ABELab and these are section will also be updated with the names of new tools that will be discovered in the future. Just to keep in mind that this list is not exhaustive, but it's just the tools that we have a tested in the context of the project. It also includes tools for PDF files, but the new tools are under development. So it's possible that in the near future, new tools will be available both for PDFs, PDF files and the EPUB files. Thank you. And we'll include a link to that those resources that you mentioned there, Chiara, in the materials we share after the webinar. I wonder if Gautier or James, did you have any more to comment in relation to tools? How about this one specifically? Can someone recommend please, a good open source remediation tool for reflowable epubs that aren't quite up to stretch? It's up to scratch. Gautier, can you take that one? Yes. No, there's no existing magic tool that works and that we can recommend for now. We think that it's a problem for now and we hope to be working on on more open source tools in in the coming months. Super and James, did you have any magic wand or were were you really relying on the services skills and maybe the internal tools used by the vendors that you were with? We, I've been reviewing our backlist titles and identifying exactly where they're falling short, whether it be structural inadequacies of missing alt text is a very popular one. And as we identify each one, we then see how prevalent it is. Sometimes it's very, sometimes it's not. And we just start building internal tools. So they're not on, not open source unfortunately, but we'll build internal tools to just repair that one item and then start passing through all of the ebooks, repair them and then we go on to the next problem. Thank you, James. Well, you mentioned vendors and working with vendors, but this question is actually to Gautier. Gautier, you mentioned smaller publishers who are less techie and I wondered if you had any comments on the role of vendors that may they may work with how they might use their relationship with vendors to support their backlist remediation. Yes, there are different, different ways of working in the in in the e-book value chain, but most often the lesser, the smaller publishers are relying on external expertise that can come from a distributor group. For example, we know that some of the distributors are helping publishers with setting up the the metadata that's how we started the Readium Go toolkit as a tool used by the back to help the publishers provide more information about about the ebooks. So that that's the first part that is usually included as a service into the distribution service. There are different service providers around there that are proposing a different service, but it's still not very clear and it's quite difficult still to have a list of service providers with the assurance of the quality of the remediation made or the quality of the of the accessibility made. The most problematic part is always the textual alternative to graphical resources. So if you provide your ebook to a service provider, it can make a lot of things. But if you don't provide the alternate text, then it will probably make sure that there is an alternate text and and it might be a bad one. So there are still needs and you can be helped with the by service providers, but you cannot just rely on them and not having an eye on on your work on your files, on the quality of the contents that are in there. And if you don't know how to start with this part, there is when you may want to have another kind of service provider, which is the kind of service that Fondazione LIA is providing that is helping you to assess what are the missings in your files and and what action have to be taken. Thank you, Gautier, we've got quite a few questions on kind of expectations for the EAA. But before we get to that group of questions, just sticking with process for a moment. One for James from Emma. So the question to you, James is how did you approach the remediation of backlist content where you needed information from the author, maybe interpreting complex tables that they would used images and someone where actually the author would be best suited for providing the appropriate extended or long descriptions or the alt text. So this mainly focuses around alt text or image descriptions where the author we still believe is the subject matter expert best suited to provide a good description. We did open up for backlist authors the ability for them to submit alt text as they generated it. We've had pretty very, very little take up on this. So in the absence of authors actually providing us material, then we have to turn and go to our external vendors to see, have them use subject matter experts to actually go back, read the material, read the content and then generate image descriptions. The rest of it is mechanical, it's structural tables or just data. So we would just convert those as needed. Thank you. So I'm wondering, Chiara, if you can maybe take a couple of the questions that relate to expectations generally for the EAA, but other presenters please chime in. So these are kind of related to just what do we know about the expectations for the European Accessibility Act at the moment. First question is from Ben King. It's a specific one. Does the EAA require EPUB files to be EPUB two backward compatible? Yes. Well, the directive defines requirements for the books which are in line with the EPUB accessibility deadlines, which means that EPUB 3 files accessible EPUB 3 files will be compliant with the accessibility requirements of the European Accessibility Act. And EPUB 3 files are actually most of the time compatible with the leading solutions which support EPUB 2 files. So I don't know if these answer your question in the in the proper way, but if you wanted to have accessible ebooks, which means ebooks in line with the Directive, you should aim for the EPUB3 format, not EPUB2 format. Super, and you get another chance to have a go at a related question. Chiara, this one to you as well. Am I interpreting the presenters correctly? Asks Karen, that there is no published criteria for what constitutes an accessible ebook file. No, when we talk about accessible book file, we refer to the accessibility requirements that are defined in the European Accessibility Act. Those are high level requirements, but they have been proven to be in line with the EPUB accessibility, which was also with the WCAG 2.0 and the future versions of the WCAG. So we do know what an accessible ebook is. You just don't find that indication of the accessibility guidelines, the EPUB accessibility and the WCAG in the text of the directive. But it's also work that Fondazione LIA has done. So we have done mapping of the accessibility requirement of the European Accessibility Act and the EPUB accessibility and it was demonstrated that the EPUB accessibility are in line with the European accessibility Act. So there is no need for a new standard. And of course there is work has been done by Fondazione LIA with the other actors of the digital publishing field. And another question for you, Chiara, before I let you go just yet. So Jim has a question. Is it true that every book will need to have an associated accessible ebook in order to conform to the European Accessibility Act? No, the directive doesn't ask it. What it ask is that if paper book has a digital version, then that digital version must be accessible, but if the paper book doesn't have the digital equivalent, it is not required to produce it. So the accessibility books must be there if it is the equivalent of a paper book. Thank you and thank you for taking three in a row. Next I'll come to you, Gautier. And the question from an anonymous questioner is, so for educational textbooks that are full of images, what is the expected result? I guess you would have come across these as you did your review of the different countries, you talked about the different categories. What's your take on that question please? Yes, that's not an easy one, because what we've seen is that it's not because a book is claiming to be in a scholar category that he has the same features as other books in the same scholar categories. So at the end, an ebook with a lot of image, just as other ebooks must be readable with ears and fingers. That mean that every visual resources as a textual alternative that can be translated into Braille or provided as a spoken voice by the reading system. And additionally, you have to make sure that the reader can modify the fonts, the size of the font and the spaces. That mean that you should not make ebook in fixed layout or in or in PDF because for now we don't have easy ways to provide the reflowable version of the fixed layout ebook. So just picking up the fixed layout question then. So I'm jumping between all these questions that are coming in. Jason asked the question, can an accessible PDF be compliant with the EAA standards or is it accessible epub three that guarantees full compliance? That's a good question and we don't have clear answer until there are low suites and and some decision have been made at national levels. But the point is that the PDF as the fixed layout today are not providing a way to adjust the font size, to adjust the font family and to adjust spaces between lines, letters, words, etcetera. Which make it in a way not accessible to people who rely on these type of features. Like people with dyslexia or people with low vision that are not using screen reader on or a specific assistive technology and that are relying on on on those features to be able to to read. Now, you can probably argue that your PDF is the norm for PDF is universal accessible, so it is readable with a screen reader and an assistive technology. And you can probably argument that making another version of it as a reflowable epub will be a disproportionate burden or would change the format of the file. So that's there's maybe a way to to play and to make sure that your PDF don't works with the with European Accessibility Act. But at the end, you're not providing a good service to a large part of the people who are needing textual adjustment aspect and visual adjustments to to be able to read in good conditions. Yeah, well, well, thank you, Gautier for taking a stab at that. I mean, we're this is beginning to stray towards a legal discussion. This isn't a legal seminar. We have no lawyers on the call. But thank you for providing that wisdom there. So the next question is a couple of questions are coming to you, James and one here from Jen. Are there challenges caused by completing the backlist remediation projects ahead of all EU Member states publishing their legislation? Are there concerns maybe that it might be some surprising details in still to be published rulings that might require then further remediation? What's your take on that, since you've made such good progress at Taylor and Francis? Not really. We said that with a grain of salt and some hope. The the WCAG Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 is more or less universally agreed to be the accessibility standard. It's already as established in the US and all of the publishing groups are dealing with the EAA are holding that up and the European Council or has already said yes. It is a kind of a starting point. They haven't rubber stamped it completely though. So that's our target and that's what we're aiming for. So we don't see an issue with getting things completed early and we're desperate to complete things early because there will still be other problems that come along that frankly we haven't noticed. And then we're going to have to step back and fix those again. And the less we have to do at that moment, the better. Right, thank you. And then we had a question, I think relating to your content, which was there was a reference to source files and wonder in in this case, which source files were being referred to? Were they epubs? Were they the original XML, maybe InDesign files? If you think this relates to you, James, maybe you could take this question. Yes. So for our backlist, we turned over to the vendors who were doing the work the epub files. We had our XML files and our application files, which in most cases were Indesign files, and they would go through and check all three and see which is in the best condition and start from that point. For simple books, the epub 2 going to epub 3 worked more or less well since it's just structural adjustments. The more complicated books tended toward the XML for the conversion process and in some cases just went to the Indesign files. Great, thank you. We have a load more questions in the queue, but we don't have the time, I'm afraid, including a few more questions on a legal basis. And one question about are we planning to do a session with lawyers? That's not really our strength at DAISY Consortium. So you'll probably need to find that webinar somewhere else. But we have many more coming up for you.

So thank you again to James, Gautier, Chiara, Thomas, Katie and Daniel for your excellent contributions to this webinar. And to remind you, in the treasure trove that is the Daisy Webinar Archive, you'll find more than 30 hours of video articles and links to resources related to accessible publishing. Today's webinar is the second event in our Countdown Series, A 12 month program in which we'll be exploring all aspects of accessible publishing and reading, facilitating knowledge sharing, and helping all involved to understand and prepare for the European Accessibility Act. I'm happy to share with you the next three scheduled topics on August the 28th with 304 days to go. Our webinar topic is accessibility testing, and in this webinar we'll explore the diverse range of tests and assessments, both automated and manual, that can be performed to refine the user experience and to support accessibility. On September the 25th, with 269 days to go, it's the turn for image descriptions. This webinar will discuss the practical workflow approaches taken by a number of publishers to ensure that high quality image descriptions are efficiently authored for both front and backlist titles. And on October the 23rd, with 241 days to go, the webinar will focus on reading solutions. Ensuring that people can read accessible ebooks across a variety of different platforms, customizing the presentation of that content and supporting the use of a diverse range of assistive technology is far from a simple task. And in this webinar, we'll hear from leading reading systems developers, including representatives from Amazon and Kobo, to learn about the innovations that they're making to support accessible reading and their ongoing work to improve the reading experience for everyone. You can find out more at daisy.org/webinars, where you can also sign up to the webinar announcement mailing list to learn about new topics as we add them. And if you'd like to suggest a subject or you're considering presenting a webinar, then please e-mail us at webinars @ daisy.org. Thank you for coming today. I'll hope you'll join us again next time. Goodbye.