# An Insider's Look at InDesign's Accessibility Improvements – webinar transcript

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<https://daisy.org/news-events/articles/an-insiders-look-at-indesigns-accessibility-improvements-w/>

Welcome everyone. My name is Richard Orme and I'm delighted to have you join us today for another webinar hosted by the DAISY Consortium. The DAISY Consortium is the not for profit global authority on publishing and reading for people with blindness, low vision and other print disabilities. Over more than two decades, our team of international experts have developed standards, tools and best practices that are relied on by publishers and library services, vendors and technology companies. And as more and more publishers are implementing inclusive practices, not least due to the forthcoming EAA for the European market and title two regulations in the US, we're bringing you webinars and website resources to help you prepare. Today, we're excited to be taking an insider's look at InDesign accessibility improvements when I'll be joined by the driving forces behind InDesigns EPUB enhancements. Over the next 30 minutes or so, I'll talk with Rob Haverty, Gregorio Pelligrino, Laura Brady, and Jonas Lillqvist, and you'll get a practical guide to the latest features. You'll learn how they empower you to build better, more inclusive EPUB, and you'll get a sneak peek at future priorities. and we'll have some time for Q&A. If you're serious about inclusive design, there'll be something for you in this webinar. Whether you're a veteran InDesign user or a casual EPUB creator.

Okay, let's get started. So people with disabilities face barriers to reading an education. If information is published in a way that doesn't work for them. And at the same time, publishers want to reach all potential readers and they need to comply with accessibility regulations. Over the last decade, we've seen wonderful progress in the accessibility of digital books, ensuring they can be read by people with blindness, low vision and other print disabilities. Because of the foundational work of DAISY and W3C, standards and best practices are clear. There are tools to validate the e-book files and check for accessibility. We also have e-book apps and devices with accessibility features. The people with print disabilities rely on, but publishers also need effective tools to create e-books that are standards compliant and meet with accessibility. Good practice. In this way, they can build those good practices into their regular workflow so it becomes part of everyday practice with the familiar tools they already know. InDesign has offered an EPUB export feature for many years, but you had to do work in the code to fix it up afterwards, correcting errors or adding support for missing features. So people who were fans of both InDesign and accessible ebooks asked for features to be added and bugs to be fixed. But it was hard to get the attention of the decision makers at Adobe. And with accessibility increasingly being part of contract language. With the EAA coming and accessibility legislation in other parts of the world too. This was becoming increasingly urgent. How could all these publishers produce accessible ebooks? If the leading software didn't provide the wherewithal? While this concern found its way to the Accessible Book Consortium, an initiative of the UN agency WIPO and to the Federation of European Publishers, both organizations reached out to the Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen in early 2022, who responded rapidly, positively and tasked his teams to prioritize the issue. And I'm delighted to be joined today by Rob Haverty from Adobe. So, Rob, tell us about yourself and your role.

Absolutely. Thank you. Richard, it's a pleasure to be here. And it has been a pleasure to have this partnership that we have had. I am on the corporate accessibility team, which actually sits under our Ethical Innovation team, led by our senior director, Grace Yee. And in my role, I manage the team of product managers that work directly with our product teams to help them address accessibility, both in our Document cloud products like Acrobat and our Creative Cloud products like InDesign.

And Rob, tell us about Adobe's approach to accessibility.

Absolutely. Adobe has launched has been committed to accessibility for a long time. And in that commitment, probably one of the most important parts is our partnership with, people with disabilities and our customers. And we want to make sure that we are addressing the needs in a timely manner. both through our own testing and identifying those issues, as well as when issues are brought to us by our customers.

Okay, so Adobe's InDesign is a leading desktop publishing tool, very widely used in the publishing industry and a big role to play in accessible e-books. Tell us about the accessibility in InDesign.

Yes, absolutely. So within InDesign, you know, our original focus was on PDF documents, and that was primarily because PDF documents are quite ubiquitous worldwide. you know, there are trillions of them created every year. but through our partnership and through the Accessible Book Consortium and the Federation of European Publishers reaching out to us, we recognized that there was a gap in providing publishers the ability to create accessible EPUB books. Well. And designs offered an EPUB feature for many years, but you had to do a ton of work in the code to fix it up afterwards. Correcting errors or adding support for missing features. So how do we go about moving the needle on that? You know, quite frankly, it has all. It really has been driven by the Accessible Book Consortium and the Federation of European Publishers. and, and really this has also been driven a bit around the European accessibility Act. so you all actually came to us with a list of issues that we needed to address, and we looked at them from two aspects. One is, how can we improve? Creating accessible EPUB formats for publishers, and then how can we also improve the output so that it is easier for people with disabilities to consume the information in those books? Thanks for that, Rob, and thank you for your partnership and a shout out to your engineering colleagues in the InDesign team for their work on this initiative. A reminder that if you have questions for Rob or any of our speakers, please use the Q&A button in zoom and we'll get to these in the Q&A session. So the letter from ABC included the phrase. Our experts would be pleased to provide suggestions for InDesign enhancements. So we needed some experts. We collected the brains trust of e-book production experts from Canada, France, Kenya, Italy, India, the UK, and the US. And we developed a closely documented list of more than 30 issues to discuss and prioritize with the Adobe team. So that's the background to this initiative. And from here, I'll hand over to Gregorio to pick up the story as we move into the technical details.

Thanks, Richard and Rob for this introduction. As the technical leader of the accessible EPUB from InDesign expert group, it's my pleasure to introduce our dedicated team of international accessibility specialists. Our expert group is composed of Richard Orme from DAISY Consortium, who facilitates our work, and you have already met him. Laura Brady, representing the Accessible Books Consortium, Jonas Lillqvist from Celia and myself, representing Fondazione LIA. Over the past three years, we have worked closely with Adobe Engineering team to improve our InDesign experts accessibility by providing them with a detailed list of technical requirements and ongoing support. These recommendations are based on our deeper, hands on expertise in using InDesign to create accessible publications, and are aimed at making the creation of born accessible leap apps from InDesign much easier. Today, each member of our team will present a different aspect of the work we have accomplished. One aspect of our work that I'm particularly proud of is that our efforts are beneficial, not just for publishers specifically focused on accessibility, but for the entire publishing ecosystem. Another significant achievement is the dramatic reduction in the manual process for code editing to the HTML, CSS, and XML that was previously required to create accessible EPUBs. After the export from InDesign, these two steps represent a significant step forward in our mission to make digital publishing accessible by default. Right since the beginning and being fully integrated into mainstream publishing workflows. Now, I'll hand over to my colleagues, who will walk you through specific aspects of the improvements with have to implement. Thank you all for joining us today.

Okay. So I want to talk about how to create a pagelist from InDesign. InDesign is now capable of creating a page list out of the box that needs almost no attention or remediation from developers. This is a major upgrade over how EPUB were created from InDesign, even from about a year ago. a page list is a literal list of all the print pages in a document, with links to the location of the page breaks in the navigation document often. And this navigation document is often called the toxic HTML and InDesign exported EPUB. The page breaks in the file must be marked with a specific HTML markup, and then a list gathered as, a gathered together as a list in the navigation. There's a good technical explainer on the DAISY knowledge base, and the link will be on your screen. Reading systems will use the page list in a variety of ways, the most important of which is to sync page locations to the print edition so that users of various formats can literally be on the same page, including a page list, and a digital publication is a key part of an accessible e-book. So InDesign has been creating a page list for fixed layout publications for some time, and it's now capable of doing so for reflow ebooks as well, which is a massive improvement for e-book developers. Up until now, we've been using scripts, from InDesign and then post export scripts. We've been basically standing on our head to get a good page list out of InDesign. It is now simple and seamless and quite easy. So there are three parts to creating a page list, which InDesign now fully supports. So it marks the page break in the file in the HTML file. The exact location with the correct markup, and includes a list in the navigation document, and there's a place to identify the source of the pagination. So the first two received automatically when a user opts for page navigation from the EPUB Export Wizard. InDesign will automatically include the correct HTML with Aria to mark the page breaks, and will assemble a list of the pages in the navigation document. The last item about the source of the pagination may require a bit more attention. So on the general tab of the EPUB Export Wizard, as you can see in the screenshot on your screen, the page navigation button will be checked by default. The decision you need to make is whether to add a print identifier that is a print ISBN as you export the book, not including this print corollary identifier will earn you an error in Ace by DAISY. So do consider including it. If the e-book is digital first or digital only, you can opt for none in that same window or point to another non ISBN source. So one other quick note. One concern for InDesign users is to maintain the page breaks as they get a publication ready for export to EPUB. This isn't always as straightforward or easy, especially for content that needs a lot of items like images, sidebars, and marginalia anchored often. e-book developers will anchor those kind of floating elements to the location in the text where they want them to appear, and anchoring. Up until now has been a bit of a glitchy process because it often causes text to flow behind the image. which is not good for print purposes. For digital, it doesn't matter as much, but that text flowing behind the image means that the location of your page break is going to be slightly off. the anchoring process is seamless with an important note. Be cautious to anchor to a paragraph above the anchored item. Doing so will prevent reflow, which will then maintain the integrity of the page list. The page break markers should be faithful to where the page breaks occurring. Print to one an image. so in the screenshot you can see that there's the image is anchored to the title above it. Then there's no reflow. When that image same image is anchored to the paragraph beside it. The layout changes slightly and the exact location of the page break marker will shift. So to avoid this, be really deliberate about where you anchor those kinds of elements. Hope that makes sense.

Tables are one of the high priority issues we started working on last year. Tables differ from ordinary linear text. They are read row by row or column by column, both visually and with screen readers. Column and row headers give essential context for understanding the data. Screen reader users can't visually scan the table to match headers with data. They rely on proper HTML markup for the standing and navigating the table. Before the recent updates. Three key features of accessible table markup were missing from InDesign EPUB export. First column headers in HTML t h scope equals col Next row headers t h scope equals row, and finally table titles. The caption element. In InDesign version 20, released in October 2024, support for column headers was introduced. This builds on InDesign existing feature for setting header rows in tables. Now, any non-empty cell in a header row is exported with column header markup, including the scope attribute. Note that this improvement only applies to reflow. Apple EPUB in InDesign. Fixed layout export still doesn't support table markup at all. This slide shows the current status of table markup support for reflow EPUB. It shows a table fragment with three rows and four columns. The table has a title or main header. Provinces of Canada. This would be a caption element within the table. Unfortunately, InDesign does not support this. The first row of the table contains headers for the data columns. Column headers are now supported, which is a big improvement. The leftmost column contains headers for the rows. Row headers are still not supported. The remaining cells are data cells, which are of course supported. Let's wrap up by summarizing the situation. Content creators can and should use InDesign feature for setting header rows. This ensures proper column header markup directly for the export. For all but the simplest tables, some manual editing or post-processing is still required. This applies to row headers, which are important for accessibility captions, which are helpful but less critical, and also the column headers that are not in the top. Most rows of the table. Support for row headers and captions is a high priority for the expert group. Unfortunately, there's no timeline yet for when they might be addressed. Now I'll talk about how InDesign handles footnotes and then notes when exporting to for. First, a bit of background and InDesign document can include footnotes and notes or both when exporting to referable EPUB. There are three options for footnotes. One of these options converts footnotes into end notes. Each export option affects the HTML markup and the placement of the note text within the pop file. E-book users must be able to move from the note reference to the note text and back to the reading position. Functional links and back links are essential for this for screen reader users. It's also important to identify note references and have the option to skip note content. Digital publishing ARIA rules address these needs. They also enable spatial handling of notes such as pop up display in reading apps. So let's look at how InDesign has improved its note export in 2024. Significant updates were made by the end of the year. All major problems were solved. The updates focused on three areas first, no reference links and backlinks. Second, HTML markup for note content. Third, the use of digital publishing Aria rules. These improvements make note handling inputs more reliable and accessible. Next, let's look at the improvements to links in HTML markup for notes, links, and backlinks. InDesign now generates functional reference links and back links for all export options. HTML markup footnotes are wrapped in a side element, while endnotes are structured as ordered lists within a section. Finally, let's look at how InDesign now uses digital publishing. Aria rules for notes. Previously, ARIA rules weren't applied to no elements at all. Now, InDesign adds these attributes to make notes more accessible. These include doc, notorious for no reference links. Doc backlink for backlinks. Doc footnote for footnote. Text and doc end notes for the end notes section. The corresponding EPUB type attributes are also added. This ensures better compatibility with reading apps.

Another important feature we designed with the InDesign team was the new accessibility panel within the InDesign Export Mask. Under the metadata tab, this panel allows content creators to directly enter the publication. Sustainability metadata. And this is a significant step forward considering that accessibility metadata is a strong requirement of the EPUB accessibility 1.1 specification, as well of the European Accessibility Act. Within this panel, you are able to set the accessibility feature. There is a long list where you can select different, elements like alternative text index, Page break markers, page navigation, reading order. The accessibility. Others in most cases, is known. The access mode, like visual and textual accessible is sufficient textual. Yes. Disability summary which is an optional field, not mandatory. The accessibility credentials are where you can set the conformance, the standard you try to conform to, like EPUB disability 1.1. We have 2.1 level Double-A. If there is a certifier of this disability of the book like Fondazione LIA. If there are some certifier credentials, if any and eventually a link. So a URL to the certifier report. However, it is important to understand the accessibility metadata are specific things for professionals, and this panel is not for the field and requires a deep understanding of the accessibility characteristics of the publication. These characteristics have to be described about the disability metadata to ensure the currency of the information entered. In this science, I want to warn you cause in Fondazione Alia as part of our quality assurance activities for ebooks, we check a lot of publications and we often face situations where the accessibility metadata do not reflect the reality of the content. So misleading the end user. For example, we see novels claiming that there are accessible formulas in MathML in the content, but there are no formulas at all in the novel. So you need to be careful not to provide users with incorrect information about the ebook accessibility. Two important new features of InDesign for making accessible EPUB were related to images. The first one is about alt text for cover images. InDesign was capable of adding alt text to images within the content, but it was not possible to produce an epub with an alt text for the cover image. Ending up with an EPUB with just covered dot PNG is an alt text of the cover image, which is not meaningful for the end user. Acknowledge these. We have InDesign to introduce a feature allowing the content creator to specify the alternative text of the cover images directly within the EPUB export Wizard. During the export process, the content creator can now input a descriptive alt text for the cover image. For sure, if the e-book as one We also provided a placeholder to help the content creator to make that alt text, properly, and the placeholder tells "cover off" and then the title of the e-book by default. Or, if the metadata are already filled in for the e-book, then the cover alt text that is automatically, generated. The other feature is about decorative images. Decorative images are elements within digital content that serve no informational purpose. They are purely aesthetic. For users of screen readers, encountering these images without the proper stacking can lead to confusion. Users might wonder if they are missing out on important content, which detracts from the overall experience. Recognizing this, we have Adobe to, add the possibility to mark specific images as decorative. It was already possible for accessible PDFs, but there was not the option for ebooks. Now, in InDesign, in the Object Export Options dialog, you can find the, the option Decorative image. No alt text. Marking up an image with this option allow you to tag that as decorative. And so the output in EPUB gets you the image with the attribute role presentation and the alt attribute empty. That means that that specific image was intentionally tagged as decorative, which is different from just having the alt attribute empty, because that may be a mistake, because you may forgot to put the alt text. While properly tagging decorative images allows content creator to specify, okay, say that that image is, decorative image.

Okay, let's talk about drop caps now. Drop caps have long been a fairly tricky part of creating ebooks. Many print layouts use drop caps as a visual element at the start of a new chapter or section, to denote a scene or a context shift. They are a purely decorative element that up until now, InDesign has been exporting in a span with CSS to create the doc drop cap. This looks accurate, but as we often know in e-book land, especially when we're centering accessibility, something that looks right isn't necessarily right under the hood. So it has been trouble for troublesome for accessibility reasons. Just as it's read by a screen reader as two separate words, the word the, for example, can get interpreted as t hee by screen readers are assistive technologies. So you'll find a technical explainer of the issues on the DAISY knowledge base and the link on your screen. InDesign is now exporting a more sophisticated HTML CSS combination known as the first letter pseudo element. The HTML has no spans in it. So, there's nothing that's going to go pear shaped with assistive technology. And you can see the HTML on your screen. Now. the drop cap is created purely by CSS, which in this case, as design is defined as a left float letter set at 4.179 EMS and with a font shift. This approach works beautifully across the device spectrum and functions without issues. For assistive technologies. And you can see how this renders in this screenshot from Apple Books. One quick note about how InDesign is exporting drop caps. If your print layout has drop caps that use more than one letter, things get a little bit more complex. IT and InDesign will then default to using a span for that two letter string, so it's just best to be aware of that.

Now let's take a look at how InDesign handles SVG. And SVG is a powerful format for graphics in EPUB because it's both scalable and lightweight. It's an XML based vector format that supports text rendered with fonts. SVG images can be scaled up without losing quality, which is important for low vision users. InDesign has supported placing in SVG images since version 15, released in 2019. By default, when exporting to EPUB, InDesign converts SVG to PNG to keep the SVG intact in reflowable EPUB. We need to adjust the export settings. There are currently two export options for SVG. The first is embed code, which means the SVG code is embedded directly into the HTML content. The second is object tags, which means the SVG is kept as a separate file and referenced using an HTML object tag. When exporting SVGs from InDesign using these two options, there are some limitations. Firstly, any alt text added in InDesign is not exported. Also, marking the image as decorative has no effect. On the other hand, when his SVGs are converted to PNG during export, InDesign does preserve the alt text. But this comes at the cost of losing the scalability benefits of SVG. In the upcoming version 20.4 expected in early June, InDesign will introduce a new export option for SVG image tags. When this option is selected, InDesign will use a standard IMG tag to reference the SVG file. This has two main benefits. It supports the old attribute, allowing all text to be exported. It also ensures that marking an image as decorative works correctly, but the default export behavior converting SVGs to PNG will not change. Now let's see where to find this setting in InDesign. You can apply it to a single SVG image or to all images in your publication at once. To apply to a single image, first select the image on the page. Next, go to object in the top menu and choose Object Export Options to open the settings window there. Make sure to select Use Existing Image for Graphic Objects. This will activate the use SVG as dropdown menu. From there, select Image Tags which is the third option in the list. To apply this setting to all images at once. Start by exporting your document to reflow able EPUB in the Reflowable Layout Export Options window. Go to the object tab at the top. Uncheck Preserve Appearance from layout for Graphic and Media objects from the use SVG as dropdown. Choose Image Text. By applying this setting, all SVG images in your EPUB will use the new Image Tags option.

Well thank you Rob and your engineering colleagues at Adobe for the improvements that you've made. And thanks in anticipation for the enhancements that you'll be making in the coming months. We still have a way to go, so don't think we're done yet. and thanks to Laura, Jonas, and our technical lead, Gregorio, for telling us about some of those latest enhancements. I mentioned before that we had an International Brains Trust work up the list of 30 issues, but over the last two years, we've been relying on a core team Gregorio, Laura and Jonas, who've been working diligently with the Adobe engineers, providing clarity on issues, helping with prioritization, providing code samples, testing, prerelease, and validating fixes. That's a huge contribution from our expert group and the organization. They work for, Fondazione LIA, eBound Canada and Celia, freely giving hundreds of hours to help other InDesign users produce better EPUB. Your work is excellent and impactful. Thank you. Okay, we'll move now into the Q&A section of the webinar. So if you have questions for Rob, Gregorio, Laura or Jonas, you can use the Q&A button in zoom. And I see some of you have already submitted questions. We'll cover as many as possible. Rob coming to you first. So this webinar has provided information on the issues that have been addressed so far. There are still issues in the issue tracker. What comes next? thank you Richard. And before I answer that, I do want to just second your comment about, the help from Gregorio, Laura and Jonas, and yourself. quite frankly, in design would not be where it is today with EPUB without all of you, partnering with us. so. Well, what comes next is actually continuing the work that we've been doing. we started with what we considered the blocking issues, which was prioritized, you know, through the help of all of you. And now we have the second set of issues that are equally important, but at least are not blocking, you know, from, you from creating accessible EPUB, books. And so, the team has this team has prioritized this, and the engineering team at Adobe is starting to, work on those. And the process will consider continue where we'll just continue to iterate on this over the next 12 months. as we as we finish up the work. Great. Thank you for that, Rob. And the second question to you, Jill asks if we have paid attention to accessibility in working in InDesign. Will the exported EPUB have, the all the accessibility aspects in the exported code? I think the simple answer to that is not yet. we have done a lot of work. but there, as you know, as Richard has mentioned, I believe we started with 33 issues and we have tackled 15 of them. So we still have some more issues to go, to, to get to you know, get to where we really want to be. However, I would just add, I've been doing, you know, accessibility for decades now. And quite frankly, it is a continuing journey. We are never 100% there. there is always more work to do. and so, you know, having the partnership that we do, with all of you and with the rest of our customers is just going to help us continue to make it better. Great. Thank you. one more question before I turn to Laura. Jim Swift, us, Jim had heard news that alt text creation will be added to InDesign. Is this still in the task list? Is there an ETA? So yeah, that's a great question. And I'm not actually 100% sure what the question is. Gregorio did talk, quite a bit about alt text, you know, being added for, the cover page. alt text itself has been in there for, for quite a while. but if you're asking about AI generated alt text, that is something that Adobe is working, very vigorously on, across really all of our products. the accessibility team that I'm part of is actually part of the Ethical Innovation team, which includes our AI ethics team. And so when we start thinking about, AI doing anything, we're always thinking about it from an ethical standpoint, and we want to make sure that what it is generating is going to, not be offensive, not be offensive. and, and stick with our ethics values. but I would say stay tuned. I don't have a firm ETA yet. AI is getting more and more robust, and we're actually starting to get to the point where not just describing the image, but actually being able to understand the image in the context in which it's been used and being able to actually create real alt text. Great. Thanks for the question, Jim. Laura, turning to you, we have a question from Hadley. it's a clarification question. So you mentioned to anchor any graphics above the paragraph that you'd like them to be anchored to rather than besides. Could you provide that clarification? You'll see the question in the Q&A. Yeah. And that's right. Hadley. what I suspect is, as you get used to how this works, there will be a little bit of trial and error as you sort of figure it out, but play with it and see what's working. It will be visually clear right away if there's going to be reflow on the page or not. But if you link it to something above rather than next to you should be safe. But you'll have to play with it just a little bit to make sure it's working as expected. Thank you Laura. We'll keep the pace up. Another one for you, is what about EPUB 2? so we've talked about changes that are fixing up EPUB three. But maybe some things about EPUB two got affected. Are there plans to address them. Is the question I have here. Yeah. So EPUB two because of some of the changes that we've made to how InDesign exports EPUB three making it more HTML5 based. EPUB two is now broken out of the box. We have logged some bugs with Adobe and hope that this will get fixed in future. If I could maybe make a little plug to just move on to EPUB three. I know there are a few lingering distributors left in the world who really want EPUB two, but call them up and yell at them, or send me their number. I'll do it. I'm not afraid to yell. Move on to EPUB three is what I would suggest. And if that's not feasible, changes will be coming. I hope to fix that export soon. Thank you. Laura. Coming to you now, Jonas. Two questions. one is, do you have any tips for exporting tables from InDesign? and at the same time avoiding accessibility, issues. So exporting tables from InDesign to EPUB. Yeah. well, my first tip would be to make sure from the start that the table is well structured and, whenever possible, avoid, very large and complex tables. Simple tables are easier for assistive technologies to handle. at the markup for simple tables. is better supported by InDesign. Also, so try to avoid complexities like merging data cells. which can be confusing for screen reader users. or dividing a large table into six sections with multiple header rows. and as I said, when you use in this size feature for, defining header rows in tables, you will get good column header markup right upon export, which is great. but you need to watch out for, row headers, which are usually found in the leftmost column of the table. they need to be fixed after export. and my last tip would be to avoid fixed layout export for books containing tables. because, in this fixed layout, the export doesn't, support, semantic, table markup at all. So you will get a bunch of, spans and divs instead of real tables. Yeah. Great. Thank you. Jonas. we're going to I've got another question lined up for Gregorio on fixed layout, but stick with you for the moment. So, EPUB exports struggling with complex layout elements, maybe images, captions and text boxes. do you know of any kind of planned improvements in the works for handling these more complex layouts? Well, there are some there are several issues that, touch upon this subject, that we, the expert group, has documented and that we have, discussed with Adobe. And I'm quite hopeful that we will see some improvements there. one example is that that InDesign, doesn't support, proper image caption markup using the caption element nested within a single tag. but this one has proved to be a bit difficult to solve, for the Adobe engineers. So there's no timeline for fixing it. but we're hopeful that it will be addressed in the future. another challenge, that Laura already mentioned, was, about anchoring images or text boxes. which often causes reflow. That's also an issue that Adobe, is looking closely at right now. and finally, when you anchor, objects like text boxes, InDesign creates, CSS that is quite problematic. It you sometimes, you may see that, the text in an image caption gets clipped and the box doesn't scale. When you scale up the text. so that's something we've been looking at closely. And, I think once the higher, the higher priority issues have been fixed, Adobe will start looking at that more closely to. Yeah. Great. Thank you. Well, Jonas, as you mentioned, fixed layout. and Marie said, very happy to see the webinar. great to have the focus on reflow able, but what news on fixed layout EPUB. So, Gregorio, what news on fixed layout. What are the solutions there? Thank you for for this question. So, as you have understood, we started working on, reflow body parts because then this is the common format used for most of ebooks that are distributed. because it's the most accessible format. if it's well done, for sure. that allowed the end user to change the font size, the line height, the font color. So the the end user as, all the power to change the formatting. This thing is not possible in fixed layout, as we know. I also want to stress the fact that at the moment, there is no, official specification on how to make fixed layout assets for for sure, they can be made more accessible than the ones that are exported by now by different authoring tools. One of these is InDesign, with some limitations on fixed layout, but there is no I call the rule a golden rule on how to make fixed layout accessible, so it's also tricky to give guidance to a big company that have to develop something that is not trusted by specifications. one thing that, I, I will dive on this is that, while working on the, the floorball part, some of the improvements of the reflow ball export were also enabled for fixed layout. For example, the metadata accessibility metadata part. You can find the same accessibility metadata panel in the fixed layout export. the improvement of on the semantic of nulls and footnotes of work inherited by fixed layout as well. we understand that is is not is not enough. we would like to finish our work on reflowable and then start, working on fixed layout, with, with InDesign. In the meantime. I can mention that there are some external tools, such as those, developed by secular software that can be used in combination with InDesign to export more accessible, accessible, fixed layout out of the design. So look at those tools that may help your daily work. Right. And again, that was, tool from Circular Software. Thank you for that. Gregorio, another question for you is one of the high priority issues in the issue tracker right now is support for MathML. can you tell us the status of accessibility support for, accessible scientific expressions? Sure. So MathML support in InDesign is quite a new thing. It was released, in version 20.0 last October, and it was a great surprise for the whole ecosystem. We were waiting, the possibility to manage formulas in InDesign for, decades now. we know that, is a starting point. Development, is not, let's say, completely finished. There are some things that have to be improved, both for the production and for the digital production on the EPUB export side. What is exported right now? if you have, mathematic formula, InDesign is the SVG image of that formula. So, vectorial image plus the MathML code hidden behind the image this is quite accessible, but for sure is not the best option because the best option would be to have plain MathML, representing more formulas in the in fixed layout. So we are working with the InDesign development teams to allow MathML export plain MathML directly out of InDesign. And we know that during this year, some some improvements should be should be available in that side. So fully accessible formulas out of InDesign are coming. Thank you. Gregorio. we have the same question asked by two people here. So we maybe two of our panelists might answer on this one. So from Chris and from Sarah, there's the question about, support for long descriptions of, images or extended descriptions, in EPUB, the status of this one. Who would who would like to start on this or maybe take this question. Maybe I can say one, one thing on the specification side and then leave to Laura or Jonas, as Laura has some techniques on this. The thing I would like to stress before sticking to the techniques is that at the moment there is no, standardized way to make long descriptions. Long descriptions are a concept. Is the idea of adding a long description for an image. But it's not like the alt text where you have the alt attribute. There is no standardized markup for those in the World Wide Web Consortium. We are working on standardizing long descriptions so that the authoring tools can implement them in a proper way, but for how to manage the long description? at the moment in InDesign, I can I can link to Laura who has some tips. Yeah. So, so this is on our agenda. It's on our radar. One thing I would just add to what Gregorio said is that, be cautious of overusing long descriptions when they're not really necessary. Be mindful of the reading experience. I would just put that out there. I have experimented with using cross references to create long descriptions, and I wrote about it on my blog. maybe I'll add a link to the resources document or something like that, just in case it's useful for people. But, the best way, and that's, that's assuming, linking out to a nonlinear HTML with a long description. And that's sort of the most simple way to do a long description. it has the broadest, device support and reading system support for that method. So that's one, one option. sticking with you for a moment, Laura. we have a question. Sorry. I've got so many. I'm scrolling through them. Yeah, from Ignacio, on. and the question is, are there any recommendations, or tips for books or courses for someone who's new and interested in learning how to make, EPUB, from InDesign that's accessible. Thank you. it's a great question. And, things are changing so fast that there are some things out there in the world, but they're all slightly out of date now because the changes are coming so quickly from the InDesign. And there's in the resources link, there's a link out to the Accessible Publishing Learning Network, which is a whole set of micro lessons on how to create accessible InDesign out of accessible EPUB, out of InDesign. So that may be of use to you. Ignacio, I would encourage you to go look at that resources document and find that APLN link. Great. Thank you for that. I have another question in the queue, but I can't find it right now. It's coming to you, Rob, which is about so great to see these improvements for EPUB, to do any of these kind of find their way into the PDF, world. What's, what's happening with with that. So that one for you, Rob. Yeah, that's a great question. and we actually have spent a number of years now, working on making sure that you could export and accessible PDF out of InDesign. But it was very interesting in this process to find that there were things that we had missed still and in and working on EPUB, we also picked up some some additional fixes for PDF. but in my experience, creating accessible PDF out of InDesign is or I should say, the different way PDF is the most accessible format that you can create out of InDesign today. Great. Thank you for that. that was from Galjique. I hope I got that name right. Sorry for not finding your name beforehand. so, here's a general question, and we're kind of beginning to come towards the end now, so it's, maybe a clear explanation for the different accessibility features in that EPUB export. What satisfies each of the options? so this question from Munchka, is kind of who says crawling through the technical explanations is rather tedious. This is something we hear. You know, EPUB producers shouldn't have to be coders and developers. They just want to know how to do the right kind of thing. So a clear explanation, maybe it links to the kind of the training and guidance piece. Yeah, for sure. And, just to, to give our feedback on this is not that simple. also cause the panel is changing, but when, when we train publishers on how to use InDesign for accessibility, it usually takes me about one hour just to explain the export wizard, because there are a lot of options and you really have to understand that each option one to understand what the output will be and the accessibility implications. So it's not that simple, but maybe we can think about, it in with InDesign, maybe in their knowledge base to, to help users. Right. Thank you.

Well, we're coming towards the end. we've got questions here in the queue we just haven't had time for. So we'll share them amongst our expert group and try to respond to the people that, ask them, if, if you want to make better, EPUB from InDesign, then we invite you to upgrade your InDesign to the latest version and take advantage of, the features that our amazing expert group, have explained to you today. and you can stay up to date by signing up for the inclusive Publishing newsletter, at InclusivePublishing.org/newsletter where our expert group will, be posting articles or will be linking to the articles that they post on their own organization's websites.

Okay, so we're coming to the end of our session today. Many thanks once again to Rob, Gregorio, Laura, and Jonas for being excellent guests in this webinar and giving us an insider's look at InDesign accessibility improvements. So that's it for today. But before we go, I just have time to remind you that in the treasure trove that is the DAISY Webinar Archive, you will find more than 50 hours of videos, plus articles and links and resources related to accessible publishing. And the next accessible publishing webinar from DAISY will be on May the 28th, when we'll be looking at AI and accessible publishing. We've got some questions on that. Debate about artificial intelligence is everywhere, with new and improved services being launched every week and the promise of automating tasks and producing higher quality content. But what might these developments mean for accessible publishing? Do they offer practical solutions, or do the costs and risks outweigh the benefits? So join us as our panel of experts discuss their experiences of using AI in accessible publishing in a variety of ways and how the promise of AI might become a reality. You can find out more information 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.

Thank you for coming today. hope you'll join us again next time. Goodbye.