# EAA Celebration, Reflection and Prognostication, T-3 – webinar transcript

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<https://daisy.org/news-events/articles/eaa-celebration-reflection-t-3-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. For the past year, this webinar series has been counting down the days until the European Accessibility Act comes into force. We've covered a wide range of topics, some highly technical discussions about cutting edge developments in AI, and some user focus sessions to introduce you to ways that people with print disabilities need to access books, and to some commonly used assistive technologies. Today, we arrive at our final webinar in this series with just three days to go until the European Accessibility Act coming into force. We're celebrating how far we've come. Reflecting little on the journey and looking forward to the future for both the EAA and other accessibility focused legislation being introduced around the world. We're fortunate to be joined by a panel of experts who have all made distinct and significant contributions to the EAA journey in a multitude of ways. As usual, we start with some short presentations, after which we'll move into Q&A to address as many of your questions and comments as possible, so you can use the Q&A button in zoom at any time during the webinar. Okay, let's get started. First up, we have Thomas Kalish from dzb lesen. Over to you, Thomas.

Hello, ladies and gentlemen, I'm Thomas Kalish from Germany. I'm the head of library for the print. Disabled people here in Germany. And also I'm the head of MediBus, which is our association of these libraries working together here in Germany. And I'm have the pleasure to talk to you about, I would call it is a working on a dream says or by headings like working on a dream. And if I look back in the early years when we started to produce information and accessible formats to transform, printed books, typing it down in Braille, manual work, a lot of work has to be done, until we finished, Braille books and gave it to our patrons and our library with technology like, OCR is optical character recognition is scanned. We scanned in documents because the reason was that publishers have produced printed books, and we have to, use them to create accessible formats out of these, printed books. And this, causes us for a, you know, let's say, very powerful process to transfer the information we have to OCR the documents stored on the computer, have a recognition process, and then, a restructuring, of this book. And this took place in all libraries around the globe for blind and partially sighted people, which is really wasting of, the resources because it is would be easier if one publisher could, create the book in an appropriate format so we can easier, bring it into new formats. But, this was, at this time in the early years. Not possible. So it was a lot of work to do using, OCR software and computer technology. And the next step was then to use the internet, which provides us with new challenges and new tenses. more and more new technology shows up. And, this was the time when I had the pleasure to join the DAISY Consortium. And together with the DAISY Consortium, we worldwide worked on standards and technology to make more information accessible. Let me say to with our goal to have all information accessible to all people around the globe, this is the big, big issue, the big, big target that we are or the dream that we are working on with the DAISY Consortium. Yes. Disability organizations, they worked hard to persuade, the European Commission to bring, a law or an, yes, to bring a law, into place. that might help the publishing industry and to bring them to create a more accessible content, which means that the publisher is, producing directly the content in a accessible format. But this once was a very, very long process. the first, publication, the pronouncement of the, the EAA was in 2011 and, it was, in Europe, 2020 and then in 2019, when these, the European Accessibility Act, was ready and it took us, a couple of years until now, 2025, that the ratification in, in the countries in Europe, it's beginning now. this long process shows, how important is war? It was to explain, the the reasons why this makes sense and why it is useful, to create accessible content and, persuade, all partners in this process, to, bring it in in very fast, a way to make things more accessible and faster accessible. Then we did it in the early days with the OCR processing and these kind of things. The European Accessibility Act, is not only for the publishing process. It's also, for, to making the reading systems and the web shops, accessible. And, this is a very broad range of, more accessibility, which we will have in the future, in Europe. and this makes us, bring, the society better together and, brings everybody into this digital world, which is so important, to, to avoid gaps and, to close gaps when the, the exist at the moment, one other big advantage is, if we have the European Accessibility Act now in place so that, a blind person can have to read the same book to the same time, to the same price, like, other people can do, this, the Americans call it the, the water cooler discussion. You standing together with a colleague, and he's explaining it. I have read this wonderful book. You have to read it. You go to the shop, you can buy it. You can read it immediately, and you can talk to your friends, to your colleagues. you do not have to wait. for months until you get an accessible version. This is also very, very important, to bring the people in the same, position like other peoples. And, their, their will for we can, have easy access and very quick access to all information that are published at the moment due to the, European Accessibility Act. We will find in the future more, educational materials published in a digital way, in accessible format, which really will be very, very helpful to, have direct access for people who are learning, learning new jobs and want to, educate themselves or are studying. And, so that's why, the European Accessibility Act is very important not only for leisure reading stuff for fun, also for the education process to bring the people together, to give them the same chance. Isn't the same possibilities like other people have. But I think at my childhood and during my education, it was very hard to get access to, to, literature and also for educational materials especially. so, to learn books in Braille if it was produced, it was a long process until I get this book and could read it. and when I think of my education in little time during my studies, I have to use my own typewriter to, type things down, to write things down, because there were no, education to material for me in an accessible format. When I think today the situation is at universities and educational centers, where you can find as a blind or visually impaired person, where you can find accessible material that brings you in the same position, in the same situation, like sighted people say, colleagues, they are sitting next to you, your students, that you can learn together, exchange the experiences, and you do not have to wait until someone is, writing things for you down. You can do it by yourself. You can use the internet and all these information, all accessible, available at the moment in the internet. And now we, the, day before, the ratification of this, the European Accessibility Act is taking place and so we have a lot of good examples. We had a lot of good experiences that we made together with the publishing industry. not all is accessible. I have to say. And we still facing challenges, that we have to overcome in the next years. But we learned that we can work together, that we can learn from each other, and we can bring it forward, that this dream comes coming true, that everything is becoming accessible to everybody in the world. This is the the dream that we are working on. And I hope this will be, becoming true, in the near future. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Thomas, for that wonderful presentation. A reminder that if you have questions or comments for Thomas or any of the presenters, you can use the Q&A button and we'll get to those shortly. Next up, we're delighted to be joined by Cristina Mussinelli from Fondazione LIA.

Good afternoon everybody. It's really a pleasure to be here with you. I had been requested to provide you some information on the evolution of the European Accessibility Act and the foundational instrument that had been created this year, and also to highlight some of the main issues that are still remaining. As you may remember, the goal of the European accessibility is to prevent barriers to free movement, and especially the one arising from different accessibility required to member state. In particular, as Thomas already explained, the European Accessibility Act include or the e-book value chain. And this means a very important paradigm shift from the traditional way that accessible content are produced to a completely new way of producing accessible content in the way that is normally known as born accessible. This means a big change for all the actors, including publisher, content creator, institution, public and private company, international standard organization, but also end user. We in Fondazione LIA since the beginning of the discussion of the European accessibility, are thinking to the world value chain. And so we designed what we called an accessible digital ecosystem, where every step of the process, from the production of the content until the reading of the content was included and was wasn't described. And also, we tried to understand which actors were involved in the process, starting from the content creator, the publisher through the distribution platform, the aggregator, online bookshop, digital library, e-commerce website, payment arena, solution. Because we saw that every actor should have a special role in this chain, and every actor should act in a way that allow or the other one to be in sync and in line with the accessibility requirement. Was this enough? No. We had to move from the theoretical part to a more practical one. So the second part of the discussion was to create a collaboration among the different actors and provide to the actor in the value chain practical instrument and guidelines specifically. A lot of work has been done by all the actors involved in the standards organization to provide the standard specification for e-books, format what platform and metadata, so that every actor could have a clear idea or which standard they should use, and all had to follow them in a very, correct way where the standard enough? no. Because, to implement the standards and to create the content and the website and the publication, you need to have tools and the, instrument. So a lot of work has been done, for example, in creating tools like Epub, Jack ace, but especially for the publishing industry, one very important step was the work done in collaboration with Adobe to provide them all the information that were needed to make InDesign more accessible, and to allow publishers to create accessible publication and in the born process, more easily. This is a step that is not ended. We had achieved some good result, but some work is still to be done and I think we need to thanks the people working in the InDesign working group that has done a very, very strong work for the sake of all the industry. Are we ready? Not yet, because there are a lot of other element that I think would be involved and that still involve a lot of work need to be done in awareness raising in the publishing industry, but also in all the other actors of the value chain. A lot of investment has been done by the publisher in acquiring knowledge and skill, both improving the skill of the already existing people in the company, but also adding new skill from different, part of the value chain. For example, a lot of work has been done in many countries by a lot of organizations in training publisher, in giving them all the information that are needed to create accessible content. This has been done by the publishing industry itself, but also with the collaboration of, some specialist organization who have supported the publishing industry in the transition. It's also important to understand that also the role of this publisher of the specialist organization is change, because they started from producing traditional accessible version, but they move also, in their activity in the in the work of producing born accessible publication. there other information element innovation. There are a lot of things that need to be done, for example, in research, a lot of hope is, in the AI tool right now, they are not good enough, but we are sure that they will improve. And especially the combination of new tool and the knowledge acquired by the publishing industry will be very useful in the future. There are a lot of work in the area of workflows, metadata, and I am very happy because the fact that now it's available on some of the website of the most important retailer and metadata part, where all the information and accessibility metadata are displayed. For me, it's one of the most important goal we achieved because the visibility of the work done by or the other actor before is it's everything fine? No. Because, there are some element that may create some, problems in the implementer version of the actor especially. I think this should be very well considered, because initial implementation may bring back the act to the, not harmonize a situation, especially now what we see that are most important. Problem are the new title versus backlist is not clear if the, there are some country where the possibility to use a transition period is approved. But there are a lot of countries where this situation is not clear. And I think this is very important because the investment for the publisher in this part are very huge. And I think it would be important to have a clearer, opinion on that. The other, problematic element are the proposed the disproportionate burden calculation. There are some rules in the legislation, but the interpretation of how to calculate is not clear yet, and it's not clear to which kind of thought you can apply and how you really need to make the calculation. In the publishing industry, the same problem may raise for the fundamental alteration. That is also another element that it's not clear. We know that can be applied to illustrated children books, complex layout books, fix a layout book. But also here I think that the common interpretation would be very useful for the sake of the implementation of the act in the publishing industry, and also penalties we saw in different legislation and different authority and different entity of the penalty. Also, these, I think can be is something that should be more harmonized and more organized in, in, in the near future. And we hope that the collaboration among member state and the commission would be useful in this, area. is this enough? I don't think so, because now the major, step we need to improve is a user adoption. we know that a lot of people is using the new e-books, but I think that a lot of work needs to be done in communication of what the publishing industry has done, and providing end user of tool and information about the advantage that more accessible publication may bring to them, and also provide them information not only on the e-books, but on the reading solution, on the assistive technology integration with, website and so on. So the real, ecosystem coming place. Thank you very much.

Thank you very much, Cristina. You've raised some very important points, and I'm sure people will have related questions and comments. We look forward to addressing those in the Q&A shortly. But before we get to that, we're joined by our final presenter for today, Rick Johnson from VitalSource. It's a distinct pleasure to have you with us. Rick, over to you.

All right. Thank you very much. It's my pleasure to be here today, to be able to talk to you about what we're doing and what we've observed in the industry around not just EAA. That's sort of what's happening, globally in terms of other countries and, and other legislation that's coming down the pike. If you're unfamiliar with me, I'm Rick Johnson, with VitalSource. I'm one of the co-founders of service, have been very involved over the years in a number of different accessibility projects and a number of different initiatives around EPUB, been around accessibility standards, vital services, taking this very seriously for a number of years, not only addressing sort of the traditional accessibility arena of making sure that we're doing the right things and supporting needs around vision, around hearing, around motor skills, around cognition in terms of, how those get supported and how those get addressed. But we also approach it with the fifth area around localization. we make sure that our applications are localized in more than 37 different languages. So that as a user, you're using our applications. We see the localization as a key part of accessibility as well. But but really this legislation such as the EAA, is really driving home a lot of great new capabilities. from a vendor's perspective and accountability from a vendor's perspective. I've got a quote on the screen here from Alister McNaught, a great friend of the industry and a great friend that I'm sure many of you are familiar with, talking about how mature legislation, really drives the focus and shifts the focus away from looking at the individual and what their specific needs are, to looking at the vendor who's providing that service and holding them accountable, and making sure that the delivering what the vendor needs to deliver in order to solve the problems that users have. And one of those key problems is really around how do students find information around, what they're getting? slide on the screen here talks about a study recently from the World Health Organization. And yes, we all understand there's a lot of people in the world that have a disability and need some help. But that third point on the screen here, so they want to drive home, at least from our perspective, and what's motivated us. And that is among students who've responded that they had a disability while attending university or attending a college. Only a little over a third of them informed the college, informed the university, worked with the disability services groups that were available to them. Nearly two thirds of the students tried to solve the problem selves. And really, that need of helping students solve the problem themselves is where the focus is. That will be a vital source for driving. And will. The EAA really led the way in terms of providing some guidelines for what to do here? When I talk about how we approach the EAA and how we approach things like title two in the U.S. and other legislation around the globe, I talked about the 3Ds that you see on the screen here, discovery, disclosure and debt. And really, this is the the key area that we as a vendor really look at and focus on readers, learners, instructors, people who are adopting materials in the education environment need to understand what's in that content before they make a choice to buy it, before they make a choice to to to adopt it for they make a choice to use it. And that can only happen if I, as a vendor, improperly disclosing things. And if I fixed my own house, if I fix my own issues. Before we take a look at what's going on in the content. And so when I talk about these three areas that it's really about how we drive sort of best practices in solving the things you would expect a vendor to solve, make sure that our own applications are accessible. And then with design or disclosure, it's really about making sure that we're being honest and transparent in how do we provide information to you to make a decision and vital source. We do this through a website accessibility that vital statistics where you can see all of our information. We can see our third party audits, where you can see the different checklists and our accessibility statement, and understand where we are being transparent, where we know we have gaps and how we are closing them, and what our roadmap is. But with the EAA, it's really about that third area discovery. This this is really with the the legislation drives and it's impossible to solve the discovery problem without good metadata from our partners, without publishers working with us and without partners working with us and the industry helping drive standards around metadata so that we can provide that metadata in a way that's easy to understand, easy for users to consume. And it's not highly technical jargon that only specialists understand, but it's easy to understand phrases that accurately describe what the metadata is about and what claims are being made by the publishers about the content that we're delivering, or that people are evaluated. We also need to be able to provide reporting so that publishers and institutions know what that metadata looks like before they adopt that. All of that gets driven by a workflow that comes to us, through a digital publishing ecosystem. The publishers provide us that metadata, either in the epub using the schema.org reference or through an honest feed, providing us with that information. And then we can display that information using the Accessibility Metadata Display Guide that the W3C has recently produced. This lets us provide a very easy to use visual way of seeing the information and discovering that on the screen. Here you see an example here in one of our storefronts where you look at a title, you open up the accessibility tab, and now I can see instead of technical jargon, really easy to understand phrases that, you know, you heard talked about earlier in the the other presentations. And in this example here in our bookshelf application, you see on the right hand side, there is again those same easy to understand phrases. Again, localize in 37 languages. So if you're using our application in one of those languages, you will see this in something that you understand. And we provide this information to, the industry and to partners as well, through APIs and through catalog feeds, as well as that panel that shows that we provide that is an embeddable iframe. If you just want to be able to pull that up and very easily embed that in so you can gain access to that without doing a lot of the heavy lifting yourselves. As one of our partners. So I mentioned title two earlier. If you're unaware of what title two is and if you've been focused on the EAA, title two is really driven out of, legislation in the United States around the, Ada and its title two of the Ada, as it applies to what are called public entities. What this basically means is, if you're a public entity, like an institution of higher ed or other learning, and you take federal funding and you take federal support of that funding, you fall under this category of what's called title two. And in, two years ago, in May, there was a new ruling that came out that basically set a standard one that we're all familiar with, the WCAG 2.1 standard as the technical standard for compliance with title two. This means that in an institution, every website, every mobile app, every digital textbook that has to contain accessible text, accessible images, sounds, videos, controls, animations, all of that has to meet the work to one standard, or the institution itself is at risk of enforcement, and that enforcement can come in the way of penalties. That enforcement could come in the way of losing federal funding. And it's different from the EAA in the United States in that in the EAA, the onus is on the vendor. For example, my my own vital source, where we need to meet the requirement and we would provide and suffer from any enforcement entitled to in the United States. The institution is the one that's on the hook. And if they're using a vendor's product, they're using our product or somebody else's product, and we fail to meet those standards, we put that institution at risk. And so it's a great way of focusing the work that needs to be done and making sure that the institutions and the vendors are working together. Now we're seeing similar looks, across the globe. in Canada, we're seeing legislation coming out that really is starting to align that with EAA. But because of proximity, we expect probably should also be providing support via title two and the requirements there. we see the same thing in Brazil, in Australia and others looking around the world, really, the Europe community, European community leading the globe much as they did with privacy, a GDPR, with the EAA and driving that type of legislation. So sort of wrapping all this up, I'm not talking about the work we've been doing over the years and getting ready for this, but just because the EU enforcement is starting in a few days here, does that mean what we're done? as you all know, and as we all believe and understand, providing accessibility is something you never arrive at. It's never a checkbox that says you're done. You're never completed. It's a continuing journey we all go through. In this case, we have, for example, the title two deadline that's coming in April. But we know that even beyond that, as other legislation is looked at, in the United States here, there's currently information that that that's being sent around and looking at for title three, which broadens it to all public access, types of use. And we know that there's going to be continuing improvements as, work evolves. We know the work to two standards is out there and we all know that the work that is happening around what's referred to as week three or goes by other names for the W3C, this is a continuing process and we had final thoughts are committed to it, but we're ready to work with the community and work with, all of you all to help drive this solution into the marketplace.

Well, thank you, Rick, for talking about your innovative work at VitalSource and for giving us a glance at the accessibility journey ahead. So we'll move now into the Q&A section of the webinar.

And if you have questions for Rick, Cristina or Thomas, then you can use the Q&A button in zoom to submit these, and we'll cover as many as possible. so the first question, Thomas is coming to you, and you described very eloquently all the work that's done by specialist organizations using technology tools like OCR and making Braille and so on. so the question to you is, will they still be a need for all of that work after June the 28th? Yes. Thank you, Richard, for that question. That, there will be a need for this kind of work, but it is it has changed and it's been more changed in the future. So we do not need more anymore. OCR technology, but we have to have a good translation into Braille. We have to have good braille printers because we want to print Braille or also in large print and, to make the information, in the digital, in e-book format accessible. It's also good for blind readers to have it in a good, Braille transforming, quality. And, this needs our experiences in this arena and this needs, the, well, example also, if we want to draw, tactile graphics, this is also, a very big issue. in schools or in seminaries to not only have digital, stuff to also to have printed out materials and also, to, to combine it with digital materials. Yeah. So, Thomas, you and other DAISY Members will be busy next week. that work will continue, I guess. So we have a question now from the city, actually, and so, actually, thank you for the question. it's it's actually asked how has the European Accessibility Act fostered collaboration between publishers, between technology providers and accessibility experts? And specifically, can you share some examples of successful partnerships? Maybe, Thomas, you could answer this first. Yes, I would love to answer this. so I would like to mention, the collaboration between, the person for which is the German Association of Publishers and Media Bus, which is our organization where the libraries for the print disabled working together, and also with the DAISY Consortium. So we created this kind of task force and, created a lot of, working groups and, I have to say, so we cooking with the same water. This is what what we, figured out that this work. so. And, there were a lot of questions, from the publishers and the the booksellers, how we can, establish a good, accessible book. And so we had good answers and we saw that these technologies that we used and, we can use in the future is internet technology is high end, cutting edge, cutting edge technology with the Epub format and XML stuff. And most of these, publishing, people who work in the technical arena, they were very happy to share this, knowledge with us. And they said, that's good. And we have the same idea here. And we need to persuade our management that it's important to use, this kind of technology and bring it forward. And so this made a very good and successful, collaboration process that we made in Germany. Right. Well, that sounds like a win win. I mean, through our webinar series, we featured lots of collaborations. I wonder whether, Cristina Rick, whether you had examples of, these. Great. Yeah, I'd love to comment on that question. There's no way the vital source could have done what we've done over the last decade. around accessibility by ourselves. We absolutely needed leadership from people like DAISY. we needed standards from the W3C. We needed to learn from experts in the field like Laura Brady in the queue here, a great example of an expert in the field that we all learn from, and publishers that we work with. It takes all of us to, to work together on this. Nobody could do this alone. So the collaboration is absolutely the key. And Cristina, Fondazione LIA is all about collaboration. your organization, of course, is a collaboration in itself, but you collaborate, and in particular collaborations that stand out for you. Yes. as you may know, for the people who don't know from the engineers, we have been created by the Publisher Association and Italian Blind Union in 2014, when accessibility was a strange word in, in the publishing industry. So we are as, we just say a collaboration, word collaborative. So this is important. But we are now working on a European project. The name is APACE that, is the same idea. So we gathered together three Publishers Association and three specialist organizations coordinated by from that synergy to work together, share experience, share best practice, make pilot project, make training, share information to all the participants of the network, but also broad. And the network is very, very wide because inside the network we have the partner of the project, but we also have the larger network, every partner as other relationship, contact, connection with other people. So last year we have trained more than 4000 people in event, training session in fair person online and so on. So I think this kind of project, we hope it's funded by the European Commission under Creative Europe and the we see this is a very interesting way of working together. Amazing number of people you have trained. Very good. That's very, sounds very good. I can put the link in the in the chat if you wish. If I can, I certainly can. So what we do is, after these events, we pull together an article. So, we can put the link in the article which will be published at the beginning of, next week. So that's how people can discover more about, that initiative. Thank you. Cristina. And of course, DAISY consortium is a consortium. It's all about, collaboration. So I love your answers there. And thank you again. So actually, for the for the question. So coming to you now, Cristina, you've been involved, of course, in the European accessibility, act legislation since the very start, as you explained. And of course, things change and evolve over time. So the question is, are we where you thought we would be? What do you think about that? I think that there's as Thomas explain there is a timeline of the act. So the act, the interim force, Saturday and, I think that from the movement that they are created, we have achieved the result because publisher of move, organization of move. So there is a very interesting period when I say again, when we stopped and no one was speaking about accessibility, but now every publisher association, every organization is thinking about accessibility. So I think that the awareness raising part had been done very well. What they see, especially in the implementation of the legislation, is that there are still some elements that are not very clear, especially because the majority of the country have implemented the legislation more or less as it is a directive with some specific information about the authority or the penalties and so on. But the some elements are still under discussion, and only very few countries have produced different, integrating document, let's say, where you can have more detailed. So I think that this is the missing part. And because there are some elements, like as I cited in my presentation, the calculation of disproportionate burden dependency. So this is where from Laura Brady sorry, but there is no centralized information on that. They're not even not on centralized version because the country don't have have not produce any document explaining better what it doesn't mean. And this is why I think that the next step is to try to find a way to more at legal or European level, to have a more coordination among the member state. discussion on this topic. Can I add so, add something, Thomas? yes. So it's, for me, it's, for the legal situation and looks at how we can pull the things together, over the countries. This is one. But also we have a lot of open things to do, in, in our own countries. And, usually, always, when we think about accessibility, we said it's some kind of process. It's not a, a switch. You have to pull or to push on. And, it's a process. You have to do a lot of things, and it takes time. And, if we wouldn't have started so early and we wouldn't have this wonderful collaboration developed in the last years. So I would be more scared about these open questions. But now we see we have things, changed, we have things developed, we have publishers working on this arena. And so that's why I'm very optimistic to to get the next steps together. And find the answers of these questions. We at the moment do not have all answers. Just another comment. What I see as a very important next step is that the the visibility of everything we do will be more wide because, even from one country to another publisher don't really know what is doing here is partnering in another company. Another company in another country. So, we are not trying to collect this from the children. Yes. Some information on what's going on in the different country at publisher level or organization level. And this is an important thing there. The important thing is, that the end user must become more aware and the communication activity through the end user, I think, will be the most important step forward because, they need to be involved. Some people is very, digital aware and very technological savvy, so they don't need anything. But there are a lot of people who are not really aware of the advantages of digital, publication, the different tools and the different devices. The reading solution is not everything easy and simple to understand for everyone. So this is, I think, is the next step that, we a collaboration from the publishing industry with a specialist organization or library for the blind, observe this. People know their needs. And this is what we propose the in the we cross finger in the next project. We propose to the commission and the users have questions. And so the publishers are happy that they have, organizations like the DAISY consortium or the libraries for the print disabled who can help the users to get used to, to the new technology. That's why it's it's very important. Thank you Cristina, for, for for mentioned it's it's, it's really a big step that we have to do with the next years when it's eight months start. Yes. And also if you understand which are the need of the end user, we have made a survey at the beginning of the project upon the idea, making a survey on 1000 people with the print disability asking where they need what they use. And so on. And so also the feedback from the people using your tool, your save your platform will be very relevant for the publisher. Then there are important, but personal, habits, important too. So I think this is the next step. All right. Nice. Well, both Rick and Cristina, you referred to, Laura's question Not everyone has access to this, so let's tackle that one. now. So Laura's question is, so we've heard over the series of these webinars that the situation of the law is not completely clear, because some of it will only become clear when there's case law. and when there are kind of complaints and so on. So Laura's question is, do we know yet is there a place to keep up on questions like the any complaints that a file filed, how the A is being enforced in the different countries as that picture becomes to become more clear, how might folk who want to keep track of that, see that? Do we do we have an answer on this one? I think we need to wait a little bit until the different countries, there are countries in Europe that don't have the authority in place or countries are waiting to decide which is the authority. So until the authority are in place and they, they also there there is another element. some authority were involved in the web directive and to manage web and publication. It's a slightly different, work and so may, they may not clear idea of how many publications they need to check or how many title, because you make a website and the website more or less that is. But the publication come out every day. So probably this is what we are trying to explain to the Italian one. Sure. Great. So yeah. So Laura, still probably a little early to to know about. We will keep in touch. Laura, as soon as we have news, we will organize another seminar. Very good. So, let's move to Rick now. And you mentioned at the end of your presentation there that accessibility is a journey, not a checkbox. for publishers who are kind of new to this field, they might be a bit alarmed by that. Oh my goodness, this is is this ever ending? Is it open ended? So do they need to continually revisit their publications and keep working on those? What does this look like to you? Do you feel and what did you mean by that? It's not a chat box, it's a journey. Yeah, I, I don't mean to alarm publishers by my answer there. First of all, probably talking more to myself and other vendors of reading systems and that we have to stay current. We have to stay on top of things. We have to things change for us. Operating systems change. Accessibility, technology changes. our own platform changes. And so that's the journey part, for publishers to get your content meeting the specification and then stay current as the specs may change. But if your content meets the spec now, it's going to continue to meet the spec moving forward. And we're going to continue to deliver and be able to provide that information. So so don't worry about that, but get involved and stay current as you're continuing to produce new content from. And that is okay. Thank you. Cristina. The standard organization come in place very strongly because all the activity done in the standard organization tends to preserve the retro compatibility. And so every new thing then and this is important. So stick on the standard. Don't invent proprietary accessible format because it's a mess. And ask your supplier to stick on that. And another suggestion we have done a lot of quality control of file produced by supplier. Don't trust. You need to be sure that the contents are accessible, because sometimes they tell you that they're accessible and they're not because you are responsible as a publisher, that's your goal and that's your work. So sorry to be very strict, but I think it's important. Quality. Accessibility means quality. And it raises the quality of the published book for all, for everybody. This is, it's a it's good for, for, for for all readers and for for all suppliers. It's just a, a big advantage make, in your quality checking. Accessibility is one of the apart. It has to be long. It is, borne by, borne by accessibility. The process would be working this way. Great. Well, Cristina, you mentioned, standards. They're coming to you now, Rick. vital source. And you, are very visible in those standards organizations. You spoke about this in your presentation. and thank you. We really appreciate you coming and talking about the work of Vital Source today. You really join in. You really participate. How kind of representative is this of kind of platforms and, and the technology kind of, vendors, in your view, is there more that could be done here? What I hear you asking is where does everybody else, you know, we have been very involved, as you mentioned, for a long time, from really the creation of EPUB and helping there all the way through the this journey over the last more than a decade. I would hope that other vendors are as involved as we are, but I don't see them. I don't see them show up at the meetings. I don't see them participate in the conversations. I don't see them submitting, things to the standard bodies. so, you know, to go back to the earlier question, trust but verify. You know, let's hope they're doing the right things. I hope we're not alone in representing this. I don't think we are, but we need to see evidence of that. If I go back to my three days of discovery, disclosure and debt, let's make sure that the disclosure is happening from vendors that are being transparent about what they can do and that they're addressing the debt that that they may or may not have in the products. Well, well, we appreciate your involvement and the other organizations that are part of the DAISY Consortium, many of whom are technology, platforms. But, we hear the message, there, let's hope, more and more organizations hear that, too. And, sticking with something else that you mentioned, Rick, in your presentation, you talked about title two in the, in the US, kind of interested in, you know, we're here and we're celebrating, the European Accessibility Act, but we're also looking forward. What changes do you see in the future that might be, kind of brought about by more legislation in other countries. You talked about, I think even Brazil and some others there, you know, we're not done. This is part of the journey. where we see need and where we're looking at how to address that need, for things like title two in other countries is beyond, sort of the consumer focus, that it provides in terms of discovery and access and metadata. There's that whole and the education side adoption process. And how do we make sure that institutions are adopting products from the beginning and making those decisions, saying, I want my students to have this, and I've decided at the front that this is going to be accessible rather than have to deal with it at the back end. Getting ahead of that process and providing elegant solutions for that process is a key part of what we want to do, especially with title two and some of the other, countries in terms of how we proceed, there. Great. but let me add something. You also need to consider that the accessibility act that it's not for European organization, but the accessibility to act equals everyone to want to sell to European customers. So it's a law that protects European citizens. So if you are an international organization, you should comply as well. And the other thing that I suggested in some countries there are not only these, legislation, but there are procurement rules and the educational area. I think this is a very important one because it could be for library, it could be for, schools, it could be for university that they don't only need, you know, you not only need to be compliant. The fact that. But they may ask you to be compliant because of the procurement rules there is in any country. So I think this is another very important element, not for trade probably, but for academic, professional and education. I think it's a very important one. as always happens, we get a flood of questions right towards the end. So we're going to speed up slightly with these, next one. So, we have another question, which is what have been the most common blockers in terms of, you know, successful implementation or preparing for the European Accessibility Act, maybe. Thomas, you talked about the partnerships. Cristina. You talked about the training. what what have been the the stumbling blocks that have been kind of the most difficult for folk to, to overcome. And we'll keep these answers short if we can, please. Yeah. I think, the blockers, was, the, the publishers were scared about whether they can manage this kind of thing. And, they want to make money and have to earn money and so, but this, that's why it was good to, to help them to, to to work, step by step, to, to come closer to solutions. And in general, what is really blocking is not having at least one person internally who is aware of what is needed. I think internal knowledge is, crucial because you cannot trust only, external supplier and, as accessibility as different element. It's not only the file but is, editorial because you have in a description. Because is, is, metadata. Because is, web platform. there are a lot of elements you need to have at least one person who is aware, maybe they cannot do all the work. You can then use external supplier, but you need to have someone internally aware of what accessibility mean and able to speak with the other external organization or supply it with a competent in a competent way. Great. so I think we have time for one more question before our closing, question, this comes from Christian. And Christian is asking, do you think the European accessibility Act represents a great opportunity for the Epub format? Rick, you spoke about, in common, having been involved in that. so the question goes on, will be more highly valued by publishers than it has in the last ten years producing better products, better professionals, this kind of thing. What's your take on Cristian's Question? I can say we've got a great view, at least of the, higher education marketplace in terms of what we use there from from our position. So I mentioned more than 20 million users all around the globe as of about a month and a half ago. Last time I looked at these numbers, we continue to see that market in terms of books that are actually being used by students in higher education. It's continuing to shift epub. We see now less than 25% of the titles are PDFs, and so more than three fourths of the titles also that are being used in higher ed are Epub. And of those Epub titles, about 65% as of a month and a half ago had accessibility metadata in them. So there's been a dramatic shift from ten years ago away from the PDF is the dominant, in this marketplace to Epub is clearly the dominant in the accessibility market. Getting it, getting ready and getting in place for these, different enforcement actions that are coming. So I think absolutely, it's become very valuable for publishers in providing solutions in their. Very nice. Well, it's clear from the answers that we're not entirely there. There's still a way to go on the on the journey. But this webinar is all about celebration. So coming to each of you, coming to you first. Thomas, what do you think this stage is most worthy of celebration? Thomas, we welcome, that the dream comes true. And so this is, that we can really have, celebration and have can, can look forward to to the next steps. Very nice. And Cristina, that I think that the most rewarding thing for us is to see the metadata on the big store, on the small store, on the publisher store or catalog, because that is really display or what has been done in the background. If you have metadata, that means that someone have take care of the item, that take care of the website, and the dream is becoming more true. Great. And Rick, what are you celebrating? the obvious thing is worth celebrating. And that is, if this is no longer just the domain of specialists, it is assumed now accessibility is a part of every conversation. It's assumed you're going to do the right thing, and the EAA is going to do for accessibility what GDPR did for privacy around the globe. And that's make it a part of every conversation. Fantastic. So we're celebrating. The dream is coming true. It's visible on the websites and on the platforms and it's everybody's job. What a great way to, to kind of, bring this discussion to a close. And we're coming to the end of our session today. Thank you once again to Thomas, Cristina, and Rick for being fabulous guests in this webinar and helping us to reflect on the journey so far and to celebrate this really important milestone that is us for today. And it's also the end of this EAA countdown series. thanks to the many presenters who contributed their time and their expertise to the webinars, to the staff at DAISY working behind the scenes to make it all happen. And most of all, thanks to you, our audience, for sending us your questions and submitting your suggestions for watching and for sharing the resources with your colleagues. If you missed any of our earlier webinars, you can find the complete DAISY Webinar Archive, which now has over 50 hours of video articles and links to resources which cover all aspects of accessible publishing and reading. You can find those at daisy.org/webinars where you can also sign up for our webinar announcements, email list. So we'll be taking a short break from our monthly webinars, but we'll let you know on the announcements list when we plan to return. Until then, please keep your suggestions coming. you can email us at webinars at daisy dot org Thank you for coming today. I hope you'll join us again when we return, but for now, goodbye.