# Webinar: Scaling Inclusion in the Transition to Remote Teaching

Date: 7/15/2020

Full details about this webinar including links to related resources can be found on our website: <https://daisy.org/news-events/articles/scaling-inclusion-remote-learning-w>

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>> Hello everyone, and a very warm welcome to you. My name is Richard Orme from the DAISY Consortium and I am your host for today’s webinar, “Scaling Inclusion in the Transition to Remote Teaching”.  
The rapid switch to online learning has in many cases amplified the barriers faced by some learners with disabilities. In this session we will hear about analysis based on data from 1000s of educational institutions, and we’ll discuss pragmatic solutions for effective and efficient inclusion.  
OK, let’s get started!  
Accessible resources, personalized learning, universal design‑ these are widely used   
phrases that take on increasing importance as education institutions have rapidly   
adapted to online and distance delivery.   
To what extent is 2020 the opportunity to really deliver on these concepts, to ensure that   
no learners get left behind. Or have these noble ideals become casualties in the scramble to   
adapt in a crisis? How do we make sense of what is happening, and take pragmatic steps to   
empower learners with choices, and colleagues with appropriate guidelines and professional development?  
In this session we’ll learn about strategies and big data from an international learning   
technology company, blended with the lived experience from a US university, to help us better think about scaling inclusion in the transition to remote teaching.  
I will be back after the presentations for questions and discussion. But at this point   
I’ll hand over to our panelists to introduce themselves.

>> Nicolaas Matthijs: Hi, everyone. My name is Nicolaas Matthijs. I've been in educational technology for about 14 years at this point, worked for a number of large higher education institutions such as the university of Cambridge, Georgia Tech, UC Berkeley and one of the original founders for Ally and I'm the product director for Blackboard Ally.

>> John Scott: Hi, I'm a project manager at Blackboard Ally team. I did my doctorate at UC Berkeley. I also was formerly a special education teacher in K‑12 and very interested in how to leverage data and research around accessibility to drive strategy and improve inclusion for all students. Christopher?

>> Christopher Phillips: I'm the electronic and accessibility coordinator at Utah State university. We have been using ally on our campus.

>> Nicolaas Matthijs: Let's dive right in. This is a very quick overview of the agenda today. We are going to be diving into three different pillars, 3 different pragmatic approaches to taking an inclusive approach towards making digital course content more accessible. We will start off by looking at some learning theories, specifically Universal Design for learning and how improved accessibility can benefit all students. Next up we will talk about how we can start to scale professional development and involve the content creators in making their course content more accessible. Lastly, we will explore around the role of data and analytics and how insights at the data level, at the institutional level can be used to make data informed decisions as well as strategic decisions.

So, today we will be using ally to provide some of these as an example for some of these pragmatic approaches. We are not going to spend a lot of time talking about Ally as a product, but we are going to use Ally as a lens to look at the pragmatic approaches and also looking at the data, usage data and accessibility data that tells us about the accessibility of content and how students, instructors, institutions engage in that. Christopher will provide the institutional story side from that as well.

For those who are not familiar with Blackboard Ally as a tool, just very quickly, Blackboard Ally is a tool that focuses on making digital course content more accessible. It does that by integrating into the learning management system and provides three main things: Alternative format for students to give the students choice about how they want to engage with the content. It provides feedback to instructors to help them guide through the process of making their content accessible and it also provides reporting at the institutional level to help institutions better understand how accessible their course content is and how that's evolving over time.

So diving into the first part of that. The student perspective ‑‑ this is what we call one file doesn't fit all. Obviously first of all, any content that's used within a course has to work with specific assistive technology for students with disabilities. That's obvious. Typically when we think of alternative format for students, this is the extent to which institutions think about that as well and is typically, kind of, focus on students with disabilities tends to be how their internally structured and how the support processes are set up, but if you think about alternative formats are really something the ability to consume content in multiple ways and that affects all students. Especially in Covid‑19 times and courses being put online; we see students use a wide variety of devices. We have to make sure the course content works well on those devices. We see a large body of students doing everything on their mobile device, iPad, e‑book reader and that's increasingly the case. We even see students complete all of their homework on a mobile device. So mobile friendliness is important. With that comes things like good important for low bandwidth. As students need more flexibility around their content, examples could include the ability to listen to your course content while cooking, while doing house hold chores or out for a run. The ability to read something on your mobile device as you are maybe waiting somewhere for something. So the consent of alternative formats and the being able to consume content in multiple ways is something that can affect all students.

So the way this is addressed by Ally is Ally when integrated into the learning management system will provide students access to a range of alternative formats based on the instructor's original. There will be an option next to the original that will allow the student to get the list of alternative formats of that item. Things such as an OCR version for scanned documents, a mobile friendly HTML version, an EPUB version, an electronic braille version, an audio version, and additional versions as well. The idea is that as a student you now get a little bit more choice in terms of how you want to consume with that content. I will pass to John.

>> John Scott: Thank you, Nicolaas. We see these alternative formats as learning tools. Tools that can empower students with choice and tools that can really enhance the learning process and we see this emphasize on the multiple emerging learning and literacy theories, in Universal Design for learning we see the multiple threaded across the principals. The principal that ‑‑ that first principal providing multiple modes of representation and how that enhance cognitive process being able to listen to content, read content in a variety of modalities and formats enhances the cognitive processes and improves the way students engage with their materials.

Learner preference, costing meta cognitive presence, being aware of how you learn best as a learner. For so many students today, their challenges are often not necessarily related to the content but to having effective study practices, being able to leverage digital tools. So when we open up choice and empower learners to be strategic decision‑makers, we can help students be more successful in the long‑term in the ways they learn in school and out of school.

We know from some of the research that improved usability through accessibility can impact time on task, how quickly students move through material, and can improve information retention. So when you are accessing an alternative format and a mobile friendly format, that usability can improve and enhance how well you are able to engage with those materials. Taking a look at our data here on the left of the screen I have a line graph that chose alternative format down loads by month going back to May 2019. This line sharply increases particularly when we get to the spring 2020 semester. Obviously, this was impacted by Covid‑19. We saw a significant uptick in the number of downloads that were happening during the months of March and April. Over 1.3 million downloads in April. This is partly related to an influx of digital content. So more digital content available inside of the learning management system resulted in opportunities to download more formats and students being reliant to stay engaged with their course work. If looking for a low bandwidth file, a mobile friendly file, looking for an alternative modality such as listening to the content. This is an incredibly important tool for students to stay on task and engaged with their courses.

When we look at the impact across institutions, again, just to see the increase in usage from about 1 download per full‑time enrolled student in fall 2019 to 1.25 downloads per full‑time student. So increase in the usage of the formats suggest the value of having access to these learning materials. I'm going to pass it to Christopher.

>> Christopher Phillips: Thank you so much, John. Prior to implementing ally at Utah State RR most of our work was focused on what we would do when a student with a disability who request accommodations and then we would reach out to the instructor. Our goal is to make every course accessible as possible. To help our instructors recognize the need to focus on accessibility as far as making their content accessible.

When we turned on Ally, as soon as we flipped that switch, right away Ally scans all of the content across every course and made those alternative formats that Nicolaas mentioned available for every file in every course.

Now, those alternative formats that Ally provides are not necessarily perfect and they'll be the first to tell you that. It's an automatic conversion but it does a good job across most of our files. That provided a reach and impact across 10s of thousands of files we could have never done on our own with our resources. So that tool and making those alternative formats for all of our content was a big deal for us.

The other big piece those alternative formats ‑‑ the conversations opened up we were able to have new conversations with our faculty and talking about how making your content accessible is not just important for the student with a disability but it speaks to the universal impact that that content can have as far as creating those audio files that were mentioned. Those are mentioned by students across our campus regardless of their back ground or ability. It helped to connect the value of creating accessible content and taking that extra time to check your content to make sure it's accessible to the experience that students are having in their course and what kinds of ways they can access their content.

The other exciting opportunity that it opened up for us ‑‑ any of you who are working in higher education, when you open up a course and see a number of PDF files that need to be accessible, that can be a frustrating experience. So here's a sample PDF file. This is not too atypical. This isn't too difficult to read. It's a scan. Somebody put a book on top of a copier. The instructor wanted them to read at 112. There's extra front matter. One of the challenges with PDF files, we do have a team that can go in and make a PDF file accessible but for anyone who has done that, that can be difficult and labor intensive work and requires a high degree of training. So as we used Ally, it opened up a new opportunity for us. The other challenge with a PDF file in general, especially this fall as we look towards many more students doing remote learning and instruction is that we anticipate a lot of students will access their content on a mobile device. If you open this on a mobile device, it will shrink the text down so small that it's so difficult to read or you have to do the scrolling back and forth thing. So as shown earlier, one of the things Ally does ‑‑ here's the inside of a canvas course here. The indicator shows me that's not an accessible file. We could work on making that PDF file accessible for a student who uses a screen reader or needs it accessible for another reason. The format that Ally offers ‑‑ I can look at the alternative formats that Ally provides. Here are the options that were mentioned earlier.

So we had a develop on our team named Lou took the tool and now any of our instructors can come into a course and look at their PDF files and can right click here in canvas and click convert to canvas page. It will take the PDF file. Here's what it looks like in canvas. It's going to be the scanned PDF that is not accessible. We are going to click and convert to canvas page. It will grab the HTML that Ally produces, and I can click view that and it converted all of that content in that PDF file into a canvas document.

Now, this is something that's going to be a lot more easier to make accessible. It's more usable for all students in the classroom and easier for an instructor to fix and edit. Again y would have a difficult time asking a teacher make a file accessible in acrobat. But here I can zap all that extra front matter. That's all from a different one. Then I can make this a heading. It's going to be a lot easier to do that work in canvas and then I'm going to have a much user friendly and mobile responsive piece of content at that point that will work for all students.

Then we go in and do more clean up. We have done thousands of these. When the students access content in canvas, they don't have to download or find a PDF file and figure out how to make it work. They click on the link and it goes to the canvas page. It makes the content more usable for everyone. Thank you, John.

>> Nicolaas Matthijs: Thank you so much, Christopher. I always think this is a cool and creative way to use some of the value that the alternative formats provide. So thank you for sharing that.

The second part that we want to look at is really the instructor facing side of the puzzle. Some of the challenges that we see around getting instructors from the beginning is there's a significant awareness challenge. It's difficult as an institution to make your instructors aware of the accessibility issues and get them to effectively engage with them to make their content more accessible. Typically that's done by organizing trainings and get them to attend the trainings which is challenging given how busy we all are. When you don't remind about those issues or the best practices, they can start to fall down the wayside over time as well. So that brings us to the second part of what Ally provides which is really that in context feedback and guidance to instructors. So whenever the instructor adds content to their course, Ally will pick up on it, run it through an automatic accessibility check list and assign an accessibility score. Whenever that content is used, the instructor will see an indicator next to it and it gives them an idea of how accessible that item is. They can engage with it then and they will get feedback and help guide the instructor through the process of making the content more accessible. One of the things we see here is by making it ‑‑ integrating it so closely within existing workflows and learning management system content, this is something that will help with awareness and making instructors aware that they may be having accessibility issues and helps with the reminder factor because it's always there and serves as a reminder.

The flip side of that ‑‑ Ally provides the feedback to instructors about accessibility within the context of where the content is used. We see that's the initial engagement point for them. There's a flip side to that. We see that this is being used more by instructors who have gone through the process of fixing a few content items already which is the course accessibility reports. This one provides a summary at the course level. Give an idea of how accessible the course is on average, how much content there is and help with prioritization within the course and what should be think about fixing first and help the instructor through that remediation process a little bit more effectively.

So this part is about the training and the feedback and awareness side of things. John, over to you.

>> John Scott: So similar to the alternative format usage as things transition into remote instruction, we also saw an uptick in the amount of files that were improved through Ally's instructor feedback. The line graph shows files altered. We see 1 million improved. In April over 121,000 files improved in that month alone. In that initial rush to get courses online, to get digital content online, Ally is scanning that content, serving up those accessibility indicators to faculty so that they can make incremental progress in real-time and be aware of what kinds of barriers are emerging in their courses, what can they fix on their own and how can they reach out more efficiently.

We also seen an impact in terms of sustainable improvement. When we talk about faculty, we want to catalyze a culture shift. Moving from accessibility as an afterthought to making inclusive design as part of their course design. So in terms of the data we have seen, 45% of the time that an instructor clicks on one of those indicators they try to fix the file. So at first that conversion rate tends to be lower as instructors are getting aware and building familiarity and then it starts to increase as they feel more confident and understand the guidance in how to improve their documents and hopefully the next time they add a new content it will be more accessible from the start. 84% of files altered resulted in an improved accessibility score. So instructors are able to ingest the feedback, process it and improve their files. 50% of the indicator clicks are on red indicators. So those are low accessibility score items. That may be due to a larger number of red indicators in courses, a number of accessibility issues with course content. Often historically we have seen that accessibility because it hasn't necessarily been something prioritized with digital content we see a number of accessibility issues. We will look at those numbers later in the presentation. It could be instructors trying to prioritize some of those very impactful issues. Trying to remove barriers to improve the experience for all students. Nicolaas mentioned the course accessibility report. We are seeing this become more and more a part of the workflow for instructors in engaging with their course and improving their files. 1/3 of the fixes we have recorded are through the course accessibility report. Using that as a lens into the course. Among the 100 courses files improved 50% are happening through the course accessibility report. So that is leveraged by instructors and they are making significant progress in addressing accessibility issues. I'll pass it to Christopher.

>> Christopher Phillips: Thank you, John. The feedback and prompts that Ally provides as you have seen, have been incredible tool to help make it difficult for instructors to claim ignorance. And help them recognize when they are publishing content that is not accessible. We started to see this exciting change where instead of us having to beg to get into faculty training meetings or ask people to stop by. We would see people line up to ask about how to make their course more accessible or reach out to us for help in making a Word document more accessible for example. So it's a big change. One of the big things that has been released in the past year is the course accessibility report where if somebody comes to us and want to make their content more accessible, we can give them a quick link in their course that gives them an overview and shows things they are doing well but also highlights the content and give them a sense of where to focus their efforts and what to work on. The idea of scaffolding engagement has been incredible. One of the challenges with accessibility as all of you on this call are familiar with is where to start and how to get people onboard as they get started in the field of accessibility.

For example, if I have a teacher with scanned PDF files, it would be overwhelming to say you need to make your course accessible and they start trying to make a PDF file accessible they will get frustrated and think they don't have time to do this or it's too difficult.

The course accessibility report provides that right there KWAUNT the easiest issues to fix. So this is generally where we start the conversation with faculty. We give them that link. If I were you, I would click on the start button with the easier issues to fix. Ally will walk them through step by step. That gets them started and provide that immediate feedback so they can see their accessibility score go up and feel like they are making a difference and making their course content more accessible.

>> Nicolaas Matthijs: The last part is the institutional perspective. Some of the challenges we see there ‑‑ traditionally it's difficult for an institution to understand how they are doing from a course content accessibility perspective just because of the vast amount of content that lives within the learning management system. We see for individual institutions over a million or millions even for larger institutions. So there's a lot of types of content, new content being added and created all the time. And then there's different people creating that content as well. So all of that creates a real scale challenge and makes it difficult as an institution to know how you are doing, where the problems are and allow you to make more informed decisions on how to prioritize, who to reach out to, where to organize training and so on.

The way in which this surfaces, Ally goes through the content, scans for accessibility issues. Based on that it will give an accessibility report and that will provide some of the insight that we were just talking about. Give you an idea on how accessible your content is on average, how that's evolving over time, tell you what the most prominent or common issues are, what courses those issues live in and so on.

So this is really aimed as providing some of that insight that traditionally is quite difficult to get which can be used to make informed decisions on where to provide training, what issues do we focus on first, who do we invite to the training, can we see a noticeable improvement on the initiatives we are taking. The reporting goes down further. You can see it by individual departments or at the individual course level.

>> John Scott: Having that insight is important into understanding the types of issues you see. On the screen here I'm highlighting 6 critical issues that Ally looks at inside of learning management system courses and here we are looking at data from large U.S. universities in their fall 2019 courses. Although I have to say for the international audience, these numbers are remarkably consistent around the world. So typically, in overall file score ‑‑ the average score of a course file ‑‑ here we are talking PowerPoint, word documents, PDFs, images, on average they scored 39.7%. So considerable accessibility issues‑facing a vast majority of content. The HTML content authored within the learning management system scores higher. Almost 99%. Quite minor issues compared to an untagged PDF or scanned PDF. So that points to the value of tools like Christopher that they are developing trying to remove the PDF from the equation and build more native content for students to engage with. In terms of the total percentage of scanned PDFs around 16% of the PDFs that we looked at are those scanned PDFs as Christopher demonstrated earlier. They have usability issues, limiting in terms of how you can use study tools, being able to highlight, copy and paste, annotate. 52% of those were untagged. So missing the structures, allowing it to be reflowable, to work effectively with assistive technology. So a lot of those are publisher resources that institutions from libraries and other databases are getting content that is missing the tags and is so important for those students and such a time consuming process for institutions to remediate. In terms of documents, 23% of documents were missing headings. So this is simply an authoring technique using Word or PowerPoint effectively that improves the content. In terms of image descriptions, 82% of images were missing descriptions. So a significant number of images that don't have an alt text for students using assistive technology, students converting to MP3 and want to hear the content. I heard an example of an instructor talking about during their transition to remote instruction, students with bandwidth issues who were parked out of gas stations to get free WiFi, the pages were slow to load and large images wouldn't load but if the image had an alt text, the student could read and understand the image. So these affect students with disabilities but really impacting low income students, first generation learners and students that may not have access to high bandwidth and POOURTs that they usually reply on campus resources.

During that transition we saw an increase in digital content. This is looking at institutions in Texas. Comparing March 2019 to March 2020. A 400% increase. Roughly 6700 PDFs, 3,000 word documents. So when you think about those disability support teams that have to remediate this content, those teams did not increase overnight with this demand. So having solutions and understanding where those barriers are from a data perspective, having tools in place how to scale these issues is critical when you have this unprecedented increase in the amount of digital content up loaded into courses. I will pass it to Christopher to talk about how he see preparing for the fall term.

>> Christopher Phillips: I love that introduction of how the increase in digital content. Based on our experience from the spring, we are anticipating this fall having significantly more online content. I would guess that's the same for many of you. From an accessibility perspective that can feel overwhelming. To get an idea of how ready are we as we go into the fall semester to make sure we are providing those accessible and inclusive experiences. This is where the Ally institutional report has been invaluable to allow us to on a minute by minute or daily basis to see which new courses have been published and how accessible those courses are.

We can also identify what some of our biggest problem areas are that we are facing across the campus. For example, how many of those scanned PDF files exist across all of our courses that have been published in fall semester.

Then as we identify not only problem areas but problematic courses. We can see which courses are struggling from an accessibility perspective that are just publishing a lot of content that won't be usable or accessible and then we can reach out individually to those instructors to offer them our help and let them know we have resources available. It's been fantastic as we transition to online courses. With a phone call from us or e‑mails we have seen participation in some of our training webinars have sky rocketed as we prepare for fall. This is on the radar of people. It makes it challenging for them to pretend this problem doesn't exist. They can be aware. Generally, it's helped in the conversations to bring those instructors online in creating content that's going to be accessible and useable for everyone. Thank you.

>> Nicolaas Matthijs: Some of the key points, we talked about that inclusive pedagogy and empowering students of how they engage with their files and how alternative formats are one kind of tool that allows for that automatic conversion of content into different formats. We saw examples of what Christopher at Utah State is doing as far as converting PDFs into native web content and accessibility benefits there. We talked about the importance of scaling professional development. Being able to catalyze this culture swift with instructors and help them become aware of accessibility issues and make inclusive course design part of their course design techniques. This helps awareness and scaffold development and make progress in addressing accessibility issues. As we saw with the institutional report data, those issues are extensive, but we are making progress. There's light at the end of the tunnel and we can see that clearly in the important role that data and analytics will play in tackling the barriers. The window into accessibility when it comes to digital content.

To wrap up here, a few free resources we want to direct you to. You can try out using the alternative formats in a standalone tool called the file transformer. I believe we will follow up and share the link. I won't read them out loud here. A quick start guide to accessible content authoring and a pedagogical review thinking about inclusive course design.

We have a vibrant and activity community of accessibility hero at usergroup.alley.ac. We have Christopher the leader and champion in this group. Great minds come together and problem‑solve and think about accessibility challenges and how to solve them. Next week we have a BB world. Our annual learning management system conference. It's free this year. It's virtual. You can blast off to the future and hear more about the ally roadmap and more about our data and research and hear some great presentations from current users and institutions with Ally who are really taking innovative approaches to their inclusive education challenges. With that we will pause for Q&A.

>> Richard: Thank you for sharing your information about tools and data from your perspective. Christopher, thank you to your lived experience at Utah State. We are talking about scaling inclusion. It seems to be that part of this is about moving this activity of making course content accessible out of the disabled students office and empowering teachers and instructors and students. The first question is to Christopher. What about the importance of empowering the learners so they can make wise decisions when they have a number of choices of downloads? How will they know which will suit their needs the best?

>> Christopher Phillips: That's a fantastic question. We share new tools such as Ally with students. A great resource from Ally, when you enable that in your LMS, it adds an icon next to every piece of content. So most of our usage of the tool ‑‑ we have a lot of students using that are curiously clicking on that. Aside and apart from the marketing efforts that we do. Students with disabilities we do more targeted and specific communication to let them know these specific formats are available to you and with your accommodation request this will be helpful. For a lot of other students it's just trying things out. One of the formats is a B line reader that makes it easier to read the content with neat coloring that it does of the text to help you go from line to line or maybe they prefer the EPUB file. We have word of mouth kinds of things. Students can figure out they can download audio of a PDF document. They will let other students know. So students figure out a lot on their own.

>> Richard: Thank you. Turning to the other piece of that around supporting the teachers, instructors and those who put the course content together. Those were scary numbers. Over 400% increase in content and also seeing the number of ‑‑ disappointing to see the number of different formats getting uploaded. Nicolaas and John, do you see the proportion of reds coming down as instructors are learning what makes for more inclusive content or are they relying on the automated tools? Is the future looking brighter?

>> John Scott: Great question. We have seen pretty compelling data. When ally was first introduced to the market around 2017, the team did a data study and the accessibility numbers that I shared today in 2017 compared to 5 years prior to that hadn't budged much at all. We looked at our most recent numbers and institutions that had ally for about a year or so, two years, they had made the amount of progress that they can made previously in 5 years. So we saw an accelerated rate of improvement. So that's an encouraging sign that because of the integrated seamless approach, being able to raise awareness and encourage faculty, we are going to start to make headway. As the authoring tools like Word and PowerPoint make accessibility features more at the forefront of how you create content in those software that will help move the needle. We see our community advocating to publishers. Hey, our instructors are using your article PDFs and they are coming up with red indicators in their courses. We are not going to pay for your services if you don't supply us with accessible content. That conversation wouldn't have happened at the same scale previously but now we see a new level of advocacy happening. The advocacy in terms of ensuring that all of the content creators and publishers out there are providing accessible resources.

>> Nicolaas Matthijs: Just to add to that a little bit, in summary we are seeing some light at the end of the tunnel, but it is going to be a very long tunnel and a very long journey obviously. There's so much content involved that there isn't a silver bullet out there that allows you to address all of it in a short period of time. It's always going to be a journey. One of the things that's surprising to me is a number of institutions have made fast progress and managed to get their institutional accessibility score into high 80s. We have even a few in the 90s. Where we started was in the 30 range for most institutions. We never thought that would be possible in a short period of time. So those who have control over templates and so on are making fast progress. For most institutions it's slower but we are seeing increase in scores. We have published research papers on that as well.

>> Richard: You talked about advocacy there and the increased awareness of the instructors about accessible formats. In this webinar series we have heard from publishers and the work they are doing that when they produce new titles they are born accessible. I wonder if you see that increase awareness of formats amongst students and the lecturers that adopt text books whether you see the behavior transferring to them demanding more accessibility formats that they are buying from publishers?

>> Christopher Phillips: Absolutely. That's one of the exciting things. Rather than twisting faculty's arm to get accessible content. Our goal is to get faculty to become people that this is part of their teaching practice and recognize the importance of accessible content. While it's not across the board, it's fantastic to help us identify accessibility champions. Individuals that see a red indicator come up and take it personally to say I'm not going to be the kind of person who publishing inaccessible content. As they do that, it's been fantastic to see some of those instructors carry that same attitude into the other teaching practices that they have. So as they work with publishers for example, they may be bringing up that question about is it accessible. So certainly there's been ‑‑ that's probably the thing that I've been most pleased around. As mentioned, the changes that happen semester to semester, we have seen that incremental change going up and up but more exciting to me is the conversations that are happening now that weren't happening before. I think those go into all aspects of an instructor feeling like this is part of my identity. I'm someone who cares about accessibility and is going to work on creating accessible content. More so with instructors than with students I think but it's starting conversations.

>> Richard: It seems to me that to scale inclusion not only do we need tools to deal with leveraging and existing content, but we have to drive that that inclusive content finds its way into the LMS and the publishers in the first place. That's how we truly scale with Universal Design. I have questions specifically to the Blackboard Ally product. One question from Deedra is understanding Blackboard Ally does that system work with all LMS's?

>> Nicolaas Matthijs: It works with a number of different LMSs. Black board learn, instructor canvas, D2L bright space and Moodle. We have a close integration with the vast majority of learning systems out there. We have a stand-alone API that can be used to integrate the capabilities.

>> Richard: Another question from [inaudible] which is can Blackboard Ally work outside of the United States?

>> Nicolaas Matthijs: The answer is yes. One of the things that's been exciting to me on this kind of journey is that we have seen that momentum and desire for more accessible and inclusive course content. We have seen that across the globe. So we basically have institutions using Blackboard Ally all over the world in all continents. So it is globally available. It's available in about 20 different languages. We are added Arabic to that as well. It's hosted around the world. So the answer is yes.

>> Richard: John, in your expedition of the inclusive learning resources you mentioned the file transformer, this is a web base resource that whatever LMS you are using it sounds like this is a web base resource where you take inaccessible content and try out the magic beans of Blackboard Ally to do one by one transforms to accessible formats, did I get that right?

>> John Scott: Correct. That's a resource we released to support institutions during the pandemic. It's temporarily available through the summer here. It was a resource that we wanted to offer the community to support them. One of the really interesting stories I got a message from a K‑12 teacher who was working with a blind student and needed to convert her digital text into braille electronic braille for the student to access her materials. She was able to go to the file transformer and convert those digital text into electronic braille for that student immediately. She said otherwise she would have been hand transcribing that content. So it has been fantastic to see the usage of it and offer something to the education community during these times.

>> Richard: Great. A resource that's available for folk who are not using Ally and around the world. I think that's a great value right there.  
OK, we’re coming to the end of this session. Thank you to our panelists for sharing great   
information and insights. And thank you to everyone who joined us for today’s session.  
Coming up in the remaining weeks of July we have some more wonderful topics for you:  
On July 22, in “The Art and Science of Describing Images” we take a deeper dive into   
describing images, talking through plenty of examples and starting to address some of the   
more complex challenges which can arise from graphical complexity and from constraints   
like those found with tests.  
On July 29, 2020 will be “WordtoEPUB Extended Tutorial – Accessible EPUB in Seconds”.   
This practical session will demonstrate how to get started creating accessible EPUBs from   
your Word documents. It will then explain features beyond the simple one click solution,   
including custom styling, page numbering control, multiple language support, including   
math, customizing metadata and more.  
If you are thinking about attending that session (or even if you’re not!) We want to   
highlight a webinar from our friends at Deque. Word Document accessibility is crucial for   
customers, co‑workers, or students with disabilities, and it is essential to get the best out of the WordtoEPUB tool. On July 21 at 2pm Eastern, Karina Boycheva from Deque University   
will be running a webinar entitled “Introduction to Word Document Accessibility”.  
Find out more information at daisy.org/webinars, where you can also sign up to the webinar announcement mailing list.  
That takes us to the end of July, and then in August we give you all a well-earned break, but   
we already have some exciting webinars ready for our return in September.  
If you would like to suggest a subject, or if you are considering presenting a webinar, then please email us at webinars@daisy.org I hope you will join us again next week. In   
the meantime, thank you for your time and have a wonderful rest of your day. Goodbye.