



Centre for Inclusive Employment & Disability Employment Australia Lunch & Learn Session | Wednesday, 18 March 2026

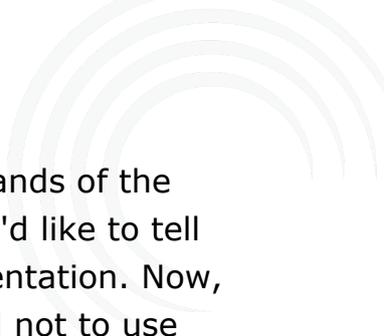
Blindness and vision-impairment in the workplace

Speaker: Ben Moxey, Emerging Technology and Accessibility Manager, Guide Dogs NSW/ACT

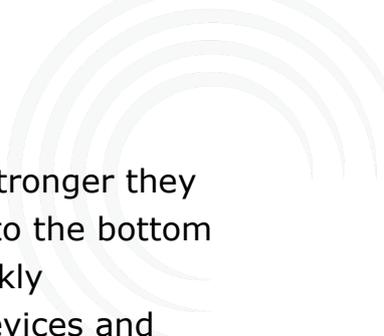
Host: Sally Karandews, IEA Policy Manager, DEA

SALLY KARANDREWS: Good afternoon everyone and welcome to this week's Lunch and Learn. My name is Sally and I am the Inclusive Employment Australia policy manager here at Disability Employment Australia. I would like to begin today by offering an acknowledging of Country and acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the lands from which each of us are joining from today. For me that's the Darkinjung people. I pay my respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge that this is Sovereign land that was never ceded. Thank you so much for joining us again this week. These Lunch and Learn's are a partnership between Disability Employment Australia and the Centre for Inclusive Employment Australia, and they seek to deliver practical and factual information and resources to those of you working in the division of Disability Employment Services. This week I am joined by a good friend of mine, Ben Moxey who is the emerging technology lead at Guide Dogs New South Wales ACT. Ben has a long career in customer service-based roles and more recently has transitioned into the roles that specifically focus around technology for people who are blind and vision impaired and he is with us today to share some of that knowledge, but also to talk about blindness and vision impairment in the workplace. Throughout the session if you have any questions please pop them in the Q&A or the chat and we will get to them at the end of the presentation. Captions are also available, and Liv will pop instructions on how to access those in the chat. But for now I will hand over to Ben. Thank you Ben.

BEN MOXEY: Thank you Sally and good to see you again. Hello everyone. I might quickly start by very importantly acknowledging the lands of the people

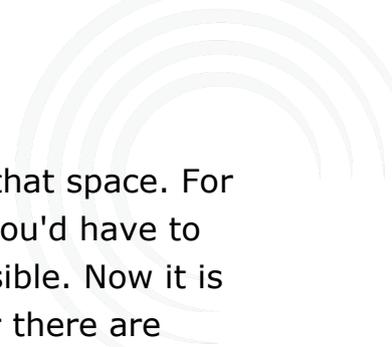


that I am on here today, I am up around the Newcastle area the lands of the Worimi people and the Awabakal people. Where to start. First off I'd like to tell everyone that I have chosen today to not have a PowerPoint presentation. Now, I am totally blind but I want to make the point that I have decided not to use the PowerPoint for that reason so people who are blind use PowerPoints very frequently and I have to do it regularly in my job, probably more than I'd like to, but at the end of the day the PowerPoint was going to give me my talking points and I didn't want to put a whole bunch of information in there; I'd rather have a conversation myself. I hope that's okay for everyone. I also like to leave some time at the end so feel free to ask questions. As Sally mentioned, I think she mentioned this level of detail, I will give you a bit more. I have worked in the blindness and low vision space for about 16, 17 years now, much of which I have been training with assistive technology for blindness. I feel like I fell into it because I lost my vision entirely at the age of 20 and I guess I should give you a bit of background there too, and I think it is important because giving you this context will give you a bit of a sense of why I have got any business sitting here talking about low vision and employment today. I was born way back in 1980, and at that point in time my retinas were totally detached, or at least partially, but anyway, I couldn't see. It took them quite a while to realise this and by the time they worked it out, I was about 8 years old by the time doctors formally recognised there was something wrong with my retinas. The retina lets you see light and dark so if they are disconnected then your eyes don't work at all. Fortunately for me I was lucky for revolutionary technology overseas where they pumped oil into the space and it basically puts the retina back in place and you can see again. It is like reconnecting a battery. I was lucky to get funding through the Lions Club to go over to the UK and have that surgery done. Long story short, it is definitely not my strong point, I have mentioned Sally will probably have to pull me up today for sure and stop me talking, but I have vision. So only ever out of one eye, I forgot to mention they tried to operate on the left eye back in Australia before I went to the UK and it was unsuccessful so that one hasn't worked, but for those who can see the screen it is interesting because the left eye looks like it is in reasonable condition, but unfortunately it never did. The right eye looks clouded over and people immediately assume that's the one that's never worked, and it was the one that was actually functional for around about 19 years. There was a whole bunch of surgeries along that journey. Long story short, I lost - that retina became disconnected again at about the age of 20. Now just turned 46 so blind for the last 26 years. Anyway, because of that it has sort of very much changed how I did things. In that period of my life where I was a teenager, I was using strong magnification, very thick glasses and that quickly became impractical. I have a magnifying

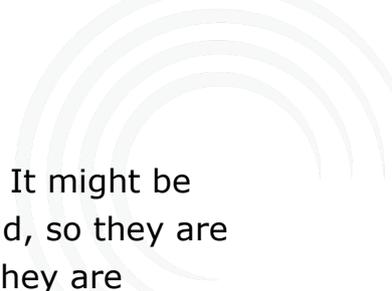


glass and the thing with a normal optical magnifying glass is the stronger they get the smaller the glass gets, so it would take me so long to get to the bottom of the page I had forgotten what happened at the top. Then I quickly transitioned into using blindness assistive technology, so braille devices and probably most important for me screen readers on computers. All of a sudden that enabled me to get back on to the Internet to be able to read information again because I was able to access it over the Net and find employment; all that sort of stuff. So you can probably quickly see where I developed a bit of a passion for it. I was using it in my life to effectively maintain my independence, I was doing online banking, online shopping and all those sorts of things that I could no longer do, at least I couldn't do it easily with no vision, so I was harnessing those skills to maintain independence, lifestyle, move out of home on my own, et cetera.

Gradually I thought to myself I was working in a telemarketing role for a very long time, five and a half years selling wine. I said to Sally before I drank more than I ever sold and eventually I thought I have got all these skills, I wonder if I can support people with blind and low vision so they can have independence and do what it is they want to do in life. That's how I came into working in the space. I feel like I fell into the career. For the last 5 years I have been focusing on accessibility and my role here at Guide Dogs is basically based around looking at emerging technologies that are coming into the space. So probably a good time to start talking about those common misconceptions around blindness and low vision, particularly related to employment. I will start off with some basic ones and ones that I come across on a pretty regular basis. It is understandable, you meet people in the community or employers, et cetera, that have never had any exposure to blindness. Many of these misconceptions are totally understandable, but let's see if we can dispel some of them today. Some of the regular ones that I hear regularly are people assuming that people with blindness can't use computers or Smart phones effectively. The other thing is they are using specialised devices all the time. I will often have someone say to me, "You must have a keyboard that's got a braille keyboard" and the fact of the matter is, yes, they do exist, braille keyboards, but they are not widely used. When I say "braille keyboard" I mean your standard keyboard that everyone has got in front of them that have braille labels on them so you are feeling around to see what keys are what. You are not going to be quick in that respect, so in the blind and low vision space people are learning to touch type just like people on this call, so their fingers are going through muscle memory. It is nice and efficient and typically you are using a standard Mac computer just



like everyone else. There has been some fantastic innovations in that space. For example years ago when I lost my vision around the 2000 mark you'd have to go and spend a couple of extra thousand dollars to make it accessible. Now it is built right into the computers themselves or the Smart phones, or there are very good third party applications that you can put on top to make a computer accessible. Just to hammer this point people, what I am presenting on today is a standard Windows standard laptop and I have got standard features coming in through the headphones and that's basically all there is to it. How do you use it to access databases, phone systems is basically through a series of keyboard commands. So there are touch screens available as well on touch screen computers nowadays that effectively most people are doing it through keyboard commands for efficiency. Imagine that you can't use the mouse at all, obviously if you are not able to see you can't see where that mouse pointer is and you are basically driving the computer through a series of keyboard commands that are built into the keyboard and the screen reader software has a range of keyboard commands - in fact, hundreds of them. A little overwhelming and it definitely takes a lot of hard work on the individual to become fluent and become quick and efficient, but it is certainly very doable and I think it is important to do that. Smart phones, so you've got people who are totally blind in my scenario effectively using Smart phones. In fact they have made such an impact nowadays I am seeing a trend where people in the blind and low vision community, some are steering away from the computer, they are doing touch screens, and even when you are using a touch screen, even if you don't have advanced features to move around more quickly you can feel the screen and drag your finger around it and it speaks, and if you want that you simply double tap it with one finger to go in. I think that's why we are seeing that trend because people are thinking, I am going to use the smart features to make it easier. If there is anyone in the blind and low vision watching today do whatever works for you, that's number 1. It is your personal choice. If you are looking to get into the workforce I highly recommend you get efficient on screen readers, because the reality is if you get into the workplace you are not going to be able to do everything you need to do using Microsoft et cetera effectively or on a Smart phone in 99% of cases. Another thing that we should dispel is that I think it is good to talk about levels of vision loss or vision impairment. So I talk about my no vision at all. Imagine your eyes aren't even on your face. A lot of people say to me, "I imagine you just see black." In fact it is not like that at all, it is as though your eyes aren't there. I picture when someone describes seeing black, what they have probably seen is they have closed their eyes and the eyes are drawing out that colour, but for me there is nothing there at all. It is such a spectrum. 95% of people who are blind or have low vision will still have some



remaining vision. It could be patchy, it could be very, very blurry. It might be that they see out of a tiny bit right of the centre of their visual field, so they are able to see what's directly in front of them in a small area, but if they are walking down the street and a poll comes towards them they will swipe it with their shoulder. We do hear people say, "I saw this person out there the other day with a guide dog but all of a sudden I saw them looking at a newspaper or they are reading something and I think why have they got that dog?" And I think that's what is going on, they may have some vision that allows them to read if they are looking at something that's held up close, but if they go out on the street their vision may not be suitable at all for navigating in a safe environment. Don't make assumptions about a person's vision just because you see a white cane or a guide dog. Sally, stop me if I am running over, because I know you've got a schedule here and I am probably not following it. I might move on and talk about some of the simple things that you can do in the workplace to make it a great place to work for someone with blindness and low vision. I said to Sally and Liv before this call there is so much untapped talent there and I see it here at Guide Dogs and we work with people who are learning to use screen reader software. There is talented people that just need to be given a shot. We are hoping there that after this Webinar today there could be employers on the call that may not have realised that people are effective at doing things on computers, they may not realise that people will use things effectively on databases like sales force, et cetera, so it might open up job opportunities. The workplace is challenging, I won't lie. One of the main reasons is a lot of the software that's out there is still inaccessible. I feel like I am going to try to give you the simple things first and I have jumped straight to a complex one. I will stick with it for now. What I can recommend if you are hoping to get the workplace ready or you might have someone with blindness or low vision working is to start scrutinising your systems. So a lot of people might not have thought about accessibility before, and that's okay, it could be very new to you. My advice if it is new is don't overwhelm yourself, start small, even really small changes can make a very big difference and I will get to that in a minute. I think one of the key principles you can do in your workplace is look at having a dedicated accessibility resource if possible. So someone that's in that accessibility championing role, ideally it is an official role so they are looking at the accessibility profile in the organisation, ideally it might be multiple people depending on how big the organisation, but you are hiring people that have got expertise to get in there, understand the official guidelines, understand the ins and outs of the technology available and help you find good hardware products et cetera to use in your workplace. Like I said, I jumped right to a complex one.



Another thing you could potentially do is at the very least form official accessibility policies within your organisation. So have an accessibility procurement policy so you can ensure that in future like you might not be set up well, some of your database systems you are using might not be accessible for someone using software, make sure you have got a good procurement so when it comes time to update it that's one of your primary criteria that it is accessible. Having that process in place is fundamental. It is something that we've done in recent years here at Guide Dogs. We also have held ourselves to account by getting officially audited by the Australian Disability Network so we can maintain that high standard and keep enhancing. I will be honest with you all, we don't get it right all the time, we are not perfect, but our aim is to listen to feedback and continually improve.

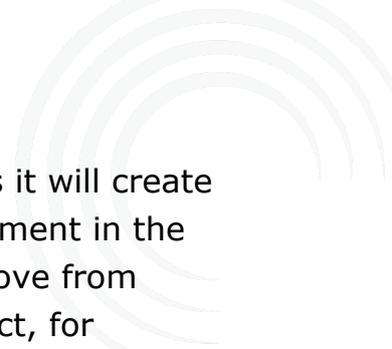
So I have talked about looking at procuring accessible software in the future, having people dedicated to those roles to keep an eye on things and actually having some formal processes to follow to ensure that when things are brought on board in your organisation they are embedded for accessibility. Like I said before, I won't lie a lot of those things are complex things to solve so let's talk about some of the easy things that require very little resources, and I honestly think can influence systemic change. Straight off educate yourself about accessibility even if it is just the basics. You could be sending out regular emails to clients and you could be using a Sarah font, that's one of the fonts that has the squiggly lines. Those Sarah fonts are notoriously difficult to read for people with low vision. Another thing I didn't realise is that using all capital letters - we all know that you shouldn't do it anyway, because you don't want to appear that you are shouting at customers - but they are difficult to read for people with low vision because the whole shape of the letter, it looks blocky; whereas if you are using regular sentence case it is easier to discern. Straight off the bat, use a good Sarah point - aerial is a good safe recommendation, it is easy to read and it doesn't have the fancy squiggles. Another thing, no cost involved at all is look at adjusting your minimum font size in your materials. We typically have a minimum font of 12, perhaps 14, and if someone requests large print then you are looking at something between 16 and 18 font. As I said, super easy, no cost involved. Colour contrast is the next thing, make sure that number 1 you are keeping visual clutter away from text. We strongly recommend you don't go putting images behind text and if you do have decorative elements you want to put behind material, keep them well away. I bet there is people on the call now that have regular sight, you go to a supermarket and you are trying to read instructions or ingredients on packaging and they have printed it over the top of



pictures or it could be just terrible, like a light green writing on a white background, extremely difficult to read, so making some simple changes there could immediately uplift your accessibility overall. The great thing about some of these changes it will gradually get out in the community and more people will become aware, and hopefully like I said we'll see these simple things start to progress across the Board. I will say on that note if you want to learn, I talk about these simple changes all day long, I will give you a free resource that is free of charge to look at. It is a Guide Dogs product, so full disclosure, but if you are to go to learn.guidedogs.com.au, our accessibility course, and there is one on delivering accessible presentations, they are completely free of charge. We wanted to make sure that we had the fundamental stuff available at no cost. Take advantage of those, feel free to pass them around the organisation. No matter what your role is knowing this sort of stuff you can start putting these basic fixes into your documents and creative writing and make a real difference. I wonder is it a good time to pause now and see if we have any questions? I muted the questions coming in just so I didn't have the screen reader coming in for me. I am distracted enough as it is.

SALLY KARANDREWS: No official questions have come in, so if anyone has any feel free to pop them in the questions or in the Q&A, but if you want to carry on, I will start collating everything.

BEN MOXEY: Feel free to ask away if you have any questions and Sally feel free to interrupt. So if we start moving on to some of the more complex stuff, like I said I am always a bit reluctant to dive deep into these scenarios and I want to hammer that point home, start somewhere. A lot of people say to me, "Ben, this is really overwhelming. I don't quite know where to start" and they over-analyse it to the point where it all becomes too scary and it gets pushed to the back burner. If nothing else, after you leave today go back and look at your emailing communication and say to yourself, I wonder if I can adjust that colour contrast, I wonder if I can make that font bigger. Another thing is that having a good heading structure in an email or a document or on your website makes a significant difference to someone who is blind. So to give you an idea, if I go to a website where there is a lot of text-based information and someone has separated it into headings, where they have got sections there that have a heading in between, obviously if you can see you can glance down that page and look at those headings because they are typically bigger, bolder, standing out. Just doing that alone, making the text bigger or bolder, isn't going to do



anything. When you implement one of their default heading styles it will create a structure for a screen reader user so they can move in the document in the same way, so if I come into that same doc I have the ability to move from heading to heading and if you take care to get the structure correct, for example, we know that heading level 2 it is a hierarchy so they typically goes under heading number 1. If you have got something that's relating to the heading 2 above it is going to relate to heading 3. It is a hierarchy. Remember that, I have people say to me, "Ben, I noticed there is 6 headings, so the first one is heading 1." It is not like that. This is a structure. The nice thing is let's say I come across that heading 2 and it has 14 or 15 headings underneath it relevant to me, I can actually skip to the next heading 2 and jump over it. So you can quickly see that from an efficiency point of view, from a frustration reduction point of view it is a good user experience. You want people in your office to be productive, so once again, really small changes will make a very big difference for someone who is blind. Some other things I can probably recommend - once again they are pretty easy to implement - don't use tables to lay out documents et cetera. So if you look at a table using it in a document and you are using it to lay out content you can rest assured it is probably going to be inaccessible to a user who is blind. Does that mean you shouldn't use tables at all? Absolutely not. Just be mindful that if you are using a table you've got a good reason for it, you are using it to represent tabular data. You need that data so you can form a relationship between what's in the column to what's in the row and you meet at that intersecting cell and you need something to form that relationship. If you are using it purely as a layout content understand it will probably be inaccessible and we strongly discourage it. One thing I will say about tables, some people who are blind they can find them inaccessible. What I would say is if you - well, in that case where I do see quite commonly people will put stuff in a table just to lay it out and that table could easily have just been a simple heading followed by a dot pointed bulleted list. That's a way more accessible, and frankly far more user-friendly way of presenting that information. From a blind person's perspective when you are moving from a table, you are hearing cell co-ordinates, there is different commands. If there is no need to use a table, why add that additional complexity? Some of that will be in that document I talked about earlier, once again, learn.guidedogs.com.au.

From that point on some of this stuff does get reasonably complex. This is probably the third or fourth time I have said it, Sally, it is challenging, so you definitely need to pay some attention to getting that formal framework in place and get advice. So if you are worried about am I going to get this right, or you



don't understand screen readers I'd encourage you to engage a reputable accessibility consultant if that's a viable option for you and get that support to make sure you are doing it right. I tell you what, there is nothing worse than securing a software package that doesn't work out ideal for a number of reasons, but accessibility is right up there. You don't want to find yourself in a scenario where you are committed to a contract and you can't get out of it then you are stuck with an inaccessible product for quite an extended period of time. A caution on that as well, we have been caught out here, full disclosure, we have been caught out before. Relying on people's goodwill. We have some scenarios, no fault of anyone in particular, but we have had a supplier that has a software come on, and it hasn't been accessible and we've determined through testing that it looks like it could be a viable product. When it comes down to contracts, the vendor, the supplier of that product has not been willing to put formal accessible clauses in the contract when you are signing off. Now, like I said, we've fallen into that before. We have relied on someone's goodwill. They had a strong commitment, good sales team and we have signed off on a product. When it came to the crunch and when the accessibility enhancement was needed to be made, it was never acted on. I just want to caution you there, it is something that we are very strong on here at Guide Dogs. We have accessibility standards. We have standard clauses that go in our contracts, and I highly recommend that if you see someone who is saying that they won't agree to those accessibility clauses, that's a major red flag for me. Like I said we are learning from previous mistakes and I am strong here at Guide Dogs that if we don't bring on a third party and they are committing to accessibility they show no issue at all putting that down in the contract to the extent that I generally forget if there is a commitment as well, then it needs to be formally outlined, you need some sort of a timeline. Realistically the issues may not be fixed overnight, but there is no point signing on to a contract for three years and then having the accessibility issues fixed in the last 6 month period. So consider that as well, having some safeguards where you look at agreed timelines for these different things to be met and potentially some sort of an exit clause if they don't uphold their end of the bargain.

SALLY KARANDREWS: Have a couple of questions come through and since you are on the topic of software. One has come in about AI and the accessibility of different AI platforms. I know I have certainly tested out quite a few. How have you found them in terms of accessibility?



BEN MOXEY: Up and down. So it is really surprising, isn't it Sally? In a blind and low vision world I would say in general at least what I hear on the ground there is a lot of excitement about AI. You'll often find that a lot of people are really excited by the possibility. We are probably more optimistic than most because what we have seen, the benefits, so taking a photo in front of you and getting accurate information about what's in that environment is quite frankly mind-blowing. So we have been, I would say we are pretty early adopters in the blind and low vision world. But a lot of these like ChatGPT et cetera have had pretty extensive accessibility issues when you are trying to use the platform on a computer, or so on, so up and down. I think it definitely will get better, it is certainly on the radar. What is a really interesting space moving forward is that they suspect - and I am keeping a close eye on this - they suspect AI is going to be used more for accessibility checking and fixing issues. I believe it will get a lot better over time but I think we are still way off, and I don't think we'll ever be at the point where we can eliminate manual checks and people with lived experience getting involved. To give you an idea now, and I am sure this question might come up later, the accessibility checkers that are involved in software and so on, people are always asking me how good are they. So they are AI-based, and they definitely will get better. At the present time they are picking up an estimated 30%. ...now, when he did his research he found it was more realistically down to the 12% mark of issues that these tools are picking up. That means when you see your document's accessible in Word, I will say they have gotten a lot better at picking up the basics, you typically can't guarantee that it is ready to go straight out to your external parties. A safeguard is get in there and learn a bit about what you can do, use those courses and keep your documents simple and stick to the principles suggested, then you know you are probably going to be pretty home and hosed. That's my advice there.

Sally, I have probably gone a little bit off topic here but I get asked quite often as well what do I think is exciting coming up in AI, aside from the fact that we might get better automated accessibility testing, which could have a systemic effect overall if people aren't doing any manual testing. Another exciting front is if they actually manage to get agentic AI off the ground. The thing I love about that is we do see people in the blind and low vision community that may have lost their vision later in life and never really used computers all that much, and as you guys can understand when you sit down in front of someone and you can't see the screens, remembering all those hundreds of keyboard commands that you need to get around, sometimes people can't get there. If agentic AI

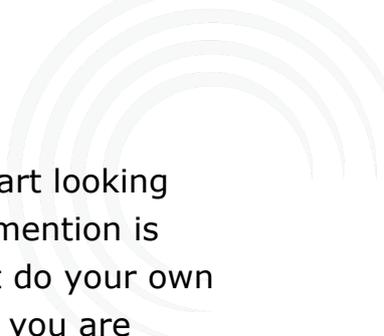
gets off the ground and you can use a voice prompt to go and order your groceries, book travel, that sort of exciting stuff. Everything I read from mainstream tech suggests that it is way further off than we expect. Apparently it is a massive leap from just the mainstream models that we have got, but interestingly Google is doing it now, and they are going into a step-by-step instructions, all you are doing is telling it what you want. I call it low hanging fruit because as you know if you order something off Uber, it is pretty step-by-step, so they can put some guardrails in place there. Sally, I will stop talking because you said there is more questions.

SALLY KARANDREWS: We will get into one of the more contentious ones that you and I discussed only last week, Jenny has asked about the line that you often see at the bottom of emails underneath the content that says if you are using AI automated assistive technology. Do you want to share your thoughts?

BEN MOXEY: We did talk about this in preparation for this meeting. Jenny, great question and look, I will be honest with you, and honestly, this is my personal point of view but it is the advice I have given to Guide Dogs ACT because we are seeing that line pop up at the end of the email saying if you are using assistive technology, quite frankly it is quite patronising. Someone like me who is using a screen reader gets to the bottom of the email instead of seeing it we hear it. Cheers, we are hearing their email signature at the bottom. We know we are at the bottom of the email the same as you do. We are just getting it audio rather than visual. Please if you are doing that in your current organisation I don't mean to discount the idea, because like I said, there is a good premise behind it, but it is unnecessary in my view.

SALLY KARANDREWS: Absolutely. Like everything there are different preferences out there, but I think that's probably the most common thing is most people don't find it particularly helpful. Question about heading structures in Word documents. Are they covered off in the course that you suggested that Guide Dogs has available?

BEN MOXEY: They are, they are mentioned in the basic course Sally. Look, there are some more advanced courses on there, but they are paid and they are related specifically to Microsoft Office 365, so Word and PowerPoint. I believe

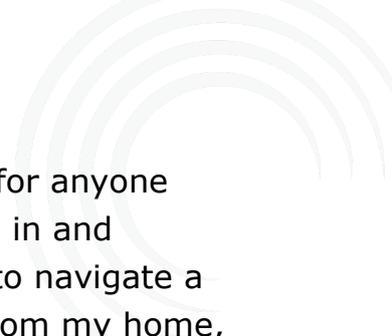


there is more in there about it. But heading structure, once you start looking into it a bit you'll get the concept pretty easily. One thing I didn't mention is make sure you are using the built-in heading styles in Word. Don't do your own custom heading, because the screen readers won't pick that up. If you are needing to modify them, modify the H1 to H6's in Word and that way you know the structure will bring it up. But, yes, heading structure is mentioned in that basic course I believe.

SALLY KARANDREWS: One of the people that are here today were in an inclusive employment disability program. If they have got clients coming in who are blind or vision impaired, any advice for them when it comes to discussing competence and familiarity with a person's preferred types of assistive tech? Any ways they can have, I guess, a sensitive but informed conversation to make sure that someone might be - have all the skills that they need to take on a job?

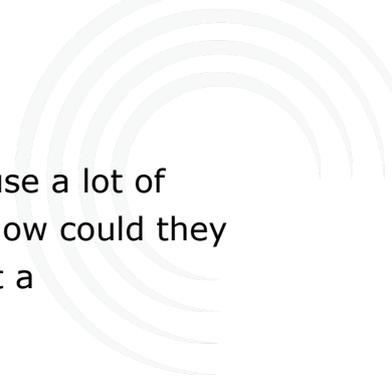
BEN MOXEY: Look, I think it is a really good idea to have. I love a conversational style interview, probably no surprise to anyone on this call the way I have run this Webinar. I think it is worthwhile to have a conversation about it, ask questions, don't be afraid because they are going to come on board and they are going to be able to, let's say here at Guide Dogs you need to be able to use Office - you could be using Excel on a regular basis, et cetera. So they are questions that you'd ask anyone else that come to an interview about their exposure, so absolutely feel free to have that conversation. If you are comfortable you could say, it is perfectly accessible, "Tell me a bit about how you access your computer at the moment?", and the person will hopefully go into some detail, "Well, I am using a screen reader", or they might say, "I don't need a screen reader, I am able to extend the text on Windows and that does me fine." You definitely wouldn't have someone who comes in with regular vision and not ask them about their computer use, so it is perfectly valid.

SALLY KARANDREWS: Absolutely. In terms of orientation mobility, so getting around, so getting to and from work people are quite familiar with white canes, and guide dogs, any other sort of exciting tech that's coming out there that might be interesting for people to hear about?



BEN MOXEY: I will touch on orientation and mobility, so basically for anyone who might not be familiar it is a professional in that space coming in and effectively instructing someone, like me with no vision at all how to navigate a particular route safely. So I get a new job and I have got to get from my home, do some bus travel and get to an office in the city, they'll come and teach me how to do that safely. We should talk about some common misconceptions, a lot of people won't know there are people going on trains and buses who are blind. People were blown away that I had come from Newcastle and come on a train. I will admit I jumped in a taxi too, but you do what you have to do. People who are blind are just moving around in that space and that's what orientation mobility services are all about. As far as exciting technology coming on to the scene, the two primary mobility aids are the white cane and the Guide Dogs still to this day. There is promising innovation happening in the space, people have probably talked a lot of talk about smart canes and there is one from...purely from sound, so you are trying to determine your entire environment by wearing a headset and when you wear a...the volume of the sound will indicate how far away it is. Mind blowing space and the team openly admit it is still a way off from potentially being a consumer device, but interesting work in that space. I will say there is nothing at the present time where I could foresee it becoming a commercial product and viable at least in the next few years. I think it will happen. Interestingly we are working on a project here at Guide Dogs New South Wales ACT where we are looking at developing a robotic guide dog. I believe there was a news article on it recently on Channel 7, but the aim there is we need valid alternatives. At the present time we have got the cane and the guide dog but what about those people where it is not effective? What about someone who can't have a dog for a particular reason, they might be allergic to dog hair? They may not want the responsibility, just like a pet, it is a responsibility. We are working in conjunction with UTS to come up with a robotic guide. It is a dog in guide form, that wasn't a deliberate decision, it is because we are...we are hoping into the future it could be something like a hand-held device and giving someone with blind and low vision another option. Really exciting space and I would say watch it.

SALLY KARANDREWS: Absolutely, very exciting as someone who regularly has to travel on planes with a guide dog, it is quite hard from booking a ticket to getting through security, so personally very excited about these robotic guide dog replacements.



BEN MOXEY: Interestingly there is quite a bit of contention, because a lot of people immediately thought, oh, they are replacing Guide Dogs, how could they replace these beautiful creatures? I want to make it clear, it is not a replacement, it is another option.

SALLY KARANDREWS: Thank you so much for coming along today and sharing, not only your own story, but that professional knowledge and experience as well and for directing people towards those resources. We will definitely share those in our follow-up to today. It has been great to have you here and hear a bit more about what might be in store for the future as well as some considerations for today.

BEN MOXEY: Really appreciate it, Sally. I don't know if it is appropriate, I will test it out. If anyone would like to informally get in contact with me, you can. I am here at Guide Dogs, I am the only Ben based in Newcastle.

SALLY KARANDREWS: Or feel free to reach out to me as well and I can send you Ben's way as well.

BEN MOXEY: Thank you.

SALLY KARANDREWS: Next week we are being joined by the National Psychosocial Safety Network and we'll be talking about psychosocial safety at work. So looking forward to having you all join us. That's next fortnight, not next week. Until then, have a lovely rest of the day everyone and thank you again Ben and live.

BEN MOXEY: Cheers, thanks Sally. Thanks everyone.

(End)