Writing for the Web and Making it Accessible Workshop
(Jan. 4, 2018)

STEPHEN LOCKER: Thank you for, I guess, coming and being a part of writing for the web and making it accessible. This has been loosely, very loosely, defined as a workshop. We'll see how well that happens.

And that will be something, hopefully, we'll work on as we do this monthly. So this will be a start of something we're going to do every month is start having workshops for the web right now especially for web accessibility, for different topics going on. First one right now, I'm talking about writing for the web and making it accessible.

We'll have designing for the web, development for the web, and other pieces, including tackling video, audio, PDFs, things like that. For the most part, PDFs-- just I want to just put a disclaimer out right now. PDFs, we're not going to discuss PDFs in this particular meeting. Usually, those take about three hours a conversation at other times.

So we're just going to save this afternoon's time and just say we know that PDFs are a difficult thing. Please be conscious that PDFs need to be accessible and that there are places that help to do that-- connecting with Wendy Steele who is back there in the corner. Wendy, raise your hand-- or others that'll be able to help guide you.

Right. So also, thanks for coming on what would be a pretty quick turnaround coming back from break. Happy new year to everybody. Excellent turn out here-- I believe this room filled up really quickly.

We have a number of people that are watching online as well. And there should have an ability, for all those that are watching online-- we do have a moderator, Wendy Steele, the same person I mentioned earlier. So if you take a look if you're watching online in the bottom right-hand corner, you can participate in the discussion.

On there, you can go ahead and start posting questions or comments. And then we can get some of those answered. And some of them may be answered just online right along the way there.

I also want to thank Wendy for helping put this together. Even though we're in the communications group, we're good at doing some code and making policy and just talking. We're not always so good on getting stuff like this organized and put together.

So I really appreciate that and thank you. And Wendy will be playing a much greater role in the future with education and outreach around accessible technology at the university, which we're also very thankful to have somebody in that role. For this presentation, I also want to thank Marilyn Reed, who is not here and couldn't be here today.

She is a lead writer for the web team and U Comm. She's having to take care of some business down in California. So anyway, she helped a lot with some of the different tips.

And she'll be posting a blog post here later this month quite a bit more in depth just about good writing on the web, which goes much more in depth of some of the things that I'll be talking about here. And that will be a topic that we'll take a look at workshopping for writers in the future maybe outside of this series or maybe a part of the series. That has not yet necessarily been determined.

All right, so 2018, the year of accessibility-- let's see how we do. What is web accessibility? Yeah.

AUDIENCE: I actually have a question.

STEPHEN LOCKER: Yes, Clint. What's your question?

AUDIENCE: Why are we having [INAUDIBLE]?

STEPHEN LOCKER: That's all right. Does anybody know why we're having these trainings?

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

STEPHEN LOCKER: Because we got in trouble.

[LAUGHTER]

Yeah.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] it's the right thing to do.

STEPHEN LOCKER: Because it's the right thing to do. Why is it the right thing to do?

AUDIENCE: So everybody can have access to it.

STEPHEN LOCKER: Everybody can have access to it. Great. It's true. We're moving forward. Just make sure that we have web content that's available for everybody.

One of the lines I had put in my notes here is what's great about seeing everybody here is it just shows that we have a lot of people that care. That's a really nice and heartening thing. Because lots of times you do workshops at a university, you get like six people.

We are all geared for six people. And we were going to workshop the crap out of it. But now we're going to be close to like 90 people today either watching or in person here.

So that changed things a little bit. And so just having that around shows that you care. And I hope we're all good humans. And we want people to do what we do.

And we also write a lot of [AUDIO OUT] at this university. And I don't mean that in a negative part of that term. But there is a lot of that, too.

We have millions of web pages at this university. A lot of us write this stuff. We want it to be consumed. I don't think any of us does any work just for ourselves very often, at least not in the communication realm.

And so making sure that it is [INAUDIBLE] that accessibility is important. Our friend Wikipedia here says "web accessibility refers to the inclusive practice of removing barriers that prevent interaction with or access to websites that people with disabilities. When sites are correctly designed, developed, and edited, all users have equal access to information and functionality."

I think every single one of us wants this. So when thinking about this, who do we need to think about? So one of the initial part is-- and this is one we all know-- visual.

Visual impairments, people have issues-- blindness, various common types of low vision and poor eyesight, color blindness. Jeremy was just telling me the other day he has learning about a certain kind of glaucoma where they can only see almost like a pinhole or a little bit like of a dot like this. Anytime they look, that's all they can see-- so making sure that we design and write knowing that that kind of stuff matters.

But web accessibility is about much more than blind people with screen readers. Not to say that that's not important, because it absolutely is. We often focus on that. But we often forget about people with motor mobility issues, difficulty inability to use hands, including tremors, muscle slowness, muscle control and other conditions. So these are kind of the common things that-- OK.

Some of the common things that happen there are caused there. And this is [? the thing. ?] People might not be able to use their mouse. They navigate through a keyboard.

Some of them have other assistive devices where they navigate through eyes, blinking, things like that. These are all things important to think about. We'll have other classes where we talk about developing for the web, making it accessible, stuff like where some of these will be more answered. But how you construct some of your content will be helpful here.

We also need to be conscious of people that have auditory issues, people that are deaf or are hard of hearing. We have a lot of videos. Oh. We have a lot of videos on the web. So then we'll get into that a little bit.

Seizures. this is a small thing in the spec, the WCAG, what we're following here-- and I should have started up front here. I should've answered that, actually, as part of Clint's question. The W3C puts out a web accessibility standard.

We're following the WCAG's WCAG 2.0 AA level. You can find all this information on web.wsu.edu. We have it there.

But we're following that. And one of the things it talks about is people with seizures. There's only so much pulsing or blinking you can do on a website so it doesn't trigger a seizure.

Cognitive and intellectual issues-- this is much more broad than a lot of us, I think, give thought and think about. And I don't know if it's because we work in higher ed and we don't always think about it. Though, there's definitely a large population here at the university with this.

This is something that we have to think about how we write. What are they able to do? People with ADHD, what does that mean? How do they go through sites? So these are important to think about, so just a wide range of people here.

And to get into the point about this, and there's a great quote that it came about here-- so why do we care? We want things to be usable for everyone. We're all in the business of advancing the reputation for the university I believe. Is anybody here not in that business? OK, good.

And 99.99% of everything we create I'm sure is absolutely great and needs to be read by somebody or is important for somebody. And basically, everything that people with disabilities comment on, so the issues that people with disabilities have, are the same things that annoy you and I when it comes to going to the web. So these are just best practices for making the web a good place.

It happens to benefit everybody. And if we go that way, that is much better. And if I don't have to have a bunch of pop-ups on my site or whatever site I'm visiting, I would be happy, or if you have long lines of text, walls of texts, which I'm not going to read.

So this is a good thing to think about. So jumping into this, what are some things that we can improve and we need to be conscious that exist? Page titles. All right, what is a page title?

Page titles, if you were to be on a website, it's in the head of your code in the site. So most of you may have access to changing your page titles within your CMS. Many of you may not and may need to work with somebody else in order to get these things correct. But they're what show up here.

And so this here, the second arrow, is me hovering this. There we go. So you can see what this says [INAUDIBLE] there. These are things that show up in social media. They show up in search results. They're important. And also, for people that are having assistive technologies, their assistive technology lets them know what page they're on by utilizing a page title.

AUDIENCE: Now, you're saying this is a phenomenal [? title? ?]

STEPHEN LOCKER: I am using this as an example of somebody that's doing it right, yes. Almost. It's exceptional-- I'm not going to say it's exceptional, actually. We'll talk about page titles in a little bit.

And actually, how we do at the university currently, our naming convention, is something we need to discuss as we move forward, how we want to make these better. But this follows our naming convention that we've been using at the university. So yes, [? Jeff. ?]

Page title failures, and we see a lot of these around the university-- so up there. And these are things you get from just the standard CMSs just because nobody loaded anything. Enter the title of your HTML document here.

So somewhere in their admin page, they had that message in there. You needed to fill in your actual page title there. You did not. And so they just keep their default text. It populates.

Untitled document-- I see tons of untitled documents. No title-- not very helpful. Untitled page. New page 1. A lot of CMSs when you create a new page automatically give it a default title page there.

So if you see these happening on your site, you definitely want to work to say, all right, where do I need to go to get this better. How do I change this? The current page fails I was referencing earlier, the page title approach at WSU. And This can help with how you want to have some of your searchability and know where you're at.

We have the organization Washington State University. We've been doing site name here. So WSU has many sites within it. Section name-- so let's say I'm in site name admission.

The section name might be how to apply our applications. And the page name might be how to apply. So then you have a how to apply.

Where this is at issue? We've talked about a hierarchy. And that's been our default go. Where I think this next year we need to take a look at page titles, maybe this should be as simple as how to apply to Washington State University.

There's multiple things to think about there, because of how screen readers and other things pick that up. Because it can get really repetitive. We don't have a good default answer. And I'm hoping that's something as a group here and with some other accessibility leaders we can come up with the right way to handle that.

And another reason to think about this and I may have [INAUDIBLE] is search engine optimization. I think many times they want to know what that is. They want to know how do we rank better. [? I would say. ?]

By getting a little bit of this, don't jam key words in this. But make sure you make it what it is, like what this page is really about. Put that down there.

Don't make it get too long with that. But that does help with Google and other search engines and also for people that are scrolling through your search engine results to know that, oh yeah, this is where I want to go. Because that comes as a title.

So next thing we want to do is-- and the word it is poorly used-- we want to make it scannable. So we want to make your web page something that you can scan through. And three things we're going to highlight here to help do this and talk about are headings, paragraphs, and bulleted lists.

And actually, I'm sorry, let's back up here. Questions about page titles? Do cut me off. I can start talking and not stop for hours. So I do need people to go ahead and start slowing me down. Wendy, yes. You've got somebody, moderator?

WENDY STEELE: Actually, we don't have a question online right now, but if you wouldn't mind repeating the question if there's one asked in the classroom.

STEPHEN LOCKER: Yeah. Do I know those?

WENDY STEELE: No, when there's a question that's asked.

STEPHEN LOCKER: Oh, yeah, yeah. I will. I thank you. Yeah. OK. And that goes with comments as well. OK. Thank you. Any questions on that? All right make it scannable-- headings, short paragraphs, bulleted lists. I'll get to what we mean here in a little bit.

So starting with headings, use headings to convey meaning and structure. So what are headings? Oops. Actually I guess I have this reversed a little bit.

So headings make things [AUDIO OUT]. So I want to give an example of what headings are in a way that can be helpful. So here is a block of content that I took from the W3C.

And this is their actual example for this. And I really liked it. And this is a number of paragraphs, six or seven paragraphs, that talk about headings and subheadings.

So if you were to take a quick glance at that, so, yeah, everybody took a look at that. We have a general idea of what that was about, right? We can kind of get through it. Let's take a look at their second example.

So what they did is they put in some subheads within the content. So now you quickly go. So if you take a look from this to this, which one is easier to kind of scan and find what you're looking for?

Right Here, I mean, so let's say I was only wanting to know about heading levels. I could get through content real quick, get to the section of content I'm looking for. Headers break up content into easily digestible chunks for the reader. They help pull the reader's eye through the content as well.

And how do we do that? So is everybody familiar with H1s, H2s, H3s, H4s, those header elements in your documents or in your editors? Is there anybody that wants to ask a question about this? There are no dumb questions. Yes.

WENDY STEELE: Yeah. We have a question online. And the question is what is the maximum length of titles?

STEPHEN LOCKER: I am not familiar with a maximum length for titles. I think, generally, you want to keep them short and succinct for usability purposes. But make sure they convey enough information. So too short would mean that there's' context or nothing revealed. Too long makes it a paragraph. So it's not something you can [INAUDIBLE]. So its really bolded type.

So I think trying to keep it in there where it is scannable. And we'll talk about headline length a little bit later towards the end in regards to how some different publications handle that. Yes.

AUDIENCE: Question-- for H1, those are typically what we want to reserve for your page title, correct?

STEPHEN LOCKER: So here's a question. H1s, are they generally reserved for page titles? Yes and no. You can have multiple H1s. There's a lot of debate on the web about how to handle H1s.

So, generally, H1s we've kept as a page title and then just went hierarchical with H2, H3, H4 underneath that, which is fine. That structure works. But let's say you have multiple articles on a page. There is nothing saying that you can't have a regular generic page header, and then have H1s for each of those articles throughout and be semantic throughout that.

So as long as that is representing the correct chunk-- and I think in most cases here you're probably going be starting with an H2, most here. But there is not an absolute rule there. And as far as that web accessibility, there's certainly no issue there.

But I agree with you. I, generally, make each the H1 the top page header or page title most the time. And so if that was the case, so I could have changed this to be H2, H3, H4, and H2.

Now, what we also-- and this goes beyond writing, but a lot of the writers have control of this is choosing headings for design purposes. So they like how the H3 looks or the h4 looks. So they're going to follow and H2 with an H4.

That is out of sequence hierarchically. And I don't have a good example of this, and I apologize. When you have an H2, there's only three directions you can go when you have an H2.

We can start a new section or a new area with an H1. We can go another H2 which refers to the H1 as parent. Or we can go down one level to an H3, which references itself.

You can't go from an H2 to an H4. H4 doesn't have a parent to talk to. The H3 is missing. It goes that direction.

So, like, you'll see a lot of sites that'll have an H2 at the top and followed with an H4 or an H1 with an H3, they just like the color that the H3 happened to be coded with and the size, or it happens to be all caps, or whatever that is. Keep it semantic. Keep the order of the Hs correct.

And if you have an issue of how it looks, contact your web designer or whoever it is that helps you maintain your parents for your website. And work with them to find a better typography hierarchy for your site. Or maybe the designer will say, well, you're writing wrong. Then you guys can have that nice discussion which is always fun.

So-- importance there of the H elements. Let me-- sorry here. There's also a fun thing. And I used the word hierarchy a little bit at least. But there's a hierarchy of content that is done here, which is helpful.

We know that anything that is less than an H2 when you have these different H3s and if there's H4s, we know all that content belongs to here. So if I'm not interested in this area whatsoever, I can skim past that until I get to another H2 level that I do want to read about.

So that helps for the scanning and the processing through and allowing people to flow through your page quickly. People make a decision if they're staying on your page within 2 and 1/2 seconds. That is you have not a lot of time there.

Design plays a role. And this is all design as well as far as that. But having good headings and then having them be chunked, so I can quickly parse through that there is something there that I want, it's really important. So short paragraphs are something else we want to talk about when we talk about our content-- yes, Wendy.

WENDY STEELE: WSU Vancouver responded back to the question about how long the heading title should be, the maximum length. And they said that Google Chrome recommends that titles under 60 characters, so that 90% of your title displays on the Google search results, which only shows the first 50 to 60 characters.

STEPHEN LOCKER: Awesome. Thank you. WSU Vancouver. Did everybody hear that? OK. Short paragraphs-- so keeping our paragraphs short. Generally speaking, paragraphs should run about three to four lines, five maximum, or two sentences. This is generally. You see the word generally.

There are always exceptions. But if you keep it towards this, you're going to have nice content. And it's going to be... And just to give you an example, let me jump off into a page here.

This here is a long-form story. And it follows that same principle. And so whether you're doing long-form page content about how to apply for school or showing a donor how great a project is, this allows the content to be readable. It allows you not to get lost.

There's a tweet that was sent out that I really enjoyed here. This person is saying they're dyslexic. "Not really seen as a disability, but large walls of text is painful."

So this goes a little bit bridging the gap here with the breaking stuff up with the headings, but also too long of paragraphs. "Also never-ending sentences and over complicated language--" this person has trouble with that. A lot of people have trouble. I have trouble with that. I assume most do here.

So when thinking about that, when we have paragraphs here and the example I was just showing you, allow it to be digestible. Know that we have people with other disabilities. Or I don't know if dyslexia is a disability or not, but people with dyslexia are people we care about.

And there are many forms of it and different levels. There's also the ADHD groups. So if you find that your text starts getting really long, chunk it up.

Also, we read a lot more on other devices. So we have not talked about phones yet. This particular thing here really matters. Because, literally, you will have walls of text quickly on your phone or other small tablets or mobile devices if you don't chunk that up.

And that also gets overwhelming. And it makes it difficult for people to go from one line to the next. And that's where we get this next recommendation. And this is an accessibility issue.

The number of characters per line matters. So what's that mean? So the recommendation they're saying is somewhere between 40 and 85 characters per line. So that means your line length. That means how long does the paragraph go before the next line goes.

So if it goes longer than that, and you'll see a lot of sites that go full width what their text, that's not accessible. A lot of those are at 120, 140, 150 characters. And what happens is people get lost, not able to find the next line when they go down. They get lost within the line they're in with the inability to go up and down.

So be conscious of that. And also, just it's easier and digestible to scan through and also easier for each of us to read. Does everybody understand what I mean by this? A lot of you may not have control in your systems over line lengths.

But you can absolutely tell, again, your web coordinator, web designer, whoever you work with, that, you know what? The template we're using is making this too long, or our text is too small. Because there's ways to fix it-- size of your type.

How many people have complained that WSU websites sometimes have too much whitespace or heard somebody-- let me restate this. How many people have heard people complain about pages having too much whitespace and we need to put something there? We hear it all the time.

Whitespace is your best friend. It's a great thing. So if you have a long text going a long ways over, go ahead and do a sidebar right. And a lot of you would know what this means if you've built some of your sites.

The sidebar can have zero items in it. It's just there. It's empty, allowing the main content area to not be as wide and allowing then for, hopefully, a character count that fits somewhere in the middle of there.

And when we talk about things for designers as well, we're going to talk about typography and also line heights. So you want to make sure you have 1 and 1/2, generally, for paragraphs for the line heights to make sure that you can go to paragraphs and stuff. But we'll get into that more with the designers. Any questions about this? Yes.

AUDIENCE: So what you're saying is that size matters?

STEPHEN LOCKER: So the question-- size does matter. Yes. No question. No question. And it's important. And if you've noticed, watched the web over the last five, six years, so just 10 years ago I was designing websites where we were using 10 pixel fonts, our sizes and paragraphs.

Then we went to 12. And we we're like, man, 12, that looks big. Then we went to 14. And we were like, whoa, this is massive. 16-- now, we're using 16 more as a default. There are some pages that we're using 18 pixels as our font for our paragraphs and especially for our desktop views.

Big type is not a negative thing. And how type now displays itself on the web, the web fonts have gotten so much better that it actually looks decent. It can be jarring if you're somebody that's used to small tiny text. But it's helpful for reading. Well, it's helpful for reading.

Bulleted lists-- so I've had a number of times in the past when I've written things. And I put bulleted lists. And they said, you should narrate this. You should make this a narrative and take it out of bulleted lists-- not on the web.

Please use a bulleted lists on the web. So if we're talking about making sure things are scannable, making sure that people see things within the first 2 and 1/2 seconds, bulleted lists goes a long ways to help. Let's take a look at this simple paragraph.

"Washington State University enrolls students at six campuses, including Pullman, Spokane, the Tri-Cities, Vancouver, Everett, and the online Global Campus." OK. Great, nice simple thing. This becomes a much easier way to kind of go through and see that content.

All right, what are WSU's six campuses? All right, I think it's a pretty simple one. But I think this helps get that point a bit.

Anybody have issues with bulleted lists? Good. Numbered lists-- please use numbered lists as well when you have do this first, do this second, or this third, or it's a ranked list of something. Lists are super handy. Lists are... be able to get through.

Next-- any bulleted lists questions? Link text-- make link text meaningful. Now, what I'm about to show you, and we've shown you a few things, on the web team and everywhere else we make these mistakes quite often.

What do we want to avoid? Click here, here, more, read more, info. So here's the thing to know about screen readers. And have anybody witnessed somebody with a screen reader? before?

If you haven't, find an opportunity to do so. There's a lot to be gained. There's a lot to learn. And then if you just want to just on the side go ahead and activate Google as an ability-- I don't know if Firefox or not does-- to turn on a mode for audio where you can kind of use your keyboard to kind of go through the site.

And it goes fast. You can set the change of speed how you want it to. But you can get an idea of how things sound and what's being read, very helpful.

Screen reader users do not visually skim. They skim links through their thing-- next, next, next, next, next, whatever it is. So click here, click here, click here, click here, click here, click here is not a very-- click here for what? And also, it's a constant repetitive. There's nothing describing what's happening here.

For example, the more information text does not clearly explain what information your user will find when the link is selected. So there's no context. Click here is related to the action of a mouse, which is an interesting thing.

A lot of people don't use mice anymore. And especially people with disabilities or other assistive devices, there's no mouse aspect to it. It could be a tablet, touch screen, reader, speech output, Braille device.

Don't link whole URLs. Now, this is a short URL. I could have put a really long one. And you see those. This is pretty long. And there are some devices that will read it letters, because of how it's dotted.

Instead, and this is a very simple thing, go ahead and give yourself something with context here. Apply for admission. And maybe it should be apply for admission at WSU. But there's already some context, I believe, to WSU by this point.

Also, avoid-- and I know this happens here. And I want to talk about this a little bit, because I get into it in alt text. But, well, we'll get into alt text [INAUDIBLE].

So this is a common thing that happens. We do it in a lot of places. Centrally, we have. This has been good to kind of think about let's get away from this. These also, like I said, can get-- if you see ones that have the question mark, bunch of information, ampersand, information, ampersand, information all the way through, that all gets read.

And then most of the time there's no context to it. There's a lot of links that the URL doesn't tell you anything. This happens to be a URL that is actually fairly descriptive.

But there are a lot of URLs that are coming through different database content management systems that really are not descriptive. This is descriptive. Does anybody want to challenge read more?

AUDIENCE: [? I have a ?] question.

STEPHEN LOCKER: Yeah.

AUDIENCE: So what do recommend-- we do have read more on our site.

STEPHEN LOCKER: So do we.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] mostly in our newsletter, our online newsletter. So like, for example, we have an introduction. And then the rest of the story is linked on a [INAUDIBLE]. What do you recommend as [INAUDIBLE]?

STEPHEN LOCKER: So the question is instead of using read more, especially in the case that was brought up by Sue in regards to their publications, where there's a bunch of articles listed on it and say read more, read more, read more-- that's a great question. Does anybody have a solution for that? Yes Larry.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] might have the information [INAUDIBLE] such and such [INAUDIBLE].

STEPHEN LOCKER: OK. So Larry had stated use the title of the page as one of the links there. And maybe you even can do read more about blah, blah, blah, blah, blah as well. Yes.

AUDIENCE: Would it be possible that read more could be appropriate in a situation where you only have the one link? It's not five [? reports in a row. ?] They're reading an article. And at the end it says read more [INAUDIBLE].

STEPHEN LOCKER: So this is a great example of how sometimes people only go through content looking for the links. So they may not have gotten the context of that particular link.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] when somebody's using a screen reader, they can go to an area called links. And what it does just audibly [? tells ?] [? them ?] all the [INAUDIBLE] page. And it reads the text with just the links. And so if you do read more, all it will do is it will go to the links and it'll say read more.

AUDIENCE: Read more, OK.

AUDIENCE: Yeah. And so even if it's just one link on a page, that's all they will get--

AUDIENCE: That's all they get.

AUDIENCE: --on a screen reader.

AUDIENCE: OK.

STEPHEN LOCKER: So it was just brought up-- screen readers will have kind of this link section that will list out all the links that are on the page. And so folks will just go through that. And so if it just says read more, they have no idea what the read more is about or any of the contextual stuff we were talking about earlier. Yeah, just a second. Yeah.

AUDIENCE: I was just going to say it gives you a change to kind of [INAUDIBLE] keywords, too, by saying more about [INAUDIBLE].

STEPHEN LOCKER: So now you're learning a little bit about the magazine. That was the magazine representative talking about their SEO stuffing of keywords to win the Google race, which they do extraordinarily well. But, yes, it does help with search engine optimization.

AUDIENCE: I'm wondering if buttons are considered links. Because a lot of times we'll use buttons that say read more or [INAUDIBLE].

STEPHEN LOCKER: So let's think about buttons. So the question is, what about buttons? Buttons are links. So the same thing applies that we talked about before.

So whatever device will have its link pile. And it'll say, all right, what's the list of links? It has no idea that it's got a box around it, a color, a border, and doing funny things when you hover it. So it is still a link. Yeah, that's something to think about and we need to think about. Yes, [? Javi. ?]

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] is there a way to have [INAUDIBLE]?

STEPHEN LOCKER: Well, so if--

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

STEPHEN LOCKER: So the question is if you have buttons, what happens to the length of your buttons if you're using something more than read more? Yeah, I think trying to be concise with the language there would be good, but still giving the context. There's probably not a real good way.

There's not an additional way. There's not a way to hook something to that. So if you were to have a--

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

STEPHEN LOCKER: So why are we using a button in the first place? Let's take a look. This is fun. This is now we're workshopping. Yes.

All right, so let's take a look at this section of the WSU home page. So I'm not saying that this is the right answer. Just when you said buttons, these are the first things that came to my mind. All right, so we have buttons here. Why do we have buttons here?

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

STEPHEN LOCKER: We have buttons here, because we're visual people. OK. Yup.

AUDIENCE: To cut down on writing?

STEPHEN LOCKER: To cut down on writing. And we're trying to make this scannable and easy to find, right?

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] hierarchy of content.

STEPHEN LOCKER: Hierarchy of content. So are these buttons bad to use?

AUDIENCE: So they're concise.

STEPHEN LOCKER: So they're concise. [INAUDIBLE] Are they too concise? Because I'm pretty sure Vancouver would be happy to be typing a question right now. And they're going to say, visit where?

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] links, how do you know the difference between [INAUDIBLE]?

STEPHEN LOCKER: To Inquire buttons-- awesome. That is a super [? great. ?] So brought up, we have inquire. I don't know if people can see me do this. We've got Inquire here and Inquire underneath graduate programs. Right. So if it got bucketed, these both are Inquire.

AUDIENCE: So maybe you could say [INAUDIBLE] [? graduate ?] program [INAUDIBLE]. Right. Going to be a great conversation to have with your graphic designer. Yes.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

STEPHEN LOCKER: Oh, yeah. Sorry, thank you. So it was just stated that we need to take a look at maybe it needs to apply for undergraduate. Apply for graduate programs, or study. Visit and probably this one it should be just Visit WSU. Because I'm pretty sure this Visit link goes directly. So we might be fine with Visit. This Visit link may go directly to a page that allows for people to select visiting Vancouver, Everette, Spokane, and all that. Well, what the heck? Oh, yeah. Visiting WSU.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

STEPHEN LOCKER: All right, so there is a huge issue here. And now I see why all the other campuses are pissed with central stuff all the time. Vancouver, Everette, Spokane, Tri-Cities, all of you, we're sorry. The admissions team is sorry. They're going to make this fix right away. We're going to get this handled for all of you. Yeah.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

STEPHEN LOCKER: Oh. So-- just been informed we're having some network issues at WSU right now. So I don't know if remote people are able to still follow, hear us, or know what's going on, or have been able to communicate with us.

If you are hearing us, can somebody that's online just send a note to Wendy real quick to make sure that you're still connected? But we are definitely having loading issues. So anyway, well, that was fun. Yes.

AUDIENCE: When you talk about a visual reader and there are two buttons that say Apply, when it's reading, you know, what's it going to be reading? What [INAUDIBLE] saying to the person online?

STEPHEN LOCKER: So the question is when a reader is going through and it sees the link for Apply or the button for Apply, what is the person getting? So if they're linking Through, they already know they're in a link.

I'm going to get the language wrong. So somebody please correct me. But it's going to be link apply. And I think they might have an ability to be able to say what that link's URL is if they hit a button at a certain time. But it's going to be link apply.

AUDIENCE: If the URL doesn't have a specific wording as part of it, it's going to be--

STEPHEN LOCKER: Gibberish. Yeah. If the URL doesn't have something that's descriptive, it's going to be gibberish. But we shouldn't also be relying on the URL to handle this situation, especially for these applies and for these inquires, because there are duplicate with taking us different places. Let's take a look at another place where we might do this fun thing.

Oh, we have real issues. All right, we're done with looking at website time. Maybe we can get back to it. So if somebody in the back row, when we get the network back, if you can give me a thumbs up, that'd be super helpful. OK.

WENDY STEELE: Stephen?

STEPHEN LOCKER: Yes.

WENDY STEELE: We seem to be still connected.

STEPHEN LOCKER: Awesome.

WENDY STEELE: [? So ?]

STEPHEN LOCKER: Thank you. All right, so avoid these. And so I think just to kind of rehash it, the read more is the one that has some ability just not in its own.

I mean, there's some argument that I think it can be stated for read more. About the article, or igloos in Alaska, something like that. There's a context there. There's an action there. Yes.

AUDIENCE: So would this apply to HTMLs as well? Because in thinking about it, when we send out our [INAUDIBLE] HTML, it just has a little teaser, an image, a little paragraph about what that story is. And then it does say read more. It takes you to a landing page where all the stories are. So are they also used for email?

STEPHEN LOCKER: So the question that's being asked is are emails treated the same way? Because a lot of newsletters that go out have read more on it. I have never seen somebody with a screen reader read an email. But I am pretty certain it's a very similar process. So they'll go through and they'll see, read more, read more, read more.

Yeah. I think as a web community as a whole and really just kind of getting through and talking through this and finding some ways to do this, we have to do better than read more. One of my favorites is the conglomerate of click here for more info. We do that one a lot as well where we just decide we're going to use all these words together.

The more you combine these, it doesn't make anything any easier. So just be conscious of that. And click here-- absolutely gone. Nobody If you feel yourself writing click and it's for a link, stop. yourself. Just put the-- no more click heres. Read more, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah-- not on its own. OK. I think we beat that a bit.

Oops. And I think it's also good for everyone to know you're not alone. I mean, I can show you examples that we've worked on over the last 10 years, 5 years, 2 years, this last year. Since we've known that there's been an accessibility issue at this university, we do the same things.

Just kind of collectively together, like, all right, what are these issues? How do we get these to be better? How do we make the web at the university something that people want to use and can use? Alt text-- yes, in the back.

AUDIENCE: I have a question. So you talked about the heading. And you've also talked about links. [INAUDIBLE] do you have any hard and fast rule about using or not using a [? heading ?] [INAUDIBLE]?

STEPHEN LOCKER: Oh, lord. So the question is headings that are also links-- there is no recommendation to do or not to do it. You can do it. Links, which we'll talk about-- just links as how you make links look different, as a graphic way in the future in our web accessibility for design. But color cannot be the only thing that sets the link apart. And there has to be something that distinguishes that it's a link.

So the most common thing that you've probably seen growing up is the underline. The underline says this is a link. So if you have a header and it's linked, the easiest way to fix that is underline that header. Can the really gumble things up and look really shitty?

Yes. It's awful. But it's usable. And if you don't want to do that, find another place to put your link that has the context there.

Now, there's been things that we've been playing around with is like using icons next to headers that are links. But even then while we're playing with that, I'm not 100% sold that we're still hitting the criteria for that making the mark. Because it has to be an understood icon.

All right, alt text-- any other questions there? That answer your question, Clint? OK. Meaningful alt text-- so biggest issues we have at university when it comes to web accessibility especially on the front end pieces-- no or bad alt text on your images, which we're going to talk about here in a second, H elements that are out of order, which we have talked about, so going from your H2 to your H4 and then back to your H3 even though it doesn't represent that particular H2. It's a new thought, just because of design purposes. Those are big things. And then color contrast issues, which is outside of a lot of scope you guys have.

So alt text-- here's what all attributions should technically be. They should be accurate and equivalent in presenting the same content and function of the particular image. Typically, no more than a few words are necessary. Though, rarely, a short sentence or two may be appropriate.

Don't use phrases in there. Be succinct-- let me get [? rid of it ?] here-- which we kind of just talked about. I'm sorry. I gave you succinct when I was trying to be accurate. Perfect.

So what is it that the [INAUDIBLE]? Be succinct. It doesn't have to be much, but just... what's going on. Not to be redundant or provide the same information as text within the context of the image-- and not to use the phrases image of or graphic of to describe the image.

So a lot of times you'll see folks that are starting to put alt text in because they're like you know what? We have to add alt text. And we have a picture of Kirk Schulz. They're going to say photo of Kurt Schulz. Somebody with a screen reader or some other device is going to get image photo of Kirk Schulz. The photo part is redundant. If it just said image Kirk Schulz, you're fine, especially if it's a portrait. Or it could be portrait of Kirk Schulz. Yes.

AUDIENCE: So in the interest of being succinct, when you say the same information as the [? text ?] [INAUDIBLE] [? would you say ?] [? caption? ?]

STEPHEN LOCKER: The same? Yes, the captioning of the image. So the question is, succinct-- I said about-- what did I say?

AUDIENCE: My question is when you say the say information is [INAUDIBLE] [? within the ?] [? context of ?] [INAUDIBLE]?

STEPHEN LOCKER: Same as content of the information? Yes. So captions work. So captions are tied to it. You're fine. So otherwise, you'll repeat. That is correct.

So what Larry is asking about in regards to text within context of the image, the alt text does not repeat the caption. Thank you for that. That was a good clarification.

So image of, graphic of, we want to try to avoid those fun things. Here's an image. So this image has-- well, let's talk about this image. What is this?

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

STEPHEN LOCKER: It's a sign, all right. What does this image have?

AUDIENCE: Text.

STEPHEN LOCKER: Has text. All right, so let's write alt text for this thing. Let's not caption, but let's write alt text for this. So what do we need to say in an alt text here?

So if we're going to be succinct and also give somebody who can't see this an understanding of what this is, what might be the first two words we want?

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] [? parking ?] [INAUDIBLE] sign.

AUDIENCE: Coug sign.

STEPHEN LOCKER: Well, so remember nobody can see this. So-- coug sign. So coug sign, what would you do after that then?

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] cougar [INAUDIBLE] logo [INAUDIBLE].

STEPHEN LOCKER: That's pretty descriptive, yeah. So in this particular situation, because this is a sign and there's no way for the user to know, we do need to say that this is a sign. Any text that appears on an image needs to be a part or the alt as well.

Interestingly enough in this particular example and many examples, the cougar head being there and letting people know that there's a cougar head there or not is not actually that important. But it's a matter of how succinct you're going to be there. And this is an example that we actually have for alt text within web.wsu.edu's web accessibility guidelines. This one-- sign that reads reserved parking cougar's only. Yes.

AUDIENCE: Would you have punctuation in your alt text?

STEPHEN LOCKER: So the question is punctuation in alt text. I actually do not know that answer. Yes is the answer. Lesa, who I look to as an expert in this area, who works for CAHNRS, says yes.

AUDIENCE: Screen readers will actually see that period and pause, and then [? move on ?] [INAUDIBLE].

STEPHEN LOCKER: OK. So the comment, so what [? this ?] [? is, ?] screen readers in alt text will see the punctuation and pause appropriately for the punctuation. I would say, though, if you're writing sentences in the alt text, you're maybe not being succinct enough. So keep that also in pretty rare situations.

But also, this does remind me. So the text in the image or in this sign is all caps. Should the alt text then be all caps? No.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] just going to read it, right?

STEPHEN LOCKER: So the thing is is it does matter, but not the way you think. Do not do all caps unless it's like WSU. Because if this would be all caps, the screen reader would go alt equals S-I-G-N T-H-- screen readers read capitalized letters separately. So something to be conscious of, if you're using all caps, know that that happens.

When I say that out loud, I need to do a little research. So you'll notice, people, we have headlines all over the web where we use all caps. Now, there's all caps where it's typed in as all caps, which please don't ever do. And then there's all caps where the CSS, so the design layer behind it, changes it.

But I actually cannot tell you for sure that the screen reader doesn't change from what's happening there, because of the CSS. A lot of screen readers do apply the JavaScript and CSS to what they do. Contrary to what some people have talked about in the past, most screen readers have JavaScript enabled. And they also have the CSS-- so just something to think about there.

And if somebody does have an answer and wants to post that, that's good, and also within the WSU Slack channel. That would be awesome. Because I'd be curious to know. So alt text, when does-- thank you. Oh, really?

So with alt text, when do you add that? So does everybody here have access to uploading images to their websites? Does anybody do it through some sort of a system where you upload it and you can fill in some field? Yes. So one of those fields is alt text. Fill that field in.

There are occasions, and I would say this has to be super rare. And I actually have a lot of trouble being able to articulate when. If you have an image that's on the foreground, if it's considered a decorative image, you can leave the alt empty.

But I would say very rarely is that something we should be doing. If it is going to be a decorative image, there should be something that we're doing the design that puts it in the background or through the CSS. There are times where maybe this happens.

I don't have a good example for you when that is a good situation. But just know that empty alt tag does not mean error. It just gives us a warning. Please make sure that this is not an image that means something. But I would say if you're putting in an image that doesn't mean anything, I wouldn't necessarily do it. Yes.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] WordPress [INAUDIBLE] [? holding ?] in something from your file into the alt text [INAUDIBLE] [? automatically ?] [INAUDIBLE]?

STEPHEN LOCKER: So the question is when you upload into the WordPress media library, does it automatically pull in alt text from some file library? I'm going to have to look to somebody else for that answer.

AUDIENCE: Yes.

STEPHEN LOCKER: So the answer is yes.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] image [INAUDIBLE] have that [? built in ?] [INAUDIBLE].

STEPHEN LOCKER: So it is... So the metadata is pulled into that. But one of the issues here is it might just put some other random stuff in there.

So do double check. Make sure it's [INAUDIBLE]. But once you have that that in your live media library, any time you use that image, that alt text always goes with it. Yes.

AUDIENCE: So in [? request ?] if there was metadata in your file, will filling in that field on the WordPress uploader override that?

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

STEPHEN LOCKER: So the question is, also on WordPress in the media library, if you were to overwrite the metadata for that particular field, will it overwrite it within the image's metadata? And the answer is yes. OK. Yes.

AUDIENCE: [? Context ?] [INAUDIBLE] for alt text [INAUDIBLE] the name if appropriate [INAUDIBLE] have an article [INAUDIBLE] it's still a picture of the person, but the font has [INAUDIBLE].

STEPHEN LOCKER: Yes. Great example of Lesa talking about context of the image. If you had just an image portrait of a faculty member, just the faculty member's name may be sufficient. But if it's a faculty and their lab working with a student, the alt text should state still the faculty member's name, maybe the names of the other people in there, but what's happening.

What's the context of that photo? Did I repeat that correctly? Please correct me where I missed it.

AUDIENCE: It really depends upon the context of where that image is being placed.

STEPHEN LOCKER: OK. And it really depends on the context of where that image is being placed. So, for example, if the image in a series of images or with other supporting paragraph, then-- OK, where it's with other supporting content. OK. Yes.

AUDIENCE: What about websites [? set ?] [? these banners ?] up at the top of the picture. [INAUDIBLE] or at the top of the page. Does that mean alt text?

STEPHEN LOCKER: So web pages they have banners, like a design banner?

AUDIENCE: Hm-hm.

STEPHEN LOCKER: So web pages that have design banners on top do not need to have alt text, not unless that is giving some sort of things. All right, we're down to five minutes already. I am sorry. So, yes.

AUDIENCE: Just a real quick question, [INAUDIBLE] about this. This is a white sign with red lettering. And it is not important to include colors because some of the people using like a screen reader would have no context as to what white and red are?

STEPHEN LOCKER: I don't know. So the question is-- this is going back to this image of the sign here. We have colors on this sign. Do we need to use colors in our description of this? And I would say the color is only necessary if the colors actually means something.

The colors, the crimson and gray and white here, play no role in actually what this purpose of this particular sign is. But there's always kind of gray areas. But I think that's getting more than what would be necessary.

Transcripts and captions-- yes. So what is the other thing we have a lot of issues at WSU? Videos. We have lots of videos. Many of our videos do not have transcripts and captions.

This was taken from one of the similar tweets that I had earlier. Videos without captions, subtitles, was by far the obstacle that most people commented on. So there was this person on Twitter that said, you know, what issues do you run into on the web, people with disabilities? And a bunch of people started doing it. And it turned into this big long thread.

The site Access Lab has a nice thing talking about it. And it kind of consolidated and talked about it a lot. And one of the things they came around with, this is the top issue that a lot of people online have run into. And a lot of people that are on Twitter are also using YouTube, hitting videos, doing things at other places.

Subtitles-- so it is only people with disabilities that have issues with videos and subtitles? No. So hearing is a major issue for folks, right? Being able to hear it, some people need to read it.

There's also situations where you don't have your headphones or something. You're in a public place. There's a video, or there's something. News sites that I have trouble with are news sites that give me a headline, I click the headline, and all there is is a video.

There's no write up about it. So that means I need to watch the video to get what that news piece is. And if that video doesn't have any captioning on it, I'm out, especially if it's a situation where I'm not able to listen to it.

So be conscious that this is really important. But this is also legal. We have to adhere to this.

So how do we do this? Great question. We'll have a bigger class on this. But where I point you right now is that we got people like Wendy Steele, who will help direct you to places to get resources to do this. Contact me. I'll help direct you to Wendy Steele to help find the right place for this.

But this is a really important thing. Quick places you can do it, at least basic steps-- and some people will give me a little grief for this. But go to YouTube. Have them caption it.

And do not stop there. That is not the least of what I'm talking about doing right now. Go in there and make sure you edit the caption that they did for you.

This does not get you still to compliance. But this is a huge step forward to be compliant in what you're doing for the web. If it's only a talking head video where it's just somebody talking, that will be compliant actually.

You do not have to have an audio transcript. You don't have to have a transcript to go with it to talk about the other things that are happening in that video. If it's a video that has more than a talking head, so things flying or lab scene, things like that, there does have to be a description of what's in the video that goes along with the video so they have access to be able to read what's happening.

Just a couple of things-- I just want to make you aware of that. So just posting a video up on your site is not as easy as just having it. I'm down to one minute.

All right, here, find stuff here. Yeah, read more. So web.wsu.edu, we have information there. access.wsu.edu-- their Office of Equal Opportunity has done a lot of stuff helping with this area and getting stuff posted.

We also have a Slack channel. I think we have 200-some people on the WSU Web Slack channel now, which is outstanding, fantastic. We want to continue to get more people there. So people can answer other people's questions, raise questions, and just kind of build some community there.

All [? handy ?] places-- both the web Slack is available on the web.wsu.edu. You'll see that information there. This-- is the video on me?

Vancouver, Spokane, Tri-Cities, Everett-- I know we don't have a way of streaming you open labs yet. But we will work on that this year and make that happen. And we'll also come and visit you this year, again, for open labs as well. So just know that we've not forgotten about you.

Without that saying, we have web open labs in the IT building here in Pullman every Friday. And we have been every Friday minus a holiday for-- I think we've got to be approaching 4 years now. And so it's been a lot of good times, a lot of good fun, a lot of people coming there.

And I know different people have come different times. And maybe it was too technical or maybe it was too something else. Come in there. Say, you know what? I have a question that's not technical, or I don't like what's going on. Just find somebody else to talk to in there.

Just kind of come up. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to come there to ask questions, be a part of it. A lot of you also have similar issues other folks do and that we may not be aware of. So come on, participate. It's a good time. And also, we'll help with web accessibility issues there as well.

I was going to give some other things here, but the time went too long. But I just want to hit we're going to talk more about this. And we'll have this post coming up. But there's five characteristics of good web content.

It goes much deeper than just being strategic, navigable, usable, or useful, scannable, and optimized. But we will break all those sections down to talk about a little bit later. But I do want to get to this.

So we were talking about headlines and headlines. So this is a headline especially for news posts and things like this, but something to think about when you're creating subheads as well. This is the BBC.

This is the BBC, who is brilliant. I don't know if anybody goes to the BBC site. It's fantastic. They do a great job of curating news. And there are fantastic writers.

They average 5 words and 34 characters per headline. Read those six headlines. You actually get what's happening.

It may take some effort. But that is scannable. That is not intimidating. That is really handy.

So if you ever want to just take a look at how somebody does good headlines, go to the BBC. They do a fantastic job. Along with those [? headlines, ?] keep them short.

This is a checklist of headlines. Rich in information sent-- so rich in information sent, that's a term that my colleague Marilyn likes to use, which is just clearly summarize the target article. What is the article really about there?

Front-loaded-- so we want to front load with the most important key words, because users often scan only the beginning of items. And so if we even talk about the person with glaucoma again, where they can only see this circle area here, having that stuff in the front is really pretty important. But also for most of us, we're just going right down the left aisle, left lane here hitting with these are-- Italy, Romania, 10 arrested, villagers, mass Thai protest, Iran accuses.

Understandable out of context-- headlines show up all over the place. So if this is a news feed, Google will have it in. You might have it fed in other parts of your own sites depending on how you're moving stuff around. Make sure it's understandable.

Predictable-- so users know whether they'll like the full article before they click. So this is if you have the list of articles in a feed somewhere. That way people know what to expect.

I just wanted to get through this, because this is one of my things I like to talk about. Because when you get to like 12, 14, 20-word headlines, I just can't operate. So I just wanted to get my quick thing really there.

So any questions? I know we're slightly over time. Is this a helpful thing? Please give feedback, too. I know that we want to do more workshopping. I know I talked a lot. And we'll get this dialed in. But is this something people would go to every month about different topics?

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

STEPHEN LOCKER: OK. Outstanding. And we'll keep working on that. We'll find ways and we'll try to make it so we can even try to workshop it in a more workshoppy way. But don't hesitate. We all have thick skin. Please give any criticism or positives that have come through that you have about this to make sure that we do a better job with these in the next few months. Yes.

WENDY STEELE: We'll also send out a recording as well as a link to your slides so that people can have that later and review them, too.

STEPHEN LOCKER: OK. WSU's web this last year has gotten better. And it's been a lot of you folks doing things and caring about it. And that is, I think, people across the system really do care about that. And that's great.

And what's also great is a lot of people asking questions about how do I get accessible. If we, in any way, have ever blocked you in that way, please let us know. And we need to take that down. But just keep tackling.

If you don't know something, please keep coming after it to find the right answer. There's no dumb questions here. And we know that the resources are not great enough at the university for everybody's site to get where they need to be right away.

And we're not even going to able to help you on all those things, but we can at least answer questions. So please don't hesitate, [? always. ?] Thank you. Happy new year. And see you soon.