ACCESSIBILITY

Hi. I'm Jenny Lay-Flurrie,

Chief Accessibility Officer at Microsoft.

We're going to talk about accessibility, so first let's explain what this is.

There are lots of examples of accessibility in the world.

There's accessibility of buildings and physical space with ramps,

power door openers and more.

And there's also digital accessibility.

Rendering websites, software, and games,

to be accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities.

All this and a lot more are great.

Cause at the core, accessibility is about

creating experiences that are inclusive

of the one billion people with disabilities around the world.

With accessibility, we have both an opportunity and a responsibility

to create inclusive tech that works for all of us.

Accessibility is NOT optional.

It is a key priority for Microsoft.

Technology can connect people in how they communicate,

how they learn, transact and experience the world.

And when tech is inclusive,

we can connect people and information in amazing ways.

On the flip side, if accessibility is not considered

and your process does not prioritize accessibility,

you have the power to exclude people,

which is clearly not what we want to do.

So if we're really going to lean into our mission to empower every person

and every organization on the planet to achieve more,

we have to think about accessibility, and embed it into the DNA of Microsoft.

It's an ecosystem. It starts with the people that we hire and empower.

Right the way through to our marketing, communications,

to the standards to which we hold our suppliers, vendors, and partners,

our products, our innovations, and our workplace.

Because we have an amazing opportunity to

explore the great potential and hard questions,

of how to create the next generation of accessible tech

and the wave of innovation that comes with it.

Just imagine what we can do together.

We're going to take you on a journey through time and space,

and to illustrate some of the common scenarios.

Just remember that everyone's experience is completely different.

And we're going to share just a few stories

that will be helpful in understanding accessibility for now and the future.

Thank you for investing your time to watch this today.

Great Scott, I’m glad I found you, Martha!

Doc? What’s wrong?

It’s the accessible and inclusive workplace, Martha.

Something’s gotta be done about how you learn, support,

and grow in all areas of accessibility.

We have an opportunity to innovate,

but we have to act now!

Oh, no. I just moved to this team

and I’m still getting to know what it means to be accessible.

It's not too late - if we hurry.

Hurry where?

Back to the past! We need to head back to a few weeks ago

when you first joined the team, and figure out what changes need to be made

in your approach to creating an inclusive world for then, now, and the future.

How is this even possible?

The flux capacitor, Martha. How else? Now, get in!

But this is an office, not a road.

Where we’re going, we don’t need roads. Hurry, Martha!

Time doesn’t wait.

Time circuits on. Capacitor… fluxing.

What the - ?

We’re in the past now, Martha.

It’s a few weeks ago. Your co-workers can see us,

so we need to be extremely careful

that you and Past Martha don’t cross paths.

Okay...

Ahhh, I love open office concepts.

The hustle, the bustle… the implied collaboration.

But they can be pretty problematic for a person with autism,

like the programmer, Jan.

There I am!

Stay out of sight!

Hey, Jan. I have two minutes before my meeting,

I’d love it if we could watch the product demo together

so you can give me your thoughts before I head in.

Um…This is uncomfortable for me.

Can we go over the video later?

But, um, sure. I guess later works.

Hi Martha, can we talk about that interaction we just had?

Yes of course, what’s up?

I’m extremely sensitive to sensory input.

This open office concept

makes it really hard for me to focus.

I wear noise-canceling headphones to help with conversation and hallway noise.

I see. Would it be helpful to move your desk to a quieter part of the office?

Yes, that’d help me stay focused in the office.

Is there anything else I should know about helping to create a more inclusive environment?

Well, I perform best in a structured work environment with a predictable routine.

I’m happy to take on additional projects like giving feedback,

but I need enough notice to adjust my schedule to fit in additional tasks.

If you’d like me to review something I’d appreciate you setting up time with me

in advance and arranging for a quiet space to meet

because I can’t concentrate in this environment.

I understand last minute things will come up,

but please know, I may not be able to give you feedback right away.

Ok, I will make sure to do that from now on.

Thank you for being so understanding and open to listening to my thoughts and needs.

This is a good start. Let’s keep talking about

these types of accommodations and interactions.

Yes, let’s keep the dialog going.

I think that went well. By listening to her needs and committing to meeting them

you demonstrated to Jan she’s a valued co-worker.

It’s important to remember that everyone is different,

and while Jan has certain sensitivities,

other people may have different needs.

That’s why communication is so important!

Seems like listening and acting is going to be key.

You’re onto something there. Now come on,

there’s so much more to do!

Interpreter: So I propose we go with the second option.

Can you tell Reed that I like that idea, but

I think we should take another look at the numbers.

What's our plan for launch?

Interpreter: Please go ahead and look and speak directly to me.

Oh, I'm sorry.

Interpreter: It's alright, it's a common mistake.

The interpreter is here, interpreting what I Sign,

but still go ahead and look and speak directly to me.

Right understood.

How could I not have known that? I feel really bad I offended Reed.

Speaking of oversights you can learn from.

Right now you have an email queued up to send to the team

that contains a video without captions.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing

may not be able to understand the video without captions.

So now I just need to sneak into my office while Past Me is busy,

intercept that email and add captions to the video!

Let’s go!

I don’t remember my password from a few weeks ago.

Try “Plutonium”!

“JLFismyhero”

“#yolo"

“pandaspandaseverywhere”

Yes, I’m in!

I don’t see a single panda anywhere.

Success. Email intercepted.

I’ve uploaded to Microsoft Stream to create an auto-generated caption file.

I’ll need to check the captions for accuracy

and must fix any issues.

When captions are incorrect, the whole meaning of the video could change!

Good work!

So where - I mean, when - are we off to next?

See you in there, Theo. Looking forward to your presentation.

Hello, everyone. Let me just get this conference call set up and we’ll begin.

Here you go, Theo.

Hey, team before we start, I’d appreciate it if we could all work together

to ensure future meetings are accessible and inclusive to everyone.

Like, if there are meeting agendas or handouts or even food on the table,

let’s put it at an appropriate height and distance for everyone to be able to access comfortably.

And one more thing. When I tried accessing our team website,

I wasn’t able to navigate the page with my assistive technology.

I use the keyboard only to navigate my computer.

To create a delightful experience for people with disabilities,

we must go beyond compliance.

ALWAYS include people with disabilities from the start of the project lifecycle.

Is there a way to test websites and other products for accessibility?

Yeah, you can use Accessibility Insights

to help find and fix accessibility issues

before you ship a product.

You can get more info at aka.ms/accessibilityinsights.

I know I have some work to do in learning from and with people with disabilities on the team,

and I’m already making progress.

You’re in the next meeting with me in Building 132, right?

The E3 meeting? Yes.

Let’s walk together.

Actually, I was going to take the shuttle.

Really? It’s just across the lot.

The shuttle seems a bit silly.

You know what, I’ll just meet you over there.

I was just teasing her a bit.

Was that wrong?

Not all disabilities are visible.

You may not know if someone has a disability or not.

I think I offended you. I’m sorry.

I have Muscular Dystrophy.

It makes it difficult to walk even short distances.

I didn’t know.

Because you won’t always know, it’s best to always be respectful

when someone says they want to take the shuttle or use the elevator

rather than the stairs.

You’re right. Can I take the shuttle with you to the meeting?

Sure.

Great Scott, your coworker Louis,

is right around the corner

and, if my calculations are correct,

we’re just in time to learn more about his

workplace accessibility needs

and some of the accessibility features and tools

he uses on a daily basis.

Scene Preview. Processing.

Probably a cup of coffee on a table.

Louis uses a screen reader,

and it looks like he just got the weekly team communication.

Yeah, it updates everyone on project milestones.

It’s part of my job to send it out.

One of the images in the weekly communication is a flyer

for a teambuilding event.

Because there’s no alt text,

Louis missed important details about the event.

Your communications go out on Mondays, right?

So all we need to do is go back a few more days

and use the accessibility checker in the review tab

to check for the accessibility of images, colors, heading structure, reading order,

and many other accessibility issues that may come up.

Let's do it!

So I’ll just hit pause send on the email.

Done.

Now, adding alt text.

Make it descriptive and specific

but not too long.

Got it, done.

I’m also setting a reminder to check my emails

through the accessibility checker in the review tab.

You can learn more about creating accessible content

at aka.ms/officeaccessibility.

Hi Louis, It's Martha.

Hey Martha. By the way, thanks for letting me know you were there.

It really helps when you identify yourself.

I’m glad you’re here. I wanted to talk to you about the presentation you gave last week.

What’s up?

I had some trouble following along in your presentation.

You said things like “read this slide and then I’ll move on”

and “you can see why we’re excited about the upcoming fiscal year.”

But I couldn’t see what’s exciting about the upcoming fiscal year.

So, if you could describe what’s on the slides next time,

that’d be more inclusive.

That’s great advice. I’ll make sure to be more descriptive

in my presentations.

You can also use an accessible screen sharing app

like Microsoft Teams or share the material ahead of time

so that I can follow along on my own device.

Absolutely.

If you’re sharing a video, make sure to provide audio descriptions.

When there’s important visual information or

another language is being spoken with subtitles,

I can’t understand what’s going on,

so audio description gives me the opportunity to

participate fully in the presentation.

Great Scott, we must get to your last co-worker in time!

This time you drive.

What?! Why?

Are we safe? Did I get us here?

Time travel. Nothing to it.

It’s Meg. She’s an engineer with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD.

It seems like something’s bothering her today

and she’s having a hard time concentrating on her work.

Ok, we have a lot to cover.

I’d like to start with the prototype update.

I’ll turn it over to Meg who can walk us through design thinking.

Meg, because we're running over,

you’ll only have 15 minutes now instead of 30.

So, as you can see here,

what we were trying to solve for was, um, the…

Symptoms can affect a person with PTSD

in very individual ways,

but it is common for people with PTSD to experience

struggles with memory and concentration,

especially when put in a situation that can heighten anxiety.

Hey, team. Giving presentations like this can be triggering for me,

especially when the schedule changes.

I'm really not feeling my best today,

and I need to manage my symptoms,

so I'd like to propose I break the presentation

into smaller segments I can share throughout the week

instead of all at once.

This way I won't feel rushed.

Let's take a break and put this on the agenda for next week.

Thanks everyone. Every day looks a little different with PTSD,

and I can't ever predict how I will be feeling

one day to the next.

Okay, let’s head back to the present.

You've got it.

There’s a team meeting scheduled in a few minutes

and I’ve got something to share.

Here we are.

Before we start, I’d like to disclose that I have a disability.

I feel like disclosing is the right choice for me.

I have dyslexia. Dyslexia is a very individualized disability

that presents differently for different people,

but it typically impacts how a person sees words

and their experience of reading or decoding text.

I use Learning tools to help with reading and writing throughout the day.

It would be helpful if you could get important information to me in a

video or face-to-face meetings

instead of exclusively relying on text.

Thanks for your support.

Will do. Thanks for sharing.

Great Scott, you did it, Martha.

You learned from your missteps and corrected them.

Thank you, Doc. I learned a lot today

and I know I have so much more to learn,

but I feel good about this start.

I’ll listen, learn, and stay flexible in how I create a more accessible world.

That’s the right attitude. So, WHEN should we go to now??

I’ve always wanted to meet Charles Babbage.

A marvelous idea. To 1837 we go!

As you can see, we had a little fun with this concept,

and we hope you enjoyed it.

We also hope that our adventure gave you some really grounded

understanding of accessibility,

and how to embed that into your environment

and your ecosystem.

It is our responsibility to make that happen,

and so if I have any word of advice,

it's to make sure that you continue

to invest in your skills in accessibility,

to ask questions,

and to explore our resources,

so that you know, and get your questions answered

on how to ensure that this is part of how you move forward.

Thank you for investing your time to take these today,

and I look forward to hearing how you've created

amazing, empowering products.

Please check out our website,

microsoft.com/accessibility.