



# **NCD-ODEP**

## **National Online Dialogue:** *Advancing Accessibility and Inclusion in Social Media - The Tech Perspective*

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**May 12 – June 13, 2014**  
**Participation Metrics**

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## **Introduction:**

The following report outlines the results of the *“Join the Conversation: Advancing Accessibility and Inclusion in Social Media - The Tech Perspective”* online dialogue. Co-hosted by the [U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy](#) (ODEP) and the [National Council on Disability](#) (NCD), this virtual event, the second in a three-part series, was held from Monday, May 12 through Friday, June 13, 2014 and was open for participation to the general public. The dialogue invited participants to work together to improve social media accessibility by reviewing ideas from the first dialogue – *“Advancing Accessibility and Inclusion in Social Media - The User Experience”* – and coming up with creative ways social media companies could go about integrating the ideas into the design and development of social media online tools and apps. In addition, the dialogue asked for ideas on the most effective way the social media industry could engage with the disability community for user feedback and ideas. As part of the registration process, registrants were also encouraged to answer a series of questions, including if they work in the social media industry; if universal design is more of a philosophy or a tangible goal; if universal design is applicable to social media; how important input is from users with disabilities in their work; and what is needed to facilitate greater accessibility in social media products and services.

Ideas posted to the online dialogue were organized into topics, including: Planning & Design, Development & Testing, Deployment, Maintenance & Support and Retrofitting. In addition to posting ideas to the dialogue, participants were given an opportunity to “vote” on each idea and submit comments. Included in this report are the top posts and associated comments contributed by and voted on by participants. An archive of the complete dialogue is available for viewing at <http://socialmediatech.epolicyworks.org/>.

The information gathered from this dialogue will help NCD and ODEP better understand how the tech industry can support the improvement of accessibility in social media online tools and apps and how the tech industry and the disability community can continue to work together to improve social media accessibility for everyone.

### **Participation Summary:**

- Registration began on May 12, 2014 at 8:00 am ET
- Dialogue opened on May 12, 2014 at 8:00 am ET
- 13 total ideas
- 73 comments
- 65 votes
- 206 registrations
- Dialogue closed on June 13, 2014 at 11:59 pm ET

### **Campaign Summary:**

- Total number of ideas: 13
- Idea breakdown by topic:
  - Planning & Design: 8 ideas (47 comments and 39 votes)
  - Development & Testing: 1 ideas (0 comments and 6 votes)
  - Deployment: 2 ideas (7 comments and 7 votes)
  - Maintenance & Support: 1 ideas (13 comments and 8 votes)
  - Retrofitting: 1 ideas (6 comments and 5 votes)

### **Registration Metrics:**

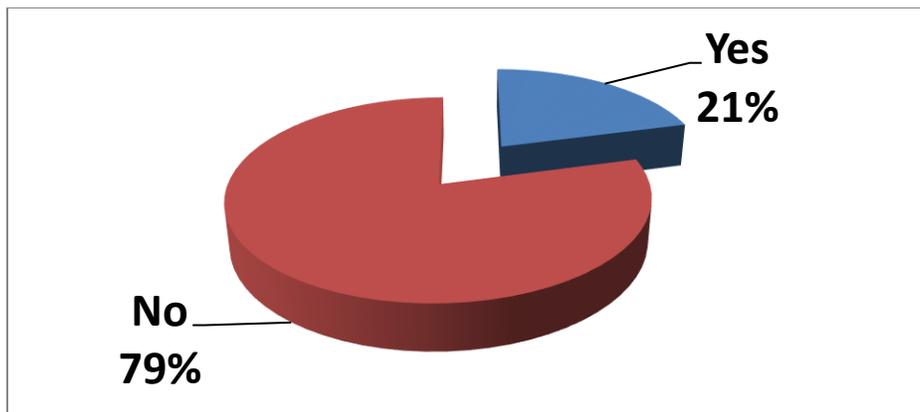
*Total registrants: 206*

*Total number of registrants that completed the registration process: 192*

*Following are breakdown of self-reported affiliations:*

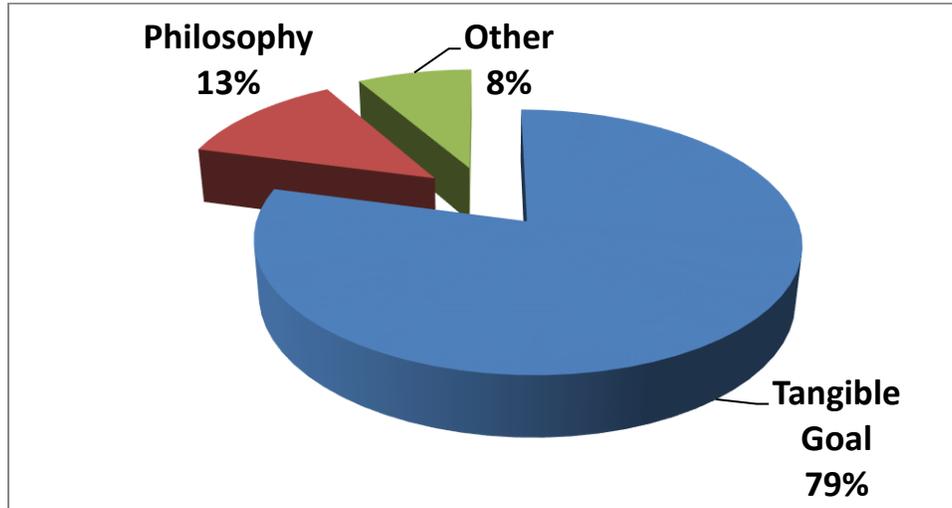
#### **Do you work in the Social Media Industry?**

- Yes: 21%
- No: 79%



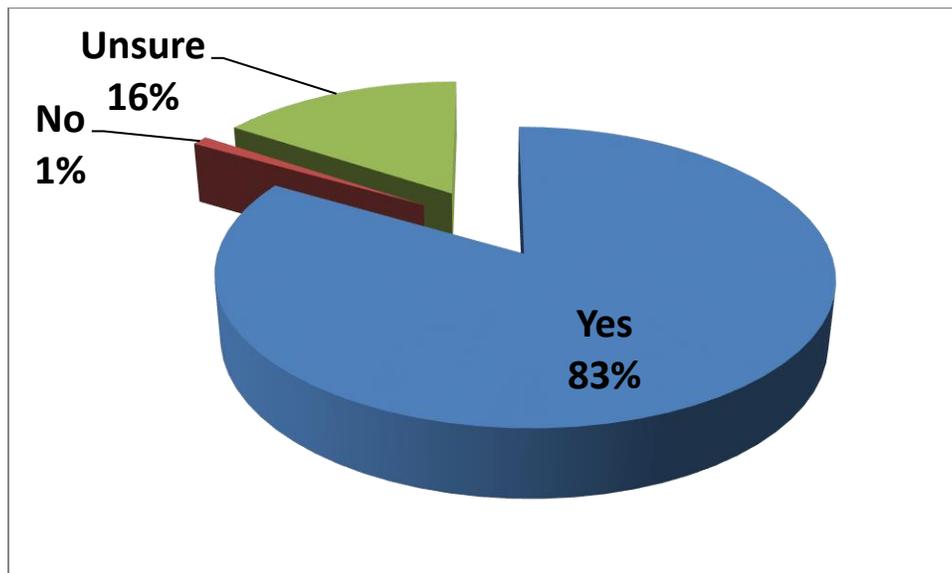
**Do you believe universal design is more of a philosophy or a tangible goal?**

- Tangible Goal: 79%
- Philosophy: 13%
- Other: 8%



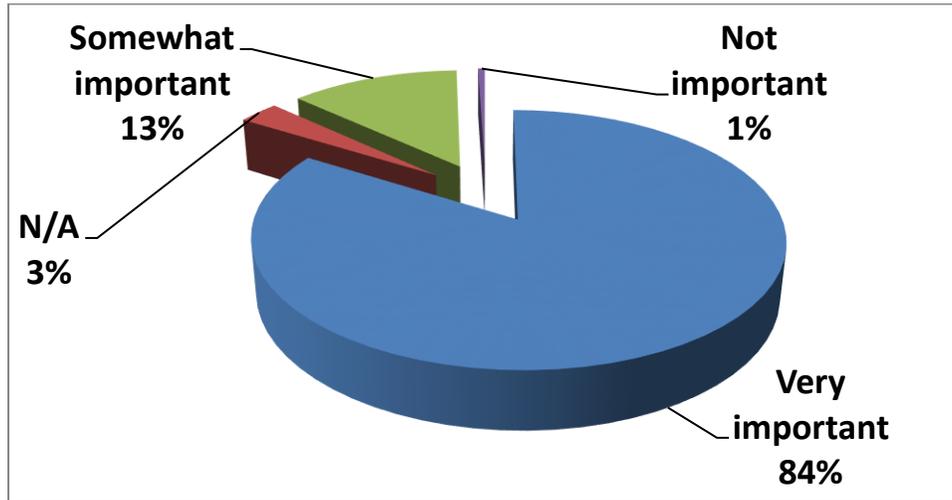
**Is universal design applicable to social media?**

- Yes: 83%
- No: 1%
- Unsure: 16%



**How important is input from users with disabilities in your work?**

- Very important: 84%
- Somewhat important: 13%
- Not important: <1%
- N/A: 3%

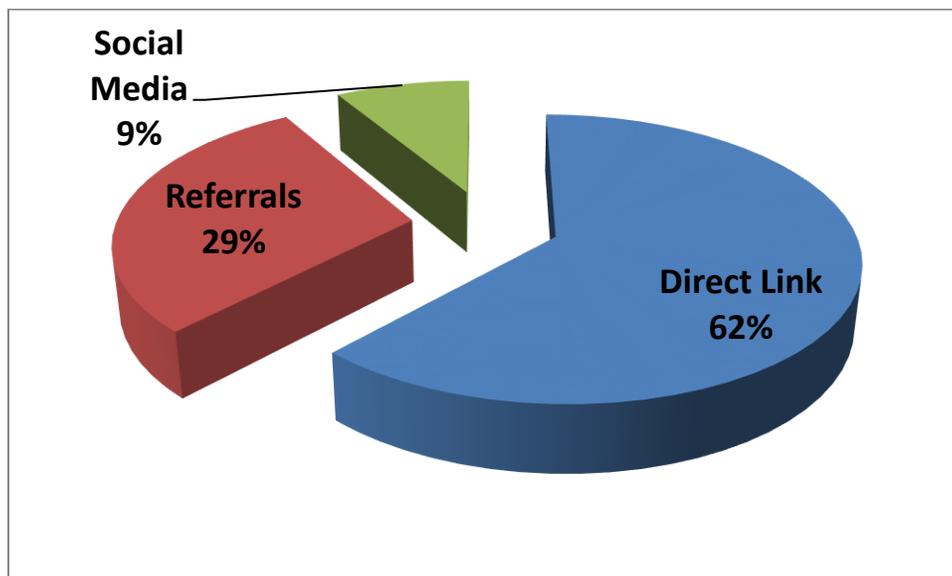


**Visits during the Dialogue (5/12/14 – 6/13/14):**

- Total visits during the live dialogue: 1,235
- Total unique visitors: 750
- Total page views: 5,407
- Average pages per visit: 4.38
- Average visit duration: 4:19
- Returning visitors: 39.68%
- Bounced Rate (percentage of people who leave after viewing the first page of the dialogue): 14.49%

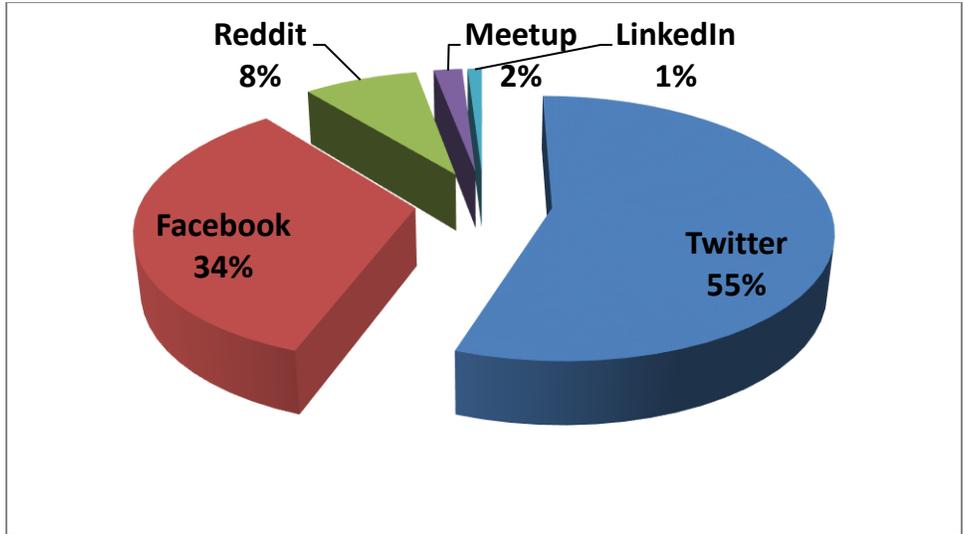
**Traffic Sources:**

- Direct link: 62%
- Referrals (DOL emails, DOL.gov, NCD.gov, ePolicyWorks emails): 29%
- Social media: 9%



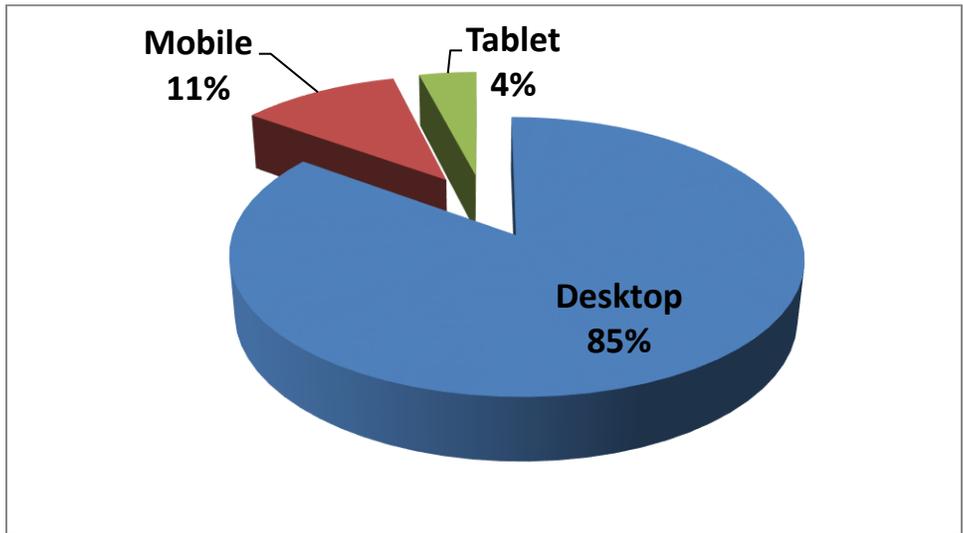
**Breakdown of Traffic from Social Media Sources:**

- Twitter: 55%
- Facebook: 34%
- Reddit: 8%
- Meetup: 2%
- Linked In: 1%



**Breakdown of Traffic from Type of Device:**

- Desktop: 85%
- Mobile: 11%
- Tablet: 4%



**Demographics of Visitors:**

| State                | Visits |
|----------------------|--------|
| Maryland             | 211    |
| California           | 173    |
| District of Columbia | 103    |
| Virginia             | 102    |
| New York             | 66     |
| Texas                | 47     |
| Massachusetts        | 43     |
| Florida              | 33     |
| Michigan             | 31     |
| Oregon               | 31     |
| Illinois             | 29     |
| Indiana              | 26     |
| North Carolina       | 24     |
| Washington           | 24     |
| Georgia              | 23     |
| Wisconsin            | 23     |
| Pennsylvania         | 21     |
| Ohio                 | 19     |
| New Jersey           | 13     |
| Arizona              | 12     |
| Minnesota            | 11     |
| Nevada               | 11     |
| Connecticut          | 10     |
| Kansas               | 9      |

| State          | Visits |
|----------------|--------|
| New Hampshire  | 9      |
| West Virginia  | 9      |
| Missouri       | 8      |
| Colorado       | 7      |
| Alabama        | 6      |
| Maine          | 6      |
| Hawaii         | 5      |
| Kentucky       | 5      |
| North Dakota   | 5      |
| New Mexico     | 5      |
| Tennessee      | 4      |
| Utah           | 4      |
| Iowa           | 3      |
| Oklahoma       | 3      |
| South Carolina | 3      |
| Arkansas       | 2      |
| Idaho          | 2      |
| Louisiana      | 2      |
| Montana        | 2      |
| Rhode Island   | 2      |
| Alaska         | 1      |
| Delaware       | 1      |
| Vermont        | 1      |
| Unknown        | 7      |

*Note: The ideas listed in the following sections include minor typographical corrections, which have in no way impacted the substance or the intention of the revised posts.*

## **Top 5 Overall Ideas:**

### **Top Idea #1: Human oversight for video closed-captioning**

11 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 11 Net Votes

I recently attempted to follow an online video via automatically generated "Closed Captioning." It was utter gibberish.

Auto-caption is so vastly a joke that "YouTube auto caption fail" is a drop-down search suggestion.

I recommend that any site (like YouTube) that imposes "auto-captioning" make it easy for content producers to edit/correct the transcript. The site should alert the content producer to the importance of taking this step, and provide extensive how-to documentation.

People who rely on assistive technology should somehow be informed, whether "Closed Captioning" was produced with human oversight or was automatically generated.

#### **Comment #1:**

Thank you so much for your recommendation, Cynthia. I personally prefer to upload my own transcript for my YouTube videos rather than relying on auto caption but not everyone wants to transcribe text! Do you have any other solutions or ideas you'd like to share?

#### **Comment #2:**

There are ways to do much of what you are asking for. I export out the file that gets auto-generated. That gives me some edit times usually that are pretty good. Then it's like going back and edit something I wrote in the first place. A touch of dyslexia ya know. It would be nice to have everything transfer from speech to text correctly, and with the right person's voice and a silent room it can be really accurate. Some of the videos that I have had to CC are from people that may have a speech impediment. I would go through those anyway because I want to make sure that what they really said is what is in the captioning. Many times there is room noise also. That will kill any text to speech software.

The way I go about it is that I copy the auto-transcribe file, rename, it and then edit through the YouTube CC editor. It can be time consuming, but it works.

#### **Comment #3:**

Thank you so much for your comments, Craig! I hope you'll continue to share any ideas or solutions you might have regarding social media accessibility!

Comment #4:

YouTube does a great job of getting the captioning started. Yes there are many errors, but the time it takes to correct the errors are minimal in comparison to having to create the captioning file from scratch. What was once 5 - 10 minutes for a professional captioner to caption one minute of video is reduced to about 2 - 3 minutes for the novice. YouTube has provided a wonderful service. As Craig indicated it is quite simple to export what YouTube creates and edit and upload. There is no reason why any video on YouTube should not be captioned

Comment #5:

It is also the user that does some of captioning. I mean Professor Messar does his because YouTube is not the only site that he is on.

**Top Idea #2: Clearly-labeled menu functions**

10 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 10 Net Votes

Social media and web-based email interfaces should use clearly-labeled menu functions, instead of cryptic pictorial icons. I shouldn't have to guess which function is represented by a gear wheel, wrench or other image.

**Top Idea #3: Maintenance**

7 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 7 Net Votes

If you are going to provide this type of service why not employ some of the people with disabilities to run a site. If you need an IT to run hire people with Asperger Syndrome to maintain it. To show the labor force that the Department of Labor is willing to run a site and have IT personal who are disabled for the disabled. Start training people in tech fields since it is growing.

Comment #1:

It really depends on the individual. Running a website and IT you train them as the same as anyone else. Yes they may need accommodations for the certs. Hiring will be more difficult because IT are not the greatest people to do hiring process. If you can train people to code who have autism why run a social media site. It is really no difference only thing you have place to hire. If you HR is aware of IT sometimes lack of social skills. Besides there is a void of IT in the country. You people who that detail orient can fix a computer but not relate to people. What you need to is train them. I think it is time for community see what the "can do" not look at the disability. Besides with 7 % mandate it can be done.

Comment #2:

Thanks, Whitney. You don't need to convince me, but what do you think is the 'added value' of having a person w/ a disability work in the tech/social media industry? Do you think it will improve accessibility?

Comment #3:

I think helping people with disabilities understand the value that they can add to the field are important. In terms of education and curriculum, making sure that schools and universities are aware of assistive technology available for students is a first step to ensuring that students can you pursue opportunities in the tech industry. If computer software and curriculum are not accessible or do not help students think outside the box, then I think we will continue to see an industry where people would disabilities are not adequately represented.

Comment #4:

Thank you so much for your comments, Nadia. We are excited that our next upcoming dialogue will be about how to encourage more people w/ disabilities to go into STEM careers. I hope you'll be interested in joining that talk as well. Looking forward to hearing more of your ideas and solutions.

Comment #5:

People with disabilities can figure out what assistive technology they would need. Right now some work programs allow people with Asperger's to create software apps. Since autism is boon to coding. If person has trouble seeing a pdf format or some of the graphics some of the assistive tech can be created with Asperger's. Probably a person who is in tech and is disabled can see the need for assistive technology and develop a little faster those who are not.

Like or not, not all communities will be able to support this. I am going to school and I am disabled but it is regular school that trains IT. It can be done in regular schools that train people in trade without creating something new. In my case it is not the school work that is the main problem it is getting to and from there.

The other problem is not a disability one is not all communities are not invested technology and infrastructure for the community. I am tech field there no near the level of investment here that will make the community I live in competitive for that region. I am not technology firm but I do understand why they won't invest in El Paso, TX. These problems are general population and not disability.

I thinking that thinking disability problems are mutually exclusive is an incorrect approach. If a general population is having a similar problem it will make it disability problem. Seeing a problem and applying it to other groups may help us create policies. Take readers for computers if the elderly did not have the same problems with font then assistive technology for that would

not come about. If disabled vets are not getting the mental health service they need then most likely disabled community is not getting it either.

The software is already there and the computers and routers is not the problem. Most people who tech savvy will go to YouTube to train. It is free. It is lack of knowledge where to go and what videos you need to watch is the problem. I go to YouTube and watch Professor Messar.

You can even learn hot script in JAVA, C++, and Oracle on YouTube. I think problem is perception people with disabilities do not know how to use technology. This is a fallacy of perceptions. With Autism and Asperger's they know more about computers and probably tell how to hack into a system or network. It not about training is getting them jobs and certifications not to. Some certainly know how to write computer software and codes. Most people with Asperger's can code because the self-taught.

The added value is that the people with disabilities will become productive citizens and may create tech that is assistive. Plus they can earn a living and be an asset to society.

Right now it is proven by various studies that this put people what they are good at. The problem is with education it is basically teaches in one format this may or may not be right way to teach with disabilities. Not all of us are visual learners, audio, and kinesthetics. So there is a need to develop teaching methods that work with a person.

The problem is not all of us use assistive technology nor do we need it. What is needed to have the basic level of computers to all with disabilities. Computers now have features that allow for disabilities in control panel call the Ease of Access. This allows reader to read the text on the page by brushing a mouse over it. Most people are not aware of this program. I use close captioning for my lectures by Professor Messar on YouTube and TestOut. I am pretty sure the accessing control panel for the computer is a problem especially in Windows 8 as an Operating System. I have problems with it and takes extreme fine motor control. I would never recommend for people who mobility problems. It does not lend itself well to disability community because relies on the user to use a tablet or a touchscreen and not using a mouse or keyboard.

The social media industry has serious problems of viruses and hackers. I am going on the limb here my problem some social media site I go to. Is that Facebook is least safe for person with disability. There are things you should do and things you shouldn't do on these sites. Facebook sells meta data. It is why get all those annoying ads on the site. Secondly people are generally are unaware the stuff you post of Facebook is no longer private. Employers will use it against you. LinkedIn I like better because some of the information for site does apply to what I am interested in.

Comment #6:

Hi Whitney, do you have any suggestions on how we can combat those stereotypes and assumptions about people w/ disabilities not knowing how to use technology? Thank you for your feedback and comments. We are excited that our next upcoming dialogue will be about how to encourage more people w/ disabilities to go into STEM careers. I hope you'll be interested in joining that talk as well.

Comment #7:

People with disabilities will have problems with STEM because of the University system. Not all people can do the traditional route of training. It is cost prohibitive. Communities need to have strong trade schools where the certifications mean as much as bachelors.

As for stereo-types this is severe problem in the sense the social workers who helped people with disabilities are unaware themselves. Right the argument of shelter work programs is a major problem because people with Asperger's can benefit from the environment. I would not endorse it either. You're asking person with disability to work for a dollar an hour while same field they can make 20 an hour. The social workers or advocates are part of problem of stereo types. The belief of emotional quotient ties into intelligence is also there. With High Functioning Autism this is not the case. The fact the people who are advocating feel that disabled person should not make more money for non-disabled is also a problem. This does not touch industry of private sector. I told the Disability Scoop advocates that some of Hackers are on the Spectrum. This assertion is met with disbelief. It is like they said how person can barely relate to people can code a virus or create a hack into network system.

I met another person who ran into similar problem he is a robotics engineer but the State of New Hampshire wants him make Christmas Ornaments. His own advocate referred him to that job.

Comment #8:

Hi Whitney, thank you for sharing your thoughts. It does seem like at least with software engineers, most people are learning through boot camps and going away from the traditional 4-year college programs. Other than trade schools, do you have any other suggestions on training in STEM for people with disabilities?

And we'll be sure to keep you in touch for our third dialogue that will be specifically on STEM! Hope you'll join us!

Comment #9:

The four year program is cost prohibitive and it is the Certs that the companies are looking at not the Bachelors. It is not really worth the price of the degree if they do not give the certs. Investing in the computer training schools that exist currently will be good start. Like Computer

Schools in the cities that train people for tech careers. Expand Stems to trade schools like  
Colleges that specialize in tech careers will help.

**Top Idea #4: Web accessibility is the new usability**

6 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 6 Net Votes

This is an excerpt of a recent article featuring an interview w/ web accessibility evangelist Lucy Greco and Ted Gies of Elsevier publishing. "Enhancing accessibility is just good usability...Most of the things that make your site accessible are quick and easy additions that don't require a lot of programming, and you get a lot of bang for your buck — a big ROI."

<http://www.elsevier.com/connect/why-web-accessibility-is-the-new-usability>

Thoughts? Easier said than done?

**Top Idea #5: Universal Guidelines for all the States**

4 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 4 Net Votes

My main problem is not all states have the same standards for access to technologies and services. This affects getting to and from places such as work and school. If you want doctors appointments. In Autism there are discussions of expanding Medicaid role in services provided. EXCEPT in some states like Texas they decided not to expand Medicaid in direct protest to Obama Affordable Care Act. Which makes the waiting obscenely long as the results.

1. All states must have the same basic level of services. I do not trust the states to do this because they yet to do this.
2. If the state cannot provide the service that the person they must pay for the relocation fees. To place that has program set up for that service. Also pay incremental fines until they have service to support the population that needs it.
3. States will remove if they exceed the criteria for the services of that population needs.
4. Metro areas must have mass transit. This will take the burden off of small buses that will strain the Medicaid budget. It gives greater freedom to the citizenry.
5. Guidelines must be passed for what is considered a hostile work environment where if the person being ostracized at work certain phrases must be posted in company bulletin board. The phrases will be treated as form discrimination and will be considered firing offenses.

Number 5 is a security issue. Most people ASD on high end can write software and hack into network systems. So insulting them is not a smart move.

I observe ASD with High functioning side are talking about software patches for the Assitive Technology. Also the possibility of creating the technology software they can do that too.

What is stopping from committing cybercrime if you marginalize people who are disabled. Nothing. They are not getting ahead in life and have no loyalty to the system. It is security and people with ASD are more likely to be pick on by their co-workers.

ASD are known not to get along with HR. In fact some the great hacks started at that Department for reasons because IT are not fond of them either. I know few ASD Information Technology people who have similar complaints.

I rather fix the problems in Assistive Technology than actually need it. The problem is Disability Advocates are unsure what to do with High Functioning. So they find us intimidating and get irritated we know more about something than don't. Another problem is the equating emotional quotient which low in ASD as being stupid. This assumption I found both the advocate and general population

Comment #1:

Hi Whitney--what do you think employers and co-workers need to do better when it comes to working with employees who have disabilities such as ASD (autism spectrum disorder)? What sorts of policies, practices and attitudes are necessary to help employees w/ disabilities feel less marginalized?

Comment #2:

Most of I run into have said to me.

"You shouldn't be so good at your job. It makes me look bad."

"You are working to fast and the boss may think I should work faster. "

"Disabled employee should not make as much as non-disabled."

"Why don't stay on Government assistance after all you are taking food out my children's mouth."

We can degrees that are required to work in that field. What is a point of getting the degrees if no one is going hire us.

HR is about social cues and eye contact. This intuitive instinct it is something we do not have. So HR is hiring the social people not the skilled.

If we outperform non-disabled they do resent us for being fast. They feel that person who disabled will get more pay for being productive.

Part of the problem is the EEOC has no teeth.

Comment #2:

Supports for cognitive and social deficits should be central to usability design. The HR function shouldn't be distorted by obvious gaps in support for employees. Designers should look at failure points that contribute to dysfunction.

**Top 5 Ideas Submitted for the Topic "Planning & Design":**

**Top Idea #1: Human oversight for video closed-captioning**

11 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 11 Net Votes

I recently attempted to follow an online video via automatically generated "Closed Captioning." It was utter gibberish.

Auto-caption is so vastly a joke that "YouTube auto caption fail" is a drop-down search suggestion.

I recommend that any site (like YouTube) that imposes "auto-captioning" make it easy for content producers to edit/correct the transcript. The site should alert the content producer to the importance of taking this step, and provide extensive how-to documentation.

People who rely on assistive technology should somehow be informed, whether "Closed Captioning" was produced with human oversight or was automatically generated.

Comment #1:

Thank you so much for your recommendation, Cynthia. I personally prefer to upload my own transcript for my YouTube videos rather than relying on auto caption but not everyone wants to transcribe text! Do you have any other solutions or ideas you'd like to share?

Comment #2:

There are ways to do much of what you are asking for. I export out the file that gets auto-generated. That gives me some edit times usually that are pretty good. Then it's like going back and edit something I wrote in the first place. A touch of dyslexia ya know. It would be nice to have everything transfer from speech to text correctly, and with the right person's voice and a silent room it can be really accurate. Some of the videos that I have had to CC are from people that may have a speech impediment. I would go through those anyway because I want to make sure that what they really said is what is in the captioning. Many times there is room noise also. That will kill any text to speech software.

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Comment #3:

Thank you so much for your comments, Craig! I hope you'll continue to share any ideas or solutions you might have regarding social media accessibility!

Comment #4:

YouTube does a great job of getting the captioning started. Yes there are many errors, but the time it takes to correct the errors are minimal in comparison to having to create the captioning file from scratch. What was once 5 - 10 minutes for a professional captioner to caption one minute of video is reduced to about 2 - 3 minutes for the novice. YouTube has provided a wonderful service. As Craig indicated it is quite simple to export what YouTube creates and edit and upload. There is no reason why any video on YouTube should not be captioned

Comment #5:

It is also the user that does some of captioning. I mean Professor Messar does his because YouTube is not the only site that he is on.

**Top Idea #2: Clearly-labeled menu functions**

10 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 10 Net Votes

Social media and web-based email interfaces should use clearly-labeled menu functions, instead of cryptic pictorial icons. I shouldn't have to guess which function is represented by a gear wheel, wrench or other image.

**Top Idea #3: rating accessibility by collaborating through hackathons**

4 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 0 Net Votes

A colleague who codes suggested to me that hackathons can be a useful method for gathering insight and creating means for building accessibility into new technology. Do any of you have thoughts about use of this kind of tool with regard to integration of accessibility into evolving technology?

Comment #1:

The people who go to the hackathons aren't talking to the people who provide the services. They should hold their hackathons at the Department of Public Health, or Social Services with providers and customers of special services.

Comment #2:

Thank you eddenbeim. Perhaps it's the state and counties who should host hackathons as well. What are your thoughts on that?

Comment #3:

Hackathons are a sure way to generate new perspectives on ideas, innovation on projects, etc. It would be a great idea to host an open source hackathon specifically on accessibility enhancements and development.

**Top Idea #4: Individualized accessibility vs universal design?**

3 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 3 Net Votes

Many people, both disabled and non-disabled, have specific needs and requirements when it comes to accessing the Internet. Some apps are created to serve very specific purposes for example. Rather than focusing on a 'universal design' ideal, is the idea of individual customizable accessibility more beneficial for users w/ disabilities?

Comment #1:

I think it's a combination of both things. Apps and software should be designed so that the most people can access it without too much difficulty or customization. However, for those who need additional customization, there should be the option/opportunity to do so. For example, if you're designing a building the hallways/entries should be easy to access as possible. This might include levered door handles, keypads instead of key locks, motion censored lights, etc. for those employees who may not be able to access the keypad or door handle, perhaps automatic doors would be best. Just an example. I think it depends on the intended use of the app or software. In general I would say that the user should have the "cleanest" experience possible, without having to navigate multiple layers to access features or add multiple components to make a device or software accessible to them.

Comment #2:

Hi Nadia, thank you very much for your response. It definitely shouldn't be an 'either/or' situation. Do you have any other suggestions on how the user experience can be as 'clean' and effortless as possible, especially for users w/ disabilities?

Comment #3:

When it all shakes out on the implementation end, you often see a one-size-fits-all modification. The problem is employers and other entities that use social media try to use a single accessibility feature to justify offering it to the entire audience of persons with that particular disability.

**Top Idea #5: Thoughts on top ideas from first dialogue?**

2 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 2 Net Votes

Has anyone taken a look at the top 5 ideas generated by participants from our first dialogue by users w/ disabilities?

<http://socialmediatech.epolicyworks.org/a/pages/results>

Are they useful or too basic and obvious to people in the social media industry? Sound off and let us know!

Comment #1:

The top topics are basic but that is because many websites are still not accessible. Accessibility becomes problematic when a site needs to be retrofitted. The topics ideas are not new - the community has been asking for access for years.

All they want is access to the same information everyone else gets access too. So are the topics simplistic? Maybe but many sites still do not includes alternative text, color options and choices for the user to change contrasts or allow more time to complete a task.

Training is still needed and part of training is understanding that accessibility is good design and helps people with disabilities but many others users including mobile users and seniors.

The community keeps asking for the same things because accessibility when blended into the process is not difficult. However when the entire site, PDF's, videos and tables are all inaccessible it seems like an overwhelming task to make them accessible. However when built into the processes it can be managed.

I advise clients to build accessibility into their P&P, style, author guides, site templates, testing, QC and QA programs. If we do not build accessibility into the website design (don't forget help, PDF's, documents, videos and audio) than it becomes difficult to manage. Making a website, social media or eLearning accessible is possible but it must be part of the process and design life cycle.

Build accessibility into your processes just like privacy and security. This is about the good ole digital divide and access to information. No one should be left out of the information age.

Comment #2:

Hi Debra, Thank you so much for your comments. It makes more sense when accessibility is 'baked in' versus retrofitted in hindsight. I hope you continue to offer some solutions and ideas in our dialogue.

Comment #3:

Thanks for the kind words Alice - I am honored to be part of the dialogue. I have been in this industry for many years and am happy to participate. I believe it should improve the design process instead of dumb it down or take away from innovation. It is possible to create fully

accessible, innovative websites and other ICT including mobile and social media. It just has to be blended into the development life cycle. Thanks for leading this valuable dialog.

Comment #4:

Hi Debra, please share your knowledge and expertise with us--we are hoping more people who work in the industry will participate as well. Thanks again!

Comment #5:

Accessibility design shouldn't be basic, simple has implied biases, too. Just as a counter example from car design: just because cars don't have a place for a purse, doesn't mean an app for transportation shouldn't have a place for a special need, like a wheelchair or service dog.

Comment #6:

Thank you for your comment, Eddenebeim. Please feel free to contribute any other ideas, solutions or comments you have about universal design & accessibility.

Comment #7:

Some of the suggestions could benefit veterans as well. I would believe implementing the suggestion to all makes more feasible to start it. It is not like few who can benefit is good strategy. We tend to overlook the AARP and Disabled Veterans who face some same accessibility as we do.

Comment #8:

Thank you Whitney for your comments. It's true, people with disabilities include many different populations including veterans and older adults. Looking forward to hearing more of your ideas and suggestions!

Comment #9:

as a user with a disability who encounters difficult pages from both an accessibility and usability standpoint, I think it's fair to say that these basic ideas appear to be more complex than they need be. doing usability testing and education to clarify accessibility is essential to the process.

Comment #10:

Thank you for your comment, mcmcadam. Do you care to share some of your experiences accessing social media sites or other websites? We'd love to hear any other solutions or suggestions you may have.

Comment #11:

What is being done here is fantastic; thank you so much for what you're doing here. Greatly appreciated.

Most of my accessibility work is done via ordinary websites, rather than social media, so I am a little behind the curve on technical implementations for social media. That said, there's a couple of points to bring forward.

First, I am the daughter of a parent who uses social media almost exclusively to stay in touch with the world. This parent has several disabilities brought on by old age and poor health, and I find that many of her frustrations have to do with the simplest of things---clearly labeling when something is sponsored, versus something from one of her friends. In her confusion, she will often click on these advertisements, thinking it is one of her friends or family trying to reach her, and from there is sucked into a vortex of nonsense advertising. I see the word "sponsored link" in faint gray letters when I'm looking on Facebook, but these letters are easily missed by someone with poor vision (read: anyone who is old, as well as anyone who is sick).

My second observation is very long term, very long range, and I'm not even sure it's feasible within the "guidelines" here, but it deals with the change in society. Some people are using social media as a primary means of communications for emergencies. I'm talking 911-type calls. I would love it if, we could somehow institutionally embrace a system where "official" notices from "official" sources could be "bumped up" to the first thing to be seen when one logs on, and/or have some sort of strong, visual indicator that something is different here. Perhaps a change in background/foreground, for, say example, from the usual dark text on a light background switched to light text on a dark background (and vice-versa for those who have chosen the "dark" theme for the social plugins, as I have).

I actually find that Facebook and Twitter are serious about accessibility. My biggest problem for me is integrating them into my web pages so that they may be seen in a webpage (as they are in iframes, the content is often "invisible" to screen readers--but this is not an issue of the social media itself--it's my own ability, or lack thereof, to implement the social plugins in some manner that is not invisible to screen readers.)

Thank you again so much for what you are doing here. Greatly appreciated.

Comment #12:

Hi Sharon, thank you so much for participating! Do you think 'official' messages and posts should be pinned at the top of a person's newsfeed or page? Is that one possible solution? Do you have any other ideas of making those types of messages more prominent? Please let us know if you have other ideas to help people with disabilities distinguish more easily between sponsored links and other posts. Feel free to post some new ideas in this dialogue!

Comment #13:

Yes, that is exactly what I am saying....you said it better than me. "Pin" official and/or emergency notices to the top. Those with infirmities of any kind have difficulty following messages, and important ones get lost in the stream. Not only "pin" them, but make them distinctive somehow.

The technology for "pinning" certain feeds already exists, as does the technology for changing the look and feel of the feed. Making emergency communications prominent, and easy to find, is critical to their effectiveness, I think.

Of course, that requires coordination with government bodies to enable this to happen. The technology already exists. It's just that there is no "official" legislation to make it happen---I bet because lawmakers may not understand that the technology already exists to do so.

Thank you again, very much, for what you are doing here, and your consideration of my comments. Social media is just too critical a technology to be left unfocused, when it can do so much for the public good.

One other point I forgot to make about the importance of standing up social media as a "formal" way to broadcast emergencies, is that at least in the case of Facebook, language translations are available right in the feed. So, the ability to broadcast in a given language and then have the user be able to translate the feed right then and there would mean that more people could be reached. Internationalization is an amazing feature in Facebook, and the ability to broadcast in different languages is critical for true universal reach. Thanks again, Alice, for what you're doing here.

## **Top Idea Submitted for Topic “Developing & Testing”:**

### **Top Idea #1: Web accessibility is the new usability**

6 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 6 Net Votes

This is an excerpt of a recent article featuring an interview w/ web accessibility evangelist Lucy Greco and Ted Gies of Elsevier publishing. "Enhancing accessibility is just good usability...Most of the things that make your site accessible are quick and easy additions that don't require a lot of programming, and you get a lot of bang for your buck — a big ROI."

<http://www.elsevier.com/connect/why-web-accessibility-is-the-new-usability>

Thoughts? Easier said than done?

## **Top Idea Submitted for the Topic “Deployment”:**

### **Top Idea #1: Universal Guidelines for all the States**

4 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 4 Net Votes

My main problem is not all states have the same standards for access to technologies and services. This affects getting to and from places such as work and school. If you want doctors appointments. In Autism there are discussions of expanding Medicaid role in services provided. EXCEPT in some states like Texas they decided not to expand Medicaid in direct protest to Obama Affordable Care Act. Which makes the waiting obscenely long as the results.

1. All states must have the same basic level of services. I do not trust the states to do this because they yet to do this.
2. If the state cannot provide the service that the person they must pay for the relocation fees. To place that has program set up for that service. Also pay incremental fines until they have service to support the population that needs it.
3. States will remove if they exceed the criteria for the services of that population needs.
4. Metro areas must have mass transit. This will take the burden off of small buses that will strain the Medicaid budget. It gives greater freedom to the citizenry.
5. Guidelines must be passed for what is considered a hostile work environment where if the person being ostracized at work certain phrases must be posted in company bulletin board. The phrases will be treated as form discrimination and will be considered firing offenses.

Number 5 is a security issue. Most people ASD on high end can write software and hack into network systems. So insulting them is not a smart move.

I observe ASD with High functioning side are talking about software patches for the Assistive Technology. Also the possibility of creating the technology software they can do that too.

What is stopping from committing cybercrime if you marginalize people who are disabled. Nothing. They are not getting ahead in life and have no loyalty to the system. It is security and people with ASD are more likely to be pick on by their co-workers.

ASD are known not to get along with HR. In fact some the great hacks started at that Department for reasons because IT are not fond of them either. I know few ASD Information Technology people who have similar complaints.

I rather fix the problems in Assistive Technology than actually need it. The problem is Disability Advocates are unsure what to do with High Functioning. So they find us intimidating and get irritated we know more about something than don't. Another problem is the equating emotional quotient which low in ASD as being stupid. This assumption I found both the advocate and general population

Comment #1:

Hi Whitney--what do you think employers and co-workers need to do better when it comes to working with employees who have disabilities such as ASD (autism spectrum disorder)? What sorts of policies, practices and attitudes are necessary to help employees w/ disabilities feel less marginalized?

Comment #2:

Most of I run into have said to me.

"You shouldn't be so good at your job. It makes me look bad."

"You are working to fast and the boss may think I should work faster. "

"Disabled employee should not make as much as non-disabled."

"Why don't stay on Government assistance after all you are taking food out my children's mouth."

We can degrees that are required to work in that field. What is a point of getting the degrees if no one is going hire us.

HR is about social cues and eye contact. This intuitive instinct it is something we do not have. So HR is hiring the social people not the skilled.

If we outperform non-disabled they do resent us for being fast. They feel that person who disabled will get more pay for being productive.

Part of the problem is the EEOC has no teeth.

### Comment #2:

Supports for cognitive and social deficits should be central to usability design. The HR function shouldn't be distorted by obvious gaps in support for employees. Designers should look at failure points that contribute to dysfunction.

### **Top Idea #2: Social Media**

2 Up Votes | 1 Down Votes | 1 Net Votes

Not all websites in Social Media are created equal. I think basic guidelines should be posted in all sites.

1. Facebook is one my least favorite sites because it is least secure. Facebook has nasty tendency of selling data. See those annoying ads on the side they are specifically targeting you based upon past buying habits. A. Facebook all that private information on this site is public and shared not by the friend list. Anyone who write down a tag and view it. C. Nothing is private and putting addresses and locations is bad.

B. LinkedIn is good there are adds and topics are of interesting. It is slightly more secure than Facebook. It is more professional.

These are examples that social media sites are needed guidelines for what they can be used for.

Most employers are looking at these accounts to see what kind of person you are. I am against this because it is invasion of privacy. If a site completely social it is none employer's business. Since there is no Laws against it. It is up to user to be aware what the company is doing.

I would like it for social media website state that all content on the servers is subject to sale to advertisers.

### Comment #1:

It does if they don't know how to use it effectively. People are vulnerable on social media and what they post is visible for anyone to see. Anyone with a router and computer can access it. Some sites are more friendly in the way present text and how to viewing.

People with disabilities are vulnerable to attacks and social media depending the site have very few protections.

Social media also can be a vehicle for cyber bullying and some sites are more prone to it than others.

It what you post on a social media can be risky. People been known to post pictures and using google maps you can figure out where they live and rob it.

Training how to use a social media site is smart thing. To maintain decorum privacy is the person responsibility.

## **Top Idea Submitted for the Topic "Maintenance & Support":**

### **Top Idea #1: Maintenance**

7 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 7 Net Votes

If you are going provide this type of service why not employ some the people with disabilities to run a site. If you need an IT to run hire people with Asperger Syndrome to maintain it. To show the labor force that the Department of Labor is willing to run a site and have IT personal who are disabled for the disabled. Start training people in tech fields since it is growing.

#### Comment #1:

It really depends on the individual. Running a website and IT you train them as the same as anyone else. Yes they may need accommodations for the certs. Hiring will be more difficult because IT are not the greatest people to do hiring process. If you can train people to code who have autism why run a social media site. It is really no difference only thing you have place to hire. If you HR is aware of IT sometimes lack of social skills. Besides there is a void of IT in the country. You people who that detail orient can fix a computer but not relate to people. What you need to is train them. I think it is time for community see what the "can do" not look at the disability. Besides with 7 % mandate it can be done.

#### Comment #2:

Thanks, Whitney. You don't need to convince me, but what do you think is the 'added value' of having a person w/ a disability work in the tech/social media industry? Do you think it will improve accessibility?

#### Comment #3:

I think helping people with disabilities understand the value that they can add to the field are important. In terms of education and curriculum, making sure that schools and universities are aware of assistive technology available for students is a first step to ensuring that students can you pursue opportunities in the tech industry. If computer software and curriculum are not accessible or do not help students think outside the box, then I think we will continue to see an industry where people would disabilities are not adequately represented.

#### Comment #4:

Thank you so much for your comments, Nadia. We are excited that our next upcoming dialogue will be about how to encourage more people w/ disabilities to go into STEM careers. I hope you'll be interested in joining that talk as well. Looking forward to hearing more of your ideas and solutions.

Comment #5:

People with disabilities can figure out what assistive technology they would need. Right now some work programs allow people with Asperger's to create software apps. Since autism is boon to coding. If person has trouble seeing a pdf format or some of the graphics some of the assistive tech can be created with Asperger's. Probably a person who is in tech and is disabled can see the need for assistive technology and develop a little faster those who are not.

Like or not, not all communities will be able to support this. I am going to school and I am disabled but it is regular school that trains IT. It can be done in regular schools that train people in trade without creating something new. In my case it is not the school work that is the main problem it is getting to and from there.

The other problem is not a disability one is not all communities are not invested technology and infrastructure for the community. I am tech field there no near the level of investment here that will make the community I live in competitive for that region. I am not technology firm but I do understand why they won't invest in El Paso, TX. These problems are general population and not disability.

I thinking that thinking disability problems are mutually exclusive is an incorrect approach. If a general population is having a similar problem it will make it disability problem. Seeing a problem and applying it to other groups may help us create policies. Take readers for computers if the elderly did not have the same problems with font then assistive technology for that would not come about. If disabled vets are not getting the mental health service they need then most likely disabled community is not getting it either.

The software is already there and the computers and routers is not the problem. Most people who tech savvy will go to YouTube to train. It is free. It is lack of knowledge where to go and what videos you need to watch is the problem. I go to YouTube and watch Professor Messar.

You can even learn hot script in JAVA, C++, and Oracle on YouTube. I think problem is perception people with disabilities do not know how to use technology. This is a fallacy of perceptions. With Autism and Asperger's they know more about computers and probably tell how to hack into a system or network. It not about training is getting them jobs and certifications not to. Some certainly know how to write computer software and codes. Most people with Asperger's can code because the self-taught.

The added value is that the people with disabilities will become productive citizens and may create tech that is assistive. Plus they can earn a living and be an asset to society.

Right now it is proven by various studies that this put people what they are good at. The problem is with education it is basically teaches in one format this may or may not be right way to teach with disabilities. Not all of us are visual learners, audio, and kinesthetics. So there is a need to develop teaching methods that work with a person.

The problem is not all of us use assistive technology nor do we need it. What is needed to have the basic level of computers to all with disabilities. Computers now have features that allow for disabilities in control panel call the Ease of Access. This allow reader to read the text on the page by brushing a mouse over it. Most people are not aware of this program. I use close captioning for my lectures by Professor Messar on YouTube and TestOut. I am pretty sure the accessing control panel for the computer is a problem especially in Windows 8 as an Operating System. I have problems with it and takes extreme fine motor control. I would never recommend for people who mobility problems. It does not lend itself well to disability community because relies on the user to use a tablet or a touchscreen and not using a mouse or keyboard.

The social media industry has serious problems of viruses and hackers. I am going on the limb here my problem some social media site I go to. Is that Facebook is least safe for person with disability. There are things you should do and things you shouldn't do on these sites. Facebook sells meta data. It is why get all those annoying ads on the site. Secondly people are generally are unaware the stuff you post of Facebook is no longer private. Employers will use it against you. LinkedIn I like better because some of the information for site does apply to what I am interested in.

Comment #6:

Hi Whitney, do you have any suggestions on how we can combat those stereotypes and assumptions about people w/ disabilities not knowing how to use technology? Thank you for your feedback and comments. We are excited that our next upcoming dialogue will be about how to encourage more people w/ disabilities to go into STEM careers. I hope you'll be interested in joining that talk as well.

Comment #7:

People with disabilities will have problems with STEM because of the University system. Not all people can do the traditional route of training. It is cost prohibitive. Communities need to have strong trade schools where the certifications mean as much as bachelors.

As for stereo-types this is severe problem in the sense the social workers who helped people with disabilities are unaware themselves. Right the argument of shelter work programs is a major problem because people with Asperger's can benefit from the environment. I would not endorse it either. Your asking person with disability to work for a dollar an hour while same field they can make 20 an hour. The social workers or advocates are part of problem of stereo types. The belief of emotional quotient ties into intelligence is also there. With High Functioning Autism this is not the case. The fact the people who are advocating feel that disabled person should not make more money for non-disabled is also a problem. This does not touch industry of private sector. I told the Disability Scoop advocates that some of Hackers are on the Spectrum. This assertion is met with disbelief. It is like they said how person can barely relate to people can code a virus or create a hack into network system.

I met another person who ran into similar problem he is a robotics engineer but the State of New Hampshire wants him make Christmas Ornaments. His own advocate referred him to that job.

Comment #8:

Hi Whitney, thank you for sharing your thoughts. It does seem like at least with software engineers, most people are learning through boot camps and going away from the traditional 4-year college programs. Other than trade schools, do you have any other suggestions on training in STEM for people with disabilities?

And we'll be sure to keep you in touch for our third dialogue that will be specifically on STEM! Hope you'll join us!

Comment #9:

The four year program is cost prohibitive and it is the Certs that the companies are looking at not the Bachelors. It is not really worth the price of the degree if they do not give the certs. Investing in the computer training schools that exist currently will be good start. Like Computer Schools in the cities that train people for tech careers. Expand Stems to trade schools like Colleges that specialize in tech careers will help.

**Top Idea Submitted for the Topic "Retrofitting":**

**Top Idea #1: Stop moving our furniture**

3 Up Votes | 1 Down Votes | 2 Net Votes

Social media and email interfaces should maintain consistent locations for user tools and features whenever sites are "improved" or upgraded.

Comment #1:

Hi Cynthia, do you mind expanding on why this is so important and how changing the location of tools and features can create barriers for users w/ disabilities? What do you say to developers who want to re-vamp their website and make it more accessible by re-arranging the 'furniture'?

Comment #2:

It depends on the disability. For cognitive disabilities it is usually just a matter of time to relearn the interfaces. With readers it is usually a problem with something getting missed as far as alt text on a photo. I'm even guilty of that myself. I try to prioritize photos that I do add alt text, or captioning to also. The main thing is if you do make changes try to have "help" features also. But also try to make navigation as intuitive as possible. Make buttons the change color or intensity, have rollover that show that something can be clicked on. Change can be good it takes some

people time to adjust to the change. I know I try to warn people of changes before they happen. I've gotten good response from some for doing so. Just a warning that says "prepare for changes to Facebook soon" works. Of course you have to dig around to find that information of when they are going to be making changes. Some companies pick certain times of the year to roll out the new stuff, and watch the techy blogs.

Comment #3:

Hi Craig, that's a great suggestion to give people some advance notice of changes to the organization of a page. Any other ideas on how to help people with disabilities adjust to new pages?

Comment #4:

Craig is correct. It takes me very little time relearn the interfaces. It is not the same people who have problem with text. There is no "off switch" for a disability.

Even changing the desk top text is not that easy for an average user. You would have to go to command prompt and write in the script to change it.

Plus the "Ease of Access" is in the control panel is not readily to get to you. It means I used to read something as Login page but person has to know where the features are.

## **Conclusion**

Through the *“Advancing Accessibility and Inclusion in Social Media - The Tech Perspective”* online dialogue, NCD and ODEP successfully leveraged leading-edge crowdsourcing tools to engage the tech community and citizens and gather ideas to help improve the state of accessibility of social media tools. Through idea submission, commenting and voting, this community driven event allowed representatives of the tech industry to contribute to the conversation and also served as an outreach and awareness tool around the issues of accessibility and usability. This modernized approach to gathering stakeholder feedback will help NCD and ODEP share creative ways social media companies can integrate some of the ideas posted to the first dialogue into the design and development of social media online tools and apps.

This metrics report simply summarizes the online dialogue’s results; the input and responses of the participants are now being analyzed by the NCD-ODEP Team. In summary, this dialogue encouraged creative thinking and will be used to help NCD and ODEP further collaborate with the tech industry in seeking solutions and reforms to improve the accessibility of social media products and services.