

SIGCHI Meet the Candidates VP for Accessibility
April 15, 2024

>> Helena: Okay, everyone. Well, thank you for attending the SIGCHI2024 candidates first meet the open forum. This open forum is focused on V.P. accessibility position, for which we have two candidates. I'm going to let them introduce themselves. Please introduce your name, your affiliation if you like, country that you're from since we are a global organization. Area of HCI if you don't mind, and anything else that you choose to let us know about your thoughts for -- introductory thoughts about SIGCHI and the role that you are aiming for. If you don't mind, we'll start with Fernando Loizides.

>> Fernando Loizides: Sure.

So it's great to be here. Thank you for the invite and it's great to meet everybody here as well. So my name is Fernando Loizides. My affiliation is Cardiff University. I currently live and work in the U.K. My area of interests is obviously share accessibility. I tend to do research towards emerging technologies with accessibility, but in terms of the -- my other role. So I'm not your typical academic where I work a lot, I came from industry, so -- and I'm very passionate about continuing that sort of very applied work on that. So half of the other thing that I do is I work with organizations to create products, and that's in the last decade has shifted well towards accessibility products, especially in countries where the need is great. So I work a lot with places like India to create accessible products, especially for places where we might consider it easy to get ahold of things, whereas in other places it's really not -- very small example of what I mean by that is everybody has a hearing test when they have a baby here in the U.K. and I'm guessing in a lot of countries there within 24 hours. India there is 70,000 births happening every day and I'm sure you know this but in 2023 they've

overtaken China as the large population. And unfortunately there's not enough people to test for hearing there in the U.S. and U.K. it's just done, we don't think about it, but in India they don't. And they don't have enough access to medical personnel to do the test so the simple answer is just don't do it. This leads to speech problems later. A not a lot of people are caught. We're creating instruments now to give the parents an app on their phone to be able to test and give an indication of can you go and have your hearing tested? So that's the kind of stuff I'm really interested in applying from the side. I have a technology background, quite technical. I'm quite a geek by nature. I love technology and it helps. I'm really into tech for good. So we're building a lot of that to help especially in the medical field and children. So that's just a taster of kind of what I do. Obviously my publications are out there so people can read about these things and I'm very happy to collaborate. I'm going for this role specifically because I think that there is a great need for help and when I had a chat with the outgoing V.P. accessibility, he had a great plan of how this is happening. He's done some great work in enhancing the SIGCHI community with this. So we know there is a need and there has been some questions which I'm guessing we'll get to later on, you know, how do we improve the SIGCHI community and make it on being able to standardize it and make everybody on the same page, raise awareness. So one of the really big reasons why I'm applying for this is I think that I'm doing a lot of work in standardizing roles and making people aware and simple identifying things to help, and I think this could be implemented into the SIGCHI community from the start rather than trying to fix things afterwards. So that motivation was the reason why I wanted to apply. I've had this in 15 conferences I've had this in many places so my main motivation was I think I can really implement that methodology and I can help in that scenario but we'll talk about that more specifically later.

Thank you.

>> Helena: Thank you so much Fernando Loizides Dragan Zhmetovic, can I pass it off to you.

>> Dragan Ahmetovic: Thank you very much. And also thanks to Fernando Loizides.

I am Dragan Zhmetovic. I am an associate professor at university of Milan. I'm, of course, as everyone here, in the field of human computer interaction and more specifically I work in mobile and pervasive computing applied to accessibility and assistive technologies. I have worked for about ten, 15 years on technologies for people with visual impairments, most recently people with mobility impairments as well as learning disabilities.

I had previously been postdoc at the Carnegie Mellon university and at university of Turin and I have been a visiting at university of California Santa Cruz as well as Smith Kettlewell Eye research institute in San Francisco. I have been in various community roles, AC in CHI for a long time, inside the best paper committee, workshop organizer for CHI. I have been in essentially every role at Web for all conference which mostly focused on accessibility, of course. And I also covered many roles at ASSETS. And of course I worked a lot on journal reviewing and did some guest editor positions for Taccess. Some of my research, of course, revolves around accessibility and assistive technologies, also to access scientific documents and visualizations, and for this I have often encountered similar problems that are geared toward conference organizations, so accessibility and things like that, I've worked on this. In that field I have also collaborated with SIGACCESS on accessible PDF production when I was in Turin, including ACM templates to be made accessible in order to make accessible PDFs. As in my community roles as conference organizer, I have often addressed directly topics related to conference accessibility in all the different roles, of course, from participating, to reviewing, to organizing conferences. All those have different accessibility issues that need to be addressed and I very much

appreciated the work of the current VP of accessibility and also the previous VPs. Well, it was not still VP at that time as position but I love the work they did and I think that there is also space in evolving this work in order to include also other conferences, other events in ACM and also outside to have a consistent way for addressing accessibility across conferences. So I think I can apply my expertise in this field as a researcher, as a conference organizer in order to improve and to help to move forward the accessibility inside SIGCHI.

Thank you very much.

>> Helena: Excellent. Thank you so much. And welcome to folks who have just joined us. We're just doing some introductions right now. I'm going to ask just a few general questions and then we're going to go over to some of the Slido questions that we had come in and as well as open it up to anybody who has a question that they want to ask our two candidates.

So one of the first things that I'd like you to reflect on is that a three-year term found long but it also can be short. So within that three-year term, what is one fairly, you know, medium-sized, big problem that you would really want to tackle to support SIGCHI? And if you have any ideas about how to tackle that question, you can share that with us at this time as well.

Fernando Loizides, can we go to you to start?

>> Fernando Loizides: Sure.

I think actually it's a very related question to the one on Slido a lot. So apologies if I'm sort of overlapping these, but three years like you say is relatively long period but it goes quite quickly and, you know, by the time you make plans sometimes comes to an end. So it needs to be something immediate. So one of the things that we talk a lot about is standardization of the needs. So a few years ago I was privileged to be working as an associate professor in cypress and there was no SIGCHI chapter in Cypress. So we built the chapter there. I was fortunate enough to go from -- through the roles there of being secretary.

Then I was sort of like the vice chair and then to chair the SIGCHI action there before I came to the U.K. And one of the things that we noticed there was also the conference that is we were running. They never sort of started off with an accessibility focus. This is now somewhat better in terms of people are considering accessibility a lot more as they're being pushed, but one of the things that I've noticed is that especially when we get applications to run events, to host events, to host conferences, a lot of these applications have maybe a paragraph on accessibility. They mention accessibility, but there's no structure in this is what is required in accessibility and here's how we're going to do it and especially here's the budget that is going to be needed. And it's a shame because people figure it out later on and they get a lot of assistance back then, but then it creates these issues. And things get done in different ways. And I think one of the big changes that realistically we can do within three years is continue the work that Dhruv has done and he's set the stage for it, which is having these standardized guidelines, making them very, very simple, providing all the resources and support for them, and reaching out to people before they do anything to help them so that it's prepared and set the foundation. And once we do that, we'll definitely benefit the committee in the long run. Raising awareness, raising the motivation is standard things that we do in all practices, but one of the things we don't do a lot of is get the feedback from people that really need it. So within the conferences usually we ask for feedback. Within events we ask for feedback but we never directly go to people and say, well, you have a specific need. Tell us what you thought. Did we do okay? Did we not do okay? So we never get that. And even when we do get it, maybe in the form of some feedback if it's anonymous, we never feed forward of what we've actually done. How did we address the committee? How can we make people feel more comfortable? How do we publicize that this is an accessible friendly event and we encourage premium to

let us know that we can help them and specifically we've put in a lot of effort so we can address that. That is something that the community needs a lot more of. And in the SIGCHI, when I was chairing then, we had a very good model and we had a very good sort of benchmark of how to do that with the events there that worked very, very well and I'd like to bring that and implement that in the next three years so that we are able to change the landscape toward a very positive attitude and get a lot of feedback from every single individual that needs it but feed forward to them in what we've done. If we do that and we set a precedent, the rest of the things can build upon that precedent and I believe in simplicity not putting just policy in documents that people need to read through and understand and -- but simplify the work to the point where people are motivated to do that. A lot of people making the decisions are unaware of how to do these things. They're unaware of how to do these things. And when there's resistance, when there's a lot of work to be done, sometimes they'll cut corners. So my plan is to do what -- the same model that I did back at SIGCHI when I was chairing is to simplify the process, make it very, very simple with contact, with support and of course we work really hard to support and do a lot of the work so that so they don't need to do it and get it so smooth that everybody's very happy with doing that. Once that's done once in a conference, anybody organizing another conference will do it again. Anybody organizing an event realizes how easy it is, they'll do it every single time. They'll advocate for it. That will scale it and make the community better.

So that's once of the things that I promise that I can do and, of course, no matter the outcome of the vote, I'm happy to support it any way. So that's something I definitely want to see happen in the next three years.

There are lots of other things, but it is three years and it does go by quickly. There is a lot of work to be done, especially if you set -- if you do the work rather than try to get everybody else to do it, I

think it's great if we have an internal team to do that. So that's what I would strive to do.

Thank you.

>> Helena: Excellent. Thank you.

Dragan Ahmetovic, same question. And I'll repeat it just in case.

So what one problem would you want to tackle in your three-year term and if you have ideas on how to, please share.

>> Dragan Ahmetovic: Thank you very much.

So this is actually quite related to what Fernando has said previously and also to a question that Jennifer has made in Slido. It's what I said previously talking with other people and also what I have added inside my statement. And it's so I think that the accessibility has worked with its limitations, of course, but quite well in many of the SIGCHI and SIGACCESS conferences where there is attention to do this. What I've noticed seeing conferences that are outside of this core of, let's say, natively accessible conference that benefit from resources, from PDF mitigation program, et cetera, is that those that are outside, like for example in cooperation conferences, in addition to, of course, not knowing what's there and so they, of course, need to be, let's say, informed about the processes and implement them from the start, there is also a question of scalability. So how can we for example expand the PDF remediation program in order to make it possible for not only the core conferences but also outside of those and also to in-cooperation conferences and things like that. Both practices may be trying to stimulate the growth of instruments that can be used instead of proprietary approaches. Also by stimulating volunteer work, as currently we do have a pool of volunteers who are invested in PDF remediation for example but this is clearly not applicable to all SIGCHI conferences and even more to conferences that are outside of SIGCHI and in-cooperation and things like that.

So I would like to understand how these processes can be scaled by, of course, working on the tools, on the volunteers, possibly through incentives. This is also something that we talked about during the SIGCHI futures summit. The necessity to motivate and to, let's say, award volunteers for their work. So I think that that will be my initial goal.

Thank you very much.

>> Helena: Thank you. Excellence. And since it was brought up, John, if it's okay I'd like to jump into your question that you put into Slido of how do you ensure envisioning consistent accessibility across all SIGCHI events? And you mention in cooperation events, which I actually don't even remember at this point how many in cooperation conferences we have. I know it's a lot. But I believe we're currently at 26 SIGCHI sponsored conferences, and although a few of those are every other year, that's pretty much a continuous log every single year. Every single month there's a different conference. So just I wanted to piggy back a little bit and lay that context for anybody else who also is listening and is unaware of the current scale of what we're talking about with regards to envisioning and ensuring consistent accessibility.

And Jen, is there anything else you would like to add to the question since you -- since you're here?

>> Jen: Thanks, Helena. No, I think that pretty much sums it up for that one. Maybe just I think the scalability question that you brought into it is exactly the right thing to be considering in that inn could text.

>> Helena: Okay.

>> Jennifer: Yeah. And also just what levers exist to help bring people into, yeah, both positive and then also are there requirements that we need in place in order to improve things across all of them?

>> Helena: Yeah. Great question.

I'm going to switch order if it's okay. I'd like to start with Dragan if it's okay with him?

>> Dragan Ahmetovic: Yes. So in terms of

positive and negative influences on this process, I think that, okay, personally having addressed PDF accessibility and all the shenanigans related to this, I think that the fact that we are still stuck in the user proprietary tools and having to do the formation of people in order to use these proprietary tools with all the effort related to that, I think that is one of the negative aspects currently. For accessibility conferences recently, I have seen some research proposing alternative open tools recently. For example, PAVE2 which I have tried recently and it impressed me in terms of intuitiveness. It's still not there in terms of all the capabilities but it allows to make accessibility a bit faster, it's a bit easier to learn and I think that trying to stimulate these kinds of approaches could help us also to make the entire process of PDF access for example a bit easier and simpler to teach to volunteers but also to the authors. And if the authors manage to do at least a part, at least a portion, then it's quite easier also for the volunteers to do the last part. So I believe that simply dropping a bit the amount of work needed could help a bit.

So this is one of the things.

The positives are that actually most of the researchers who are in the field of accessibility come across this issue. So in one way or another, the expertise of most researchers in the field somehow gets to the point that they understand how to do these things. And they most often teach their Ph.D. students, the other researchers on how to do this simply because they have to send papers that are accessible. And this could actually be leveraged as possible volunteer workforce. For example, if registration discounts are done for people who are volunteers, and that are also students to participate in solving this problem to help that could be a way for example. So this is one of the things I thought of in terms of this.

>> Helena: Building volunteer effort is yeah a really good thing to be thinking about.

Fernando, same question then for you, about envisioning scalability and requirements.

>> Fernando Loizides: Yeah. So the -- obviously being sponsored by the ACM is quite important to people. There's lots of applications for this. So in terms of like you mentioned, Helena there,'s a large amount of conferences that are now under that umbrella, and one of the things is definitely helping each and every one of them, but to make it simple just like Dragan had a really good comment on the scalability of creating the material, and completely agree with that. But one of the things that really helped me was that I remember the first time that I was writing and submitting for Assets where it kind of -- it's very clear. You know, it says, even if you go now, it asks if you do not have an accessible format it is desk rejected. It's very clear. But point is not to punish people for not having accessibility. It's not that excluding people because they're not accessible; it's trying to encourage them to be accessible. And the way to do that is to be able to have a good foundation of how do I do that? And Assets had a really -- I remember working with a the team and working with my students going let's work with Assets to show you and learn what does it mean to be accessible? How do these PDFs become accessible? How does the work? There were videos about it. You had somebody helping you and then e-mailing the other end. These resources are violate. The first time you do it, little bit of a learning curve. Then you always do it and you know thousand do it immediately. So the easiest way to do this is to work from the baseline, from zero to go to people, okay, if you do want to be part of ACM and have that registration as you're being sponsored by the ACM, we don't want to punish you because you're not accessible. It's not the point. The point is to make sure that you are because you're representing us. So having something as strong as what Assets has before anything gets approved for ACM sponsorship I think is important. I think we should have more strict rules about -- and checks for these before anything comes through, but

give them the tools to scale. So before we go and check those 28 conferences, have we given them the opportunity first to adjust? And it does come down to the tools. It comes down to how much effort we put in in the next three years. If we put enough effort to like Dragan said, give proprietary free tools to people, but are those tools easy to use? Will people actually use them? Do they know how to do use them or do we just say go and use these tools and figure it out? So we need resources like very very simplified videos. Have simplified directions. Examples. Somebody to help out on the first instance. Great idea by Dragan, let's have representatives, ambassadors that are willing to help and do this. So you have a contact, you know, how do I do that? A lot of people want to do this. How can we empower students to be accessible by giving them the training and then saying, so, can every conference have a student volunteer that's specifically there for accessibility? Can we have a little training session and a little five-minute session for every conference to go what are your accessibility guidelines? These are very quick wins, but they scale really quickly and they need a lot of work from us. So to raise awareness is not about every single time doing it again and again for every single person; it's making sure that instead of training somebody for three hours and then they do a conference and for get about it, we have something that we've worked for three hours or 300 hours but we'll train them in the next 15 to 20 minutes to be able to understand the landscape and have easy access to once that happens. Once that happens it doesn't matter if we have 28 or 280 conference that is run and it's not just conferences. We keep talking about conferences. But it's not just about the conferences. It's about everything. It's about the events that we do at SIGCHI. It's the events that ACM does. It's the online meetings that we have such as this one. It's everything that SIGCHI does and not just conferences that need these rules. And if we have that foundation, everything will just fit into place.

So the scale questions comes down to the basics, to the benchmark, the foundations. If we can get the foundations right and we simplify them, and Dragan has said that, if we have simplified versions of that, very quick wins and support and a lot of work, of course a lot of work from us now, that will scale without it having an issue later. It will require us to create those tools or to use those tools or to identify them and create a lot of material but it requires very easy access to it and we can pinpoint where it is. We can sponsor things. We can make it easy for things and it won't be easy but the other thing, as I said before is, we need that feedback from the people actually taking part in the conferences. Are we missing something? Are we missing something that they don't have? And that's the hardest thing I think to scale. It's not the basics which we have to put a lot of work in, but are we missing something right now that people are not complaining about because they just don't tell us about it? So I would like to make sure that, you know, to scale that we make sure that we get information from every single person on that event, every single person on that conference to see that we're not missing something.

So that's basically what we have. We have the clear guidelines, clear tools we can make it work. It's a lot of work but we can make it work.

>> Helena: You both brought up something that actually was my second question. So I wanted to highlight this. So I always like to remind folks doing work by yourself doesn't get you very far. (Chuckles). We're always better as a team. And so I want to ask each of you have you thought about who you would want to work with and how would you do that type of work? And each of you have sort of touched on that in various ways but I think it's good for folks to hear how you plan on reaching out and across?

Dragan Ahmetovic, let's go back to you.

>> Dragan Ahmetovic: Thank you, Helena. So, well, of course all of us have preexisting networks of people they work with, people who have done

accessibility work previously and naturally brought together again when working on these topics but we also need to think a bit outside of the box, our own box. So to to understand first of all the needs of the community and I don't mean only the SIGCHI community but also the communities outside, not necessarily people who directly relate to conferences that we have been doing but also to, for example, other conferences, other events, other associations. For example, in the association for the advancement of assistive technology that organizes ICCHP, it's a community that is, let's say, parallel to ours, for example, there are a lot of events more or less industrial, more or less academic that address the same issues and the same problems. So I think that we need to understand not only our needs but also the needs of related communities, both because they sometimes entwine with ours, they participate in all these events as we do, of course, and sometimes that maybe they do something a bit different, a bit better, which we can learn from and which we can and also ther are advantage that we can teach. And I also think that if you learn a process in unrelated area, unrelated conference venue and you can apply it to another one so there is consistency between the tools and the practices, then also we can benefit even if it's not by directly involving only our community.

Of course, there is the accessibility committee inside SIGCHI and most of those peoples have been there for a long time and know what's happening, the best practices, what's in use more than me. So, of course, I will have to listen to people who are already there and who have better experience in directly working in SIGCHI on accessibility. The executive committee is also important because there are related probs that we need to address. Financing, of course, communication of our results, the involvement of volunteers in the executive committee of course there is a lot of role for each of these aspects so we need to have the direct involvement of those people. And I think that there is

one community that maybe is sometimes underrepresented in terms of accessibility. It's the reviewing community. Like often I face conferences that ensure that the end PDF is made accessible, but the process doing the reviewing is not so clear. So sometimes you have reviewers who need an accessible version but that initial version is either not accessible or not properly accessible. So you kind of need to make do with sources, but the authors are not aware that the sources might be used directly for reviewing or they just submit sources they use that are not anonymized so there are some problems there too. So I think there are all of these communities that we need to involve from the start, of course, in order to work well in this position.

Thank you.

>> Helena: I'm going to -- in order to ensure some continuity -- point to Jen's follow-up question. Jen, would you like to voice that yourself? And then we can move on. Oh I think we lost her. All right. I will repeat it.

As a follow-up question: We have some very close by groups that do and know a lot about/with accessibility, Access SIGCHI and SIG Access. What are your thoughts about how to coordinate with those groups specifically?

>> Fernando Loizides: Dragan Ahmetovic, do you want to continue your answer with so you can answer that before I answer as well? Because it's unfair if I just if I have that question too.

>> Dragan Ahmetovic: Thank you.

So, yeah, access SIGCHI is a great source of resources about accessibility and I have, of course I've checked what they do and I know and appreciate the availability of resources made by access SIGCHI and clearly there are more groups need to be involved in the process and possibly to help integrate those guidelines and resources that are still not present inside the pool of resources given by Access SIGCHI. And as for SIG Access as well, I am kind of that is

kind of my origin community and it is still my one of my priority community in which I do research, submit papers, et cetera. And of course I see it on this particular topic as a central point of interaction in order to have a consistent approach to accessibility. Clearly there is vast expertise in SIG Access as that is the topic of research, accessibility is the topic of research in SIG Access. And as I mentioned before I also collaborated when I worked at the university of Turin some time ago about accessible PDF production and the idea was to implement accessibility practices inside the templates. I still do research on this and, of course, I would love to rekindle this relationship and try to move forward this particular part of accessibility as I think it was going quite well. It will be really of course central to the role to involve SIG Access as well.

>> Helena: I should unmute myself (chuckles).

Excellent. Fernando, going back to who would you work with and how would you like to work with them, keeping in mind the follow-up question that Jen had put into the chat there for us?

>> Fernando Loizides: Yeah. I echo a lot of the a lot of what is being said here. I don't think we could run any events without SIGCHI Access or Access SIGCHI within them I think they should be paramount in that -- in every process. So transparency is quite big. I think that anything we do internally shouldn't be we're going to go inside of ourselves and work on something and then present something and happens.

So those are two communities as well as some other community I think should be involved. I'm a big advocate of participatory design. Therefore anybody who's interested in that capacity should be involved throughout the process and work with us to volunteer and obviously the bigger the amount of people that are involved the more feedback that we're able to get which is why I think we need to have a platform which is transparent to as many people as possible. So anything we do at any stage we can get as much feedback as possible, as much sort of criticism as possible which

is very important to processes like this. We're not always going to make it and be good at everything we do. We're going to make a lot of mistakes but I think we should learn from them, we should handle criticism and we should go ahead. One of the things that motivated me in the first place to get accessibility was one of the first organized conferences I had, I got stopped in the corridor by one of the participants that said to me do you know that your leaflets are -- fail color contrast and they're not accessible. I was very young back then and, you know, I could only apologize because it was a company that we'd used and we hadn't done the design but I sat down for two hours and I had the chat with this individual and now we're great friends 15 years later but I learn a lot about them and the reason is because they couldn't read it themselves. That was fantastic. Participatory design is really important to get involved as many people and have transparent and ask for help. We don't know everything. So the more people there, the more holistic it will be and better it will be and more we can improve.

That means members of the community and representing every kind of accessibility should be thought of. Anybody in the team that either Dragan or I will have should be inclusive of as many people and as many different circumstances as possible of the one of the areas I -- parts I work with is part of the interact conference we have. We have IFIP. In that there is TC13 handles the HTI and that group with the working group 13 which has the accessibility part. Within that we take care of and have exactly the same issue there as well and we're handling it. I think that we have lots in common and should bring everything together. There's no point. No competition, at least I don't think there is. There shouldn't be. So we should bring everybody together and go you know what's working for you and what did you fail at? And be transparent about it. Here's what we have and can you give us what we have. The other thing is requirements. Again, what are we not doing? We know what we should

be doing but what are we not doing? We don't know what we don't do right sometimes. So really important to bring us into community to tell us what the mistakes are. When we run a conference what's our policy and after the conference beyond just saying what did you think of this, with as it nice, accessible enough? Can we actually have a much more substantial process of going out and saying what did we do wrong? What can we do better next time rather than all the stuff we send out we like to get the positives. The food was great. PDFs were accessible but what did we not do? What made you feel uncomfortable? What was inaccessible for you? Did you not see in the cameras? Did you not be able to -- if you're in a hybrid state were you not able to interact as much? Did you feel like you were not being included very much and that most people could answer questions?

One of the things we need to include is that participatory design in everything. We've got access, IFIP (International Federation for Information Processing), participants from the events that we would like to have and representative groups that I think and the fact that if we are being transparent with the whole process will make us be able to have a leader in a sense that it isn't just going by with a tunnel vision but is able to be informed by a whole community to make the decisions that's reciprocal to make it better.

>> Helena: Well thank you. Thank you for listening to my questions. Now I'd like to open it up to folks that are here that may want to ask their own questions or perhaps have follow-up questions for our two candidates for VP for accessibility.

And I'm okay with silence, so (chuckles).

[PAUSE]

Neha Kumar has her hand up. Please take the stage.

>> Neha: Thank you and thank you both for sharing your vision. All of the exciting thoughts and I have so much confidence in both of your leadership for the future.

I wanted to just -- A, just reinforce a point that I put in the chat. This is something that has been -- it's a conversation that's been taking place at the SIG governing board level as well. Other conferences, other SIGs other than SIG Access don't think about accessibility at all. So this is something for us to consider as within S SIGCHI what is the leadership that SIGCHI could bring in with ACM? And the other aspect is, you know there, 's been so much leadership in the community around accessibility. There's been so much work done. I feel like they really set the stage for what inclusionary efforts could be trying to achieve and so thinking about that as well, that what we do -- if we cannot do right by accessibility we cannot do right by other equity and inclusion efforts. So thinking about that. It's a heavy crown to wear, right? And sometimes -- but also the flip side of that is that we have to think about the finiteness of resources as well. So just to bring that up. And not to say that this is a concern. In fact, it's something that we have been trying to keep track of with SIGCHI chapter 24 and it's always a big question how we support accessibility efforts. So how do we continue to serve all accessibility requests in our community? Recognizing that there is some effort needed to make the most of the resources we have. And to make wise use of those, right? So what thoughts do you have on that?

>> Helena: Happy for either to jump in when you have an answer ready.

>> Fernando Loizides: I'll maybe mention one, go to Dragan if you want, we can alternate that way instead of long answers.

So thank you so much for your question and I saw now that you posted it as well. It is true we have limited resources. And resources can be time, it can be finance, anything. But also we have a lot of resources. So it's a shame to not use them. I mean one of the things you talked about was continuation which is sort of sustainability and going forward instead of backward. For example Dhruv has a lot of

resources he's created now for years. One of the most powerful things we have is not to start over. It's to continue that work. And a lot of people have been working really hard on creating those resources. So once they have them it's pointless kind of like throwing everything away and starting again. So the important thing I think that we should consider going forward is we should establish them so that going forward everybody does use the resources we have and then once we allocate more resources and we try to find more resources to get this done then we can keep adding on top of that instead of loses the resources we already have. If you have limited amount of time then that's fine. Have you created material within that limited amount of time you can use? Great. Still use them. And then how can we improve the material? How can we get a little bit more? Your question actually is interesting because if you look at -- if you review conference application that are coming, it's very unlikely that you get any financing or time in that for accessibility in a lot of these conferences. Beyond the -- there are so many conferences out there now that people don't think of the accessibility side. They especially don't think it's going to cost them anything which is a real shame. If you have a little bit of resource there's a lot of things that you can do. So that I believe that if you are able to capture the resources but simplify them then you don't need a massive amount of resources to make the right steps going forward. It's not going to be a huge change right now. I doubt within the next three years we will make every conference on the planet accessibility. However, if we don't go backwards and we know every part of those 28 conference that is Helena mentioned is accessible, oh, did I get in touch with IPIB and they've given us their resources and those other ten conferences are now accessible and there is a group over there we're working with to make accessible conferences that are running the new sort of work shops that they're coming out with and they've now made it mandate that you have to have accessibility from the

start that's a step in the right direction. I do think we can go for funding by the way. Even if you look at this virtual room here, if all of us together could go out and say we need funding why because we need resources for people's time to create this and this and this then that's a resource we could apply for. One of the things I would like to do is apply for funding and say there is a need to fund a huge scale project so that every single conference if possible on the planet needs to apply for these guidelines. We've got WCAG. Everybody uses it to teach in their courses, to when they've got accessibility issues, legal issues and they want to show that they have been double A, AAA, they use WCAG. Why couldn't we have something similar as well that we could establish and see if everybody can adopt it and work together what we do together with WCAG so why can't we do that kind of thing. It's not something that can happen in a year or two. We just need to get -- start going forward and finding that resource in the right way.

Sorry, Dragan, I might have taken a bit longer but I really got into it.

>> Dragan Ahmetovic: Don't worry.

One thing that strikes me when talking about this topic, it's actually not something that comes from for the conferences, making their practices accessible. It's not something that the conference do apart from those that are centered to SIGAccess and SIGCHI and related communities. It's usually not something that comes from the conference hey we want to make this accessible; it's usually something that comes from the needs of participants or from the above entity involved. For example in SIGCHI I'm sure that some conferences did not even consider accessibility until SIGCHI made it in some form mandatory to do this and this is actually what happens with pretty much anything related to accessibility, from making Web sites, making apps. For example, here in Italy until there was some mandatory enforcement by the government for public Web site as well as private firms above a certain threshold

of importance to actually make these resource, websites accessible, it was not perceived as a need. Which is something I am deeply sorry about. It is something you should make it inclusive to more people. You can but actually there is some role of finance in numbers there that makes it so that people invest as they need to reach most of the community but they forget, of course, accessibility and inclusivity because simply it's too expensive for them. So they are actually enforced to do this when there is a policy in place. On the one hand, I would love the community to access the resources because they are available and because they are in some way thought that this can be done and that this is beneficial to the humanity. But I don't expect that this will be largely applied until there is good effort advocating for this and enforcing this through policy. And actually I'm sure that the large part publishers and conference organizers are not so many entities. There is ACM, IEEE and few other publishers and I'm sure that doing some policymaking in that sense to enforce them to make things accessible and at the same time providing resources on how to do this would ultimately bring us to the goal. I think that unfortunately there is some pressure that needs to be done in order to enforce them to make the production of science and participation to these kind of events mandatory to be accessible and inclusive.

>> Helena: Well, Neha asked the questions about resources which was going to be my hard question I was going to take that for the team. (Chuckles).

But D.J., please, take the stage and ask your question.

>> Dhruv: Thank you for answering these questions that you have answered. Clearly he will do well for SIGCHI going forward. One thing I'd like you to think about, how would you maintain relationships with the ACM? We have been talking a lot about downward mobility, like talking to conferences and talking to organizations and also, you know, communication with

partners, like Sig Access and SIGCHI but what about ACM? What kind of relationship do you want to forge with ACM and how would that affect how you move forward?

>> Fernando Loizides: I'll -- so, yeah, definitely. So I think the work that we do should influence those that other committees that we have. I truly believe that first we need to have good work to show before we go into any meeting and have a good relationship with them we have to show that we have something to bring to the table. So one of the things that I'd like to do is establish a scene where I ask the ACM to watch what we're doing. I'd like to go to the whole ACM committee and say this is a big change that we would like to do and I would like you to keep in mind this is happening and please watch us. I would like to make sure within a year we have some fantastic results to show and once we have something on the table say we need more support, somebody on a committee with us. We need your direct feedback on what we're doing and also need your support so this goes out to the wider ACM community. So SIGCHI is the start. I know SIGCHI is the most suitable one to lead but once we've established what is happening then we need to have clear communication there is also an attitude and a support that it will also be repeated in other parts of the ACM. I think one is establishing the other chapters that we can immediately go and have support. We also have context in those chapters. That's a first start I think to approach a network in the ACM, approach all the chapter heads that we know and have them ready to assist us and as soon as we do that say can we now please establish the mandate for the ACM that all chapters now, we have it ready, it's ready to go. We'll help in transition. Can you please guarantee us once we have this established -- can we please now establish this in all ACM chapters? This is the best sort of policy I can think of. I doubt that is not going to be taken well and once I've noticed that you tell people it's going to be smooth transitioning that's what they want to hear I think

that's the key to making this work. Simplify it, make something that works. Contact other chapter heads so they're in play with you and then go to the ACM directly can we please now establish this in every single chapter there is.

>> Dragan Ahmetovic: I agree with Fernando about this and also as VP currently already told, ACM is quite, let's say, receptive to this kind of modifications and influences. If there is actually something that could improve the practices and improve the accessibility for ACM members, I don't think there will be a problem, at least from what I understood by interacting with you to bring this up to a higher level. And I think executive committee of SIGCHI which is kind of big and influential in ACM would be very much central to bring any kind of modification to ACM. So if we do have something that has been discussed and appreciated internally I don't think it would be quite difficult to bring this up to the ACM and to actually have them propose this to other chapters. So I don't see this as very big difficulty. I mean, if I can convince the executive committee I don't think they will have it hard to conversation of the usefulness and applicability of what has been proposed in terms of accessibility. Not so much.

>> Fernando Loizides: I agree with Dragan and Dhruv. I know you're a bit apprehensive but I think what Dragan Ahmetovic and I are saying it's not wanting to good usually to the resistance it's how to quickly do it and the pro was it takes to change. So I think that the you know, when Dragan says I don't think there's going to be a problem I don't think he means it's just really simple to communicate and everything will be done in a day.

>> Dragan Ahmetovic: Yeah.

>> Fernando Loizides: But what he's saying is once we establish a process that's easy to do then hopefully we get enough backing from enough people to influence the committee to go, okay, well, show us how to do this. Once we have the okay and then we've got a process, hopefully things will start to change. I

think that's, you know, the process or the key here, that we can submit a very easy process that doesn't require a lot of changes and doesn't blow up things. Usually that's the resistance of change. It's not do the people want to do good? Of course they do; it's the how do we do it that's usually the issue and once we have that process and it's easy and simple and it's tested, and we have the backing from other chapters as well that we've already tested it, I think that's going to be a much better case to bring forward.

>> Dragan Ahmetovic: For example just the fact that the ACM templates and its TAPS process have the accessibility as a central point to that process. It is still in construction but quite central to the process, the accessibility of the templates of the resulting products, the fact that the system itself essentially would produce something accessible from the start is something that makes me think that ACM is eager to apply accessibility practices, even if they're a bit difficult. Because the TAPS process is still quite ongoing effort and we have learned that it is quite complex as it has taken quite some time but just the courage to take this endeavor makes me think that there is an interest by the ACM to make accessibility as one of the central points.

>> Helena: I would love to continue this conversation but we are actually at the top of the hour and I want to be respectful of everybody's time. So I, of course, if anybody watches this recording or wants to follow up with our candidates, they're happy to answer any further questions, and just a plug that we'll be having our next meet the candidate open forum for VP for communication this Wednesday from 3:00 to 4:00 in the afternoon UTC time, and we are planning in a few weeks further sessions as well for our other VP for membership in our P and EPV and our VP core of finance. So that's a lot of acronyms but keep your eye open for announcements on all of these.

Thank you too, everybody, for attending and thank you, of course, to Fernando and Dragan for being our candidates for VP for accessibility. I really

appreciate you showing up for this session as well.

>> Fernando Loizides: Thank you everybody. Thank you everybody for attending. Thank you Helena for arranging as well. Thank you.

>> Dragan Ahmetovic: Thank you everyone and thank you Helena of course.

>> Fernando Loizides. Have a great rest of the day everybody.

>> Dragan Ahmetovic: Have a nice day. Byebye.