

[music playing]

[Narelle] Hi, welcome to  
The Digital Access Show.

I'm Narelle Wright,

and yeah, I'm the host,  
whatever you want to call it.

Last week, we talked  
about documents,

and the lack of  
accessibility with documents.

And I talked about an  
issue I've been having...

with filling out a document.

This week,

let me explain  
another issue to you.

Most people won't know, I am a  
massive Brisbane Broncos fan.

I've followed them  
since day one,

and I love the team.

However, being vision impaired,

I cannot watch the TV anymore.

The commentators drive me crazy,

because they do not commentate...

adequately so that I can picture  
in my mind what's happening...

on the screen.

It just, there's too much...

dropouts and we'll go  
back and look at something,

or whatever it is or they  
throw in something to make it...

interesting,

but for a person  
with vision impairment

it's a huge problem,  
so I thought, okay,

let's start seeing  
what we can do about it.

So I've brought,

well, I've actually

have as a guest today,

Belinda Vesey-Brown

from Meet Aandi.

Belinda, thank you

so much for coming.

[Belinda] Thanks, Narelle.

I love an opportunity

to talk accessibility.

My favourite topic!

[Narelle] It's mine too,

isn't it?

Belinda, can you tell

me a bit about yourself,

and what you do at Meet Aandi?

[Belinda] Yeah, sure. So,

hello, everyone. I'm Belinda.

I am a short blonde woman  
wearing my pink jacket today

cause it's a bit chilly.

Meet Aandi is, well, Meet  
Aandi actually stands for Meet,

Aandi is accessibility  
and inclusion,

and is something that we  
are very passionate about.

And we do not only  
document remediation,

and consulting on  
all things accessibility.

We do video remediation.

We have our own...

SaaS tool, if you like,  
that makes it easy.

[Narelle] It's one of the things  
I don't think people think about,

is audio description on videos.

They know about captioning.

And one of my big bug bears  
is AI-generated captioning,

where the spelling  
isn't correct,

and the grammar,

the punctuation

and the timing is out.

And that's really frustrating.

And I know

anecdotally, obviously,

it doesn't worry me,

I can't see it,

but people talk about how funny

it is when the timing's out.

The problems that I have

watching a football game,

can they be resolved?

[Belinda] Well, and you're

talking about recorded games,

and absolutely can be resolved.

And I want to go as far as  
saying should be resolved,

because the technology  
makes it so easy.

You know, there's  
no excuse for that.

And you were talking  
before about, you know,

captions being, you know, wrong.

I've seen even brand names.

We've got our, you know,  
ANZ Bank, for example,

and when you use  
automatic captioning,



and that's their brand name,

it immediately says A and...

Z, Z-E-D,

as their brand in the caption.

And you're like, wow, it's  
such a simple thing to tune.

You know, there are a  
lot of tools these days,

like such as ours,  
you can actually train it.

So every time you hear that,  
this is how you should spell it.

-[Narelle] Yeah.

-[Belinda] There's no excuses.

[Narelle] It's like my name.

There is no AI that can  
get my name correct.

Siri, I get Royal,  
I get all types of things.

And I just think,  
oh, yeah, I'm over it.

So I've actually  
used accessibility,

a trick with accessibility,

so it actually puts my name  
correctly when I'm using Siri.

But what is the options?

What can people do with videos?

What are the rules?

Tell us about it.

[Belinda] Well,

I think, first of all,

I believe, and you

probably do too, Narelle,

that video is actually the

best communication tool.

And we're seeing such a

growth in the area, right?

There's more videos being

uploaded to YouTube than,

you know, ever before.

Because video, it can be visual,

it can be auditory,

you get a sense for a feeling

of what's going on when you're  
watching it or you're hearing it.

You can then choose how  
you consume that content.

So, one day you  
might want to just listen.

And they're the things  
that I love about video.

But the things to make  
a video accessible,

is you need three things.

And most people,

and it's only

because we've been,

you know, talking

more about captions

that most people would

say, there's captions.

Yes, and captions

is the first one.

The second one is AD,

as you said before,

audio description.

So, that's describing what's

being shown on the screen

to those who can't see it,

or to those who are

listening in their car perhaps.

And then the final  
thing you need

to meet the standard for  
accessibility is a transcript.

So, a transcript of  
everything that's said,

and everything that's shown.

So, it's capturing the CC,

the closed captions,  
and the audio description.

Do you know what transcripts  
are good for, Narelle?

They're really good for if  
you are learning something,

or you're a student,  
or English is a second language,

you can look at it  
afterwards and highlight,

you can read along if  
you're learning to read.

You can read along  
with what's being said,

so you're seeing the  
letters and the words.

And you can highlight  
things if you do a printout,

if you're watching a video  
and studying something.

So, transcripts  
are so important.

[Narelle] The interesting thing

I don't think people realise is,

those three techniques

are also part of...

the Australian Digital

Accessibility Standards.

That's based on the Web Content

Accessibility Guidelines 2.2.

And it's so important

because all it does,

it's opening up video

to everyone, isn't it?

[Belinda] Well, it is.

Like I said, I actually think it

is the most accessible medium,



but only if it's been  
remediated properly.

[Narelle] Yeah.

So, if we look  
at captions first,

what should people be  
considering with captions?

[Belinda] Well, you want to  
get your important words right,

like your brand name or  
the spelling of your names.

You want to look for a  
tool that you can teach it,

or it can learn.

You wanna make sure that there's  
not too much on the screen.

You don't want captions to  
be too large on the screen.

And I know we don't always have  
control over how we view that.

But you want to have,

you don't want to say  
too much in advance.

You sort of want the words  
to come out as it's being said.

We have captions on all the time  
when watching TV, for example,

There's nothing more frustrating

when you can see

what they're going to say

when they haven't said it yet.

It gives away

sometimes the punchline,

which, so you

don't want to have,

you don't have too much on the  
screen, it becomes overwhelming.

Especially if we look at  
a neurodiverse audience,

who may be reading  
some of this, right?

So, we want to have it  
just short on the screen.

And just make sure

that they're there.

A lot of the tools,

you know, it's an option.

You want to make

sure that we do that.

And I think most of us

are getting pretty good

at making sure that

captions are there.

It's the audio description

that's the bigger problem.

Less than one percent of video

on YouTube has audio description.

[Narelle] Yes. Exactly.

One other thing about  
captions I must argue about,

and I do have  
a tiny bit of sight,

and I'll be watching something,

like trying to watch a footy  
game would be an example, but...

they don't do this.

And you see captions in  
bright yellow, horrible fonts.

[Belinda] Yes!

[Narelle] Up the top or,

what should people be doing?

Should they be doing that?

They're burnt in.

You actually can't turn it off.

That's my second hate.

[Belinda] Yeah, well,

and then, you know,

having them burnt in,

I still believe, though,

is better than not

having them at all.

You're right, you want

to toggle them on and off.

That's all to do with

the player that you have.

And so, again, if

you are embedding,

you know, some video  
into your website or,

you know, wherever  
you're putting it,

you want to make sure  
that it's using a player

that you can toggle on and off,

that does allow for  
audio description,

that does give you a transcript,

that you can upload a  
transcript file, for example

So, it's more to do with  
the player, and you want to,

you don't want to  
have to burn them in,

but if that's your only option,  
it's better than not, right?

[Narelle] Yep. Yes.

[Belinda] But yes, you've  
got to think about contrast,

so I see a lot that,  
you know, is white,

and the background is white,

and you're like,  
I can't read that.

So, you know,

some of it we can  
control, some of it we can't,



but, you know, you want to be,

I've seen them with little  
sort of drop shadows on them,

but yeah, you don't want  
them to be a distraction.

You want them to be an  
enhancement to the learning,

or to the viewing.

[Narelle] And  
that's it, isn't it, it's...

I know,

with my sons at times,

when they were younger  
and you'd put captions on,

and they spent more time  
laughing at the captions,

and you'd be wanting  
them to really...

yeah, understand  
what's happening.

Or you get those words...

you don't want your kids at  
certain ages to know about.

Kids at any age sometimes.

And there's nothing you can do,

because it's  
captioned and it's there.

So,

we've covered captions.

Let's look at audio description.

What can people do about that?

What is audio description?

[Belinda] Well,

audio description is...

describing what's being

shown on the screen.

And it gives that richness

to the movie that

you're watching,

that, you know, someone

who's blind, they're watching...

some Arnold Schwarzenegger

movie, for example,

and the city's being blown up,

and there's all this

sound that's going on.

You know, someone who's blind,

that's where they get a drink,

because they just have no idea...

what they're actually seeing.

And so that text becomes...

you know, that descriptive

outline of what's being shown.

And, you know, even as a sighted

user of audio description,

I think it adds that value,

that extra insight into what  
the creator was intending

that is just so beautiful.

And so, that's something that,

you know, they're just starting  
to teach even in film school.

You know, what is the,  
where are the breaks?

Even for the live production,  
where will the breaks be?

Where will we start to have,  
you know, what's being said?

Where will we start to  
insert that audio description

that's describing

what's being shown?

They need to be,

with everything

for accessibility,

thought about

from the beginning.

But there's a lot

of video out there

that we need

to retrofit it into.

And again, looking for a player

that will allow you to pause,

so that you can add,

you can do an audio

description version,

where you can describe it

to give the context of

what's being shown in detail.

And, you know,

Narelle, my pet hate,

my pet hate is where people

put up stuff on the screen.

So they put up like

tags or names of people,

or, you know,

words that aren't actually said,

that someone who can't see them,

or, like I said, maybe

listening in their car,

you know, doesn't then

have an idea of, you know,

what that announcement is.

So, we need to think about, even

when we're presenting to camera,

when we're putting

together videos,

that we're thinking about

the words that we're using,

and where we're

putting those words.

So even as a presenter

presenting to camera,

if you can describe what you've



got going on in your scene,

as if there is someone

who's just listening,

and not watching,

then we do away with the

need for more audio description.

[Narelle] And I can

watch my footy game.

[Belinda] You can

watch your footy game.

[Narelle] Yeah!

[Belinda] There is a

real skill in doing that.

[Narelle] Yes! One of the things

that I get the giggles with is,

I love cricket as well.

So in cricket season, I'll  
quite happily sit with the...

radio on listening  
to the cricket.

Now, if I listen to the  
Australian commentators,

and this is picking  
on the Australians,

I can't actually know  
the way the field's set,

or, yeah, you know, who's  
facing, you know, who's bowling.

But who's out at mid-on?

Who's at mid-off?

Who's down deep?

All of those little things.

You know who

the wicket-keeper is,

but the field set,

you don't know,

there's things you don't know.

They'll say, wind's blowing

from the east or whatever.

If you listen to the

BBC commentators,

they're good,

because you do know.

They will talk about that.

And the reason I love listening  
to cricket is I like cricket.

And for me, I'm not  
interested in anecdotes...

of what happened to...

Adam Gilchrist 20 years ago.

I actually want to know,

because I actually watched Adam  
Gilchrist play 20 years ago.

I actually want to know  
what's going on in the game.

[Belinda] Yes.

And that's so  
frustrating for me.

So really, I'm at the stage,  
I don't listen to my football.

I don't listen to my cricket,  
  
because it's frustrating.

One of the other things that I  
don't think people understand is,

in my family, I have people  
on the autism spectrum.

And when I'm watching,  
I love those murder mysteries.

You know, those...

you know, can be  
a little bit gruesome.

I was watching one one day,

And obviously audio  
description was on,

and it was,

Annika is looking depressed.

And one of them that is on  
the autistic spectrum says,

oh, I wondered  
what she was doing.

Because don't forget,  
people on the autism spectrum,

some of them cannot read body  
language and facial language.

It gives them an extra level.

[Belinda] That is an  
extremely good point.

We talk about that, especially  
for education materials.

So, if you're producing  
educational content,

you want to think about  
what, in the audio description,

that you're actually capturing in  
more detail some of the emotions,

some of the expressions,

so someone on the ASD spectrum  
can make those connections.

And that's how they learn,  
just as equally as all of us.

[Narelle] Yeah!

[Belinda] That is the  
power of audio description.

[Narelle] It is, isn't it?

I don't think people get that.

But even for young kids that are  
learning to read body language,

learning how to read  
facial expressions,

Bluey's a classic.

Bluey's audio described.

And I love it. I sit there with  
my grandkids and I watch Bluey.

And the kids will, you know,



they'll be, where they used to  
say, oh, Bluey's really upset.

I'll hear,  
Bluey is feeling upset.

And the boys will go,

oh, yeah, Bluey's upset,  
Grandma. They've said it.

And they're learning as well  
how to read body language,

how to read facial expression,

and those important tools that  
kids need to get along in life.

[Belinda] Absolutely.

You know, you've heard me say

this many, many times, Narelle,

but when we think about and

we make things accessible,

it makes it better for everyone.

[Narelle] Yeah, it does.

What about transcription?

So, we've covered captions

and audio description.

Let's cover transcription.

[Belinda] Yeah,

so transcripts are...

capturing basically

everything that's said,

and everything that's

shown on that screen,

as a written document that,

you know, and some players

actually, you've seen them,

they cycle through with

the word that changes colour

as it's being said.

And some that you can

just download and print out.

And I think that they're an

invaluable tool to learn from.

You know, you can take those

notes and put them into ChatGPT

to maybe give you a

summary of, you know, of the,

of the video,

you know, pull out key things.

So, there's many  
advantages of that.

I think that if you've made  
sure your captions are right,

and your captions are there,

and your audio description,

then having the transcript,

and, you know, that's the  
icing on the cake, right?

You have total control over,

or choice.

We talk about choice over  
how you consume that content.

Actually, Curtin University  
did a study...

about a year or so ago now.

They actually used our tool  
for that, for their lectures.

And the outcome of that  
study was that it gave students...

more choice, so making them  
accessible not only opened up,

you know, their lectures

that had been recorded  
to any kind of student,

regardless of their ability,

it actually at the end of  
the day gave the student...

choice over how they  
consumed that content.

Because a lot of them now  
are juggling part-time jobs,

and, you know, travelling  
on buses and things like that,

that they could listen to  
the lecture that had been,

you know, that was  
a video recording.

They could listen perhaps  
while they're on a bus,

and know that whatever was  
being shown on the screen was,

you know, they were  
capturing all of that,

and could have the  
printout in front of them.

English as a second language.

They could slow it down.

They could speed it up.

They could watch  
the words, so video,

such a powerful, powerful tool,

but only if we have  
made it accessible.

[Narelle] Yeah.

Belinda, what's...

a couple of tips that you  
could give to people listening,

in regards to this subject?

[Belinda] If you create video  
content from the beginning,

then think about how you are,

what you are saying  
and how you are,

you can eliminate some of the  
need for some audio description,

cause if you get it  
right from the start,

then it's actually inclusive



from the beginning, right?

You want to make sure  
that you're finding a tool

that makes captioning easy,

and audio description easy,

because when it's easy,  
you're more likely to do it.

And I actually want  
everyone to join us,

and be advocates  
for audio description.

We've done a lot  
in getting captions,

and having as an  
expectation around captions,

and we need to now do the  
same with audio description.

I invite everyone who's listening  
to join us on this bandwagon

of having that conversation,

asking for audio description  
and knowing the value of it.

[Narelle] Couldn't  
have said it better, Belinda.

I so agree with you.

And for people with disability,

for people like myself,

so I can just watch  
my footy game.

It would be exciting.

Belinda, how can  
people contact you

to keep the conversation going?

[Belinda] Well,  
we have a website,

[www.meetaandi,](http://www.meetaandi.com.au)

so that's M-E-E-T,

A-A-N-D-I,

[.com.au.](http://www.meetaandi.com.au)

Or you get me at

[Belinda@meetaandi.com.au,](mailto:Belinda@meetaandi.com.au)

and just tell them

that Narelle sent you.

[Narelle] Thank you.

Seriously, Belinda,

thanks for your time.

You've given me

some food for thought,

particularly in regards

to transcription.

But...

like anything,

the show has to end.

We can't keep talking all day.

So, look, please like,

subscribe, review,

share, feedback.

We love feedback, whether  
it's really good, bad or ugly.

And we will see you next time  
on the Digital Access Show.

See you then.

[music playing]