

[music playing]

[Narelle] Hello. Welcome to...

the Christmas edition of  
The Digital Access Show.

Hey, everyone else is doing it.

We're going to do it.

Now,

this one's going to  
be slightly different.

I've invited a  
friend of mine on,

and I actually said, look, I need  
someone just to be the yes man,

and Reece put his hand up.

I was sitting there thinking,

you guys really need to meet Reece  
because he is pretty amazing,

what he does and what he's done.

Reece is what we  
call a sighted guide,

and I'll leave Reece  
to explain that to you,

and he's actually  
my sighted guide.

So, everyone please  
meet Reece Crawford.

Reece, thank you for coming on.

[Reece] You're welcome.  
Good to be here.

[Narelle] Reece,

can you tell me a  
little bit about yourself,

and what a sighted guide is,

cause not that many people would  
know what a sighted guide is.

[Reece] Well in effect,  
I'm the eyes of the runner,

the vision impaired runner who...

needs...

to be able to see the  
path in front of them.

I'm on there viewing  
the path in front of them,

and then describing  
everything to them,

so that they can...

mentally see what  
they're about to step into.

So a corner is coming,  
a hill is coming,

a slight change of the surface  
you're stepping on is coming,

all of that.

[Narelle] Yeah. And...

Reece, you've got a  
pretty remarkable story...

as well and that's

one that, you know,

it's up to you how much you want  
to tell but I'd love people to...

learn a little bit  
about your story,

and the challenges  
that you've conquered.

[Reece] Well, I'm lucky to  
have the life that I've got.

And I think that's where  
my passion to give back...

to other people with  
difficulties comes from.

But 11 years ago,

I sustained a fairly severe  
traumatic brain injury.

On my journey home from work,

I was on a motor scooter,  
went through a green light,

assuming a right

of way, as you do,

and a van come the opposite way  
turned across in front of me.

I hit the van,

woke up 12 days later in  
the ICU in a Brisbane hospital.

For me, I had to learn to walk  
again, talk again, eat again.

They should've thought  
twice about the talking part.

No one can shut me up now.

And...

Well, now I work at the hospital  
that gave me back my life.

And that's one of  
the ways I give back,

just giving back to the world.

[Narelle] One of the things  
that's been really interesting,

because as you've done  
a sighted guide for me,

because I do park run,  
which is where I met Reece,

is we've talked  
about communication

and the challenges  
of communication.

And that must have been a big  
thing at times for you as well...

in relearning how to do things.

[Reece] Absolutely.

There's a lot of my journey  
that I've got no memory of,

which in actual  
fact is wonderful.

I'd rather not remember some  
of the things I've been through

But early in the journey,  
I had a tracheostomy,

so my voice was  
taken away from me.

And then once that was out,  
I had to learn to speak again.

[Narelle] Yeah.

[Reece] And not just learn  
to speak, but learn to...

re-understand what  
people were saying to me,

and comprehend the messages that  
were being put across to me.

So,

communication was a pretty  
big challenge in the early part.

[Narelle] Yeah.

And that's the reason why,

you know, and  
I will tell you all,

another sighted guided  
dobbed Reece in to do this,

and he took the  
challenge really quickly.

Thanks Sonia.

But...

One of the things that  
we want to do today is,

where Reece gives back to  
the community all the time.

I thought,

let's give back,

give you some tips and tricks  
about digital accessibility.

How to...

work out...

how to make the website or the  
document a bit more accessible.

What do you think, Reece?

[Reece] Sounds great.



[Narelle] Yeah.

What I want to do first,

for me and everyone  
that I talk to is aware,

I have a severe  
vision impairment,

and I've just had another  
quite recent sight loss,

which poor Reece, I think it was  
only the second time guiding,

and I just had the sight loss  
and my spatial awareness was...

pretty shocking.

I had no idea where  
my arms were,

but that's life when  
you have these types of...

deteriorating conditions.

And so, things are a

lot more blurry for me.

However, there's things  
that people don't really get.

I use screen readers  
to do all my work

and a screen reader  
doesn't read a website...

the way you would  
read it now, Reece.

It reads the code behind.

One of the things, and I'm going  
to share my screen in a minute,

and, you know,  
definitely as you listen,

have a look at websites  
yourself and just have a play.

But one of the things  
people forget is,

every website needs to be  
keyboard accessible only.

Because, Rhys, it's not just  
people with vision impairment

that can only use  
a keyboard, is it?

I mean, that fine motor  
skill that mouse requires,

there'd be a lot of conditions  
there, wouldn't there?

-[Reece] Absolutely.

-[Narelle] You can't use a mouse.

[Reece] Absolutely, yeah.

There's more than I  
can list on both hands. So...

-[Narelle] Yeah.

-[Reece] Yep.

Cause that's one of the things  
you would've had to do, isn't it?

Learn how to use a mouse again.

Learn how to do everything with...

one side of my body.

My right-hand  
side was very weak,

and at points there,  
no movement at all.

Unfortunately, I'm a  
right-handed person as well,

so my dominant side was taken  
away from me for a period there.

-[Narelle] Yep.

-[Reece] So...

[Reece] Yeah, I had to  
learn everything again.

[Narelle] Yeah.

One of the things that website  
developers, if you're listening,

I'm just going to  
share the screen.

[Reece] There we are,  
there it is. Yes, yes I can.

[Narelle] Okay. So Reece,

when you go to a website,

and for any website developer,

and website designer,

it is really important that...

the website is

keyboard accessible.

And you know the

easiest test of all?

Just use your tab key.

And I'll go across

to that screen.

Whoops.

There.

And see how the screen's moving?

I'm just using the tab key,

but what people need to remember

is your up and down arrows.

Just using...

the up and down arrows,

see how you can  
actually see where...

you're looking at,

I'm just using my keyboard,

and my up and  
down arrows to see it.

And that is a really important  
thing that people need to do,

because if you can't use  
the up and down arrows

and your tab key to access  
everything in the website

there's so many people  
that are excluded.

And I'm just going  
to go up to the menu,

because there's one other thing...

that I want to show you.

Now, that is a drop  
down menu, right?

And I just use the  
enter key to open it,

and I'm hearing what it is.

If I hit the escape key,

I'm expecting  
that menu to close.

The reason that's  
really important...

is if a person  
uses keyboard only,

and they've gone  
into the wrong menu,

now I can just go to the next  
menu or whatever I want to do.

But if I can't close it just  
using the escape key,

I've got to go through every part  
of that menu time and time again.

That's really frustrating.

That's a couple of things there  
with keyboard accessibility,

and it's things that  
people don't think about.

Would it be something you'd  
have thought about, that...

a website's got to be  
keyboard accessible?

[Reece] Not at all. No.

Now watching you do this now,

I can't believe how easy  
it is without a mouse.

You're just flicking  
from option to option.

And...

I can see the movement  
of your screen...

each time you say  
what you're doing here.



To me, it looks as though  
you're doing this with a mouse.

[Narelle] Yeah. Well, I'm  
using the JAWS screen reader.

And one of the things that the  
JAWS screen reader does as well,

I believe, you've  
got the eyes, I don't.

Is there a red outline  
around what's got the focus?

[Reece] Yellow.

-[Narelle] Yellow, is it?

-[Reece] Call it yellow. Yep.

-[Narelle] Yeah. And the reason...

we do that is so that  
people with low vision,

I think there'll be people  
with tracking issues,

how many people lose  
where they are on a website,

because you're just not  
quite sure where the cursor is.

And that's another tip,

you know, they  
call it focus, Reece,

set your focus so you can  
work out where you are.

And a developer  
can do it very easily.

There's one other  
thing I want to show you,

and this is for  
people with low vision.

Reece,

you've got the knowledge,

as a physiotherapy assistant,  
that I just don't have.

I know for myself,

I have a lot of problems with...

spatial awareness and  
balance and things like that.

But people with low vision would  
have those problems as well,

wouldn't they?

[Reece] They do, definitely.

Take away that visual reference  
of the world around you

and your balance goes with it.

[Narelle] Yeah.

And one of the things I want  
to say to every developer is,

when you, and a  
test everyone can do,

and I'm going to do it on this,

is hold your shift key down,

and I'm going to have  
to use the plus button.

I'm zooming...

four hundred percent.

Now,

see how...

the whole website  
is still accessible.

I've made it to 400 percent and  
it's a test that you should do.

The reason we use  
400 percent, Reece, is,

anything over 400 percent,

a person should be  
using a screen reader.

But this is still  
really readable...

doing it that way.

Can you read it?

[Reece] I can.

And the first thing I spotted  
when you zoomed in there...

is that all of the text hasn't...

You haven't zoomed in...

and lost the end of a  
sentence off the screen,

off to the side of the  
screen, but instead the...

the next word has dropped down  
to a line underneath, so the...

the text is right  
there in front of me.

All important questions  
if you want to be found,

rather than found being off  
to the right side of the screen,

hidden away because  
you've zoomed in so far.

[Narelle] And that's an issue,

is that's some problems that

you had when you were healing...

in, you know,  
your vision as well,

and different areas like  
that, was that affected?

[Reece] I think my...

my periphery was probably  
the most affected part.

[Narelle] Oh, was it?

Because you've said something  
that a lot of people with...

peripheral vision  
problems talk about.

Things go missing.

[Reece] Maybe subconsciously  
in the back of my mind

that memory must be...

be there, and...

Yeah that's the first

thing I look at is...

things disappearing  
off to the side.

I'll make sure to...

[Narelle] Yeah, it's a  
good thing, you know,

it's a good way to  
quickly test, isn't it?

Because if a website is going  
to be accessible by doing that

I'm just going to bring it down.

There we go.

So, that's zoomed it back  
to what's normal, Reece.

That's what you expect, that  
things follow along beautifully,

that it expands and contracts.

And that's a couple of really  
good things for websites.

The other ones that we're just  
going to have to talk about,

because it's much  
easier to talk about them.

But I'll just leave this up.

All these images, Reece,

and this is some really good  
tips to give website developers.

And it's even,  
if you own a website,

these are things people  
really need to know.

So for me,

I know there's some images on  
the website because I hear image,

dah, dah, dah,

whatever it is.

All these images on my website  
have what we call alternate text.



You won't hear them,

but when you use  
assistive technology tools,

such as screen readers,

braille devices.

Here's another one.

People with dyslexia often use  
a form of screen reader as well,

because it is much  
harder for them to...

read the words.

Alt text describes  
what's in the image.

So what's the image  
in front of us, Reese?

Can you tell me? Cause I  
won't turn on my screen reader.

It gets a bit much while  
I'm trying to talk and listen.

Okay.

The image is a signpost  
with four different signs on it,

each of them an arrow,

two of them pointing to the  
right, two of them to the left,

green arrow on the top  
saying independence,

yellow arrow or gold arrow  
second saying autonomy,

blue arrow third pointing  
to the right saying freedom,

and a red arrow on the bottom...

pointing to the left  
saying self-reliance.

That's all alternate  
text is, Reece.

You did it better than me.

I need to change that wording,

cause I think it's much  
better than what I did.

And the reason  
that's really important,

when Reece was  
describing it to us all,

I could picture in my  
mind what he was saying.

I've lost that much sight now I  
can't tell you what the image is.

I'm really relying on the  
screen reader to describe it.

Now, if it's just  
for decoration only,

and you do get some images that  
are there to make it look pretty.

It could be...

It could be something  
as simple as a line or...

What else would be  
used as decoration?

I'm not sure because  
I don't see them.

[Reece] Flowers,

fireworks, there's  
so many things.

[Narelle] Yeah.

They're not important  
to provide information.

Just set your alternate  
text to what we call nulls,

double quotes.

Otherwise, do  
something like Reece said.

It was perfect, Reece.

It described what the image  
was so that it made sense.

[Reece] That's the training you  
gave me to be a guide runner,

just describing everything

that is there in front of you.

[Narelle] Yeah, but Reece,  
you do a good job.

And I'm safe.

But the thing is  
people don't realise...

a sighted guide is all  
about safety as well,

because, how many did park run,  
just to deviate for a minute,

how many did park run  
last week, do you know?

I know it was a lot.

[Reece] 504 was the number.

[Narelle] And we were  
talking after park run

when we were all having coffee  
about the number of people...

that were coming at us, and...

the level of sight I've got,  
I see big walls coming at me.

I don't, or big shapes.

That's really scary.

So, Reece being  
able to describe...

what's coming at me...

does a few things,  
mentally it helps.

Emotionally, it really does,

because I know I'm  
concentrating on Reece's voice.

I'm not concentrating on  
the people coming at me,

and I'm concentrating on putting  
one foot in front of the other.

That's what a  
sighted guide does,

and that's one good  
reason to have Reece on,

because he does it so well.

He describes what people with vision impairment need to see.

Reece, another tip...

that I thought is  
a really good one,

is if you have a look at the  
spacing in the paragraph there,

It's one and a  
half line spacing.

Any ideas why?

I guess for those  
with low vision,

it would really differentiate  
between the lines of text.

[Narelle] Yeah.

And that's a really good point  
too, but there's one other.

People with eye

tracking problems.

And it could be for any reason,

they really struggle  
to read a straight line.

It's like their eyes  
jump all over the place.

And I don't know what  
the medical terminology is,

and I should, one  
of my sons had it.

But it means that...

they can actually be able  
to physically follow that line.

It's distinct, really distinct  
from all the other lines.

Simple trick, isn't it?

[Reece] Absolutely.

[Narelle] How  
easy is it to read?



[Reece] Very.

And easy to identify  
the next line down as well.

I couldn't tell you the amount of  
times I've been reading a book,

and we'll get to  
the end of one line,

and then flick my  
eyes across to the left,

so I can start the next line  
and restart the same line.

[Narelle] Yeah. Yep.

And when I was losing my sight,

that's one of the reasons  
I had to stop reading,

because I was doing exactly  
that, because I was losing track,

my vision wasn't good enough  
to track that line anymore.

[Reece] Yep.

[Narelle] The other thing is,

if you have a look at the  
font types that are used

and I won't run the test here,

but there's this really simple  
test and it's a capital I,

a lowercase L and  
the number one.

And if you find...

that they all look the same or  
two of the three look the same,

find another font,

because people with dyslexia,

people with any type of...

vision processing problem,

they're going to struggle.

It's a really big one.

[Reece] That's a great test.

[Narelle] Yeah,  
it's a simple one.

And a lot of people  
don't know about it.

And the other really good  
one is the lowercase c.

And between the start  
and the end points,

if it's really close together,

people can mistake  
it for the lowercase o.

It's just simple stuff, really.

And one last tip before we go,

and let everyone go and  
have a great Christmas,

is...

colour.

I don't know what the

background colour is.

I think it's a greyish slightly  
off white, is it, Reece?

[Reece] It is,  
just slightly off white.

[Narelle] Yeah. If you have a  
look at the foreground colour,

I think it's either a  
navy blue or a black.

[Reece] Yes.

[Narelle] Okay.

There's a ratio that everyone  
needs to be really aware of,

and it's called the  
colour contrast ratio,

and it must be,

the difference between the  
background and the foreground...

must be a minimum of 4.5 to 1.

If you get...

An easy way to explain it is,

and Reece has seen me do this,

when we're running,

there's a lot of people where to  
me, it's the same colour shirt,

And so, it all blends in.

And they're probably  
different colours,

but I can't distinguish  
between the colours.

Particularly...

some of those racing clubs,

they get quite similar in  
their colours, don't they?

[Reece] They do.

[Narelle] I've got  
Buckleys. I can't...

I cannot tell you...

what colour it is.

So if I've got a dark blue,

that really dark  
charcoal colour, black,

navy blue,

even your really dark reds,

all of those colours,

I cannot distinguish  
between them.

So anyone with colour blindness,

it's really important that the  
ratio is a minimum of 4.5 to 1,

because you want  
people to be able to see it.

So some quick tips  
and tricks for you.

I'm just going to  
stop sharing, Reece.

I'm cheating and using my mouse.

Right.

Reece, simple stuff, isn't it?

[Reece] Absolutely.

It's very simple and  
easy to implement,

and open your website  
up to everybody.

[Narelle] Yeah.

And they're tests  
that everyone can do.

You know, it's not,

I think,

one of the things I get  
very frustrated about,

another reason to have Reece on,

because he got  
it really quickly.

People think it's so complex,

but it's not.

[Reece] No.

[Narelle] So Reece,  
this Christmas time,

let's throw in a  
running tip from you.

I will tell you,  
Reece is a marathon runner.

And for anyone in Australia,

particularly the  
Queensland area,

that wants to do  
the Paralympics,

Reece is happy to be a sighted  
guide to do the Paralympics...

as a runner.

Reece, what's a  
running tip in this heat...



that we have in Queensland?

[Reece] Don't try  
to break records.

In this heat, just get out,

go as slow as you need to to  
cover the distance you want.

[Narelle] Yeah.

[Reece] But yeah, don't be a  
rock star at this time of year.

Be a rock star in the winter.

[Narelle] That's a good tip.  
Wear plenty of sunburn cream.

[Reece] Oh, yep.

[Reece] More than you own.  
Go out and buy more.

You probably don't have enough.

[Narelle] Yeah. Reece,

thank you.

Thank you for tonight.

Thank you for coming on.

Thank you for being  
my sighted guide.

Reece, I hope you and your family  
have a wonderful Christmas.

-And an easy new year.

-[Reece] You too.

[Narelle] And  
everyone listening,

please enjoy your Christmas.

Have a think about  
digital accessibility.

Not on Christmas Day.  
Christmas Day is a time to...

celebrate,

laugh and enjoy  
being with your family.

[Reece] Maybe go on a park run.

[Narelle] Definitely  
go to park run.

There will be a park run on,  
  
but on the Saturdays.

Definitely find one.

I do one in North Brisbane.

It's North Brisbane,  
but that's bad.

I even have to think  
about where it is.

Reece does a few different  
ones, but they're everywhere.

Do a park run,

come for community,  
come for friendship,

and come to learn,

because I learn  
every day at park run.

And I learn when I

do digital accessibility,

and you meet some  
fantastic people.

So Merry Christmas,

have a wonderful new year!

And we will see you...

on the next Digital Access Show.

-See you soon.

-[Reece] Merry Christmas.

If you like what we do,

please share,  
review, like, subscribe.

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podcast episodes on YouTube,

and also on our website,

[dasat.com.au](http://dasat.com.au),

We really do and love to receive  
any feedback you can give us.

So, we'll see you next time  
on The Digital Access Show.

Bye, bye.

[music playing]