

WEBVTT

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David Falis: Meeting content should be kept confidential, and members should demonstrate a professional level of courtesy and respect when participating in CTA activities. This meeting is being recorded by CTA for the purpose of taking minutes.

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David Falis: CTA does not permit the use of external AI note-taking or other transcription technologies for CTA-hosted virtual meetings without prior consent. And with that, I'll pass it off to Rachel.

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Rachel Nemeth: Thank you, David. And good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for joining us today for this, virtual roundtable on Innovating for Access, AI, and Daily Life.

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Rachel Nemeth: My visual description is that I am a white woman with red hair and wearing glasses and a white blazer.

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Rachel Nemeth: My name is Rachel Nemeth, and I'm the VP of Regulatory and Government Affairs here at CTA. I'm pleased to welcome you to this conversation on AI and accessibility. But first, some background about CTA and our work related to accessibility.

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Rachel Nemeth: As North America's largest tech trade association, CTA is the tech sector. Our members are the world's leading innovators, from startups to global brands, helping support more than 17 million American jobs.

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Rachel Nemeth: CTA, provides advocacy for the tech industry, and we also develop technical standards, conduct market research, and we also produce CES, the most powerful tech event in the world.

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00:01:42.385 --> 00:01:56.905

Rachel Nemeth: CTA is committed to ensuring technology works for everyone. The Innovation for All initiative believes that for innovation to reach its full potential, a variety of voices, experiences, and perspectives must be integrated into the workforce.

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Rachel Nemeth: CTA's AI Council, comprised of industry leaders, shapes CTA's strategic direction and advances AI innovation across the broader technology landscape.

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00:02:08.175 --> 00:02:26.784

Rachel Nemeth: The Accessibility and Age Tech Working Group is made up of CTA members with a mission to foster innovation, collaboration, and inclusivity to bridge the gap between technological advancement and the unique needs of older adults and individuals with disabilities.

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00:02:27.275 --> 00:02:40.025

Rachel Nemeth: The CTA Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the Consumer Technology Association, dedicated to connecting older adults and people with disabilities with technologies that enhance their lives.

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00:02:43.375 --> 00:02:57.545

Rachel Nemeth: In May, Forbes named the CTA Foundation to the Forbes Accessibility 200, recognizing the world's leading organizations driving accessibility progress, joining honorees from 23 countries across 6 continents.

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00:02:58.955 --> 00:03:05.824

Rachel Nemeth: And now I will set up the introduction for the content of what we're going to be discussing in this virtual roundtable today.

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00:03:06.375 --> 00:03:11.035

Rachel Nemeth: AI is changing how people work, communicate, and access daily life.

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Rachel Nemeth: CTA partnered with the organizations Access Living, Disability Belongs, and Communication First to examine how the disability

community is approaching AI today, drawing on research grounded in real-world experience.

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00:03:26.025 --> 00:03:35.645

Rachel Nemeth: The goal of this project was to document lived experience, not to speculate about what AI might do someday, but to understand what is actively happening now.

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Rachel Nemeth: And more findings from the research that we're previewing today will be in CTA's forthcoming white paper on AI and accessibility.

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00:03:44.424 --> 00:03:58.054

Rachel Nemeth: There will be time for Q&A after the presentation. If you would like to ask a question, you can put it into the Zoom chat throughout the presentation, and someone from the CTA team will read it aloud during the Q&A.

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00:03:58.215 --> 00:04:09.924

Rachel Nemeth: Or, you can wait until the Q&A portion of the of this event, and use the hand-raising tool, and unmute when myself or another member of the CTA staff calls on you.

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00:04:10.665 --> 00:04:19.114

Rachel Nemeth: Thank you all again for being here. Now, I will turn things over to Karen Tamley, President and CEO at Access Living.

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00:04:20.555 --> 00:04:31.615

Karen Tamley: Thank you so much, Rachel. Good afternoon, everybody. As Rachel said, I'm Karen Tamley. I'm the President and CEO of Access Living. We're Chicago's Center for Independent Living. We're

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Karen Tamley: run by and for people with disabilities, and I myself am a wheelchair user. We were really pleased to be part of this, research project.

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Karen Tamley: And I think it really tied into a lot of the work that we're already doing in the digital space.

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Karen Tamley: Particularly around trying to close the digital divide for people with disabilities that just don't have any digital access, but also we do a lot of digital accessibility, testing and advising on websites and other, on other platforms. Soâ€¦

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Karen Tamley: This was really a great tie-in because we've named, AI and the use of AI for folks with disabilities as one of our strategic goals over the next 3 years. So we looked at, people with, specific disabilities, including,

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Karen Tamley: those that are blind, deaf, hard of hearing, hearing loss, and physical disabilities. And, we did do more just, one-on-one conversations about how

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Karen Tamley: each person is using AI in their daily life, primarily in work settings, with activities of daily living, mobility, and in healthcare, were kind of our four areas that we wanted to focus in on.

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00:05:57.195 --> 00:06:03.445

Karen Tamley: And so, I'll just start with the blind community, but also say that, you know, we had a fairly small

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00:06:03.505 --> 00:06:12.164

Karen Tamley: sample size here, so, you know, what I'm going to share isn't necessarily fully complete or, like, absolutely representative of the whole

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Karen Tamley: class of individuals, with that specific disability. But I did want to share some of the findings, that we had through these really, really informative conversations. So, in the blind community,

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Karen Tamley: we definitely saw high use of individuals that were using AI-powered smart glasses, either, like, Aira glasses or Meta glasses,

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00:06:39.995 --> 00:06:48.785

Karen Tamley: all of the people that I had spoken to were using metaclasses, mostly for travel, for wayfinding.

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Karen Tamley: But also for doing things like reading prescription bottles, or, you know, doing activities of daily living, reading recipes, picking out clothes, things like that.

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Karen Tamley: And they found that really, really helpful, and I think one of the things that's important about meta glasses is that they're really available on the open market.

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Karen Tamley: For anybody, not specifically for people with disabilities, but they are working for a lot of people who are blind and low vision. And, I'm gonna just say one thing I forgot to mention.

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Karen Tamley: also just about the entire group that we interviewed, they were all, in terms of makeup, were racially diverse, were age diverse, so we had, interviewees that were younger and older, like, over 60, and then we also had,

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00:07:50.005 --> 00:07:51.574

Karen Tamley: All of ourâ€¦

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Karen Tamley: interviewees were employed or formally employed. So, they all had some basic knowledge of AI tools that were available to them, and specifically to their disability, but also had the resources to purchase them if that was needed. So, I think going back to the blind community, one of the things

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Karen Tamley: that we did.

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Karen Tamley: Here, also, was that there was, kind of some areas where people felt that they wanted metaglasses to better identify, like, obstacles, particularly in the winter with snow and ice.

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Karen Tamley: Or do better descriptions of people's faces, so that they know more about and more information about who they were talking to.

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Karen Tamley: So those are some of the things that we definitely heard. And then, I just think overall, we found that there was a little bit, higher trust in AI tools amongst a younger generation than there was with the use of an older generation who preferred to rely on

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Karen Tamley: like a human, particularly with sensitive information, like financial information or, personal medical details. So that was definitely something that surfaced as part of the conversations with the blind community.

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Karen Tamley: We also interviewed, in the deaf and hard of hearing community,

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Karen Tamley: individuals who were either their own employer or worked at a large employer. And, I think one of the things that both talked about was the importance of, like, AI-powered captioning.

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Karen Tamley: And speech-to-text in their daily life.

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Karen Tamley: One Deaf person that I spoke to who works in the accessibility field hasâ€¦ has their own business, really talked about

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Karen Tamley: how AI is helping them, just as a business person, carry out their daily life. They do need, as part of their disability, to record all of their conversations, and so they wish that in the platforms that they were using.

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Karen Tamley: those recordings were automatic versus having to ask the person that they were in a meeting with, like, hey, can I record this conversation? Because they felt that that very much

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Karen Tamley: kind of interrupted the flow of the meeting, might create some level of discomfort, by having to ask if they could record the meetings. So that was something that, they definitely talked about.

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00:10:46.845 --> 00:10:55.085

Karen Tamley: They also talked about how they're using, just telemedicine platforms.

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Karen Tamley: in, to access their healthcare. And while this might not be AI-specific, it isâ€¦ they did really reveal

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Karen Tamley: some of the shortcomings that exist still in just technology and how people with different types of disabilities were able to get access, to telemedicine. The main issue that was surfaced was the fact that they use an interpreter, and when they're on their telemedicine platform, there can only be two people on the screen.

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Karen Tamley: There wasn't the ability to have

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Karen Tamley: an interpreter on the screen where they could see both the interpreter and the doctor. And that was problematic because the platform also didn't, provide captioning.

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Karen Tamley: So, that was a big barrier in terms of, being able to access healthcare. Another, thing is the person

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Karen Tamley: that I interviewed, particularly who is the business owner and travels fairly extensively for their job, talked about just travel, and

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00:12:03.545 --> 00:12:13.054

Karen Tamley: How there have been a number of improvements made to being able to get communication access, in travel, so on trains and

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00:12:13.085 --> 00:12:19.934

Karen Tamley: In the airport, but yet there was still kind of a long way to go when it comes to

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00:12:19.935 --> 00:12:43.135

Karen Tamley: you know, being able to get access to, when the pilot comes on and announces that everyone needs to put their seatbelt on, or that there's turbulence, or specific instructions that, you know, this is something that we need to really work harder on in terms of making sure that deaf people have equal access, to air travel as well.

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Karen Tamley: And then, the other thing that I think was really noteworthy, was that,

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Karen Tamley: the issue of generative AI and just, the lack of disability, cultural sensitivity in generative AI in terms of terminology was a big issue. The Deaf one Deaf person that I spoke to talked about

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00:13:08.865 --> 00:13:14.885

Karen Tamley: How when he's using generative AI,

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Karen Tamley: they're referring to the deaf community as, quote, hearing impaired, and it made them very angry, feeling that, you know, I am culturally deaf, I'm a Deaf person, I don'tâ€¦ I am not hearing impaired, and that this really spoke to the need for more,

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Karen Tamley: Deaf people, hard of hearing folks, and people with disabilities really being truly involved in the design, testing, and rollout of

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Karen Tamley: different platforms, and how that was just noticeably absent just by the terminology that was being used. So, I think all of those were really interesting findings.

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Karen Tamley: that I hadn't thought about, both in terms of how far we have to go, but also in terms of where the benefit is, really, for folks that are deaf and hard of hearing. Another person that I had spoken to who was hard of hearing, and worked in the medical field

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00:14:17.335 --> 00:14:32.294

Karen Tamley: She has had a lot of issues with, you know, just communication access and getting that accommodation from her employer. Works at a large medical university, and

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Karen Tamley: was extremely grateful, because recently the employer switched over to a form of technology that would record and put speech-to-text for all patient-doctor relationships across the board for every medical professional. And this was

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Karen Tamley: Really meant originally as a way to save time and make sure that patient-doctor interactions were accurate and,

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Karen Tamley: And as a way to really maximize the efficiency and the time that doctors had to spend with their patients so that they weren't just diligently taking notes the entire time, but could just record the interaction, and all of that speech would turn into text.

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00:15:23.265 --> 00:15:38.645

Karen Tamley: But she really talked about how that was extremely helpful to her as, a hard-of-hearing clinician, and in terms of really making sure that her interactions with her patients were accurate, and

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Karen Tamley: you know, fully representative of the appointment that, she was having with them. So that was a way that AI was being used more

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Karen Tamley: From an organizational perspective, not necessarily as a disability accommodation, but really, really benefiting employees with disabilities.

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Karen Tamley: We'll go to the next slide and then talk about the last segment, of disability that we

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Karen Tamley: worked with, or interviewed, which was, individuals with physical disability.

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Karen Tamley: So one of the people that, I spoke to was someone that had a very high-level disability, relied, fairly heavily on personal assistance, used a power wheelchair.

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Karen Tamley: And but has been a long-time user of technology.

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Karen Tamley: And talked about that really as a necessity for survival and management. This is someone that is a director of an organization, travels extensively around the world.

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Karen Tamley: extremely independent, but yet, again, uses personal assistance for most aspects of daily living. And,

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Karen Tamley: has really been a high user of technology, particularly AI, kind of in all aspects, in the home, you know, using AI and smart technology in the home, but also using metaglasses too, which I thought was really interesting.

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00:17:18.245 --> 00:17:22.455

Karen Tamley: Because he has, a number of personal assistants.

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Karen Tamley: In and out, that help with, you know, just

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Karen Tamley: Traveling, or, getting ready for bed, cooking, all of the activities of daily living, and training multiple, personal assistants

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Karen Tamley: you know, is very time-consuming, so I was using metaglasses to record the PA trainings, and then would share those recordings with, the personal assistants that he was onboarding as a way to save time.

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00:17:54.335 --> 00:18:11.465

Karen Tamley: And just effort, and so I thought that was really fascinating to see how metaglasses were being used in a little bit different way. Also, this was an individual that has a very complex, diet, and

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00:18:11.515 --> 00:18:15.375

Karen Tamley: so has used AI to help with

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Karen Tamley: Just doing menu planning for the entire week, and using AI to prepare a shopping list for his personal assistants, that would really meet the needs of

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00:18:29.265 --> 00:18:37.975

Karen Tamley: his dietary restrictions. So I thought that was really, pretty clever way of using AI in a way that saved a lot of time.

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Karen Tamley: And then, again, in the workplace, using AI to, you know, organize meeting notes, to doâ€

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Karen Tamley: all of the tasks that you need to do in office, and particularly as an executive director, who has a fairly high-level responsibility, AI, like, it probably helps most of us, was really, really essential to him also in the workplace.

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Karen Tamley: And then, just kind of circling back to the healthcare.

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Karen Tamley: He talked about using other devices like the Oura Ring, to maximize when to take medication during the day, to, monitor oxygen levels so that he could, really just kind of schedule rest periods throughout the day based on, if his oxygen levels were going down or

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00:19:30.235 --> 00:19:30.855

Karen Tamley: up.

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Karen Tamley: And so that was another really, just insightful use of how, he was using AI. So that is,

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Karen Tamley: just kind of a very high-level summary of the interviews that I did as part of this project. We're really, really thrilled to be part of this.

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Karen Tamley: And I think for us, because we are a Center for Independent Living, most of the people that we are serving are low-income individuals with disabilities that reallyâ€¦ many who have challenges with

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00:20:03.115 --> 00:20:21.085

Karen Tamley: accessing digital tools, just basic tools like internet or devices to be able to get connected. We're really interested in looking and using this project as a launch pad to see how we can think about how we get AI tools

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Karen Tamley: for disabled folks that are extremely low income, that may not be aware or connected, with individuals or information, about different AI tools and how it can support their independence. So, in our strategic plan over the next 3 years, we're going to be really taking a deep dive on the ways in which

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Karen Tamley: We can help bridge that digital divide and help get, you know, affordable or no-cost AI tools into the hands of our community that's least digitally connected.

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00:20:57.185 --> 00:21:04.584

Karen Tamley: So that is a summary in our project. Just want to thank you all for being here, and Rachel, I will turn it back to you.

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00:21:04.945 --> 00:21:17.315

Rachel Nemeth: Thank you so much, Taryn. The information you presented was, very enlightening. So now we will hear from Ariel Sims, President and CEO of Disability Belongs.

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00:21:28.075 --> 00:21:43.984

Ariel Simms: Sims. I'm the President and Chief Executive Officer of Disability Belongs. My pronouns are they, them, or she, hers. I'm a white, non-binary individual. I've got short, curly red hair. I'm wearing a black suit jacket today over a bright blue top.

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Ariel Simms: And I'm in front of our virtual background with Disability Belongs logo.

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Ariel Simms: in the upper corner of the Zoom screen.

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Ariel Simms: So grateful to be here with all of you. Thank you to all of our attendees for joining us. Thank you to CTA for hosting and facilitating the overall project.

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00:22:03.695 --> 00:22:14.025

Ariel Simms: And of course, thank you to the other organizations who came on board as partners, to our colleagues at Access Living and Communication. First, we always enjoy the opportunity.

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00:22:14.135 --> 00:22:15.534

Ariel Simms: To work with you.

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Ariel Simms: So I'll start with a brief overview of Disability Belongs, then move into our research process, then give you some insight into the overall findings and some of the overall key takeaways from the project and the research that we did.

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Ariel Simms: So, Disability Belongs is a cross-disability, disability-led nonprofit organization driving cultural and policy change to create a more accessible, equitable, and inclusive society.

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Ariel Simms: Our work really spans three key pillars, which includes systems-level advocacy, leadership development of both people and within organizations, as well as partnerships, where we kind of take

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Ariel Simms: everything we know about systems advocacy and what we know about leadership development, and we bring that together in a specific partnership with another organization or a group of organizations. For us, artificial intelligence and the overarching

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00:23:18.835 --> 00:23:36.254

Ariel Simms: Field of technology is a key cultural change sector, and therefore a key opportunity to ensure that the disability community is fully and authentically represented, and that those of us with disabilities are

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Ariel Simms: influencing, technology outcomes and processes every step of the way. Our name kind of says it all. Disability belongs in every sector, and therefore belongs, in the world of tech as well.

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Ariel Simms: And I'd love to invite you all to learn more by visiting our website at disabilitybelongs.org.

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Ariel Simms: So with that, I'll move into an overview of our process. Top line, we did a kind of a mixed methods research approach. We combined a series of interviews, 8 in total, with a paid survey that we administered through SurveyMonkey.

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Ariel Simms: Overall, we gathered responses from 406 participants across those we surveyed.

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Ariel Simms: And those respondents kind of represented experiences across geographic regions, age groups, and types of disabilities. And we had a pretty good representation across the eight interviews we did that were a

bit more in-depth. So, overall, we felt pretty comfortable that between the survey and the interviews, we had a more

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Ariel Simms: representative sample.

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00:24:48.505 --> 00:24:50.194

Ariel Simms: Across our research.

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Ariel Simms: Although, as an organization, we were focused most explicitly on cognitive and intellectual disabilities, as well as the broader category of neurodivergence. But for us as a cross-disability organization, we're also really interested in the experiences of those

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Ariel Simms: who live across disability identities or parts of the overall disability community. So, some of the key findings that we hadâ€¦ I'll start with what we found is, you know, what were the

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Ariel Simms: When were people most likely to make use of AI, especially for those of us in the disability community?

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Ariel Simms: In general, there was an overarching theme of, you know, people were more likely to use AI when it facilitated

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Ariel Simms: independence, but also didn't require a lot of sensitive information, which I'll get into in just a minute.

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Ariel Simms: But some of the examples that came up were around navigation and route planning, using that for wayfinding, but also to plan ahead and know what the experience might be, how to navigate from point A to point B.

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Ariel Simms: There were sort of mixed results on using, voice, voice instructions or voice commands across technology. Some people really appreciated, using voice commands, others found that

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Ariel Simms: a bit distracting and not as helpful. So, different experience, across, the community and across the neurodivergent community in particular.

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Ariel Simms: There was also quite a bit of use in healthcare, and for things like, scheduling tools and making of appointments. We did see some of that use case carry over into other contexts as well, including in the workplace, or keeping a schedule for

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00:26:49.845 --> 00:26:53.074

Ariel Simms: You know, daily life, and transitioning between.

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00:26:53.385 --> 00:26:55.635

Ariel Simms: aspects of community.

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Ariel Simms: In the workplace, we also noted that people are more likely to use note-takers and other assistive devices to support success on the job. But overall, some key themes are where people are most likely to use AI was in navigation, route planning.

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Ariel Simms: General planning of activities and days, scheduling considerations.

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00:27:21.335 --> 00:27:28.414

Ariel Simms: So, some of our general findings across the research that we did was that,

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Ariel Simms: you know, it wasâ€¦ it was hard to parse out different experience from different parts of the community, and of course, even when people had a shared disability experience, there were often mixed reviews or mixed insights on the use of AI, what was most

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Ariel Simms: helpful or unhelpful, the level of trust, etc. And we heard, kind of repeated throughout our approach was that

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Ariel Simms: most people did not identify other forms of AI unless it was a truly generative AI tool, such as aâ€¦

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00:28:05.575 --> 00:28:08.064

Ariel Simms: ChatGPT or a Gemini.

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00:28:08.195 --> 00:28:13.045

Ariel Simms: So, for example, a lot of people didn't recognize that AI lives in

140

00:28:13.385 --> 00:28:25.675

Ariel Simms: almost every piece of technology we interact with on a daily basis, but often assumed that we were asking about only generative AI. So, there was a really interesting finding that

141

00:28:25.725 --> 00:28:43.884

Ariel Simms: There's different levels of awareness and recognition of artificial intelligence tools and how they're being embedded into technology without notifying users or making it clear to users that this is part of the overall experience of the technology.

142

00:28:43.885 --> 00:29:02.785

Ariel Simms: For those who did recognize it, they expressed some frustration that, one, they weren't being notified when AI was explicitly being used, and that there was no opt-out feature, in all of the different, technology that people are interacting with day to day.

143

00:29:03.465 --> 00:29:09.555

Ariel Simms: And we can go ahead and move to the next slide, please. So, overall, something that

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00:29:10.015 --> 00:29:17.745

Ariel Simms: Oh, I'm so sorry, I thought we had another slide. You can stay there, thank you. So overall, across the board,

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00:29:18.095 --> 00:29:21.505

Ariel Simms: We appreciate that was different,

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00:29:22.175 --> 00:29:27.245

Ariel Simms: You know, different tech across different platforms, and people noted that

147

00:29:27.335 --> 00:29:38.935

Ariel Simms: you know, they would encounter one platform which used a different form of AI and have to transition to something else, and that overall, this could be an incredibly frustrating user experience to go from

148

00:29:38.995 --> 00:29:53.995

Ariel Simms: you know, company to company, technology tool to technology tool, and that the tools being used are different, or work differently, which required a lot more cognitive load and consideration to try and adapt.

149

00:29:53.995 --> 00:30:04.124

Ariel Simms: to those tools. Another key concern that was raised was privacy, and overall, we found that individuals were far less likely to

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00:30:04.125 --> 00:30:18.585

Ariel Simms: use with AI, if they knew it was included, when it came to more private information, such as health information, or information where they had to input personal data about themselves.

151

00:30:18.875 --> 00:30:26.454

Ariel Simms: We also heard throughout our research that there were security concerns, and security concerns in the sense that

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00:30:26.485 --> 00:30:44.375

Ariel Simms: both data could be leaked, and or that data being collected by these tools could be misused by third parties. So, for us, that presented a bit of a more nuanced concern. I think many of us are familiar with general privacy concerns.

153

00:30:44.375 --> 00:30:49.274

Ariel Simms: But something else that came to mind, particularly for the disability community.

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00:30:49.315 --> 00:30:56.974

Ariel Simms: Was, how is this data going to be used by third parties, and could it be used in a way that could harm

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00:30:57.045 --> 00:31:00.094

Ariel Simms: The disability community in particular.

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00:31:00.745 --> 00:31:05.765

Ariel Simms: My one last, highlight I will share was that,

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00:31:06.245 --> 00:31:15.075

Ariel Simms: people with disabilities kind of disproportionately noted that, you know, AI isâ€¦ Not always well-suited toâ€¦

158

00:31:15.075 --> 00:31:32.534

Ariel Simms: navigating more nuanced, concerns or challenges, especially when it comes to things like customer service platforms and interactions, that they're often designed to follow a very specific, flow, and, you know, with only

159

00:31:32.955 --> 00:31:41.994

Ariel Simms: two choices of a response, and then the system responds accordingly. But the reality is that a lot of things are more nuanced.

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00:31:42.025 --> 00:32:00.964

Ariel Simms: people really wanted to ensure they always had a human option or a way to sort of get out of some of these very binary-driven systems across the board. So overall, some key things that we were taking away from our research was that

161

00:32:00.995 --> 00:32:20.635

Ariel Simms: You know, like everything, disability has to be a really intentional part of the process. We can't design something without the disability community and expect for it to work, and we need to have more onus back on systems to notify people of the platforms and technology that they are getting into, that they might not be

162

00:32:20.695 --> 00:32:21.875

Ariel Simms: Aware of.

163

00:32:21.975 --> 00:32:26.585

Ariel Simms: So those are some of the key things that we found, and with that, I'll pass it back to Rachel.

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00:32:27.565 --> 00:32:29.375

Rachel Nemeth: Thank you very much, Arielle.

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00:32:29.995 --> 00:32:37.255

Rachel Nemeth: So now, the last organization that we are going to hear from is we will be sharing some of the,

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00:32:37.255 --> 00:33:00.725

Rachel Nemeth: results of the research done by Communication First. First, a little bit about this organization. Communication First is the only nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the civil rights of the more than 5 million children and adults in the United States who, due to disability or other condition, cannot rely on speech alone to be heard and understood.

167

00:33:00.855 --> 00:33:15.145

Rachel Nemeth: Their mission is to protect and advance the rights, autonomy, opportunity, and dignity of people with speech-related

disabilities through public engagement, policy and practice reform, and systemic advocacy.

168

00:33:15.825 --> 00:33:25.814

Rachel Nemeth: So to present the research that was conducted by Communication First, I will turn it over to, one of my colleagues here at CTA, Ellie Schatz.

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00:33:27.065 --> 00:33:37.354

Ellie Schatz: Thank you, Rachel. As Rachel mentioned, I'll be presenting on behalf of Communication First, and as a visual description, I am a white brunette woman, and I'm wearing a brown dress.

170

00:33:37.915 --> 00:33:51.894

Ellie Schatz: So Communication First focused their research on people with speech disabilities. They found that people with speech disabilities are generally very optimistic about AI's potential to make communication faster, easier, and more fluid.

171

00:33:51.895 --> 00:34:10.395

Ellie Schatz: For people with augmentative and alternative communication, or AAC, AI is already making a practical difference. Features like word prediction, grammar support, and hands-free access are helping users communicate more efficiently and more fully.

172

00:34:11.125 --> 00:34:30.024

Ellie Schatz: So this matters because, for many users, communication is not just about speed, but it's about being understood and participating in real-time conversation and expressing thoughts in a way that feels very authentic to them. AI can address the common frustration of losing pace in a conversation before a thought can be fully expressed.

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00:34:30.445 --> 00:34:38.915

Ellie Schatz: So participants emphasized that if AI is going to drive efficiency for people, it should include AAC users and their communication needs.

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00:34:39.785 --> 00:34:53.044

Ellie Schatz: So, where AI is already helping, word prediction is one of the most praised AI-enabled features. So many users said that multi-word prediction helps not only with speed, but also with writing and communicating more completely.

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00:34:53.635 --> 00:35:00.405

Ellie Schatz: Participants want even stronger multi-word and sentence prediction, as well as support for multiple languages.

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00:35:00.725 --> 00:35:08.574

Ellie Schatz: Ai is also helping with grammar and message construction, especially for users who don't always communicate in full sentences.

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00:35:08.915 --> 00:35:18.025

Ellie Schatz: Some participants also envisioned AI tools that could take notes from AAC interactions and then help them revisit and respond to the topics later.

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00:35:18.815 --> 00:35:28.614

Ellie Schatz: So, this is a key area for innovation. Ai can improve both the efficiency and the quality of expressive communication for AAC users.

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00:35:28.975 --> 00:35:46.695

Ellie Schatz: better AAC tools can help participateâ€| help users participate more fully in school, work, healthcare, and everyday social interactions. So there's a strong interest that AI systems areâ€| become more adaptive, more personalized, and more responsive to how people actually communicate.

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00:35:47.535 --> 00:35:59.055

Ellie Schatz: Participants also raised some key concerns in their communication-first research. So despite the promise, participants were very clear that today's tools still fall short in many important ways.

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00:35:59.055 --> 00:36:09.114

Ellie Schatz: Especially AI-generated voices can be described as robotic, emotionally flat, or limited in their ability to convey tone, emphasis, or feeling.

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00:36:09.225 --> 00:36:17.614

Ellie Schatz: So users wanted to communicate emotion, personality, excitement, frustration, and individuality, not just words.

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00:36:18.205 --> 00:36:24.995

Ellie Schatz: Participants also warned that AI suggestions can sometimes alter the meaning or character of what they were trying to say.

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00:36:25.635 --> 00:36:35.924

Ellie Schatz: So, for AIC users, preserving personal voice is essential, and the goal is for AI is not to replace their voice, but to help support it so they can communicate more fully.

185

00:36:36.725 --> 00:36:55.204

Ellie Schatz: So the main takeaway from communication-first research is that AI can be a powerful tool for accessibility for people with speech disabilities when it's designed not only to enhance speed, clarity, and dependence, but also to preserve the user's intent, personality, and emotional expression.

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00:36:55.465 --> 00:37:02.765

Ellie Schatz: So the most effective AI solutions will be the ones that help people communicate more naturally without overriding what makes their voice their own.

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00:37:03.315 --> 00:37:10.484

Ellie Schatz: So thank you, and we'd be happy to connect you with the Communication First team to learn more about their research from them as well.

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00:37:12.745 --> 00:37:14.875

Rachel Nemeth: Great, thank you so much, Ellie.

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00:37:14.875 --> 00:37:35.805

Rachel Nemeth: So now, is the opportunity for the folks who are participating in the virtual roundtable to ask questions. If anyone who is on the, Zoom now would, like to ask a question, please feel free to type it into the chat or, use the hand-raising tool, and I will call on you.

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00:37:35.805 --> 00:37:42.015

Rachel Nemeth: While I look to see if we have any hand raised,

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00:37:42.185 --> 00:37:46.445

Rachel Nemeth: Okay, I see, Roy with your hand raised. Please go ahead.

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00:37:46.445 --> 00:38:03.395

Roy Samuelson: Hey, thanks so much for putting this together, Rachel, and Ellie, and Karen, and Ariel. It's great to hear you speak about the different applications here. I'm curious about the conversations that you've had about privacy beyond what you've already stated. I understand there's a lot of pushback.

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00:38:03.395 --> 00:38:10.385

Roy Samuelson: from different perspectives when it comes to privacy. Is there anything you could elaborate a little bit more on that? And thanks so much for being here.

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00:38:17.275 --> 00:38:20.664

Rachel Nemeth: Arielle, I think you were the one who brought up privacy.

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00:38:21.255 --> 00:38:40.404

Ariel Simms: This is Ariel, happy to kick us off, and I'm sure others may have additional insights as well. So, overall, what we found with privacy was that it's often a very, individualized experience, and from individual to individual, there was a different sense of

196

00:38:40.505 --> 00:38:58.125

Ariel Simms: how comfortable am I using specific AI tools, and what information am I comfortable sharing with it? So there was a lot of individual range in that overall experience. We did find, some general themes that

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00:38:58.125 --> 00:39:12.185

Ariel Simms: when people don't always recognize when they're interacting with AI, you know, they're kind of expecting all AI to be, you know, the generative AI tool, so that raised for us a concern that people might

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00:39:12.725 --> 00:39:18.974

Ariel Simms: when they're using these tools, not even be aware they're interacting with AI, so that was one.

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00:39:19.235 --> 00:39:22.135

Ariel Simms: One space,

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00:39:22.305 --> 00:39:38.685

Ariel Simms: in particular that stood out to us was not even recognizing someone's interacting with the tool in the first place. And then there was a theme tied to more sensitive information, and I believe, Karen in Access Living found a similar theme in that

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00:39:38.765 --> 00:39:46.505

Ariel Simms: You know, the more sensitive people perceive their information to be, such as medical data or information.

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00:39:46.525 --> 00:39:58.954

Ariel Simms: there tended to be a trend towards the more concern they were about privacy. But then there was a related concern around security of, you know, even if there is trust in a specific tool.

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00:39:59.095 --> 00:40:07.794

Ariel Simms: who else has access to the information, how the information might be used, and what's happening with third parties. So, for folks.

204

00:40:07.795 --> 00:40:08.305

Karen Tamley: Fact.

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00:40:08.305 --> 00:40:26.124

Ariel Simms: were more experienced AI users, I would say we heard more of those concerns, coming out, that it was not even just, what am I comfortable sharing with different AI tools, but how are others using this information, and might be.

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00:40:26.325 --> 00:40:37.684

Ariel Simms: using information. And thereâ€¦ there were some really mixed results around, generative AI. In some cases, you know, users found it really

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00:40:37.745 --> 00:40:55.845

Ariel Simms: helpful to be able to put in some information and, you know, kind of collaborate with a more generative AI tool to generate insights based on the data it was being fed. Others were concerned about, you know, AI sort of quote-unquote jumping to the wrong conclusion based on

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00:40:55.845 --> 00:41:12.305

Ariel Simms: the information that was being shared. So, those are some of the things that stood out for us, and I think something we're really interested in the future is, you know, how will this change over time as people become more AI literate across

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00:41:12.545 --> 00:41:29.175

Ariel Simms: across society and have become more familiar with what AI tools are being used? Or could we possibly have the effect that, as it becomes more of an everyday occurrence, and people come to expect that across platforms, will people become desensitized? And I think that's something we're

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00:41:29.585 --> 00:41:31.895

Ariel Simms: within the future implications of.

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00:41:32.985 --> 00:41:37.315

Ariel Simms: I'll pass it to, well, I'll just open it up in case anyone else would like to chime in.

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00:41:40.035 --> 00:41:52.094

Karen Tamley: Yeah, Ariel, this is Karen Tamley. I think just that AI literacy and familiarity was really, really key, and again, we definitely saw that withâ€¦

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00:41:52.395 --> 00:42:05.214

Karen Tamley: you know, again, the use of AI, particularly around sensitive, confidential information, financial, medical information, and more of a tendency to want to rely back on humans.

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00:42:05.215 --> 00:42:13.814

Karen Tamley: For that support versus use of AI, so I think that's something that we definitely need to grapple with as this moves forward.

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00:42:16.315 --> 00:42:27.835

Rachel Nemeth: So, I'll jump in with a question that came in, through the registration process, because it, relates to what we were just talking about, and this has to do with the,

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00:42:27.925 --> 00:42:47.485

Rachel Nemeth: customer service numbers that are listed as the accessible numbers for customer service, you know, for banks, airlines, hospitals, retail stores, etc. Do we know how well known and used these, methods of communication are, and what technologies are

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00:42:47.485 --> 00:42:50.304

Rachel Nemeth: They using to facilitate this?

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00:42:50.935 --> 00:43:00.435

Rachel Nemeth: I mean, for example, I would think, you know, hospitals and banks, just with what you were saying about, that'sâ€¦ that could be where some of the privacy concerns are.

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00:43:00.805 --> 00:43:06.344

Rachel Nemeth: Do those calls end up in speaking to a real human, or is it mostly automated, or do we even know?

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00:43:10.315 --> 00:43:28.304

Ariel Simms: This is Ariel. It's such a great question, and I think this is a particular area of AI that's moving very quickly. You know, even some folks on our own team noticed that when they go to a drive-through restaurant now, that some of the

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00:43:28.305 --> 00:43:37.995

Ariel Simms: ordering, mechanisms are now AI-driven rather than being a human. So it's something that is changing

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00:43:38.735 --> 00:44:02.735

Ariel Simms: very, very fast, and I think this comes back to one of the insights that we learned from our research, is that overall, the experience is that some of the systems work similarly, but overall, theyâ€¦ some seem to work better than others, so people are having very different experiences from, you know, working with a business, to working with a healthcare provider, to

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00:44:03.015 --> 00:44:22.964

Ariel Simms: navigating a community space, there doesn't seem to be a lot of consistency yet, so even when they encounter a tool that seems similar to one before, it often feels different enough that the suspicion is that these are different tools, and I think that is kind of our experience as well, is that

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00:44:23.265 --> 00:44:42.765

Ariel Simms: it's such a rapidly growing field that right now we do have lots of technology being used in different, different ways, and lots of platforms and tools that rely on different AI systems and models underneath them, and I think that's going to be something we're going to have to continue to contend with.

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00:44:42.925 --> 00:44:46.395

Ariel Simms: Asâ€¦ as the field progresses, soâ€¦

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00:44:46.505 --> 00:44:55.615

Ariel Simms: And people have also, I think, had the experience, too, of, you know, they call the same number, they call the accessibility line, or the customer service line.

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00:44:55.635 --> 00:45:04.765

Ariel Simms: And they call back a month later, and it seems like it's a different tool, and a different system. And I think overall, what we were hearing from participants was.

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00:45:04.765 --> 00:45:17.144

Ariel Simms: like, they would like to be notified, one, that, what they are speaking with or interacting with is AI, because that posed a real challenge, particularly

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00:45:17.145 --> 00:45:29.735

Ariel Simms: For folks with less technology experience, but also those with cognitive disabilities or neurodivergence, was not always being aware that it was an AI they were interacting with, rather than a human being.

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00:45:29.735 --> 00:45:38.765

Ariel Simms: So having that notice and the other, you know, big flag we learned was the always keeping the human option. Like, at some point.

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00:45:38.895 --> 00:45:55.995

Ariel Simms: the systems are not evolved enough, and there's enough nuance that, you know, people felt like a human could better help them than going back and forth with the system overall. So, for us, that have, that really came up quite a bit.

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00:45:57.635 --> 00:46:09.555

Rachel Nemeth: Great, thank you. And, to close out this portion of the conversation, I want to share something that our, one of our attendees, Michelle, put into the chat to share with the group, that

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00:46:09.555 --> 00:46:31.664

Rachel Nemeth: Tiffany Wilson of WINS has raised awareness of privacy and consent regarding technology like apps that are downloaded for someone with a disability without their awareness of how the data may be used. And, there's a link, in the chat for, changeaccess.com slash Tiffany. So we'll,

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00:46:31.665 --> 00:46:34.624

Rachel Nemeth: We can share this resource with,

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00:46:34.865 --> 00:46:39.654

Rachel Nemeth: the roundtable attendees, after, After the event.

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00:46:40.405 --> 00:46:45.564

Rachel Nemeth: Anyone else would like to, ask a question?

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00:46:50.775 --> 00:46:57.965

Rachel Nemeth: I'm not seeing any hands, so I will go to another one from our list.

238

00:46:58.755 --> 00:47:07.715

Rachel Nemeth: How will AI impact communication for those who are hard of hearing or have hearing loss, but do not use ASL?

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00:47:13.335 --> 00:47:20.775

Karen Tamley: Well, this is Karen. I mean, I guess the folks that I interviewed definitely,

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00:47:20.915 --> 00:47:40.295

Karen Tamley: you know, speech to text and captions and things like that. Automated captioning is something that's really important, particularly for those that might not use sign language, and that was talked about amongst the group that

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00:47:40.295 --> 00:47:51.924

Karen Tamley: that I interviewed, in particular to the person that I spoke with that didn't use sign language at all, and was hard of hearing, and the workplace,

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00:47:52.075 --> 00:47:57.754

Karen Tamley: you know, AI tools now, how they were really totally leveling the playing field for her at work.

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00:47:57.835 --> 00:48:14.375

Karen Tamley: So, but, you know, I feel like I would need to dig even deeper to find out what that's; what the future is going to look like in terms of tools, that may be emerging for folks that are; are deaf or hard of hearing that don't use sign language.

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00:48:14.585 --> 00:48:19.235

Karen Tamley: But would love to hear what others, have to say on this panel.

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00:48:20.585 --> 00:48:25.364

Ariel Simms: Ariel, thank you so much for that insight, Karen. I think that's so incredibly important.

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00:48:25.465 --> 00:48:34.855

Ariel Simms: I think one additional nuance I would add is that, from some of the survey responses and interviews that we conducted, what also

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00:48:35.165 --> 00:48:47.664

Ariel Simms: came to light and consistently comes to light for the disability community, many of whom rely on captioning, including those who are neurodivergent and have other access needs, was that

248

00:48:47.965 --> 00:48:55.115

Ariel Simms: Kind of the important reminder that the automated captions currently do not

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00:48:55.375 --> 00:49:03.415

Ariel Simms: Replace, human-provided captioning, or, you know, what we call communication access, real-time translation.

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00:49:03.415 --> 00:49:03.935

Karen Tamley: Aww.

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00:49:03.935 --> 00:49:12.004

Ariel Simms: And that came through, loud and clear. I know some of our, respondents also,

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00:49:12.565 --> 00:49:29.035

Ariel Simms: I guess I can't say fondly, but jokingly referred to automated captions as craptions, and that continues to be a theme for those who rely on captioning, but then, of course, encounter other barriers with

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00:49:29.145 --> 00:49:35.385

Ariel Simms: Whether people will, cover the cost for human-provided captioning.

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00:49:35.485 --> 00:49:52.714

Ariel Simms: Which comes with its own quality standards, and the hope is that over time, if automaticâ€¦ automated captions continue to be in use, that they will be subject to similar or equivalent standards that are placed on human cart providers, as well.

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00:49:53.215 --> 00:50:13.045

Karen Tamley: And Ariel, this is Karen. The other thing that got brought up to me that I didn't mention earlier is also the use of avatar interpreters, too. I, was also just a really big concern, particularly around specific areas that required a lot of, like,

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00:50:13.045 --> 00:50:21.884

Karen Tamley: You know, sector-specific terminology and cultural competency, that there's a lot of concern about the move towardsâ€¦ towards that as well.

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00:50:22.935 --> 00:50:25.345

Ariel Simms: Ms, Mariel, absolutely.

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00:50:25.495 --> 00:50:40.085

Ariel Simms: That comes up a lot, and I think some parts of the community have been saying, like, well, what about even limited contexts, you know, such as emergency situations, or in a disaster? And I know the feedback we've heard consistently from

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00:50:40.095 --> 00:50:52.354

Ariel Simms: our colleagues who are deaf, or use sign language, that they're like, never, never, never avatars, because so much of that communication gets lost. So it'll be interesting to see

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00:50:52.535 --> 00:50:57.675

Ariel Simms: how this develops and the tension, I think we're encountering across the sector with

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00:50:58.125 --> 00:51:09.695

Ariel Simms: You know, adequate planning for access needs ahead of time, ensuring there is adequate resources and budgets to pay for professional interpreters, as well as part providers.

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00:51:10.025 --> 00:51:19.834

Ariel Simms: and the potential to have AI increase access in a world where resources are always limited, so I think that potential

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00:51:19.975 --> 00:51:24.315

Ariel Simms: We're still gonna continue to experience in the months and years ahead.

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00:51:24.585 --> 00:51:37.425

Karen Tamley: Yeah, and I also think it just really speaks to a broader need around disabled people need to be at the table whenâ€¦ when platforms and products are, you know, designed and tested and

265

00:51:37.425 --> 00:51:50.844

Karen Tamley: Rolled out, and, you know, just over and over again, we have examples where, products are designed for us, not with us, and, you know, what that end result looks like is not always positive.

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00:51:53.915 --> 00:52:03.984

Rachel Nemeth: And to that point, Karen, that is a big reason why it is a priority for CTA to make sure that representatives from the

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00:52:03.985 --> 00:52:14.375

Rachel Nemeth: various disability communities have the opportunity to attend CES and talk to the representatives from the companies who are, you know.

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00:52:14.435 --> 00:52:26.224

Rachel Nemeth: showing the exhibits and developing these new products, because, you know, facilitating those relationships and connections is very important, both for CTA and for our member companies.

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00:52:26.855 --> 00:52:30.745

Karen Tamley: For sure, yep. No, and I really appreciate all the effort that

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00:52:30.905 --> 00:52:42.365

Karen Tamley: CTA Foundation really put into making that experience not only inclusive, but having various forums for people to give that feedback directly.

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00:52:43.105 --> 00:52:44.494

Karen Tamley: So, thank you.

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00:52:46.375 --> 00:52:54.594

Rachel Nemeth: Great, I think we have time for one more question, if there's someone who wants to ask the question live, or I have,

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00:52:54.725 --> 00:52:57.965

Rachel Nemeth: Another, submitted written question.

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00:53:02.555 --> 00:53:05.494

Rachel Nemeth: Not seeing hand raised. So,

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00:53:05.655 --> 00:53:25.385

Rachel Nemeth: This question asks, are there efforts to standardize wearables and home monitoring to seamlessly support aging adults? Could there be hands-free install and add devices to easily allow adult children in remote cities to connect and invite local support services?

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00:53:25.725 --> 00:53:32.155

Rachel Nemeth: I think this is an interesting question, talking about the kind of caregiver management piece that I know we've,

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00:53:32.495 --> 00:53:34.364

Rachel Nemeth: Talked about already today.

278

00:53:36.235 --> 00:53:46.054

Ariel Simms: This is Ariel. I think it's such an interesting area, and one that is also potentially fraught with so many of the things that we've,

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00:53:46.105 --> 00:54:00.295

Ariel Simms: identified in our roundtable conversation, to date. Something that we always flag from an advocacy perspective is, the idea of informed consent, and that, you know, no one is,

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00:54:00.445 --> 00:54:12.934

Ariel Simms: Being subjected to, anything, including technology, the use of technology, without being aware of what it is, what it's for, how the information will be used.

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00:54:13.085 --> 00:54:18.304

Ariel Simms: and with that full understanding, consenting to its use. So this comes up a lot in the context of

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00:54:18.405 --> 00:54:29.825

Ariel Simms: monitoring and remote monitoring in particular, in different caregiving contexts and settings. But it also originally came about because there's a very real need and such a

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00:54:30.035 --> 00:54:44.354

Ariel Simms: a hard time keeping up a robust direct care workforce that the community also relies on. So, again, acknowledging the tension there, but noting that, you know, I think the way we address it is through

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00:54:44.355 --> 00:54:57.804

Ariel Simms: informed consent as a process. As for standardizing wearables, I think what we found in our research, and I was hearing it echoed from other colleagues, was that

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00:54:57.895 --> 00:55:15.455

Ariel Simms: as technology continues, there is a desire for more familiarity across technology and tools, so that people aren't having to relearn systems and technology every time they're in a different context. But at the same time, I think what we're actually

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00:55:15.455 --> 00:55:18.034

Ariel Simms: Hearing more from the community isâ€!

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00:55:18.055 --> 00:55:30.634

Ariel Simms: more options, and being able to customize or individualize technology experiences, as opposed to having everything work the same way. So, in other words.

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00:55:30.635 --> 00:55:38.575

Ariel Simms: Trying to keep some of the technology similar across the board, but having user interfaces and settings be

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00:55:38.575 --> 00:55:43.064

Ariel Simms: Kind of diverse enough that individual users can update their own

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00:55:43.065 --> 00:56:04.604

Ariel Simms: preferences, you know. We've been talking about captioning today, and there's, you know, a move towards more dynamic captioning in some settings to express, emotion and, context, and others find it incredibly distracting to have it not just be, sort of.

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00:56:04.645 --> 00:56:22.874

Ariel Simms: black and white, straight-up captioning. So, giving users the autonomy to influence the decisions, and the settings to create their own experience, I think is something that we're going to continue to see the need for, and was certainly a big theme of conversation I noted at CES this year as well.

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00:56:26.605 --> 00:56:38.454

Rachel Nemeth: Great. Well, thank you very much, Ariel, Karen, Ellie, and your organizations, Disability Beloans, Access Living, Communication First,

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00:56:38.455 --> 00:56:49.465

Rachel Nemeth: CTAs really, enjoyed, this project and this partnership, and we hope to, continue to work with these wonderful organizations in the future. So,

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00:56:49.775 --> 00:57:05.275

Rachel Nemeth: with that, the, the white paper that will, explain more with this research, will be, published soon on the CTA website, along with a recording of this virtual roundtable.

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00:57:05.285 --> 00:57:10.984

Rachel Nemeth: for you all to be able to access and share, as you like. And,

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00:57:11.245 --> 00:57:25.334

Rachel Nemeth: Also, before we adjourn, I want to say a special thank you to my CTA colleagues who helped organize the logistics for this today, as well as our ASL interpreters and their important work as well.

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00:57:25.565 --> 00:57:30.954

Rachel Nemeth: So with that, thank you all very much, and look forward to, working with you all again soon.