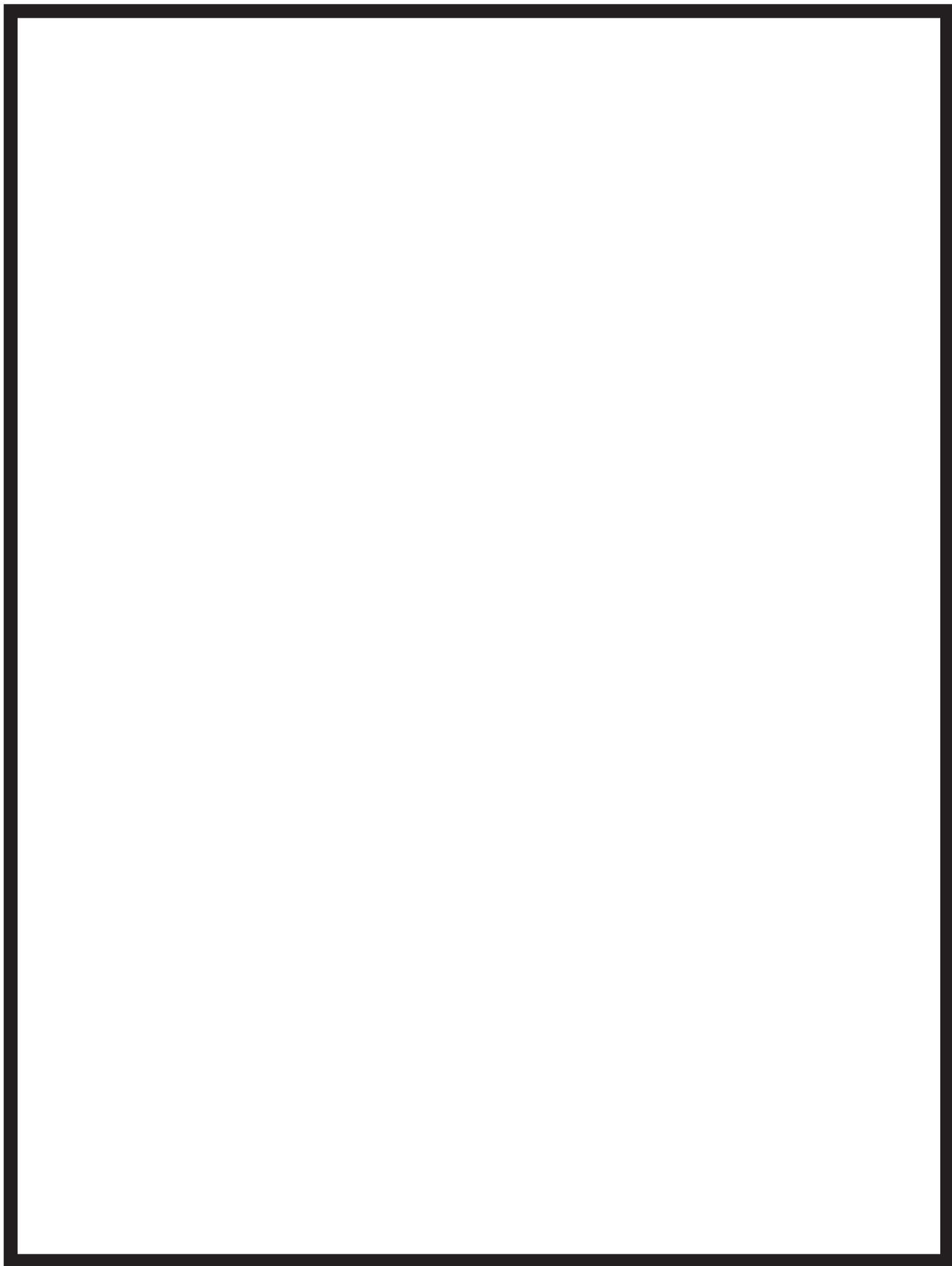


How Accessible Are You?

The Need for the
Effective Communication of
Accessibility at Museums

Elizabeth Clay
The University of the Arts
Department of Museum Studies
December 2017



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A thesis-capstone submitted to The University of the Arts in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Museum Communication.

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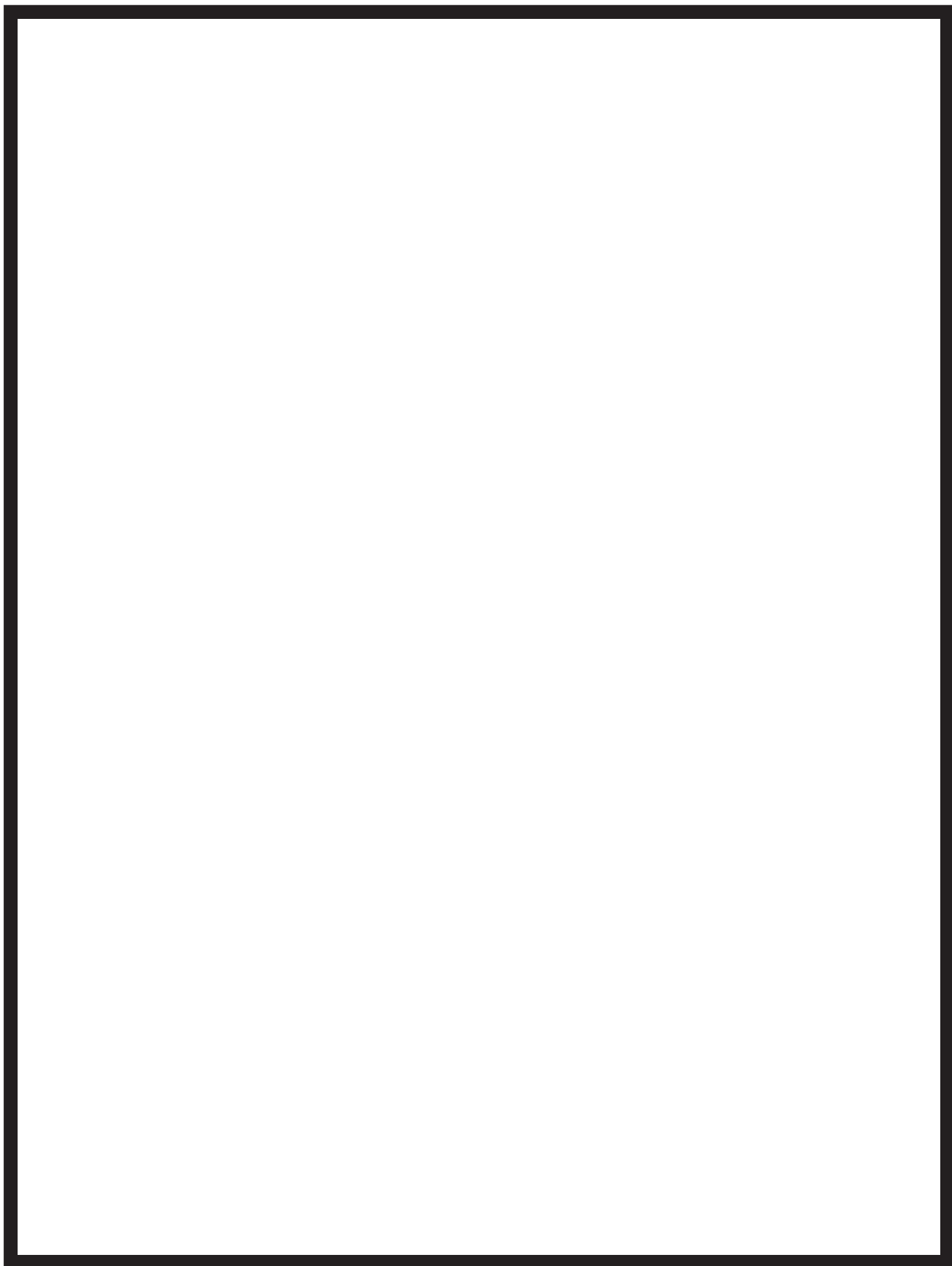
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Abstract

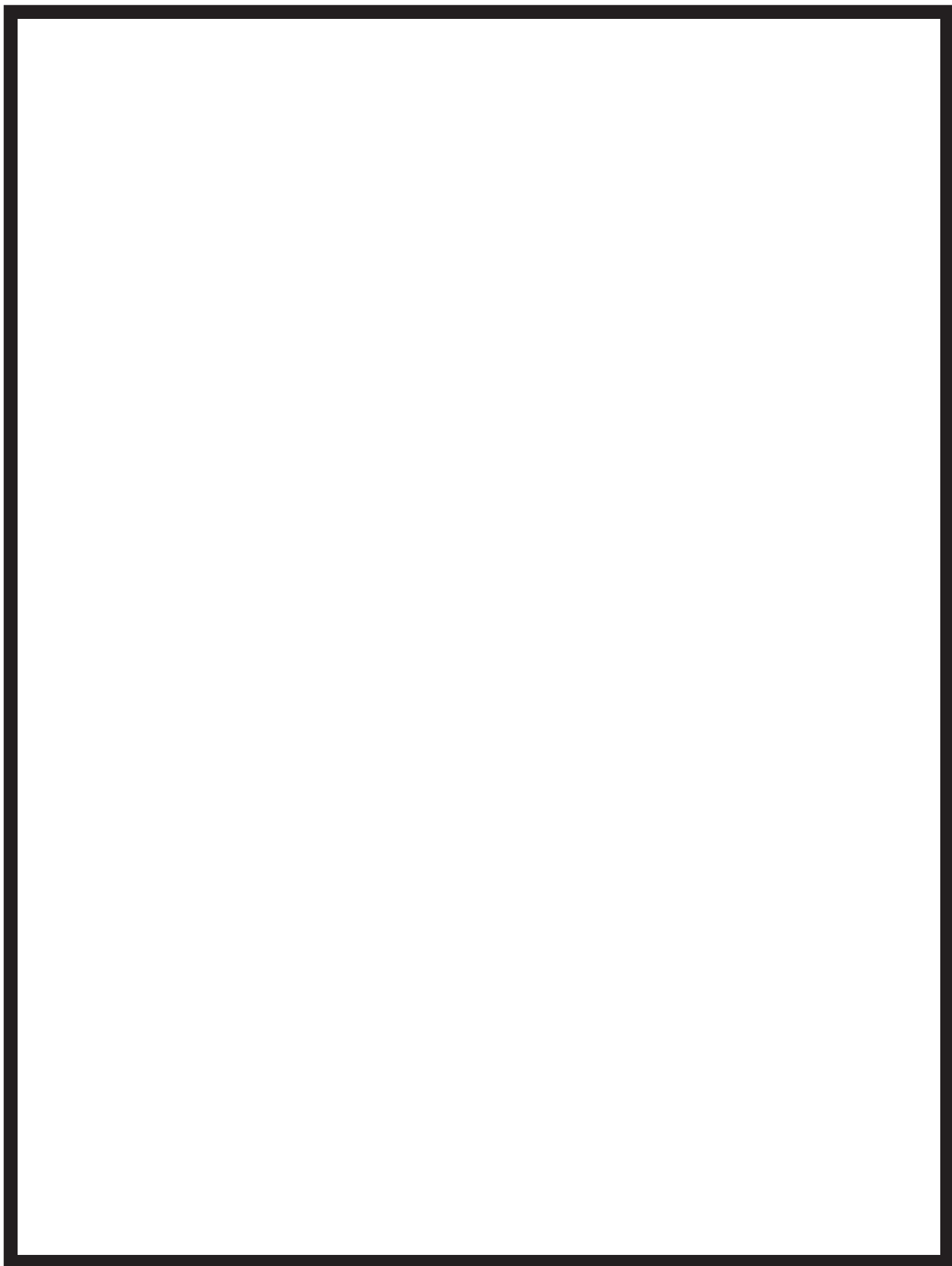
This Thesis-Capstone Report explores the marketing and communication of accessibility at museums and cultural institutions for visitors with disabilities. It is intended to identify audience needs and enable museum marketing and communication professionals to better position their institutions to reach and positively impact visitors. This Report examines current trends and best practices in the marketplace, explores resources provided by advocacy organizations, and defines the needs of visitors with disabilities. Research was completed at Art-Reach, which serves the disability community in Philadelphia by creating arts and culture opportunities. A Marketing Toolkit was written to provide insight into communication tools and vehicles that can be used in strategic marketing plans targeted to the disability community. This Marketing Toolkit can be made available to Philadelphia-area cultural institutions, as well as on a national level, to serve as a guide in the development of these strategic plans.



Dedication

For Nonna, who always encouraged me to follow my heart.

For Nathan, whose belief in me and constant support helped me do just that.
Thank you so much.

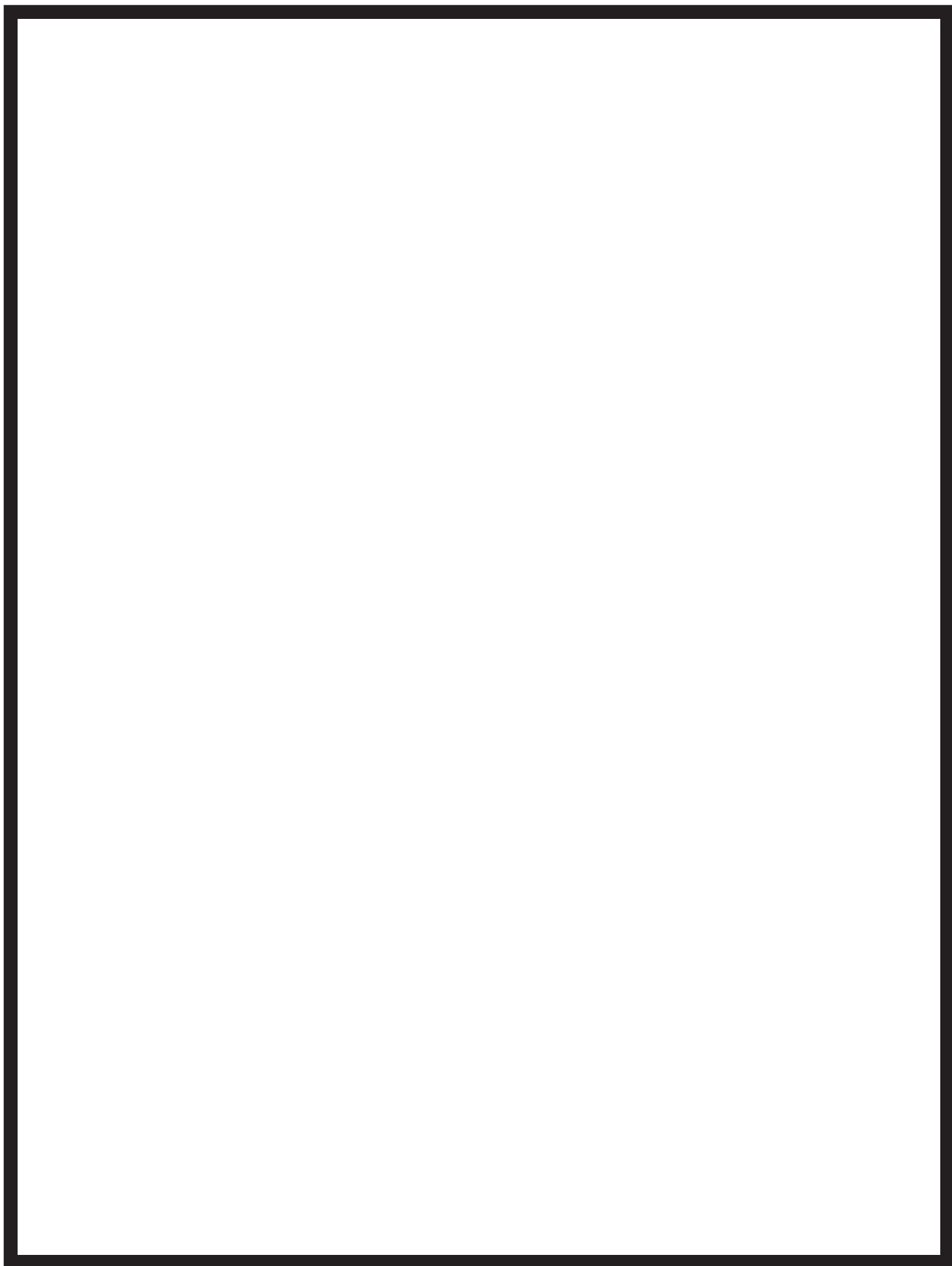


Acknowledgments

I want to thank Charlie Miller, for having me be a part of Art-Reach for eight months, for your constant guidance, and for all that you do for our community.

Thank you, Jessica Jenkins, for your continued expertise and support that helped shape not only this Thesis-Capstone, but also my entire experience at UArts. Thank you for your commitment to each of us as individuals and as future museum marketing professionals.

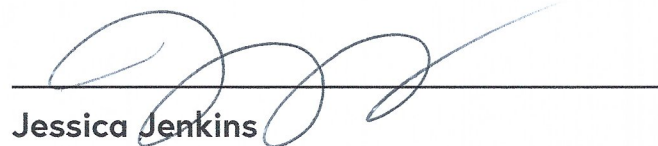
For everyone at Art-Reach: I learned so much during my time with you and am so grateful.



To the Faculty of The University of the Arts

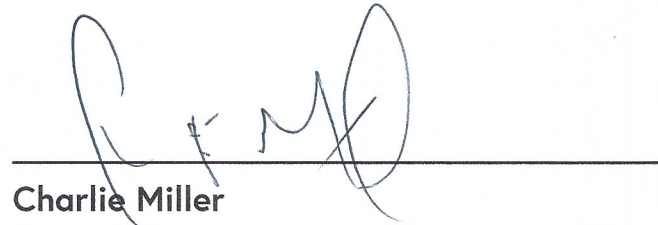
The appointed advisors to examine the Thesis-Capstone of Elizabeth Clay find it satisfactory and recommend it to be accepted.

December 12, 2017



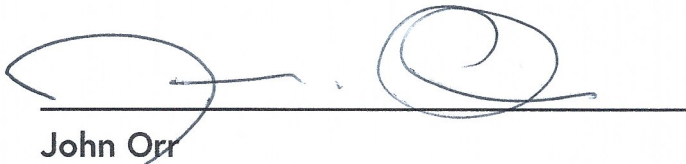
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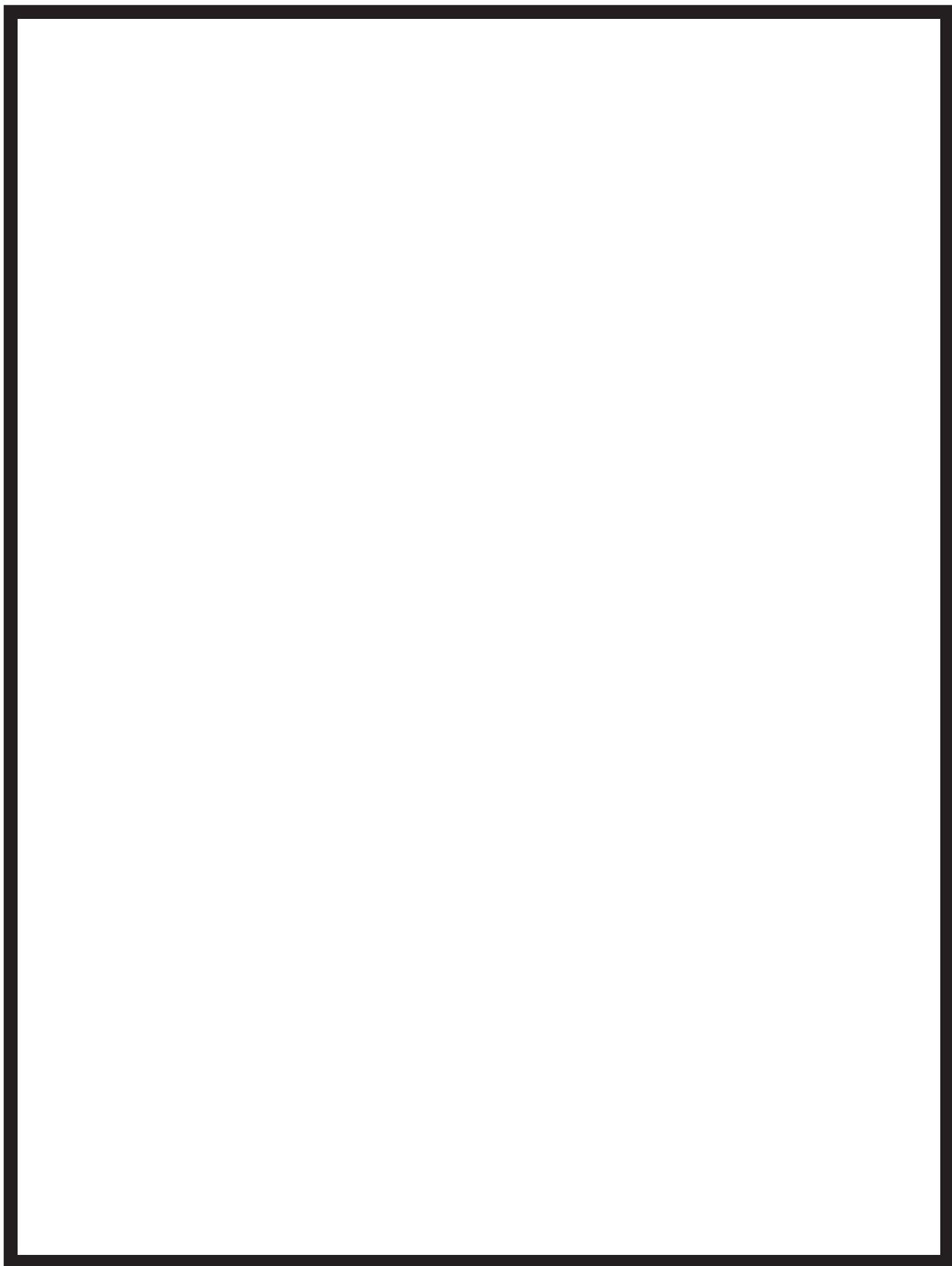


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Introduction

How can marketing and communication strategies further connect the disability community with its local museums? How can museum professionals examine visitor motivations and needs to better serve the disability community? Over the last few decades, museums have transitioned from acting solely as collections-based institutions to prioritizing the needs and expectations of their visitors and surrounding communities. Audiences are becoming just as important as the collections. In their book, *Creating the Visitor-Centered Museum*, authors Peter Samis and Mimi Michaelson detail this transition, citing John Falk, co-Director of the Institute of Learning Innovation and advocate for free-choice learning. Falk said, "What separates those who go to museums from those who do not is not whether they possess one of these...basic categories of need, but rather whether they perceive museums as places that satisfy these needs."¹ This capstone examines the needs of the disability community and how museums can better align marketing tactics to meet these needs, encouraging participation among visitors.

Falk, a longtime expert on what drives visitors to a museum, discusses research on visitor participation in his paper titled, *Understanding Museum Visitors' Motivations and Learning*:

Research has been done on who visits museums and to a degree why. Research has been done on what visitors do in the museum. Research has been done on what visitors learn from the museum. However, only rarely has research been done in ways that allow understanding of the whole visitor and the whole visit experience—research on individuals whose life-course intersects with the museum experience prior to as well as after the visit.²

The visitor experience begins long before an individual arrives at an institution. From the marketing and communication perspective, museum professionals work hard to ensure that the entire visitor experience is conveyed through multiple channels: the museum website, social media, print, and the web, to name a few. However, what does this mean for the disability community? Are museums doing enough to address the specific needs of the individual and community?

Looking to Judy Rand's *Visitors' Bill of Rights*, which details needs from the visitor perspective, we know that audiences are looking for museums to address and provide for the basics, such as comfort, respect, choice and control, and communication.³ For the visitor who may, for example, be blind or who may use a wheelchair, how do these needs change or become more unique?

The visitor who is blind may not have the chance to enjoy an exhibition if he or she does not know that exhibition includes image descriptions or braille text. The visitor who uses a wheelchair may not ever make the decision to go to a museum if he or she is not aware of accessible parking, entrances, and galleries. Therefore, museum marketing and communication professionals must be sure they are taking the necessary steps to deliberately and fully engage and inform the disability community through the proper channels. This capstone, *How Accessible Are You? The Need for the Effective Communication of Accessibility at Museums*, explores the information that must be communicated and offers suggestions and tools for marketing accessibility at institutions.

Key Terms

The terms and definitions included below are intended to provide guidance on key words and concepts presented throughout this capstone, as related to specific marketing and communication strategies for the disability community.

Accessible Design: Accessible design is a design process for which the needs of people with disabilities are taken into consideration and it helps ensure that all design meets the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act. Environmental, communication, and information technology needs of individuals with disabilities are incorporated into accessible design.⁴

People-First Language: People-first language emphasizes the individual, not the disability, in written and spoken language. It ensures that people with disabilities are not defined by their impairment, but rather as themselves, with the disability being one among many individual characteristics. For example, instead of saying "blind man," one would say, "man who has a visual impairment" or "man who is blind."⁵

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Enacted in 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against and guarantees equal opportunity rights for individuals with disabilities. The ADA is comprised of five titles: Title I (Employment), Title II (State and Local Government), Title III (Public Accommodations), Title IV (Telecommunications), and Title V (Miscellaneous Provisions).⁶

Screen Reader: A screen reader is a technology program that enables individuals who are blind or visually impaired to read website text through either a braille display or speech synthesizer.⁷

Image Description: An image description uses text to provide information about non-text content, such as photographs, on websites. Descriptions can be presented through audio or text, depending on a user's needs.⁸

Alt Text: Alt text is a word or phrase that is inserted in HTML to define an image or actions for website users. Alt text improves web accessibility for users who, for example, use a screen reader. It does not necessarily describe the image or action, but rather provides information about the respective content or function.⁹

Literature Review

Creating Opportunities Through Marketing and Communication

Inviting the disability community to actively participate in a museum is a moot point if the museum is not thoughtfully incorporating this audience into its marketing and communication plans. In 2017, ADA requirements are no longer the standard for full accessibility. And over the last few decades, emphasis is being put on how museums engage and serve audiences versus focusing solely on what audiences can learn from museums.

In their book, *Creating The Visitor-Centered Museum*, authors Peter Samis and Mimi Michaelson write, "We don't suggest that change is easy, but do endorse that the challenge is worthwhile. We also believe that the current focus—a new audience-centered paradigm—is here to stay."¹⁰ In *The Art of Relevance*, Nina Simon acknowledges that museum professionals must show visitors that they matter, "even if that requires learning new ways of working, speaking, or connecting."¹¹ To help bring in an audience to the institution, Simon states, the "insiders"—museum professionals—can say to these visitors, "let me help you access it."¹²

Art Beyond Sight and VSA/Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (VSA) both cite marketing to the disability community as an important first step in creating more inclusive museums, as well as engaging the impacted audiences. In its list titled, "Ten Surefire Ways to Achieve Arts Access," the VSA stresses how important it is to market and communicate to the disability community. It states, "Access is useless if the people who use it don't know about it."¹³ Visitors with disabilities should be included from the beginning of any strategic plan focused on audience engagement. With more education, resources, training, and tools readily available, and an understanding of just how large this audience is, U.S. institutions have the means to position themselves as destinations that fully connect with and value these visitors.

The American with Disabilities Act and Museums

The passing of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which requires that "all public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, state and local government services, and places of employment allow for equal opportunity to all citizens, regardless of ability," directly impacted U.S. museums.¹⁴

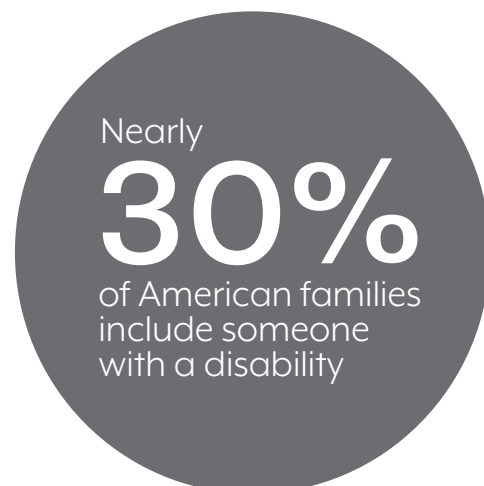
According to Art Beyond Sight, a leading national disability advocacy organization that also provides accessibility tools and resources for museum studies programs, the ADA "affects how museums operate regarding the public—providing both physical and intellectual access to its resources."¹⁵ Additionally, the American Association of Museums (AAM) Code of Ethics states that museums must work to guarantee that "...programs are accessible and encourage participation of the widest possible audience consistent with its mission and resources..."¹⁶

In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that one in five adults identifies as having a disability.¹⁷ The Census Bureau also reports that, as of 2010, approximately 2.8 million of the 53.9 million children aged five to seventeen have a disability.¹⁸ Additionally, nearly 30% of U.S. families have someone with a disability.¹⁹ The ADA defines a person with a disability as someone who has a "physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; a person who

has a history or record of that kind of impairment; or a person who is viewed by others as having such an impairment."²⁰ (This capstone report will follow the ADA definition of a person with a disability.)

While the ADA requires U.S. museums to make the necessary accommodations and changes for visitors with disabilities, institutions must work harder and look beyond onsite services to reach this audience. In fact, in its report, "Characteristics for Excellence in Museums," the American Alliance of Museums states that a museum should do the following:

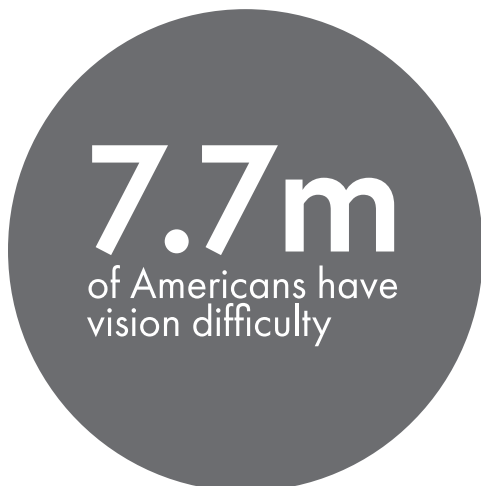
- Strive to be inclusive and offers opportunities for diverse participation;
- demonstrate a commitment to providing the public with physical and intellectual access to the museum and its resources;
- comply with local, state, and federal laws, codes, and regulations applicable to its facilities, operations, and administration.²¹



Hyperallergic, the online arts and culture periodical, reported in 2014 that the Institute of Museum and Library Services confirmed that there are approximately 35,000 museums in the U.S.,²² up from the reported 17,500 in 2009.²³ With such a sharp increase in the number of museums over seven years, as well as approximately 850 million total visitors per year²⁴, U.S. museums have been working over the years to implement more visitor-centered practices from within, including those for the disability community. In a 2015 article by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), "Museums and the Americans with Disabilities Act at 25: Progress and Looking Ahead," NEA Director of Accessibility Beth Bienvenu advises that the requirements set by the ADA should be thought of as the very minimum standard for museums. She states that, across departments, full access and inclusion should be available to every visitor.²⁵



Even so, according to a 2015 publication from the NEA, *A Matter of Choice? Arts Participation Patterns of Disabled Americans*, which reported data from the 2012 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, adults with disabilities account for less than seven percent of all adults who visit art museums.²⁶ The Survey of Public Participation in the Arts also reported that of 28 million adults who identified as having a disability, only 11.4% responded that they had visited an art museum or gallery.²⁷



The 2016 American Community Survey (ACS), as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau, estimates that approximately 19.7 million males and 21 million females reported having a disability. The ACS also reports on the population by age, citing that approximately 2.9 million people between the ages of 5 and 17 years, 4.6 million people between the ages of 18 to 34 years, 16.1 million people between the ages of 35 and 64 years, and 7.1 million people between the ages of 65 and 74

have a disability.²⁸

According to the ACS, approximately 7.7 million people have vision difficulty, and approximately 21.2 million people have ambulatory difficulty, which means this population has difficulty walking.²⁹ In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where the organization Art-Reach is based and which is discussed in the next section, the percentage of the total population that is reported as having a disability for the age ranges of 5–20 and 21–64 is 18.9% and 17.3%, respectively.³⁰

This is a significant portion of the Philadelphia population that may not visit museums if accessibility information is not, in fact, accessible. The question remains, how can museums recognize individuals with disabilities as important audiences and thoughtfully consider if enough is being done to help engage and build this audience outside of an institution's walls?



One in Five
Americans identify as
having a disability



17.3%

of Philadelphians between
the ages of 21 and 64
have a disability

Populations Identified in This Report

Two populations within the disability community were reviewed for this capstone: individuals who are blind or who have low vision, and individuals who have a physical disability and require the assistance of a wheelchair, prosthetic, crutches, cane, or walker, among others. The National Federation for the Blind defines blindness as someone who "must use alternative methods to engage in any activity that persons with normal vision would do using their eyes."³¹

It also cites the U.S. Census Bureau, saying that someone with low vision or blindness "has trouble seeing, even when wearing glasses or contact lenses."³² The American Foundation for the Blind defines legal blindness as "a medically diagnosed central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the best possible correction, and/or a visual field of 20 degrees or less."³³ (Visual acuity is defined

as the "clarity or sharpness of vision measured at a distance of 20 feet."³⁴) The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation defines someone as having a physical disability according to the following:

...is blind; does not have full use of an arm or both arms; cannot walk 200 feet without stopping to rest; cannot walk without the use of, or assistance from a brace, cane, crutch, another person, prosthetic device, wheelchair or other assistive device; is restricted by lung disease to such an extent that the person's forced (respiratory) expiratory volume for one second, when measured by spirometry, is less than one liter or the arterial oxygen tension is less than 60 mm/hg on room; uses portable oxygen; has a cardiac condition to the extent that the person's functional limitations are classified in severity as Class III or Class IV according to the standards set by the American Heart Association at rest; is severely limited in his or her ability to walk due to an arthritic, neurological or orthopedic condition.³⁵

Audiences Are Active Participants in the Museum

In her book *The Art of Relevance*, Nina Simon asks the question, "What happens when institutions remain deaf to the needs of outsiders?" She continues on to say, "When we invite in outsiders, of any kind, we have to do it on their terms. Not ours. It's their key. It's their door. They have given us the gift of their participation, and they deserve our interest and respect."³⁶ Once viewed as places of privilege, where people go to view the collection and rely on the expertise of the curators, museums are now actively seeking to consider visitors when making their strategic plans, from exhibition and event planning to visitor services.

One such example is detailed in *Creating the Visitor-Centered Museum*. In the case study on the Detroit Institute of the Arts (DIA), museum staff came to understand that many people simply did not go because they viewed DIA as elite. Becky Hart, Curator of Contemporary Art at DIA said, "I think a lot of times with museums, we've been more interested in what our colleagues, especially other art historians [think], and how we were perceived in the field—as opposed to always [focusing on] what our audience thought of us."³⁷ After spending 18 months gathering audience feedback, DIA staff soon realized that its audience wanted "to belong," and instead felt like they did not.³⁸ To resolve the issue,

in its study, DIA curators and visitor services personnel became "resources" for the visitors, creating interesting and exciting stories about work in a particular exhibition. DIA also took it a step further in this pilot process by no longer allowing curators to write the labels; freelancers were given the stories to reference and then wrote the labels. The new practice was then evaluated through panels of community members, who were asked to compare the new labels to understand which resonated with them.³⁹ The new approach allowed DIA to see why it needed to transition to a more visitor-focused institution. Is the same approach being practiced with the disability community?

In its report *Arts Access Made Easy: Successful Strategies from the Award of Excellence in Arts Access*, the VSA highlights the Wang Center for the Performing Arts in Boston. In addition to creating performances for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, it looked to changing its culture internally by inviting people with disabilities to join its planning committees, ensuring that the disability community is considered from step one of any planning phase.⁴⁰

At the institutional level, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) actively seeks to learn more about individuals with disabilities (as defined by the ADA) through advocates. In a 2015 website article, "An Education in Access," IMLS Program Officer Michele Farrell reflects on her visit with Kim Charlson,

President of the American Council of the Blind and Director of the Perkins Library at Perkins School for the Blind in Massachusetts. Charlson sits on multiple access advisory committees and provides guidance on how museums and libraries can better serve their audiences with disabilities. During her visit, Farrell learned from Charlson that the Perkins Library, which is an affiliate of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, supplies the community with free braille and audio materials for qualified participants and can give accessibility information for nine museums in the region. In addition to serving residents in Massachusetts, the Perkins Library is also able to provide for residents of six other states.⁴¹

At the end of the article, Farrell notes, "it remains crucial for librarians, archivists, and museum professionals to reexamine their services and buildings to ensure that they are providing the latest access tools for all members of their community."⁴² Museums have been moving toward seeing visitors as participants versus patrons. There is also a simultaneous movement to better understand needs of the disability community, what access means for them, and how marketing can be tailored to help meet these needs. Advocacy organizations have created resources that, in addition to educating the public, can help museums implement strategic communication tactics to help market to this audience.

Museum Website Pages on Accessibility

Museums may feel that marketing to the disability community is a daunting task or they may not know where to begin. The Association of Science – Technology Centers recommends that institutions can start by reviewing what accessibility they do have. This includes examining their grounds, building structure, transportation, facilities, services, events, publications, and programs, among others, and creating or updating the information located on the website accessibility page.⁴³

In its report *Expanding Your Market: Maintaining Accessibility in Museums*, The U.S. Department of Justice emphasizes how necessary it is to make all accessibility information available online. Additionally, visitors should be able to locate this information easily and it should always remain current to allow for full participation.⁴⁴ Not only do accessibility pages allow visitors to find information for themselves, they also allow these visitors to determine if a particular museum or cultural institution meets their needs. As with any decision-making process, visitors gather information on a location before arrival. For visitors with disabilities, this process includes evaluating whether or not an institution is accessible enough for them.

The organization VocalEyes, which provides arts and culture experiences for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, is based in the United Kingdom; however, its

recommendations on museum marketing to the disability community can be applied to institutions in the U.S. It stresses to museums how important it is to have a webpage that is dedicated to accessibility.⁴⁵ In its guide for museum marketing professionals, VocalEyes recommends including an accessibility page under "Visit" or "Visitor Information." It reminds marketing professionals that adding an accessibility page under any other heading will not be intuitive for visitors.⁴⁶ Museums should also be mindful of the information that is included in this page. VocalEyes states that relevant visitor information should be presented in groups: Information about how to access a building and accessible services and events.⁴⁷

Museum marketing and communication professionals can reference other museum websites that have accessibility pages. An example of a museum with a robust accessibility website page includes the Smithsonian Museums in Washington, D.C., which has a detailed list of services and features for visitors who are disabled. It also includes direct links to the respective accessibility pages of each of the Smithsonian Museums, such as the National Museum of Natural History, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, and the National Zoo.⁴⁸ Additionally, the Smithsonian links to PDFs of its accessibility map, parking map, and information on scooter and wheelchair rentals.⁴⁹ The de Young Museum in San Francisco opens its accessibility page with a welcome statement, followed by

by full descriptions of the services, features, and respective access symbols, as well as a direct contact number for inquiries on accessibility.⁵⁰

In the greater Philadelphia region, Longwood Gardens (Longwood) is an example of an institution that has also considered the full spectrum of needs for visitors who have disabilities. From the Visit menu option, visitors can locate the Special Needs tab on the left-hand side, which brings them to one page that details wheelchair-accessible sites, the distance in miles between specific sites at Longwood, and a separate link to wheelchair and scooter rental information.⁵¹ Based on the guide from the Institute of Science – Technology Centers and tips from Charlie Miller at Art-Reach, the accessibility page on LongwoodGardens.org fulfills many of the requirements for marketing accessibility. Not only does it require a user to click only twice from the main page, it provides the exact mileage of the gardens and Longwood's Conservatory, giving potential visitors the ability and freedom to determine for themselves—prior to arriving at Longwood—if the Gardens and Conservatory are navigable.

Increased Guidance on the Marketing of Accessibility

The IMLS stresses the importance of museums working to ensure that their programs and services are accessible to visitors across all abilities. It says, "This means creating opportunities that go beyond the basic requirements, and thinking expansively about how to be widely-inclusive, welcoming, and collaborative."⁵²

There are a wide range of organizations—including those that are associated with museums—that advocate for and support individuals with disabilities and their families. In addition to providing direct resources and guidance for the disability community, these organizations educate and inform museum professionals. Rather than thinking of accessibility as only onsite access (e.g., accessible parking, exhibitions, and programs), "accessibility" can be expanded to include the process of thinking of members of the disability community as target audiences in strategic marketing plans.

"The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco are committed to offering services that make its collections, exhibitions, and programs accessible to all visitors."

- The de Young Museum Accessibility webpage

Many organizations seek to further engage the disability community by publishing online (e.g., on their websites or in articles) tools and guidelines that help institutions implement marketing and communication strategies that further increase participation among individuals with disabilities.

Since there are specific needs within the disability community, it is important that museum professionals are aware of these needs and work to ensure they are being met in marketing and communication materials. Many of the available resources outline the unique needs of visitors with disabilities. With such easy access to these resources, and with such a wide breadth of information available, museums and cultural institutions should be able to integrate visitors with disabilities into their communication plans as targeted audiences. Some of these strategies can be incorporated at any institution—no matter how large or small that institution may be—as they involve small changes that create a big impact. This section reviews these changes.

Since 1987, Art Beyond Sight has created accessible arts opportunities for people who have vision impairments, who are blind, and who are disabled. Additionally, Art Beyond Sight has an online resource that includes guidelines and educational materials for museums to increase accessibility, working with museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Philadelphia Museum of Art.⁵³

It created an extensive online guide, "Disability and Inclusion: Resources for Museum Studies Programs," as a means to help museums build an audience comprised of visitors with disabilities. The guide is organized into nine modules that address accessibility across museum departments. These modules are short, easily digestible descriptions that will help museum professionals become more aware of how accessibility may impact their respective departments.

For example, in its Marketing and Public Relations Teams module, Art Beyond Sight reviews why museum marketing professionals must collaborate with other departments in order to fully communicate to audiences with disabilities how their museum fulfills specific needs.⁵⁴ By understanding, for instance, which education programs impact members of the disability community, marketing professionals will be able to communicate how these programs meet the needs of this audience.⁵⁵

Art Beyond Sight also lists questions that museum professionals should ask themselves when evaluating their institution for accessibility. When evaluating their institution's website, marketing and communication teams should determine how easy or difficult it is to find accessibility information and how many "clicks" it took to locate this information.⁵⁶ This process involves setting aside time to review and document where accessibility is mentioned on a website

is current and reliable. Website copy audits are often a task that many marketing professionals perform regularly, so auditing for accessibility can be added to existing procedures. They can also download a free screen reader, such as the one available from Google Chrome Extensions™, to test how visitors with vision impairments experience their institution's website. By incorporating accessibility into this task, professionals can evaluate the effectiveness of their online communications.

The New Jersey Theater Alliance, co-sponsor of the Cultural Access Network Project (which provides services and programs to make theater performances more accessible), has a list of marketing strategies to help museum professionals consider the disability community in their strategic plans. It reminds museums to think about the disability community as they may "any diverse, minority constituency you're interested in engaging within your marketing strategies," and to "incorporate disability and accessibility into marketing strategies as an institution would incorporate disability and accessibility into legal requirements and compliance."⁵⁷ Marketing professionals must think of potential barriers other than those found onsite or within a program. It asks, "Think of barriers from the perspective of the person with a disability—fear of the unknown, hard to find information, transportation issues, economic factors, attitudes of staff."⁵⁸

By looking beyond the experience of a visitors who is non-disabled, marketing professionals can address these needs for the visitor and help alleviate their decision-making process. As noted earlier, including visitors in the development and planning processes can help lead to a greater understanding of their wants and needs. For example, talking to visitors with physical disabilities about what information is important to them when making the decision to go to a museum (e.g., designated parking or automated entrances) will help a marketing professional write more impactful copy for a website's accessibility page.

Art Beyond Sight has training tools that can help museums bring visitors with disabilities into conversations about accessibility. In its online publication, "Disability Awareness Training for Museums and Cultural Institutions," Art Beyond Sight reviews how museum professionals can open up their institution to accessibility by inviting the disability community to participate in panel discussions and focus groups.⁵⁹ Similar to the case study at DIA, giving audiences the opportunity to provide feedback and insight on accessibility allows museums and cultural institutions to understand what these audiences are looking for. Art Beyond Sight notes that understanding the visitor perspective will help museum professionals gauge potential barriers that may exist in their programs and services.

Art Beyond Sight also provides guidelines on how to invite participants into the conversation through panel discussions. It emphasizes that panel speakers should be people with disabilities, not people from service organizations that may represent them. Additionally, depending on the topic, Art Beyond Sight recommends inviting personal care attendants and family members, as they can also provide important perspectives.⁶⁰ For those museums and cultural institutions that are moving forward with organizing conversations with the disability community, Art Beyond Sight gives suggestions on how to guide the panel, sample discussion topics and questions, and who can be invited to speak so a diverse panel is represented.⁶¹

The Cultural Access Network Project page of its website includes resources that marketing and communication professionals can leverage, including guidelines on how to write web copy that addresses an institution's emphasis on welcoming visitors with disabilities, tips on writing audio descriptions, and checklists for evaluating online and onsite accessibility. Similarly, the Association of Science – Technology Centers website has an extensive resource section dedicated to accessibility for science museums. Its marketing resources specifically discuss strategies on advertising and communicating accessibility, from an audit guide to assess onsite accessibility information to using access symbols and people-first language online (e.g., "man who is blind" versus "blind man")

and in printed materials.⁶²

Both the New Jersey Theater Alliance and Association of Science – Technology Centers advocate further for marketing to the disability community by providing extensive resources on guidelines for accessible web design, ADA guidelines, and links to downloadable versions of access symbols and transcription service vendors. Again, with so many resources available, museum professionals should be able to easily begin making their online communications accessible.

Organizations are also leveraging their social media channels to educate and increase awareness on marketing accessibility. The Chicago Cultural Access Consortium (CCAC) is dedicated to helping museums and cultural institutions provide better access to people with disabilities. On its YouTube page, CCAC posts videos of panel discussions it has hosted, many of which are targeted to educating museum professionals on how to reach the disability community.

At its May 2016 panel discussion, "Marketing Strategies to Expand and Retain Your Audience With Disabilities," Julie Stanton, Marketing Director at the Chicago Shakespeare Theater, speaks on how the Theater successfully markets to its audience members with disabilities. She reviews specific strategies, such as creating a dedicated email newsletter that highlights accessible performances and programs and also ensuring this information is included on print collateral.

Stanton also discusses the importance of providing the Theater's audience with information necessary to help an individual know he or she can come to a performance, noting that not only should a visitor be able to find accessibility information, they should also, for example, be able to easily purchase a ticket online or request large-print guides.⁶³

ShapeArts, an organization based in the U.K., focuses on advocacy for the disability community, and it works to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate in the arts.⁶⁴ It has created a resource that other organizations can leverage when marketing accessible events and programs. Its guide, "Marketing your accessible event," details what accessibility information should be included in all marketing. It also has a list of questions that organizations should ask themselves to ensure all communications and media are accessible, such as color and type, web accessibility, and the inclusion of access symbols. Anyone can download the guidelines and save them for future use.⁶⁵

Although Shape Arts is located in the U.K., the advice is applicable to U.S.-based organizations and can be used as a quick tips and tools resource to help guide museum professionals when planning events. In the U.S., the ADA has published guidelines on the marketing and communication of public events, including recommendations on how museums should publicize an event. For example, it advises organizations to consider local broadcast

media, such as radio news stations, to reach audiences who are visually impaired, or partnering with local advocacy groups to spread awareness through word of mouth.⁶⁶

Online Accessibility

With the passing of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all federal organizations were required to make electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. In 2016, Section 508 was updated to align with national and global standards, the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which applies to websites and electronic software and documents.⁶⁷ Web accessibility is defined as ensuring all websites are fully inclusive of people with disabilities, such as an individual who has a vision impairment or someone who cannot use his or her hands.⁶⁸

Websites should be designed or updated so that, for example, someone who is blind can use his or her screen reader easily on a website that is designed for full accessibility because it includes alt text. In this case, "full accessibility" means that a website's text, images, and graphics will translate to text or audio through the screen reader. For museums, all online content should be fully compatible with a visitor's screen reader.⁶⁹ If an institution is not thinking about online accessibility, it is neglecting to give the disability community the opportunity to engage in and be a participatory audience by not allowing them to find important information



about the institution, no matter how accessible the actual museum may be.

Sina Bahram, President of Prime Access Consulting, is blind and consults with museums to increase their online accessibility. He has contributed to and published many articles and videos on the subject, helping museum professionals not only understand the importance of extending accessibility to their institution's websites, but also to increase awareness on the subject. In his article titled, "Make Your Website Accessible Before You Are Forced To: An inclusive design approach avoids costly legal issues and reaches new visitors," published by AAM, Bahram discusses how and why websites should be accessible and how assuming that a user can see or hear may violate the ADA.⁷⁰

When answering the question of what museums can do to help ensure online accessibility, Bahram says, "If a website redesign is scheduled, make sure accessibility and inclusive design are part of the initial discussion and associated budget."⁷¹ He also notes that accessibility should be incorporated into all requests

[Image Description: A picture of a young boy at a museum. He is touching an interactive screen with his pointer finger on his right hand. Behind him is another child playing on an interactive screen.]

for proposals from vendors, and that only those that meet accessible design requirements will be considered. In 2014, ILEAD USA (Innovative Librarians Explore, Apply, and Discover), published a video on its YouTube channel that features Bahram's talk, "Accessibility on the web and what it all means." In the video, Bahram uses his screen reader to demonstrate what he confirms is a website that does not fully meet online accessibility requirements. He highlights what professionals need to consider when designing for accessibility, including how to describe links for screen readers.

For example, he reminds viewers that semantics matter, and simply describing a link as "click here" does not work. He asks, "What does the link actually mean?" By describing a link as "click here," the user is

not provided with meaningful information. Instead, it should be described as "For the [name of page], click here." In this instance, a user will understand what page a link will bring them to when they click on it.⁷²

As noted earlier, marketing professionals can download free screen readers to help determine if website links include meaningful descriptions. Sina Bahram successfully speaks to accessibility practices that should be implemented across all museums. Accessible websites help potential visitors with vision impairments find the information they need to get themselves to a museum, see an exhibition, or participate in a program or event.

"If a website redesign is scheduled, make sure accessibility and design are part of the initial discussion and associated budget."

- Sina Bahram

Project Goals

The goal of this capstone project is to help museums understand the needs of visitors with disabilities and better serve these visitors through specific marketing and communication tactics. The tactic developed during this project is a marketing toolkit, which will include marketing, communication, and public relations resources intended to help guide and implement engaging and effective means for communicating accessibility. The target audience includes individuals in Philadelphia who are visually impaired or who have a physical disability and who require the assistance of a wheelchair, scooter, crutches, or walker.

The pieces included in the Marketing Toolkit will be developed according to research gathered from leading advocacy and arts organizations and interviews with individuals who are blind or who care for people with physical disabilities. For the purpose of this capstone, the disability population, including some of the population data and interviewees, will be defined according to the medical model of disability; the Marketing Toolkit and recommendations for museum professionals will be based on the social model of disability, which are defined further on in this report. The capstone research will take place at Art-Reach, a Philadelphia-based organization that creates arts and cultural experiences for the disability community.

The final Toolkit will be given to Art-Reach and it can, in turn, provide Philadelphia-area museums with the Toolkit, helping them enhance or create a marketing plan that specifically targets visitors with disabilities. The final toolkit will be a piece that can be made available online at elizabethclayeditorial.com as a downloadable PDF.

Finally, recommendations will also be established to help guide Art-Reach and other museums in expanding accessibility. These recommendations will serve as next steps in strategic marketing and communication plans to help further increase attendance and participation by and full inclusion for visitors with disabilities.

Methodology

Research indicates that there are specific marketing and communication strategies that can be used to help engage the disability community and make them more aware of accessible events, programs, and services at museums.⁷³ The methodology used in this capstone is based on gathering information from three sources: members of the disability community, advocates who work with the disability community, and organizations that specifically publish information on how to market to people with disabilities. These sources will help lead to a better understanding of how members of the disability community search for information, what defines a positive or negative experience with a museum or cultural institution, what information about a new location is considered important in the decision-making process, and which strategies help engage the community.

Charlie Miller, Deputy Director at Art-Reach, provided guidance during the development of the marketing toolkit and reviewed each of the pieces as they were created. He also reviewed the recommendations, as outlined later in this report. Mr. Miller was updated on the progress of the toolkit and recommendations throughout the process.

Interview Methodology

Interviews with a total of seven individuals were conducted during the time period of October 1 through November 1, 2017. The interviewees from the disability community included individuals (three females and two males) between the ages of thirty and fifty. The interview with Henry S. and Noelle S. was conducted in person at their home over one hour. The interviews with Anna W., Tom S., and Mary B. were conducted over the telephone; each telephone interview took approximately one hour to complete. Each interviewee was asked the same series of 28 questions (see Appendix) regarding their experiences with online searches to gather information about a specific location; their experiences at a museum or cultural institution; and

they were asked to confirm which information impacted their decision to go somewhere new.

Interviews were also conducted with two individuals who work for organizations that specifically advocate for the disability community. The interviews with Lisa Sonneborn and Vicki Landers were completed in person in Philadelphia. Both Ms. Sonneborn and Ms. Landers were asked the same set of questions (see Appendix), which were intended to understand marketing and communication tactics that are specifically leveraged for events and programs targeted to the disability community. They were also asked about which tactics were found to be particularly successful. These narratives helped guide and inform the pieces and

marketing copy included in the final marketing toolkit, as well as the recommendations.

Four interviews were conducted with individuals who have been diagnosed as legally blind or who have children with a physical disability (their children use a wheelchair). The individuals who were interviewed are described below.*

- Henry S. and Noelle S., who live outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and have a sixteen-year-old son, Q., who has cerebral palsy and uses an electric wheelchair.
- Mary B., who previously lived in the Philadelphia region and now lives outside of Denver, Colorado. She was recently diagnosed as legally blind.
- Tom S., who lives outside of Seattle, Washington, and is legally blind.
- Anna W., who lives in Ohio with her husband and three daughters. Her middle daughter, M., uses an electric wheelchair.

Two interviews were conducted with Lisa Sonneborn and Vicki Landers, professionals who work for advocacy organizations in Philadelphia and who help plan events and programs for people with disabilities. These individuals are described below.

- Lisa Sonneborn, who is the Director of Media Arts and Culture at the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University. Ms. Sonneborn is a producer and filmmaker who has helped plan events and programming for members of the disability community.
- Vicki Landers, who is Director of Disability Pride Philadelphia. Ms. Landers plans the annual Disability Pride Philadelphia parade, and she also is the Managing Partner of Independence EDGE Studio, which brings together artists with disabilities.

*Due to the nature of these interviews, interviewee names have been changed.

Art-Reach

Founded in 1986, Art-Reach is an organization based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, that creates arts and culture experiences for the disability and lower-income communities in the greater Philadelphia region. It works with museums and institutions (arts partners) and performing arts venues (live arts partners) to advocate for and help these individuals engage in the arts. Currently, it partners with thirty-seven museums and cultural institutions on its ACCESS Admission program, which provides individuals who have the Pennsylvania ACCESS card with discounted admission to these institutions for up to four family members.⁷⁵

The Social Model versus Medical Model of Disability

Art-Reach looks to the social model of disability (versus the medical model) when planning its events and programs with Philadelphia-area museums and cultural institutions. The social model of disability is based on the systemic barriers, negative attitudes, and exclusion that society places on people with disabilities. It focuses on the idea that it is not the disability that is the impairment, but rather society's tendencies toward exclusion.⁷⁶

The social model is based on findings from the World Health Organization, which states that while individuals may have physical, intellectual, or sensory impairments, "disability" is caused by society.⁷⁷ Therefore, based on the social model, museums must be inclusive and work toward welcoming all visitors, and not just with their onsite accommodations, but also with their online presence, programming, education, and events.

The medical model of disability focuses on the specific illness or disability as defined by a physical condition or medical

diagnosis/es.⁷⁸ Based on this model, individuals with physical, sensory, or intellectual impairments must be "fixed" or treated in order to account for limitations they may face. Art Beyond Sight states that the medical model can often lead to stereotypes or stigmas typically associated with a specific disability. Whereas the individual is seen as a patient or the "object of intervention" according to the medical model, the social model looks to individuals as integral members of the community and, therefore, part of a museum's audience.

ACCESS Admission and Online Communication

Art-Reach has impacted 100,000 individuals annually and approximately 250,000 over the last five years.⁷⁹ Executive Director John Orr and Deputy Director Charlie Miller, Art-Reach's leadership, also work to create full transparency between the disability and lower-income communities and the ACCESS Admission partners. This initiative includes helping to make information more accessible to their audiences, in part through marketing and communication.

It is working to create an online resource that allows individuals to easily locate and be informed of the details they may need in order to make the decision to go to a museum or cultural institution.

From July to August 2017, Art-Reach completed an audit of its 37 ACCESS Admission partners. The audit included searching the websites for each of the ACCESS partners to gauge how easy or difficult it was for a potential visitor to find important, impactful information. For example, research involved locating accessibility information about onsite facilities (e.g., parking, accessible entrances and ramps, restrooms, drinking fountains, and cafés/restaurants), programs and events, exhibitions, sign language interpretation, and accessible audio or visual offerings (e.g., text, braille, or large-print formats), communicating if service animals are welcome and if wheelchairs or scooters are available onsite. One of the tactics discussed in this report was informed, in part, by this research.

Capstone Toolkit

As part of the initiative to provide full transparency between the visitor and the institution, a marketing toolkit will be created for Art-Reach. The toolkit will be available to Art-Reach partners and will also be made available to museums (both inside and outside of Philadelphia) to serve as a comprehensive, one-stop communications tool and guide to help them better market their accessibility to

the impacted audiences.

The marketing toolkit will include the following pieces:

- "How to write a welcome statement" template and guidelines.
- An "accessibility checklist" that museums can use to determine accessibility that can be immediately communicated online or in print materials.
- Direct email copy that specifically touches on accessibility.
- Accessibility website page guidelines and how information should be presented and organized (e.g., what information to include and why, image guidelines, screen readers, people-first language, and access icons).
- Marketing quick tips and resources, including tips on how to write communications for the disability community.
- Communications strategies for marketing to these audiences.

Key Findings and Conclusions

The findings from the interviews with people with disabilities and people who have children with disabilities, as well as Lisa Sonneborn and Vicki Landers, are included in this section. Speaking with the interviewees allowed for a closer look at the decision-making process for visitors with disabilities and how museum professionals can reach the disability community through strategic marketing and communication tactics.

Interviews: People With Disabilities

Tom and Mary are both legally blind, and they use the JAWS (Job Access With Speech) screen reader when using the Internet.⁸⁰ Throughout their interviews, both Mary and Tom stressed the importance of online accessibility. Based on these interviews, it was determined that online accessibility goes beyond, for example, the inclusion of image captions and labeled links. Online accessibility involves taking great care to ensure that images, captions, links, and buttons are clear and well-defined.⁸¹

Mary and Tom indicated that online searches should be a simple process, and often it is not. Many times, according to the interviewees, the process creates quite a bit of internal stress, as ads or pop-ups, for example, can make online searches more difficult or overwhelming when using a screen reader. Additionally, both interviewees confirmed that badly labeled websites can lead to having to search the respective page two or three times, when ideally it should only require a user to search once. In these instances, Mary and Tom confirmed that, instead of searching online, they tend to rely on their GPS apps or they will ask a friend.⁸²

Since neither Mary or Tom specifically use a destination's website to locate information, it was necessary to understand what would make for a positive website experience. Tom stressed the importance of an intuitive, well-defined website, noting that a website has to present information very clearly, all graphics should be labeled, links and buttons must be well labeled, and lists should be very clear as well.⁸³

Additionally, when asked how they feel when a website requires a potential visitor to call for more details, both Tom and Mary stated that they prefer not to have to make a call. There should be enough detail on a website to eliminate the need to contact a new location via phone. In many instances, they noted, contact information is not up to date or they get stuck on hold.⁸⁴

When asked to define what accessibility information is important to them, Tom and Mary had similar responses. Since the same set of questions was used with all four interviewees, some of the information in question seven was not applicable to the particular interviewee (see Appendix). Both Tom and Mary answered yes when asked if the following were important to them when making the decision to go

somewhere (the letters correspond to the respective question on the interview sheets):

- General information (e.g., address, phone number, and hours) (a)
- Dedicated accessibility page (c)
- Accessible entrances and parking (d)
- Information about accessible programs and events (h)
- If accessibility information is located in the same location on a website (i)
- If all signage is in braille (j)
- If all images and links include descriptions for screen readers (k)
- If printed materials, such as guides or maps, are available in braille (l)
- If maps include accessible entrances and spaces (m)
- If any outdoor spaces have paved pathways (p)
- If a location has an accessible restaurant or café (q)

Henry S. and Noelle S., who have a sixteen-year-old son, Q., with cerebral palsy, described their experiences with trying to visit new destinations that are accessible for their son's electric wheelchair. Anna W., who has a daughter with limb reduction complex, also detailed her experiences. When asked to describe a positive experience when searching for information online, Henry and Noelle spoke about taking Q. to a local concert venue. They noted that what made it so positive was the ease with which they were able to purchase tickets.⁸⁵ Anna also confirmed that an easy online search helps create a more positive experience when planning

a trip to a new location.⁸⁶ However, Henry and Noelle did note that, occasionally, more detailed information should be included, such as the exact location of designated parking in relation to a venue's entrance.⁸⁷

When asked to describe a negative experience with a new location, Henry, Noelle, and Anna stated that having to dig through a location's website for accessibility information can be very frustrating. This frustration can also stem from not having enough information online, as individuals are often looking for more details than whether or not an activity or venue is accessible. Additionally, all three said that having to make a call for accessibility information is equally as frustrating, and that they should not have to do that. These experiences can also lead to disappointment, as Henry and Noelle, as well as Anna, have children with disabilities and they often search for activities they can do with their families.⁸⁸

Henry and Noelle noted that a positive experience they had with Q. at a museum involved staff that provided personal attention, and that this experience helped them feel as though the museum was very reliable when interacting with visitors with disabilities and their friends and family.⁸⁹ Similarly, Anna stated that a museum should work to make all spaces universally accessible, and that it should always be this way.⁹⁰ When recounting negative experiences, Henry, Noelle, and Amy reflected on the importance of communication.

Directions or instructions for visitors with disabilities must be clearly communicated, such as details on the location of accessible entrances or how to obtain companion tickets for caretakers at a visitor services desk. When details are not clearly communicated, it can be confusing or lead visitors to feel as though they are less important than visitors who are not disabled.

Often, Henry and Noelle will rely on a location's website and online reviews, such as Google, when making the decision to go somewhere. When asked to describe how it feels when a website requests visitors to call for information, Henry and Noelle confirmed that they feel discouraged, and that this experience is often enough to keep them from exploring a new location.⁹¹ For the interviewees, including accessibility information on a website lets potential new visitors know that an institution or location considers accessibility and welcomes visitors with disabilities.

The final question of these interviews asked the participants to confirm if specific accessibility information is or is not important to them. Similar to the responses from Mary and Tom, some of the options were not relevant to Anna, Henry, and Noelle based on their children's disabilities. All three answered yes when asked if the following were important to them when making the decision to go somewhere (the letters correspond to the respective question on the interview sheets):

- General information, such as the

address, phone number, hours, and location (a)

- If restrooms are wheelchair accessible (b)
- A dedicated Accessibility page (c)
- Accessible entrances and parking (d)
- Information about accessible programs and events (h)
- If accessibility information is located in the same location on a website (i)
- If maps include accessible entrances and spaces (m)
- If any outdoor spaces are wheelchair accessible (o)
- If any outdoor spaces have paved pathways (p)
- If a location has an accessible restaurant or café (q)

Interview Conclusions

The interviews with Henry S. and Noelle S., Anna W., Mary B., and Tom S. allow for a deeper understanding of what directly impacts the experiences of people with disabilities and their loved ones. These experiences can lead to positive changes that can further accessibility at a museum. All five interviewees noted that having a dedicated accessibility page on a destination's website is very important. A dedicated accessibility page helps visitors know that a location takes accessibility and its visitors with disabilities seriously.

Additionally, it can be concluded that online accessibility goes beyond having a dedicated accessibility page. A well-designed accessible website is equally

important. It should be compatible with screen readers and include defined descriptions and labels for links, images, buttons, and headings. Many times, individuals who are blind or who have visual impairments may rely heavily on gathering information from friends over trying to locate information on a poorly designed website.

Institutions should also ensure that webpages have accurate, up-to-date information—and a wealth of information—in order for visitors to feel the information is reliable. Based on their answers to question seven, most interviewees answered yes to the questions that were relevant to them and only answered no when the question was not relevant (see Appendix). For example, both Mary and Tom answered yes to whether or not a destination should have information about accessible programs, braille signage and maps, accessible entrances and parking.

Henry, Noelle, and Anna also responded yes to the questions that applied to them, and responded no when the question was not relevant (see Appendix). In these instances, they did not answer "yes" to questions about wheelchair availability (their children have their own motorized wheelchairs) or braille signage. They also indicated that the finer details are important. For example, many times, specific information about parking at larger venues, such as where the designated parking spots are in relation to a venue or building, or details about accessible

entrances, such as the exact location of the entrances, are not included. Here, it can be concluded that details are incredibly necessary and should not be overlooked. By including very specific information, museums and cultural institutions help create a positive experience for potential visitors.

It should be stressed that all interviewees did not appreciate having to call a location for more information. In these instances, they said that websites that direct them to call for more information will discourage them from going to a new destination. As a result, word-of-mouth marketing and online reviews were often mentioned, as relying on the opinion of trusted friends and families is often easier than grappling with a website that is not accessible or calling a listed contact number for information. Additionally, visitors with disabilities may read online reviews or refer to friends and family to help gauge what other individuals with disabilities think about a particular destination, as noted in the interviews. Based on these interviewees, it seems that people with disabilities may frequently look to the opinions of other people with disabilities, friends, or family to give them recommendations on new places to visit, as they view that as reliable, up-to-date information.

Interviews: Professionals From Advocacy Organizations

Lisa Sonneborn is the Director of Media Arts and Culture at the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University and was the procedure on the Institute's piece, *A Fierce Kind of Love*, which documents the intellectual disability rights movement in Pennsylvania. When asked to talk about good experience she has had when marketing events or programs for the disability community, Ms. Sonneborn reflected on press coverage for the premiere. She noted that she had extensive coverage for *A Fierce Kind of Love*.

She sees the arts as an important access point and safe space for having important and necessary conversations about disability, advocacy and awareness, and how the arts foster personal connections with important topics regarding disabilities.⁹² For example, a mother of a child with a disability can connect with a story about another mother fighting for her children's rights. Ms. Sonneborn often works with the press, including coverage with WHYY, The Philadelphia Inquirer, and blogs about disability. Ms. Landers, who runs the annual Disability Pride Philadelphia (DPP) parade, also confirmed the importance of developing relationships with the press. She said that local advertising spots on Philadelphia news and television stations can help with publicity for an event.⁹³

Regarding any negative experiences she has had with the press, Ms. Sonneborn acknowledges that sometimes the press will neglect to use people-first language (e.g., "man who is blind" versus "blind man") when writing about people with disabilities. She noted that it can be difficult to develop and understanding among the general public if the media does not consider the language it uses.⁹⁴

Ms. Landers spoke about her partnership with the City of Philadelphia and Charles Horton, Acting Executive Director and Accessibility Compliance Specialist for Philadelphia, when planning the parade. She stated that working with Mr. Horton helped her consider citywide accessibility issues, such as parking and locations that can accommodate DPP participants. While it takes quite a bit of planning, Ms. Landers also notes that, for the most part, city planners often work hard to find accessible options.⁹⁵ Even so, Ms. Landers noted that many of her negative experiences revolve around trying to find venues for specific Disability Pride Philadelphia events. Many venues, she noted, are not able to make accommodations, or they can only make accommodations up to a certain point. For example, the 2017 DPP parade was the first time the city designated certain streets for accessible parking for parade participants.⁹

Ms. Sonneborn expanded on specific marketing tactics that she found worked well with not only the people with disabilities, but also their friends and family. When email campaigns were

created for the premiere of *A Fierce Kind of Love*, the Institute created a "Know Before You Go" email that was sent to patrons after they had purchased a ticket to the premiere. The email included accessibility information about the venue, as well as information about the film's content. Recipients also received two guides: one was a sensory-friendly guide to the play and another was a venue guide.⁹⁷ Ms. Sonneborn stated that the emails were a simple way to quickly share information about *A Fierce Kind of Love*. She emphasized that what made the email impactful was that everyone received it, not just visitors with disabilities. This allowed peers, family, and acquaintances, among others, to have access to information that may impact their family members, friends, or co-workers, for example, and share it with them. Based on this, Ms. Sonneborn confirmed that word-of-mouth marketing is important, as many people with disabilities receive important information from their peers.⁹⁸

Ms. Landers also talked about the importance of allowing friends and family of people with disabilities access to information and the success of word-of-mouth marketing. When asked about marketing tactics, Vicki stated that she sought out online calendars of events. By searching for online events calendars in Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey and including DPP events on these calendars, it helped increase the reach of the parade through word of mouth. Peers, associates, or family of people with disabilities had access to the information

and could share it.⁹⁹

While there are a variety of specific tactics that help market an event or program, both Ms. Sonneborn and Ms. Landers value the ability to share information easily through social media. With social media, the Institute can increase the reach of articles and share important information. Designating hashtags and creating a campaign for an event is an effective means of communication. For example, for *A Fierce Kind of Love*, Ms. Sonneborn shared one-minute interviews of people who reflected on the play.¹⁰⁰

Interview Conclusions

Speaking to individuals who have planned events for the disability community provides insight into strategic marketing plans that are built upon accessibility and awareness. When many marketing professionals think of the disability community, they may think only of people who have disabilities. However, similar to the parents of children with disabilities who were interviewed, this audience frequently extends to family or friends of the disability community.

As Ms. Sonneborn notes, many recipients of the Institute's marketing campaigns, while not disabled themselves, are directly impacted by accessibility information because they care for or go to events with friends or family members who are. Ms. Landers highlighted how many educators and people who work with people with disabilities are reached through marketing.

Word-of-mouth marketing is an effective tactic for spreading and sharing information about an accessible event, institution, or program. Some campaigns, such as email or social media, allow this information to be shared easily through a social media platform's followers or recipients of an email. Not only is knowledge about an event or institution being shared with just a click, it also may help make that event or institution that much more accessible because impactful information can be found through sources other than those produced by an organization or institution. Since both Ms. Sonneborn and Ms. Landers specifically plan events that directly involve the disability community and both touched on the importance of social media, it can be concluded that organizations should be sure to incorporate social media marketing in their communication strategies.

Many of the advocacy groups mentioned in this report cite the importance of using people-first language, but Ms. Sonneborn makes an important distinction when she asked how the public will know what language to use if the press does not. With so many resources available (as outlined in the Literature Review) that provide guidance on people-first language, it is essential that marketing and public relations professionals understand why it matters and the positive impact it can have on the broader community.

Building relationships with local and national press can also lead to greater

knowledge about accessibility at an institution. By developing storylines that focus on making the public more aware of disability and accessibility, many organizations can then open themselves up to greater participation from the public. As both Ms. Sonneborn and Ms. Landers note above, leveraging the press as a vehicle for storytelling helps create connections. A reader who is raising children with disabilities may relate and respond more to a story about other parents of children with disabilities. A teacher who has students with disabilities may connect with a story about an event or program at a museum for students with disabilities. Leveraging press contacts, whether it is through the radio, print, or online news, is an effective means for communicating accessibility at an institution or event.

Recommendations

For the purpose of this capstone, some of the specific marketing strategies in this section will be targeted to individuals who are blind or who have low vision and individuals who have a physical disability. Museum marketing professionals can follow these recommendations to ensure that accessibility information at their institution is, in fact, accessible.

1. An institution should start with what it has. A primary key to marketing accessibility is arming visitors with the information they need to make the decision to go to a museum. No matter how great or small the accessible feature or program may seem to a museum professional, it will directly and positively impact a visitor in the disability community. By describing, for example, the exact locations and details of accessible entrances and parking, a visitor will then be able to discern that there is designated parking, ramps, or automated doors, thus allowing the visitor to understand that, yes, he or she will be able to park at and enter the institution.

2. Invite people to be a part of the conversation. Inviting members of the disability community to join conversations and discussions about accessibility at an institution is an effective means for better understanding their perspective. It may help provide insight and feedback on existing programs, events, or services; help museum professionals think of new ways to reach visitors with disabilities; and give them the opportunity to evaluate if current marketing strategies are effective. By participating in panel discussions or focus groups about accessibility, visitors with disabilities will understand that an

institution takes it seriously and may feel more confident that they are being represented and are welcome.

Additionally, representatives from the disability community can be surveyed about specific marketing campaigns for an event or service to help gauge how effective the campaign was and where improvements can be made. For example, after a specific event or program, a short survey can be sent to participants. The survey can ask questions about how each participant heard about the event, giving marketing professionals guidance on how participants are gathering the information that impacted their decision to attend. A question such as, "How did you hear about this event? Please select from the following options: 1. Friend or family member; 2. Our website; 3. Event email or newsletter," can help professionals understand which communication vehicles are the most effective and, therefore, guide future communications.

3. Think about if a potential new visitor can rely on an institution's information.

Many times, visiting a museum or cultural institution for the first time involves a lot of coordination and planning for visitors with disabilities. They may rely on the information provided on an institution's website more often than visitors without disabilities. Performing an accessibility audit and taking the time to provide thoughtful, accurate, and up-to-date details about accessible services, programs, and contact information (when necessary) helps ensure that visitors will have the information they need to travel to and enjoy a museum or cultural institution. Information that is stale or outdated should be removed.

4. Create a designated accessibility website page. To help ensure that visitors can easily and quickly locate accessibility information, institutions should include a specific page under a "Visit" or "Visitor Information." Visitors typically will not want to spend more than a few minutes searching for information that may be buried within other pages. This is particularly important for the disability community, as these visitors will be looking for very specific information that directly impacts whether or not they can visit an institution.

5. Take the time to write detailed and accurate website copy. All interviewees in this study confirmed that if a destination's website directed them to call for more information, they were less likely to make the decision to go. By dedicating resources

to writing complete and comprehensive descriptions of all accessible services, institutions will help decrease the chance that a potential visitor will have to make a call. This includes, for example, information about on-site facilities, such as naming the accessible entrances, providing directions on how to find designated parking, and the number of accessible restrooms on each floor of an institution. It is not enough for an institution to say that it has designated parking spots; it must clarify where the spots are located in relation to the building and accessible entrances.

6. Make websites accessible. When implementing online website accessibility, museum professionals should be mindful of creating well-labeled links, headers, images, and buttons. Two of the participants interviewed for this capstone stressed how important it is that websites have clear, descriptive labels. Once a website is accessible, it is also helpful to test the site with a screen reader to understand how the user experience will be for visitors with vision impairments. Many versions of screen readers are available for free online. The Google Chrome Extensions™ and NVDA (NonVisual Desktop Access) screen readers can be easily downloaded and, once turned on, can be used to determine how accessible your website is.

7. Read online reviews. By searching through online reviews, museum professionals may be able to better understand the visitor experience. It may help them decide if there are specific

topics that are repeatedly showing up in reviews. For example, if visitors are saying that accessible entrances are not well defined on an institution's website or are missing from maps, this will help museum marketing professionals make the decision to better communicate or begin communicating this information. If visitors are responding positively to a particular accessible program or event, it may be worth budgeting for that event year after year.

8. Always use access symbols. Advocacy organizations such as the Association of Science – Technology Centers cites the use of access symbols as the first step of marketing accessibility at museums.¹⁰¹ The access symbols are available for free online from the Graphic Artists Guild.¹⁰² The new, more dynamic wheelchair access symbol is available for free from The Accessible Icon Project.¹⁰³ These files are available in multiple file formats and can be used online or in printed collateral.

9. Create a dedicated accessibility map. Many institutions probably already designate on their maps accessible entrances and features with the respective access symbol. But museum professionals should also think about creating an online map that specifically highlights accessibility. Within the interactive map on its website, The Franklin Institute in Philadelphia gives website visitors the option to view only the accessible entrances, restrooms, elevators, and galleries.¹⁰⁴ By providing visitors with a dedicated accessibility map, museum

marketing professionals can help arm them with information they need to enter and navigate an institution without the clutter of non-relevant details.

10. Add accessibility information to existing email campaigns. Information about accessibility does not have to be its own campaign or be sent solely to visitors with disabilities. As noted in the interviews with Ms. Sonneborn and Ms. Landers, many people who care for or know someone with a disability are interested in accessibility. By adding call-out boxes and text to existing e-communications, museum marketing professionals can highlight accessible events and programs that can help members and email subscribers become more aware of these services. Additionally, emails can easily be forwarded to friends or family members with disabilities.

11. Create social media campaigns about accessibility. Social media is a fast, easy way to share important information about accessibility at an institution. It also allows social media users to then share impactful information with their followers. Marketing professionals can tailor social media campaigns that highlight accessible events and programs, services, and information for platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Creating customized hashtags for accessibility is another simple way to draw attention to its accessibility.

There are multiple platforms that allow for image descriptions and alt text, such as

WordPress, Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube.

Marketing professionals can reference the individual guidelines for each platform for more information on how to activate these options using the links below.

- WordPress: wpbeginner.com/beginners-guide/how-to-add-caption-to-images-in-wordpress/
- Twitter: help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/picture-descriptions
- Facebook: facebook.com/help/216219865403298?helpref=faq_content
- YouTube: support.google.com/youtube/answer/6373554?hl=en

Although Instagram does not include an alt text feature, image captions can easily be added to a photo or video since the platform does not have a character limit. The image below, which is featured on the Art-Reach Instagram profile, is a good example of how image captions help make social media profiles more accessible. Additionally, it highlights a specific Art-Reach program that is targeted to members of the disability community.

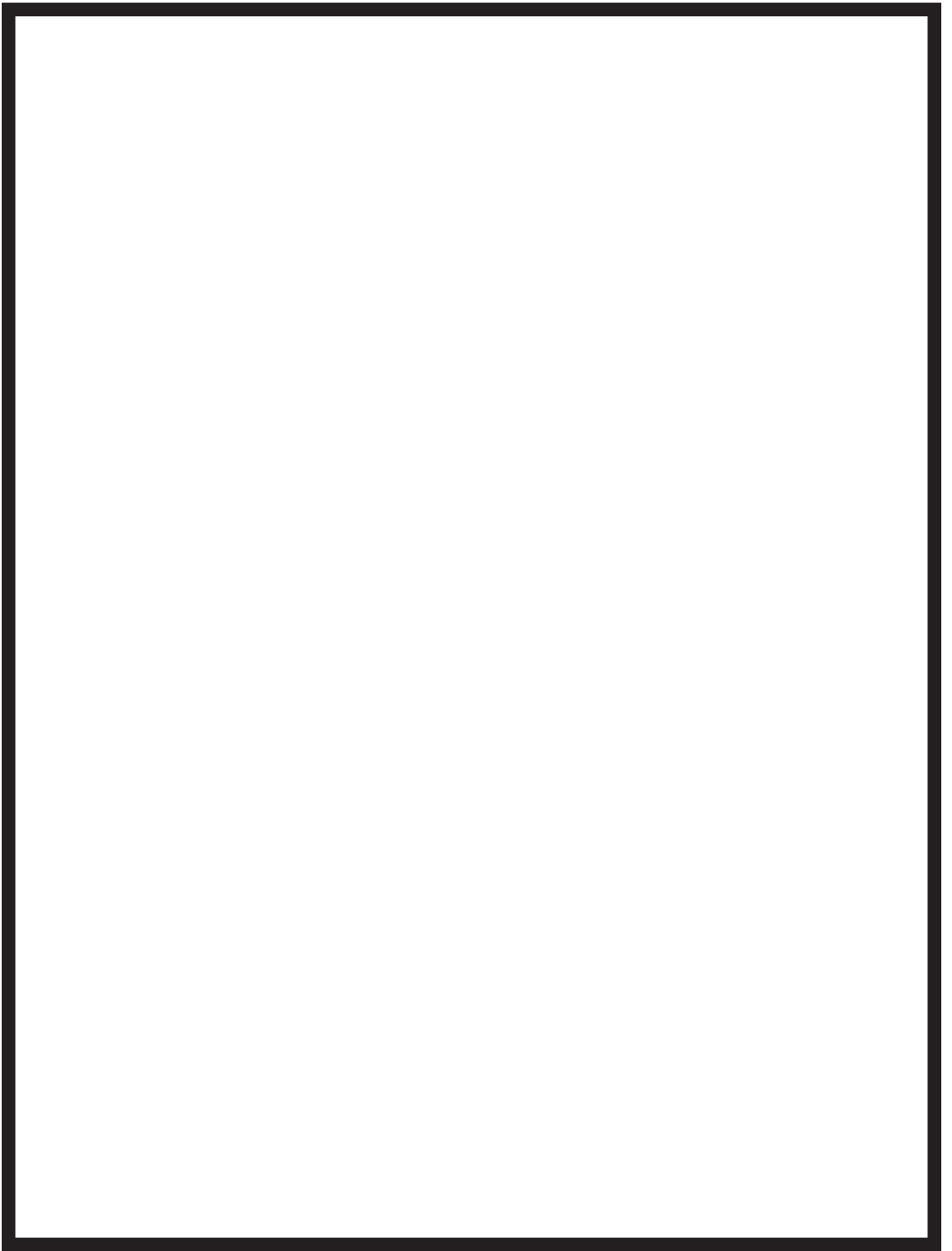


Source: Art-Reach Instagram



12. Consider surveying visitors with disabilities to evaluate accessibility. In addition to reading online reviews about accessibility at an institution, museum professionals can also go directly to the visitors. Sending an online survey via email to members, new visitors, or participants of an accessible program can help gain valuable feedback that can be implemented across departments.

13. Include accessibility information in an institution's app. Making a museum more accessible can mean providing electronic access for visitors who are on the move. Institutions with their own smartphone app can consider adding accessibility to the app. People with disabilities may rely on their smartphones to gather information about an institution. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, for example, recently updated its app to include the accessibility information and features, such as online accessibility and visitor information.¹⁰⁵



Marketing and Communication for the Disability Community

The final Marketing Toolkit was developed and written based on the research summarized in the Literature Review and key findings from the interviews gathered in October and November 2017. The Toolkit is intended to help museums include the disability community, as well as their friends and family, in the beginning stages of strategic marketing plans and provide guidance on how to better engage this audience.

The Toolkit, which is presented in the following pages, features six pieces that can be leveraged by institutions in the Philadelphia region and versioned for institutions nationwide. Each piece includes important reminders, guidelines, helpful tips, and sample copy.

Marketing to the Disability Community

A Resource and Toolkit for
Museums to
Better Serve and Engage
Visitors with Disabilities

© Elizabeth Clay, 2017

Marketing and Communicating to Visitors with Disabilities

Let your visitors with disabilities know they are valued at your institution.

How can you help your museum elevate its reach within the disability community? How are your accessible events, programs, or services currently being marketed to the impacted audience?

It has been over twenty-five years since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and being ADA-compliant is no longer considered a milestone for accessibility. As a museum marketing and communication professional, you may believe that your institution is effectively reaching its visitors with disabilities by featuring accessibility information online or in printed marketing collateral.

However, it is important that you understand how information should be presented and what details should be included.

These days, it is simply not enough to post or print content and assume you are reaching your audience.

By deliberately and thoughtfully considering the presentation of accessibility information, your institution can better position itself in the marketplace. Not only will your visitors know that your museum is accessible to them, they will be able to trust that you welcome them.

By educating yourselves on effective marketing vehicles and strategies, you can create an impactful communication plan that positions your institution to positively reach the disability community.

This marketing toolkit is intended to help you understand why it is necessary to re-think your

accessibility communication strategy and how to implement important changes. The toolkit was created to help with communicating to museum visitors who are blind, who have visual impairments, or who have physical disabilities. Some of the resources provided in the toolkit refer to Philadelphia-area organization; however, these tips and tools can be incorporated for many abilities and at institutions outside of Philadelphia.

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3. Accessibility Webpages
4. Welcome Statement
5. Email Marketing
6. Tips and Reference Guide

Your Onsite Accessibility Checklist

Performing an audit of your institution is the first step in your Accessibility Marketing and Communication Plan.

Taking a closer look at how your institution communicates accessibility on its public-facing marketing platforms involves taking a closer look at your onsite accessibility. By providing important and well-defined details on, for example, your institution's website, you can help your visitors with disabilities determine how your services and programs meet their individual needs. Your visitors will be better positioned to make the decision to come to your museum or cultural institution.

The checklist on the following pages can assist you with performing an institution-wide accessibility audit. Remember: You can never include too much information for your visitors. To assist with the process, work with your peers across departments to help complete the checklist. Sharing this checklist with

other staff and employees, such as visitor services associates and educators, will help you document the full breadth of services at your institution. This checklist covers a range of abilities to help you understand the scope of your offerings.

Next steps: A completed checklist means you now have accessibility details and content for your marketing pieces! Gather the information received in the checklist and determine how it can be versioned for various communication vehicles, such as your website, program brochures, and maps.

Don't forget: Be sure to write detailed, helpful copy. For your visitors with disabilities, it is always better to include more information than not. For example, it is not enough to say you have designated parking spots; describe where these spots are in relation to the accessible entrances.

Quick tip: Keep the completed checklist handy so that it can be updated as more accessibility features at your institution are added. Ensuring that the checklist is always current will help you easily update marketing copy and make your communications that much more reliable for visitors.

Accessibility Checklist

Use this checklist to help document accessibility at your institution.

1. Where on your institution's website is accessibility referenced? Document each of the locations below with direct links.
2. Does your institution have designated parking spots for visitors with a disability parking placard? If so, indicate in the space below where these designated spots are located, including details on where on your grounds they are in relation to accessible building entrances.
3. In the space below, provide the details about what makes the building's entrances accessible, such as automated doors or a wheelchair-accessible ramp. Also provide the names of these entrances.
4. In the space below, name the entrances that are designated drop-off sites. Indicate if these entrances include seating.
5. Does your institution provide wheelchairs onsite? If so, provide the details in the space below. For example, are they free, can they be reserved, and are they available on a first come, first-served basis?
6. Are the restrooms on the first floor of the building wheelchair accessible? Provide the specific locations of each wheelchair-accessible restroom in the space below.

Accessibility Checklist

7. Does all signage within the institution feature braille?

8. Does all signage within the institution feature access symbols?

9. Are the water fountains on the first floor of the building wheelchair accessible? Provide the specific locations of each wheelchair-accessible restroom in the space below.

10. In the space below, provide the details about what makes the building's entrances accessible, such as automated doors or a wheelchair-accessible ramp. Also provide the names of these entrances.

11. Are all galleries, meeting spaces, or areas within the institution wheelchair accessible? If specific galleries are accessible, please list these galleries below. If all galleries are accessible, please indicate so.

12. Are there areas within the institution that are not wheelchair accessible? If so, list these areas in the space below.

13. Do all areas within the institution have seating? If not, indicate the spaces that both **do** and **do not** have seating in the space below.

Accessibility Checklist

14. Are all elevators within the institution wheelchair accessible and do they feature braille buttons?

15. If your institution includes outdoor areas, such as a patio or sculpture garden, do these spaces include paved pathways? If so, list the specific areas below. Also list the approximate mileage of the paved pathways and where they are located in relation to accessible parking and entrances.

16. Does your institution have tours or programs dedicated to visitors with disabilities? If so, please provide the details of each tour or program in the space below, including the name, a brief description, how participants can register or sign up for an event or program, and contact information for questions.

17. Does your institution offer visitor gallery guides, brochures, or informational collateral in braille in large-print text? If so, list the specific materials below and how visitors can request or access each.

18. Are audio guides available to visitors? If yes, how can a visitor request audio guides? Provide the details for the process of requesting an audio guide in the space below.

19. Does your institution provide Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs) for people who are deaf or hard of hearing? If so, how can a visitor request an ALD? Provide the details for the process of requesting an ALD in the space below.

Accessibility Checklist

20. Are videos and films available in closed captioning?

21. Does your institution provide sign language interpretation? If so, how can a visitor request sign language interpretation? Provide the details for the process of requesting sign language interpretation in the space below.

22. Are the personal care attendants of visitors with disabilities admitted free of charge? If so, how can a visitor request tickets for personal care attendants? Provide the details for the process of requesting personal care attendant tickets in the space below.

23. Does your institution provide a map of indoor and outdoor accessible areas? If so, is this map available online or is it in print form? If it is available online, provide the direct link to the map in the space below.

24. If your institution has a café onsite, is it wheelchair accessible? If so, please provide the details, such as low-top tables and location on the first floor, in the space below.

25. Does your institution welcome service animals? If so, please indicate any specific instructions for visitors with service animals in the space below.

Accessibility Checklist

26. If a visitor has questions or concerns about accessibility at your institution or about an event, program, or tour, please provide the contact information below, including an individual or department name, email address, and phone number.

27. If your institution has accessible services, programs, or events that are not featured in this checklist, use the space below to provide details.

Effective Communications Strategies

Tips and tools for communicating to the disability population.

An important step in reaching your visitors with disabilities is taking the time to develop a strategic communication plan. While these strategies may be slightly more nuanced than communicating to your visitors who do not have disabilities, they will help to successfully reach your intended audience by creating a plan that considers the individual, families, and communities.

1. Determine your audience. If your institution is promoting a program or service that impacts a specific audience, this needs to be determined before starting any marketing campaign. You will need to consider the who, what, and where for the audience.

a. Who is impacted? Ask yourself who the participants are and who needs information about your program, service, or event. They can include members of the disability community, friends, family, or caretakers.

b. What does the program or service involve? It is not enough, for example, to say that your institution hosts a specific program every month; you need to document what participants can expect during the program. Thoughtful messaging can tell your audience how this program

benefits them and/or their loved ones or students. Not only does it let your audience know that they can participate in the program, but it also provides enough information for friends and family to share details via word of mouth. For accessible services, be sure to include details about how to register, purchase tickets, locate online information, or where to direct questions.

c. Where does the program or service take place? Many details that may not impact visitors without disabilities actually do matter when

communicating to visitors with disabilities. These details should not be overlooked. Simply stating the date, time, and location of the program may not be enough. Document where in your institution the program will be held, how to get there from the main entrance (or if there is an alternate entrance!), if questions upon arrival can be directed to visitor services associates at the admission desk, where to park (and where designated parking spots are located), and who to contact for questions prior to the event date.

Effective Communications Strategies

2. Social media. You can create targeted social media campaigns for your programs, events, or services. Social media is an easy way to share and increase the reach of your campaign through the use of multiple platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.

a. Word of mouth. Social media is an effective means for marketing through word of mouth—many platforms allow users to quickly share posts or events with friends and family who may be interested in your program.

b. Go live. You should also consider leveraging Instagram Stories or Facebook Live to showcase what goes on during the program and generate excitement and interest for upcoming events.

c. Free content management sites. You can create copy for all social media platforms and schedule them ahead of time through budget-friendly sites such as Hootsuite. This means you can streamline promotion for the events months in advance.

d. Hashtags. Consider creating a specific hashtag for your program to make it that much easier for social media users—and new visitors!—to find your campaign.

e. Image descriptions.

Don't forget to use image descriptions on social media! You want to be sure users with vision impairments have access to your pictures and videos, especially since they are one of your target audiences.

f. Access symbols. Be sure to also include access symbols. These symbols are an easy way to communicate to your audience what about your program is accessible.

Effective Communications Strategies

3. Be present on local events calendars. Take advantage of local tourism sites, blogs, and email campaigns that promote events and programs in your area. Many sites allow you to add your events to their online calendars at no cost; take time to search for events calendars that highlight what's going on in your town.

You can also research accessibility blogs—many travelers with disabilities write blogs about the most accessible cities! If your county or city has a dedicated tourism site, reach out to the organization to see if your event can be mentioned in email subscriptions. This can also lead to future community partnerships and successful public relations for the long term.

4. Tell stories. As mentioned above, you can tell short stories about your event, program, or service by creating a video that showcases the participants or activities. These can be promoted through social media, on YouTube, or they can have a permanent home on your website.

Interviewing educators, your institution's staff, or parents with children in a program can help get future participants get excited about what you offer. You can highlight how a program or service meet the needs of participants. Explain in a minute or two what the program involves, how students interact and participate, feature sound bites from advocates for the program, and include the website address so viewers can read more about it or sign up.

Effective Communications Strategies

5. Community partnerships. There are most likely area schools or organizations that will want to help market your program through partnerships. Consider speaking directly to educators or local advocacy organizations to distribute promotional materials about your program. Word-of-mouth marketing can be particularly impactful through these communication channels. For example, a teacher with students who are blind or an organization that works specifically with people who are blind will want to know about your program and how they can participate.

6. Media and public relations. Similar to community partners, forming a relationship with local media and news outlets is an effective means for increasing awareness around your program. It is also another vehicle for sharing your story, whether through an interview with your local public radio station, ads that air during certain times of day to target specific audiences, or articles that highlight your accessible programs and events.

7. Tips for all communication strategies. No matter which strategy you decide works best for your program, audience, and institution, there are specific "must haves" that should be implemented when communicating accessibility. Always be sure to use access symbols, people-first language, image descriptions, and test for web accessibility. It is not enough to simply implement specific campaigns if you aren't taking the time to ensure the content is accessible.

Accessibility Webpages

Creating a designated accessibility page will help inform your visitors with disabilities.

No matter the size of your institution, its website should include a designated accessibility page. An accessibility page tells your visitors that you take accessibility seriously, that they are welcome at your institution, and that you want to ensure that they have the information needed to make the decision to come. And remember—you already have all of the content for the accessibility page in the completed checklist!

Location on your website

The accessibility page should be added to the existing "Visit" or "Visitor Information" menu, and it should be titled "Accessibility," letting people know right away where they can find the applicable information. Also, it should not take more than two clicks to find the page. You don't want new visitors to get lost or frustrated locating details about accessibility on your website.

Content

Before you begin writing copy for the page, use the accessibility checklist as a guide to determine how to order the information and what details to include.

Also, ask yourself if a new visitor, after reading the copy, will have to call the institution for more information. You want to aim for the goal of never having to put a visitor in the position of having to call; your webpage should give them all of the information they need!

For example, if you are writing copy that details accessible entrances, use the copy below as a template:

Accessible Entrances
The X Museum has three wheelchair-accessible entrances, located at the A, B, and C Entrances to the building. All three include wheelchair ramps, automated doors, and drop-off areas. A fourth entrance, D, also has automated doors but

does not have a wheelchair ramp and has four steps leading up to the doors. Visitors who use wheelchairs are encouraged to use entrances A, B, and C.

Parking lots Y and Z are directly across the street from the A and B entrances. A paved walkway leads from parking lots Y and Z to both the A and B entrances.

You will notice that, in this example, details informing visitors what makes each entrance accessible, the entrance names, and parking information were mentioned. It is not enough to say that entrances A, B, and C are accessible. You must communicate to the visitor where the entrances are located at your institution,

Accessibility Webpages

and you must include information on what makes these entrances accessible. Otherwise, how is this information meaningful to a new visitor? The visitor will want to know the path from parking to an entrance.

This also includes noting what is not accessible, as shown in the copy above regarding entrance D. It is just as important to communicate this to visitors. In this example, visitors who use wheelchairs will know that entrance D is not wheelchair accessible and, therefore, they can access the institution through entrances A, B, and C.

Looking at another example, if you do not have onsite parking, you should include copy that alerts visitors. Here, you can provide helpful information on other options. This can be one or two lines under a designated "Parking Information" headline, such as:

Parking
While the X Museum does not have onsite parking, designated parking for visitors with a handicap parking placard can be found at multiple parking garages in the area. The P Garage and O Garage are both located one block from the Museum, and each have two designated parking spots per floor.

You can also have your parking validated at the Museum. The sidewalks leading from both garages to the Museum are paved and provide direct access to the wheelchair-accessible entrances on the north and south sides of the building.

Consistency is always key. It helps people easily locate accurate and timely details to help them make the decision to visit your institution. Take the time to create an accessibility page to help engage your readers, provide them ease of navigation, and let them know they can rely on you to provide necessary details.

Accessibility Webpages

You also want to note if accessibility information is located in multiple areas of your site. Make sure that this information is also up to date and aligns with the copy you have written for your accessibility page. People should not have to waste time wondering why parking information on the "Visit" page says one thing, but parking information on the "Accessibility" page says another.

Next step: Once your draft copy for the accessibility page is complete, invite members of the disability community to read it! You can host a focus group with people with varying abilities to provide a range of important feedback and insight on the information. This will allow help you understand if you are missing information, how effective the existing copy is, and if it is accessible to readers who are blind or who have vision impairments, among others.

Quick tip: Be sure to test the webpage for web accessibility before it goes live! You can download free screen readers, such as JAWS and the version available via Google Chrome Extensions™, to ensure that all headlines, links, images, lists, and buttons are labeled well and help the user gauge what action will be taken or what is pictured in an image.

Welcome Statement

Let your visitors with disabilities know they count with a welcome statement.

Why should you welcome your visitors online? By speaking to your visitors with disabilities in your public-facing marketing and communications, you are letting them know that they matter and that your institution considers them an important audience. Whether you have a designated accessibility page or not, you can still help them feel as though they are a priority with a welcome statement.

Writing the statement

The welcome statement can be added to your existing one, or you can write a statement specifically for an accessibility page or to accompany accessibility information. Consider exploring the websites of similar institutions to view impactful statements and how they address the audience. Many are written as evergreen copy that can be used across multiple marketing vehicles. For example, check out the websites for the de Young Museum in San Francisco, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, or the United States Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C. These statements can be applied to small or large institutions.

Remember, what matters most is that you are speaking directly to your visitors with disabilities.

Tips and tools

Tip 1: A one- or two-sentence welcome statement creates big impact. It should be short and concise, making it palatable to readers and also allowing them to quickly determine that you are speaking to them. A short statement also eliminates the chance that they will skip over it by avoiding long, descriptive copy.

Tip 2: Write a few drafts of your welcome statement or share the task with your team. Things you should consider

when writing the drafts include:

- Does the copy directly refer to visitors with disabilities?
- Do the draft statements align with the overall tone and voice used on your website?
- Do the draft statements align with your institution's style?

Tip 3: You can use the templates below as a guide or reference tool:

Museum X welcomes visitors with disabilities. We are committed to providing services, exhibitions, programs, and events that are accessible to all.

Welcome Statement

Museum X welcomes visitors with disabilities and is committed to providing accessible services, exhibitions, programs, and events.

Tip 4: If you have a designated accessibility webpage, the statement should be the introductory copy, displayed above the rest of the text on the page. If you do not have a designated accessibility page, include the statement wherever your institution mentions accessibility on its site. It can be added as the first sentence in these references.

Tip 5: Once you have drafted a few examples, share them with your fellow marketing and communication professionals for their input.

Tip 6: Consider adding the welcome statement to printed marketing materials (such as program or exhibition brochures), e-communications that speak on accessibility, and in press materials.

Next steps: Collaborate with other departments at your institution to determine how they can leverage the statement. The welcome statement can be applied across departments. For example, it can be versioned for educational materials or internal communications, or visitor experience associates can be made aware of the statement for when they speak directly to guests.

Quick tip: If you do not have a dedicated accessibility page, be sure to include contact information with your welcome statement. This will help eliminate the chance that visitors will have to dig for a phone number or e-mail for accessibility-related questions.

Email Marketing

Leverage your existing e-communications to highlight accessibility.

Start with what you have! Marketing and communicating accessibility at your institution does not have to be an overwhelming process. Here is a simple way to actively highlight accessibility: If your institution has existing e-communications, such as newsletters or member news and information, consider adding a call-out text box that speaks to accessibility.

Writing copy for e-communications

You can help jumpstart the communication process by working across departments and with your institution's current pieces.

Tip 1: Determine what information you want to present in your e-communication. You can reach out to other departments for details on accessibility, such as your co-workers who work in facilities or your institution's educators.

For example, does your institution have accessible programs or events? Has your institution recently improved

its grounds to be more accessible? Does your institution have a new tour that is specifically for visitors with disabilities? Working across departments will help you gather more content

Tip 2: Partner with whoever at your institution is responsible for sending e-communications to understand how much space within the e-mail will be dedicated to accessibility. This will help you determine how long or short your message should be. Remember: your message does not have to be lengthy to be impactful!

Tip 3: Here are some examples that can help guide your content:

Did you know? Museum X recently added automated doors at the East and West entrances. These entrances also have ramps and are located close to the Visitor Services Desk. Read more about accessibility at [MuseumX.com!](#)

Join us on the first Tuesday of every month for our Touch Tours! Visitors who are blind or who have visual impairments can experience many of the works in our exhibitions through tactile reproductions. Sign up using the button below.

Email Marketing

Museum X welcomes service animals in the museum and in the sculpture garden. If you have questions related to bringing a service animal to Museum X, contact Visitor Services at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

Tip 4: Remember to include the applicable access symbol with your text. This helps readers immediately identify the respective accommodations or services.

Tip 5: Do not forget to include a "share" button in your newsletter. Word of mouth marketing is important—give the friends, family, and acquaintances of people with disabilities the chance to share accessibility information

quickly and easily.

Tip 6: Remember that communications should follow web accessibility guidelines for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Be sure to include well-defined descriptions and labels for all images, buttons, forms, or links in your communication so that they are compatible with screen readers and accessible to readers who are blind.

Tip 7: Add a placeholder for e-communication content on accessibility in your existing communication schedule. Doing so will help ensure that this information is included in the planned communications for the year.

Next steps: Think about creating a dedicated e-mail that is specific to important information for visitors with disabilities and their friends and family. At your next event or program for people from the disability community, gather contact information to create a dedicated e-mail list.

You can also have static accessibility copy in confirmation e-mails that are sent to visitors who purchase admission to your institution online. Adding this language will alert visitors that you are an accessible institution. You can include your existing welcome statement or include more detailed information.

Reference Guide

Important tips, tools, and resources to help you get started.

Whether your institution has a range of accessible programs and events, or if it recently became more accessible, it is important to remember that you must be able to communicate to the impacted audience. Doing so demonstrates that you and your institution take accessibility seriously and are welcoming of visitors with disabilities. You can use the guidelines below as a quick, one-stop resource for helpful tips and reminders.

1. Use access symbols.

You should always use access symbols in your online and written communications. Access symbols communicate directly to the audience impacted by your accessible events and services and lets them know how accessible they are. If you do not already have them on the accessibility page of your website, be sure to add them. The Graphic Artists Guild provides free, downloadable files of 12 symbols here: https://www.graphicartistsguild.org/tools_resources/downloadable-disability-access-symbols.¹⁰⁵

You can also download the new, dynamic wheelchair access symbol via the Accessible Icon Project here: <http://accessibleicon.org/#use>.¹⁰⁶

2. Learn how to write descriptions for labels, images, buttons, headlines, and more.

In 2016, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was updated to comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines for websites and electronic media and documents.¹⁰⁷ This means that your entire website should be fully accessible to visitors who are blind, visitors who have vision impairments, and visitors who use screen readers such

as JAWS (Job Access With Speech) or NVDA (NonVisual Desktop Access) to translate web content to text or audio.

Sina Bahram—who founded Prime Access Consulting, a firm that helps organizations with their web accessibility needs—is a leading expert. Understanding what makes a website accessible to your visitors with vision impairments will position you for reaching this population. You can learn more about web access through Sina's presentations via the links below.

How Do Blind People Use a Computer? In this video, Sina reviews the nuances of web technology, online

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accessibility, and universal design.¹⁰⁸ You can find the video on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nf91AuyPnQA>.

Accessibility on the Web and What It All Means

Bahram demonstrates how he uses a screen reader online and how to write meaningful descriptions.¹⁰⁹ For the full video, follow this YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7OMljzKfEg&t=823s>.

Perspectives and Advice on Accessibility and Universal Design

Bahram speaks on the transformative effect accessible content has on the population and how small

changes create a big impact.¹¹⁰ Watch the entire talk via this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CKNj37dAFs>

Writing descriptions and labels for your website and online content's images, buttons, and headlines provides users with meaning information about what action will be taken if they click on a link or button or what is pictured in an image. For example, for a link that, once clicked, will bring a user to a registration page, the description should say, "For the Registration page, click here."

Similar to labels, image descriptions give visitors access to the content of a video or picture in text form.

Check out the image below and the companion description.



Image Description: A picture of a young boy at a museum. He is touching an interactive screen with his pointer finger on his right hand. Behind the boy is another child playing on another interactive screen.

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The image description is helpful for visitors who use screen readers by providing verbal text descriptions of what is going on in the image. By taking the time to write image descriptions, you are not only complying with the law, but creating a more impactful experience for people with vision impairments.

For more information on text descriptions for non-text content, you can visit these resources:

Art Beyond Sight's Guidelines for Verbal Description:¹¹¹ <http://www.artbeyondsight.org/handbook/acs-guidelines.shtml>

Stanford University's Online Accessibility Program:¹¹² <https://soap.stanford.edu>

3. Write descriptive content.

The act of writing about accessibility includes purposefully and thoughtfully providing details that are both helpful and very necessary to the visitor with a disability. It is simply not enough, for example, to say that your institution has designated parking spots for visitors with disability parking placards. You must take into consideration where the parking spots are in relation to accessible entrances, where on your institution's grounds the parking spots are, and details on how close or far the parking

spots are from the building. You can provide exact mileage if a visitor will have to travel to the building, or give meaningful directions such as referencing if parking is on the north or south side of a building.

What may seem like small details to the visitor who is non-disabled may be the information visitors with disabilities (or their friends and family) needs to make the decision to visit your institution.

4. Learn how to use people-first language. It is important to ensure that all marketing copy puts the person before the disability by using people-first language.

Reference Guide

For example, instead of writing "blind man" or "deaf child," you should write "man who is blind" and "child who is deaf or hard of hearing," respectively. Taking the time to learn how to write using people-first language tells your visitors that your institution is inclusive and values visitors of all abilities. There are multiple online resources that can help guide marketing and communication professionals with understanding and implementing people-first language:

National Disability Rights Network:¹¹³ <http://www.ndrn.org/media/press-kit/265-reporting-and-writing-about-disabilities.html>

Art Beyond Sight:¹¹⁴ <http://www.artbeyondsight.org/dic/module-3-effective-communication-and-interacting-with-people-with-disabilities/what-museum-front-line-staff-need-to-know/>

Arts Access Made Easy by VSA Arts:¹¹⁵ https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/vsa/resources/arts_access_made_easy.pdf

5. Write for the entire community. Many people who are impacted by information about accessibility at your institution do not have disabilities. These individuals include parents, siblings, caretakers, friends, co-workers,

or educators who are actively seeking details about accessible events, programs, or services, and they should be included in your target audiences.

Word-of-mouth communication is particularly helpful with reaching the disability community. Think about how you can market to all decision-makers: parents of children with disabilities will want information about family-friendly events; educators may be looking for programs that focus on students with disabilities; and people who may seek details on accessible exhibition tours for their friends.

Reference Guide

6. Research advocacy organizations in your area.

In Philadelphia, there are multiple advocacy organizations that can assist museum marketing and communication professionals with any questions or guidance they may need. Included below are Philadelphia-area organizations, some of which have a national reach.

Art Reach, which creates arts and culture experiences for the disability community. It also started the ACCESS Admission program with 37 cultural institutions, museums, and theaters in the Philadelphia region.¹¹⁶ Find out more here: www.art-reach.org.

Institute on Disabilities at Temple University, which offers advocacy, technology, employment, policy, and disability studies education programs. Its Assistive Technology Lending Library loans technology devices to people with disabilities at no cost.¹¹⁶ You can learn more about the Institute on Disabilities via this link: <http://disabilities.temple.edu>.

Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, which provides guidance and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act for both businesses and individuals. The Mid-Atlantic center serves Washington, DC; Pennsylvania; Maryland; Delaware; Virginia; and West Virginia.¹¹⁷

More information about the Mid-Atlantic ADA Center can be found here: <http://www.adainfo.org>.

Liberty Resources, which supports and provides services for independent living of people with disabilities in the areas of advocacy, information and referral, peer support, skills training, and transitioning and youth services.¹¹⁸ Learn more about Liberty Resources here: <http://www.libertyresources.org>.

For more information

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Conclusions

Significant work has been done on the part of museum professionals to bring their institutions up to date with current research and data regarding accessibility. However, more emphasis needs to be put on how museums can specifically target potential and current visitors with disabilities.

Since the ADA was enacted in 1990, museums have made the necessary improvements to ensure their buildings, facilities, programs, exhibitions, and events are in compliance with the ADA. However, there are specific strategies that museum professionals can leverage to help ensure that visitors are more aware of their accessible offerings. These strategies are also in line with the growing trend of looking to the visitor as an active participant in museums, a practice lauded by well-known experts such as John Falk and Nina Simon.

Museum marketing and communication plans for the disability community should be thought of as deliberate and thoughtful strategies for not only engaging visitors, but also providing them with enough information to help facilitate an easy and helpful decision-making process. Keeping this in mind, professionals can either begin the process of developing a new communication strategy or improve an existing one.

Resources provided by national advocacy organizations and other arts and culture institutions—such as Art Beyond Sight, U.S. Department of Justice, Art-Reach, the Association for Science – Technology Centers, and the VSA/Kennedy Center—

can be leveraged as guides and best practices in the development of a communication plan. These include training and research to better educate museum marketing professionals on the unique needs of individuals with disabilities. Many of these resources are available online, allowing for greater transparency between an institution and an advocacy group, as well as access to free tools and tips that can easily be implemented.

Interviews with individuals who are disabled or who have family with disabilities helped provide an important distinction between what may be considered helpful information and what is impactful information. These interviews provided valuable insight into the decision-making process many individuals experience and what information they are looking for when actively searching for information about a museum or cultural institution.

While marketing professionals may believe that saying their institution has accessible entrances or designated parking is helpful, the individuals interviewed confirmed that it is the finer details that help shape their decision to visit an institution or not. Access to this information is, in many

respects, equally as important as access to a building.

Similarly, interviews with individuals who specifically market events for the disability community provided a deeper understanding of how it is necessary to include friends and family of people with disabilities in target audiences. Giving these audiences an easy way to share important information through, for example, email or social media, can lead to more opportunities to reach the community. Museum marketing and communication professionals should also consider word-of-mouth marketing, as all of the interviewees confirmed that they tend to rely on the opinions of peers. Additionally, a museum's online presence should be fully accessible to anyone who uses a screen reader, ensuring that important information reaches the widest possible audience.

The pieces included in the Marketing Toolkit were developed based on research and identified trends in the field, as well as feedback from the individuals interviewed. Each are intended to be a resource and guide for museum marketing and communication professionals, through specific strategies, education on best practices that should be used with people with disabilities, and direct links to further reading.

While the Marketing Toolkit can be leveraged to assist with helping museums better position themselves in serving their visitors with disabilities, it should be noted that professionals need to do their own

research and educate themselves on the needs of these visitors. The expertise and guidance of the organizations and individuals included in the Literature Review and throughout this report can be referenced as marketing professionals begin to formulate and develop their own plans. Additionally, in tandem with these steps, professionals may want to perform their own research (as discussed in the section below) among their institution's visitors to fully understand expectations and how the institution serves or does not serve their needs. Surveys, focus groups, or panel discussions can assist with gathering important information, as well as give visitors with disabilities the chance to be active participants in the museum.

Museum marketing and communication professionals should not only implement impactful communication strategies focused on accessibility, but also make the visitor and his or her needs key components in the development of these strategies.

Looking Forward: Additional Research and National Impact

If it does not already do so, Art-Reach can consider adding marketing and communication best practices to the onsite training it currently does with local institutions. Alternatively, it can consider hosting a bi-annual CAFE (an existing program at Art-Reach) session that presents the Marketing Toolkit to participants and reviews the best practices and recommendations. This would also

present an opportunity to feature speakers from existing ACCESS Admission partners who specifically work with accessibility at their respective institutions. Additionally, participants would leave with an understanding of best practices and, more importantly, why they should implement these best practices within their own institution's policies and procedures.

In addition to hosting a CAFE session, Art-Reach can consider hosting CAFE sessions that focus on educating participants on one or two of these best practices. For example, it can provide guidance on how to write image descriptions, which are reviewed in the Marketing Toolkit and already used in Art-Reach social media platforms. While educating museum professionals on the importance of image descriptions and captions is always important, teaching participants on how to write them takes it a step further and provides opportunities for these participants to, in turn, educate other professionals at their institutions. Art-Reach can provide examples from its own Instagram and Facebook profiles, and have session participants write their own sample posts.

The AAM website is an extensive resource for individuals seeking guidance on accessibility and inclusion, such as building and engaging audiences. However, it does not speak directly to the marketing and communication of accessibility, and it does not appear that it has published its own guidelines for best practices. Instead, it links directly to other resources that

provide guidance on accessibility, including some of the organizations and individuals discussed in this report (e.g., Art Beyond Sight and Sina Bahram). Since AAM speaks directly to the need for museum professionals to reach the widest possible audience in its Code of Ethics, it can consider publishing its own guidelines in partnership with advocacy organizations and experts in the field. For example, including pieces such as the Marketing Toolkit would help it reach and impact a national audience in the museum community. Since it has already published an article with Sina Bahram in Museum Magazine, AAM can think about creating a series on accessibility in the Magazine that appears a few times a year.

Looking forward, it is necessary to continue surveying and interviewing members of the disability community, as they are the individuals who are directly impacted by strategic marketing plans. Museum professionals can start with surveying participants at a specific accessible program or event to gather valuable feedback. These surveys can ask questions on any marketing tactics that were used to promote the program and help determine how impactful these tactics were. Museum professionals can also consider hosting focus groups as follow-up evaluations to these programs, inviting participants and peers to have open conversations about accessibility. Similarly, a group of visitors of varying disabilities can be asked to search for accessibility information on an institution's website to provide feedback on how, for example, easy or difficult

it is to locate information or how user-friendly a website is for individuals who use screen readers. Since the interviews conducted in this Report concluded that people may be discouraged when they have to place a call to an institution, website audits conducted by members of the disability community can help museum professionals gauge if they have enough information on their websites to eliminate the need for a phone call.

While more surveying needs to be done to confirm the type of information individuals with disabilities are looking to glean from online review sites such as Yelp or Google, it is important that museum marketing professionals begin taking these third-party sites into account if they have not already. They can consider adding a bi-annual audit of these sites to any existing marketing audits or policies they may currently have in place. This presents an opportunity to ensure that an institution's Yelp or Google profile includes details on accessibility and that information is correct and up to date. For example, marketing professionals can ensure that the proper access symbols are featured on their institution's profile, or read visitor reviews to determine what visitors are saying about accessibility at their institution.

It is important for museum marketing professionals to understand that many of the communication tactics reviewed in this Report can be implemented at institutions with limited resources. For example, updating existing website copy to further

highlight and clarify important details about accessibility can create a big impact. These changes can be made onsite and, in many circumstances, only require adding them to any existing or upcoming technology updates.

Similarly, free resources, such as the universal access symbols provided by the Graphic Artists Guild and Accessible Icon Project, allow smaller institutions with limited budgets or staff to make improvements online that directly and positively impact the disability community. In these instances, it is important for museum marketing professionals to remember that while the process can appear daunting, incorporating these changes into existing marketing plans can help ensure that accessibility is included in policies and procedures that are already tailored to an institution's current resources.

The Marketing Toolkit presented in this Report reviews important best practices for marketing and communicating accessibility; however, it is important to note that these best practices will need to be versioned for each museum, based on the size of its staff, budget, current offerings, and region.

If the Toolkit is presented to organizations outside of the Philadelphia region, it will need to be updated for advocacy organizations according to the specific region and type of institution. In the immediate future, institutions can look to national advocacy organizations that

provide guidance on accessibility, including the resources listed below:

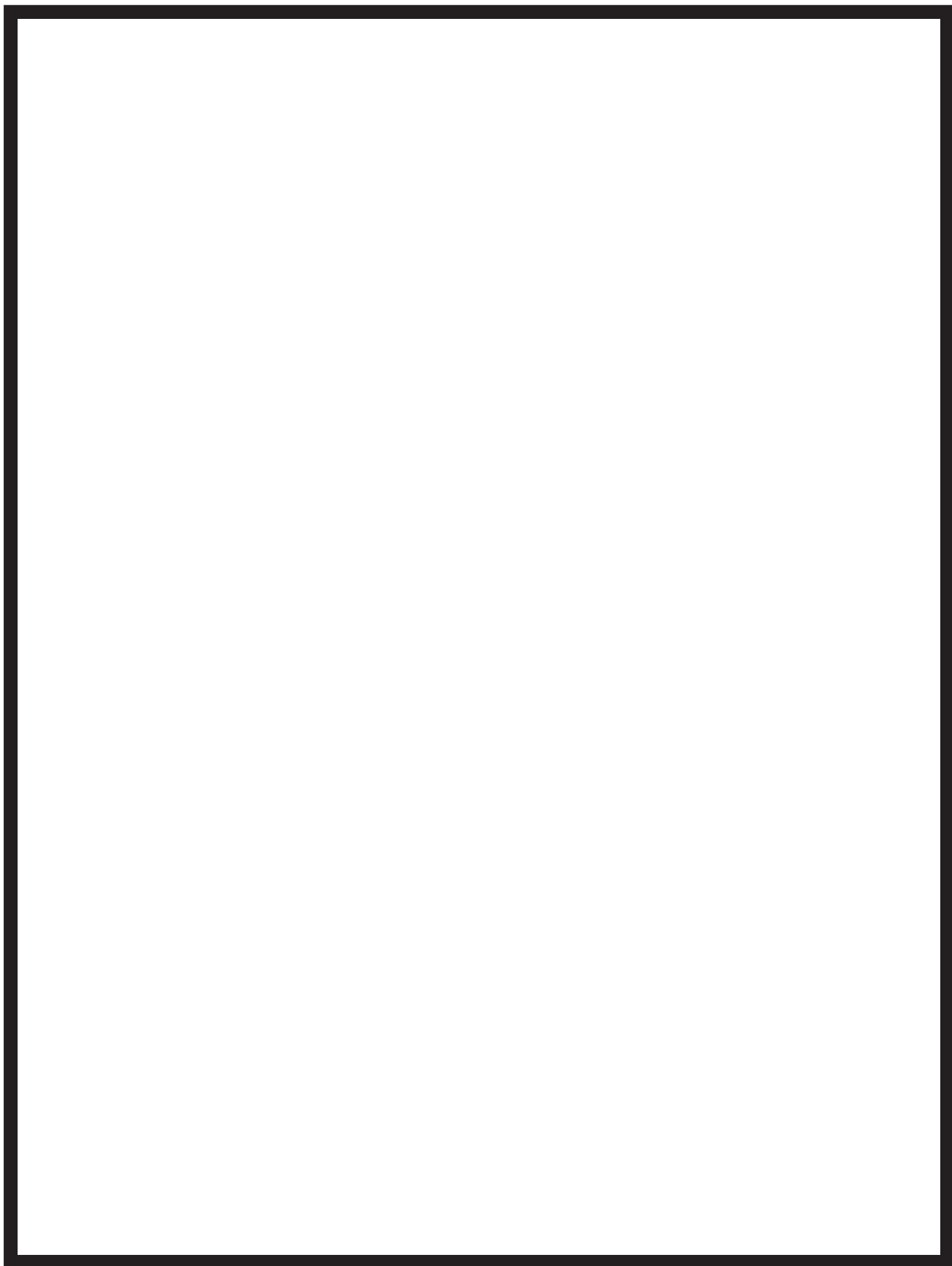
- Art Beyond Sight:¹¹⁹ artbeyondsight.org/sidebar/aboutaeb.shtml
- AAM:¹²⁰ aam-us.org/about-us/what-we-do/resources-on-diversity-equity-accessibility-inclusion
- Great Lakes ADA Center:¹²¹ adagreatlakes.org
- Great Plains ADA Center:¹²² gpadacenter.org
- Mid-Atlantic ADA Center:¹²³ adainfo.org/content/about
- New England ADA Center:¹²⁴ newenglandada.org
- Pacific ADA Center:¹²⁵ adapacific.org/index.php
- Rocky Mountains ADA Center:¹²⁶ rockymountainada.org
- Northeast ADA Center:¹²⁷ northeastada.org
- Northwest ADA Center:¹²⁸ nwadacenter.org
- Southeast ADA Center:¹²⁹ adasoutheast.org
- Southwest ADA Center:¹³⁰ southwestada.org

Additionally, as technology and accessible design are improved, it will be necessary to update the Toolkit accordingly. These updates include researching and revising guidelines on web accessibility to ensure they incorporate any changes to screen readers, any future updates to Section 508, or revised best practices from experts in the field, including Sina Bahram. Similarly, versioning the Toolkit for specific accessibility topics, (such as,

for example, public relations tactics) may be considered to ensure the Toolkit is applicable to the larger museum community outside of the Philadelphia region.

Finally, while this Report speaks to museums and museum professionals, more research should be conducted to understand how the recommendations can be versioned or revised for all cultural institutions, such as libraries, gardens, or historic sites. For example, Art Beyond Sight provides disability awareness training and best practices for both museums and cultural institutions, and can be researched further to extend recommendations across multiple types of institutions. Similar advocacy organizations referenced in this Report, such as the VSA, can also be contacted for their insight.. Since the intent is to positively impact both the disability community and help museum professionals understand the needs of this audience, future research should focus on reaching the greater cultural institution community.

The Toolkit should be updated for the type of institution and speak to the needs of each to help reach a wider audience. It can also be versioned so that it covers a range of disabilities, ensuring that, over time, more individuals in the disability community have access to the information they need in order to visit a museum or cultural institution.



Appendix

Interview Questions and Responses: Henry and Noelle S.

Name: Henry S. and Noelle S.

Age: 38

Location: Media, PA

1. Can you tell me about a time you easily found information about a new place/destination on its website? How did this experience make you feel?

- Went to a large performance venue to see a concert and were happy with how easy it was to purchase tickets for the two of them and son, who has cerebral palsy and is in a wheelchair (16 years old); Noelle: "We were able to buy 2 tickets online and had to call to get the companion tickets. But the process was very easy."
- However, they would like to see specific information online about designated parking and where it is in relation to the venue; is there a cost for the designated parking?
- Both agreed it was one of the "best night's ever."

2. Can you tell me about a time you could not easily find information? How did this experience make you feel?

- Noelle: Tried to search a website for a Halloween haunted house venue and could not find any accessibility information online; "We ask questions such as, 'Could our son get in and out of the hayride? How wide was the corn maze path and could a wheelchair go through it?'"
- "We never want to have to call a venue for accessibility information."
- Both Noelle and Henry were frustrated; "There was no accessibility information, not even parking, on the website."
- Noelle: "Sad. I was originally really excited because he would have loved it; we were sad we couldn't go."

3. Can you tell me about a good experience/experiences you have had while visiting a museum or cultural institution? How did this experience make you feel?

- Visited the Houston Health Museum when their son was a Boy Scout and loved it
- The Museum would close for specific events, allowing for personal attention, which made them "very happy."
- Noelle and Henry could rely on the Museum.

Interview Questions and Responses: Henry and Noelle S.

4. Can you tell me about a bad experience/experiences you have had while visiting a museum or cultural institution? How did this experience make you feel?

- Visited the PMA for First Free Sunday
- Noelle and Henry got in line and "were told we could go to the front, but then we were sent to the back of a different line."
- They "felt bad and confused; the directions were not clear and it was frustrating, especially since a lot of people were there."

5. What is your primary source for searching for information about a new location?

- The Internet
- Henry and Noelle "look at a location's website and also Google reviews of the site."

6. How do you feel when a location's website says that you must call for accessibility information?

- Noelle and Henry: "Discouraged; that is reason enough not to go."
- Noelle: "Puts you on the fence of whether or not it's worth going."
- Noelle: "[We] assume you don't have your act together."
- Henry and Noelle: Accessibility information on a site is "setting the tone [a location] takes accessibility seriously."

Interview Questions and Responses: Henry and Noelle S.

7. I'm going to list general information that many visitors can find on cultural institution's website. Based on the type of information, can you let me know if it is important to you when making the decision to go somewhere new?

- a. General information, such as the address, phone number, hours, and location: Yes
- b. If restrooms are wheelchair accessible: Yes
- c. A dedicated Accessibility page: Yes
- d. Accessible entrances and parking: Yes
- e. Wheelchair availability: No [son has his own wheelchair]
- f. If service dogs are welcome: No [son does not use a service dog]
- g. If personal care attendants are admitted free of charge: No
- h. Information about accessible programs and events: Yes
- i. If accessibility information is located in the same location on a website: Yes ["we don't see this often; many times, it's (accessibility info) very hard to find."]
- j. If all signage is in braille: No
- k. If all images and links include descriptions for screen readers: No
- l. If printed materials, such as guides or maps, are available in braille: No
- m. If maps include accessible entrances and spaces: Yes ["very important"]
- n. If all spaces include seating: No [Not relevant. Son has his own wheelchair.]
- o. If any outdoor spaces are wheelchair accessible: Yes
- p. If any outdoor spaces have paved pathways: Yes
- q. If a location has an accessible restaurant or cafe: Yes

Interview Questions and Responses: Anna W.

Name: Anna W.

Age: 40

Location: Cincinnati, OH

1. Can you tell me about a time you easily found information about a new place/destination on its website? How did this experience make you feel?

- Anna believes "we found information online about a hike in Hocking Hills [state park] that was accessible."
- "It was fantastic! It's so nice being able to do family outings when we know everyone can equally participate."

2. Can you tell me about a time you could not easily find information? How did this experience make you feel?

- Anna and her family enjoy hiking and exploring parks and trails.
- "In general, it's pretty hard to find information about accessibility when it comes to hiking trails, parts, etc. I can't remember a specific one, but it seems that the outdoor adventure type activities take a lot more digging."
- The experience is "frustrating when this information about accessibility isn't easy to find."

3. Can you tell me about a good experience/experiences you have had while visiting a museum or cultural institution? How did this experience make you feel?

- Anna: "It seems that most children's museums are great about providing an accessible entrance front and center. Honestly, I don't feel much when I have this kind of experience...the experience being easy accessibility...because it just feels so normal to me. Being able-bodied my whole life I haven't always been aware of this lack of accessibility, so I notice that a lot when it happens. When a building is easily accessible, I don't really think about it at all--which is how it should be [because all spaces should be universally accessible]"

Interview Questions and Responses: Anna W.

4. Can you tell me about a bad experience/experiences you have had while visiting a museum or cultural institution? How did this experience make you feel?

- Anna: "Last year we visited the Cincinnati Museum of Art. We drove up to the front and it was freezing cold. We discovered that the accessible entrance was pretty far around the side. It feels frustrating and even humiliating to have to walk around a building to find some random entrance. It's like you're forgotten and less than everyone else. Perhaps I could handle this if it was just about me, but since this is something we have to do for my daughter - she was 6 at the time - it stings that much harder."

5. What is your primary source for searching for information about a new location?

- "The internet."
- Online reviews

6. How do you feel when a location's website says that you must call for accessibility information?

- Anna: "Ugh. I don't recall anything like that recently. But it would be annoying to have to make an extra call to find out if we are 'welcome' to visit or not."

7. I'm going to list general information that many visitors can find on cultural institution's website. Based on the type of information, can you let me know if it is important to you when making the decision to go somewhere new?

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. General information, such as the address, phone number, hours, and location: Yes | j. If all signage is in braille: No [not relevant] |
| b. If restrooms are wheelchair accessible: Yes | k. If all images and links include descriptions for screen readers: No [not relevant] |
| c. A dedicated Accessibility page: Yes | l. If printed materials, such as guides or maps, are available in braille: No [not relevant] |
| d. Accessible entrances and parking: Yes | m. If maps include accessible entrances and spaces: Yes |
| e. Wheelchair availability: No [not relevant] | n. If all spaces include seating: No |
| f. If service dogs are welcome: No [not relevant] | o. If any outdoor spaces are wheelchair accessible: Yes |
| g. If personal care attendants are admitted free of charge: No [not relevant] | p. If any outdoor spaces have paved pathways: Yes |
| h. Information about accessible programs and events: Yes | q. If a location has an accessible restaurant or cafe: Yes |
| i. If accessibility information is located in the same location on a website: Yes | |

Interview Questions and Responses: Mary B.

Name: Mary B.

Age: 39

Location: Denver, CO

1. Can you tell me about a time you easily found information about a new place/destination on its website? How did this experience make you feel?

- Mary was "learning about a café to do an open mic night and I looked at the café's website with my screen reader...This website was easy to navigate...Really cool to find the information quickly."
- "[An accessible website] is really easy to navigate [with a screen reader] and [I] won't get lost in a bunch of lists."
- Mary felt "relieved."

2. Can you tell me about a time you could not easily find information? How did this experience make you feel?

- Mary: "On Friday, I was trying to find a recipe online on a cooking website. There was too much information and I just wanted the recipe. I had to scroll down through the whole page to get the information. I kept getting stuck on the bottom of my iPhone."
- Mary: "How much stress do we hold onto? It's difficult when it's something I can't change."
- When she gets stuck on a website that is not easily accessible, she "gives up."

3. Can you tell me about a good experience/experiences you have had while visiting a museum or cultural institution? How did this experience make you feel?

- Mary: "I really like tactile museums. But museums can be very overwhelming."
- Mary tends to look for "live shows and performance venues."
- Mary had a good experience at the Keswick Theater in Glenside, PA.
- About the Keswick: "It set off my whole year! They treat people like family there; the usher was genuinely helpful. I like the small venues."

Interview Questions and Responses: Mary B.

4. Can you tell me about a bad experience/experiences you have had while visiting a museum or cultural institution? How did this experience make you feel?

- Mary: "I can't think of a specific institution, but if someone tries to grab my arm to help me, I pull it away. But people don't understand that you don't want people you don't know grabbing them."
- Mary: "This happens a lot in public spaces."
- She felt "frustrated and overwhelmed"

5. What is your primary source for searching for information about a new location?

- Mary: "I typically will ask a friend now" instead of going online
- Mary: "I rely on word of mouth and third-person marketing"

6. How do you feel when a location's website says that you must call for accessibility information?

- Mary: "A lot of times, it's just a call loop. It will get me on the phone for a long time. And a lot of times, contact information isn't updated or current. I don't trust online information; it's not a modern convenience for me and should be so much easier."
- Mary uses JAWS screen reader

Interview Questions and Responses: Mary B.

7. I'm going to list general information that many visitors can find on cultural institution's website. Based on the type of information, can you let me know if it is important to you when making the decision to go somewhere new?

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. General information, such as the address, phone number, hours, and location: Yes | j. If all signage is in braille: Yes |
| b. If restrooms are wheelchair accessible: No [not relevant] | k. If all images and links include descriptions for screen readers: Yes |
| c. A dedicated Accessibility page: Yes | l. If printed materials, such as guides or maps, are available in braille: Yes |
| d. Accessible entrances and parking: Yes | m. If maps include accessible entrances and spaces: Yes |
| e. Wheelchair availability: No [not relevant] | n. If all spaces include seating: Yes |
| f. If service dogs are welcome: No [not relevant] | o. If any outdoor spaces are wheelchair accessible: No [not relevant] |
| g. If personal care attendants are admitted free of charge: No [but didn't know about this] | p. If any outdoor spaces have paved pathways: Yes |
| h. Information about accessible programs and events: Yes | q. If a location has an accessible restaurant or cafe: Yes |
| i. If accessibility information is located in the same location on a website: Yes | |

Interview Questions and Responses: Tom S.

Name: Tom S.

Age: 48

Location: Seattle, WA

1. Can you tell me about a time you easily found information about a new place/destination on its website? How did this experience make you feel?

- Tom: "I use an online learning environment website. JAWS for Windows. I've been using it since its release. It's a screen reader. A good website has to be very clear with its information. All graphics must be labeled. Links must be well defined. Buttons also have to be well labeled. Not all websites are intuitive so I have a hard time; sometimes I have to go through a website 3 or 4 times. I use a lot of apps for finding information over websites. Or if I'm going somewhere new, I'll use the GPS on my phone. I do read a lot of news websites. The AP, Washington Post, BBC. I don't search for much new information about a place online. I use my GPS or talk to friends. JAWS allows me to go back, forward, browse headings, links, and tables using the right and left arrow. It can show you every link on the page and take you to all of the headings. Clear lists are important."

- Tom: "I don't like having to search on a website more than once. I'll just use GPS or ask a friend."

2. Can you tell me about a time you could not easily find information? How did this experience make you feel?

Interviewee responded in question one.

3. Can you tell me about a good experience/experiences you have had while visiting a museum or cultural institution? How did this experience make you feel?

- Tom: "I played a [music] gig at the Seattle Art Museum. They were very welcoming. I really enjoyed my time there. The Seattle Art Museum and Pacific Science Center have good websites. The whole website has to be accessible. The Seattle Children's Museum and Seattle Art Museum have great programs for people who are blind."

Interview Questions and Responses: Tom S.

4. Can you tell me about a bad experience/experiences you have had while visiting a museum or cultural institution? How did this experience make you feel?

- Tom: "I can't think of any particularly bad experiences."

5. What is your primary source for searching for information about a new location?

- Tom finds information via "apps or through friends."

6. How do you feel when a location's website says that you must call for accessibility information?

- Tom: "No. I typically talk to someone who has been to a location."

7. I'm going to list general information that many visitors can find on cultural institution's website. Based on the type of information, can you let me know if it is important to you when making the decision to go somewhere new?

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. General information, such as the address, phone number, hours, and location: Yes | k. If all images and links include descriptions for screen readers: Yes |
| b. If restrooms are wheelchair accessible: No (not relevant) | l. If printed materials, such as guides or maps, are available in braille: Yes |
| c. A dedicated Accessibility page: Yes | m. If maps include accessible entrances and spaces: Yes |
| d. Accessible entrances and parking: Yes | n. If all spaces include seating: No [not relevant] |
| e. Wheelchair availability: No (not relevant) | o. If any outdoor spaces are wheelchair accessible: No [not relevant] |
| f. If service dogs are welcome: Yes | p. If any outdoor spaces have paved pathways: Yes |
| g. If personal care attendants are admitted free of charge: Yes | q. If a location has an accessible restaurant or cafe: Yes |
| h. Information about accessible programs and events: Yes | |
| i. If accessibility information is located in the same location on a website: Yes | |
| j. If all signage is in braille: Yes | |

Interview Questions and Responses: Lisa Sonneborn

Name: Lisa Sonneborn,
Director of Media Arts and Culture at the
Institute on Disabilities at Temple University
Location: Philadelphia, PA

1. Can you talk about good experiences you have had with marketing events or programs for the disability community?

- Lisa: "We have great coverage for [the play] A Fierce Kind of Love. We use the arts as a delivery mechanism. Art creates a safe space for conversations...disability as a social construct, advocacy and awareness needs, and art gives people a chance to make a personal connection. [For example] a mom can relate to a story about a mom finding for her kids' rights. We worked a lot with the press; one of the headlines was, 'The best play you may never see.' We've had coverage with WHYY, the Inquirer, in various blogs. The press really catches on to the idea of access on many levels.

"We had one particular project, Cardboard for Kids. Kids with disabilities grow out of their equipment or prosthetics very quickly. [Cardboard for Kids] partnered with Adaptive Design and Fab Lab in Manayunk. We brought together architects, families, designers, and OT and PT professionals. People really grab onto this idea of access in the media. It's a softer inroad into disability. If you create a safe space for the conversation, the idea of disability becomes more universal. You introduce it in the press and then reel in [the public] to have harder conversations."

2. Can you talk about bad experiences you have had with marketing events or programs for the disability community?

- Lisa: "The one main negative is the language that is sometimes used in the press. Not all use people-first language. It can happen anywhere. How can we expect the general public to 'get it' if the media doesn't?"

3. Can you describe how specific tactics, such radio ads or interviews and social media campaigns, help with marketing to potential visitors with disabilities?

- Lisa: "Our community engagement coordinator reaches out to populations who might have an interest [in access] but who may not be disabled. She will say, 'this really great show is fully accessible.' It's always very important to stress that every show is fully accessible. We make it known that there is open captioning, a quiet area, accessible seating. Once people bought a ticket to A Fierce Kind of Love, they got a 'Know Before You Go' email."

Interview Questions and Responses: Lisa Sonneborn

3. Can you describe how specific tactics, such radio ads or interviews and social media campaigns, help with marketing to potential visitors with disabilities? (con't)

- Lisa: "Everyone got this. It included general information about accessibility, including content, noise, flashing lights. They also got two guides. One was a sensory-friendly guide to the play. Another was a guide about the venue. It was so easy to share this information!"

4. Can you tell me about a time when a specific marketing tactic was particularly successful? Why was it successful?

- Interviewee responded in question three.

5. Do you also market/communicate to friends, family, and personal care attendants of people with disabilities? How does this vary, if at all, from marketing directly to people with disabilities?

- Lisa: "Yes. We definitely reach out to people who have an interest in access but who aren't disabled. Family, friends, neighbors. They can let a loved one know about an accessible event or performance. Word of mouth is important."

6. When it comes to communicating important information to visitors with disabilities, can you rank the following communication platforms?

- Lisa: "Each is good for different reasons. We work hard to create accessibility from the get-go. We always have conversations with staff ahead of time."

a. Website page

b. Social media (e.g., Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook)

"This is the best tool. It allows us to share articles, share buzz. We do behind-the-scenes interviews, [which are] one-minute interviews of people talking about different aspects of the show [A Fierce Kind of Love]." "We had a project, a Mother's Day photo shoot. The idea of moms as visionaries doesn't have to be an unattainable thing. We used the hashtag, #visionariesaremade."

c. E-mail

"Direct email outreach is important. We send emails to everyone, even if they may not have a disability. It's an [easy] way to share important information."

d. Print (e.g., brochures)

"Accessibility and venue guides are very helpful."

Interview Questions and Responses: Vicki Landers

Name: Vicki Landers,
Director of Disability Pride Philadelphia
Location: Philadelphia, PA

1. Can you talk about good experiences you have had with marketing events or programs for the disability community?

- Vicki: "When I decided to work for Disability Pride Philadelphia, I talked to certain people to make sure they were on target with me" and what she wanted for DPP
- Vicki: "I talked to Charles Horton [City of Philadelphia Acting Executive Director and Accessibility Compliance Specialist]; having him on board helped me think about accessibility issues in the city...It took a lot of planning to find something [a venue] that is 100% accessible. Many organizations, for example the people who run Dilworth [at City Hall], take this into account. People who ask questions are great. They really try to do the best that they can."
- Vicki: "The city is working on making Franklin Square [where DPP was held one year]; we couldn't do it for more than one year. Vetting venues is so important. There needs to be parking, a ramp, accessible bathrooms, no steps or edges, low-top tables."

2. Can you talk about bad experiences you have had with marketing events or programs for the disability community?

- Vicki: "We get a lot of places that weren't making accommodations. Some places will be accommodating up to a certain point, but it can be hard to push the envelope. It took a long time to work with the city to have parking for the event [DPP]. In 2017, the city blocked off certain streets for accessible parking. But the first time this happened was in 2017. We also have street issues. We need the parade on accessible streets and curbs. The planning stages are important; for example, trying to find things for us to do besides a [performance] stage and [sponsor] tables. That can be difficult."

3. Can you describe how specific tactics, such as radio ads or interviews and social media campaigns, help with marketing to potential visitors with disabilities?

- Vicki: "I'm trying to get funding for a website, Accessible Philadelphia. This will highlight places that are accessible: restaurants, theaters, museums, etc. Information will be provided by the community. Sort of, 'let's build this website together!' Have a positive spin! The site will give me options and I will know what I can do so I can plan."

Interview Questions and Responses: Vicki Landers

3. Can you describe how specific tactics, such radio ads or interviews and social media campaigns, help with marketing to potential visitors with disabilities? (con't)

- Vicki: "The internet is a great place to share and include information. DPP is learning about the things make us happy and educating the world."
- Vicki: "The internet helps bring in the community and engage."
- Vicki: "We market DPP through flyers, save the dates; I find every online source with event calendars and add the event. I do this for Pennsylvania and South Jersey. We send out press packets to news media; we also use social media marketing."

4. Can you tell me about a time when a specific marketing tactic was particularly successful? Why was it successful?

- Vicki: "For DPP, the events calendars really helped. I Google 'Philadelphia events calendars...Bucks County and South Jersey too. I had about 10 to 20 [internet] pages of lists; many are free! It helped bump up attendance in 2017. Getting radio spots on the Philadelphia city news and TV stations is also helpful."

5. Do you also market/communicate to friends, family, and personal care attendants of people with disabilities? How does this vary, if at all, from marketing directly to people with disabilities?

- Vicki: "DPP is a great opportunity for friends and family. It really focuses on integrated [sponsor] tables for friends and family. The calendars of events are helpful too. Especially because of word of mouth; it helps increase our reach through word of mouth. We reach educators, people who work with people with disabilities."
- Vicki: "I'm trying to increase [the reach] of the social model of disability. I'm using DPP to bring the communities together. People want to engage and understand."

6. When it comes to communicating important information to visitors with disabilities, can you rank the following communication platforms?

- a. Website page:** "Yes, it's helpful to have the information in one place."
- b. Social media** (e.g., Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook): "Social media helps share information quickly."
- c. E-mail:** "No. People get too many emails already."
- d. Print** (e.g., brochures) "Yes, flyers and posters."

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The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the research and the objectives of the study. It then presents a literature review of the existing research on the topic. The next section describes the methodology used in the study, including the data collection and analysis techniques. The results of the study are then presented, followed by a discussion of the findings and their implications. Finally, the paper concludes with a summary of the main points and suggestions for future research.

The research was conducted using a quantitative approach, with data collected from a survey of 100 participants. The survey was designed to measure the levels of anxiety and stress experienced by the participants, as well as their coping strategies. The data was then analyzed using statistical methods to identify any significant differences between the groups.

The findings of the study indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between the levels of anxiety and stress experienced by the participants and their coping strategies. This suggests that individuals who experience higher levels of anxiety and stress are more likely to use coping strategies to manage their emotions.

The implications of these findings are that individuals who experience higher levels of anxiety and stress should be encouraged to use coping strategies to manage their emotions. This could be achieved through a variety of methods, including cognitive-behavioral therapy, relaxation techniques, and support groups.

In conclusion, the study has shown that there is a significant positive correlation between the levels of anxiety and stress experienced by the participants and their coping strategies. This suggests that individuals who experience higher levels of anxiety and stress are more likely to use coping strategies to manage their emotions.