

# Creating Sustainable Global Cross-Disability Communities

## Transcript of the presentation

October 11, 2022

### Slide 1: Creating Sustainable Global Cross-Disability Communities

**Lesley Cottrell:** Hello, everyone! Welcome to the October version of the Ability Grand Rounds for the Center for Excellence and Disabilities. We appreciate you joining us. We are going to quickly go into the presentation. But I just want to remind everyone to make sure that you're on mute and to utilize the chat or raise your hand, if you have questions along the way. We'd love your questions and your comments, and we'll make sure that we have time at the end for questions if all else fails.

The other thing is this will be recorded. Please use closed captioning. That is an option here if you need and let us know if you have any technical issues along the way in the chat function, we'll be watching that. So, today I have the pleasure of introducing Dr. Jaeger from University of Maryland at College Park. Not too far from here. They're actually – he and his team—colleagues, I should say, because they've all dispersed and have works of their own as well. But for this project and others they've connected, and that's really great for us to highlight. They're going to introduce themselves in more detail. I'm going to quickly turn it over.

But today we're talking about creating sustainable global cross disability communities which we all can relate to here in West Virginia, and without further ado. Dr. Jaeger, I'm going to turn it over to you.

**Sara Olsen:** I'm actually going to step in for Paul here. My name is Sara Olsen. I'm a recent PhD graduate from University of Maryland, and currently still teach there. But my day job is Disability Rights Program Specialist for the Department of Justice enforcing ADA, and I've got into disability rights and the disability communities through my work coming out of the military with wounded veterans. And I'll turn it over to Ron to introduce himself.

**Ron Padrón:** Hey all! My name is Ronald Padrón and my pronouns are he/his. I'm the Director of Undergraduate Operations at the University of Maryland's College of Information Studies. I'm also a member of the President's Commission on Disability Issues, and the co-chair of the President's Commission on LGBTQ issues. I got involved with Including Disability – the Summit – for the last summit in 2021, and then have kept involved, and then been part of the journal which we will talk about. I originally came into it through my involvement with the President's Commission on Disability Issues in which I got involved with as somebody who developed a chronic disabling illness, and I was looking for a community on campus and found that through PCDI.

**Sara Olsen:** Thanks, Ron! Nedelina, would you mind introducing yourself?

**Nedelina Tchangalova:** Sure! Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Nedelina Tchangalova. I am a Public Health Librarian here at the University of Maryland in College Park, and I know all my colleagues

presenting today through the President's Commissions on Disability Issues. I have been involved with the Commission for many years, and currently inherited the leadership role of a co-chair from Paul who was the co-chair of PCDI before me.

**Sara Olsen:** Great! Thank you, Nedelina, and our fearless leader Paul, will you please introduce yourself and kick us off?

**Paul Jaeger:** Hi, everyone! Thank you for coming today. I am Paul Jaeger. I am a professor at the University of Maryland's College of Information Studies, and I co-direct the University's Museum Scholarship and Material Culture Graduate Program. I am a disability lifer and so I've come to these issues pretty early on. And so you know what we're going to be talking about today are a conference and some accompanying things that we have built that has gotten very large and has been successful in building a community along the lines of the title of the talk.

And the context that everyone has mentioned is, you know, we're all part of a group that works on this conference and its accompanying journal. Before we get started, I just want to mention also that the fifth name on the presentation, Alex Peterson was not able to join us today, unfortunately, but I just, you know, got to mention she's a wonderful collaborator on all of these things, and we're sad. She couldn't make it today.

## Slide 2: The Disability Summit Defined

**Paul Jaeger:** The idea here is to provide lessons we've learned from developing what started as a small but innovative conference that has grown into something very large, how we have done well, and then also done not so well and learned, and done better on different aspects of using events to bring people together with different disabilities, different fields, different professions, to build not only a dialogue of disability that is, of a large one, not siloed, but also bring people together to continue those engagements and interactions and collaborations beyond the events.

The disability summit is the thing we're talking about. It's now about ten years old. I'm bad with math and time, but we have this event every two years simply because it is so large, and we're all volunteers. It's an all-volunteer event, but the core fundamentals of what make it what it is, is it is specifically **international**. We encourage and welcome and are delighted to get participation from all over the world. It is intentionally **cross-disciplinary**. So, we allow a space where people from all kinds of different disciplines can learn about disability work that's going on in fields they might never interact with. It's intentionally **cross-disability**, and in that, instead of so many venues focus on one type of disability in the same way, so many types focus on disability from one field, we want to help people have the opportunity to learn the things that connect them across different kinds of disabilities.

And those three pillars have actually led to us to some really interesting, really neat discoveries as we've gone along. The conference is now also **virtual**. It originally started in person, but we have found that taking it virtual makes it so much more accessible. So many different kinds of people, not just to save them the cost of the trip to get here, but because when it's virtual, it can be much more accessible. For all kinds of you know different disabilities that might present barriers otherwise for a physical conference. We've always made it **free** for attendees when you're talking about making things accessible that seems like a really important part of it that puts extra work on organizers for fundraising, but it keeps it really open. And so what we've wound up with is a really robust **global network** of

disabled people, advocates, educators, scholars, government officials, family members, allies, accomplices. It's a really neat big community. Now, Sarah is going to talk some more about how it actually works.

### Slide 3: The Disability Summit in Application

**Sara Olsen:** Yeah, so thank you, Paul! As Paul mentioned, it began as this day long in-person event run by three people. Our organizing committee has grown to over a ten. It's now a 3-day virtual conference, and you know there, there's this he mentioned earlier, and Ron mentioned it as well, this need for more platforms. So, Paul mentioned, we do this every other year because it is quite a heavy lift for volunteers to do so. What happens in the interim? Well, what happens in the interim is this, including Disability Journal that takes the concept of the Disability Summit across disciplinary across disability, and puts it into a periodical that's released right now twice a year. So, being in an all-volunteer organization, the organizing committee actually becomes highly critical. Alex Peterson and Amanda Strausser were our sort of Logistics Committee chairs.

And really what makes the summit work functionally was having once the roles for the volunteers were identified, having very clear handbooks that we could send out to volunteers with... Here's your expectation. Here's if it required additional training. Here's when we were going to offer that or additional meetings. Here's links. Here's who to ask questions. If you are a moderator, a script even. You know, the expectation of having a few questions already prepared for whatever you were moderating such that if there weren't questions in the chat immediately that you could keep the conversation going. Guidelines and guidebooks for the presenters. The expectation of an image description, the expectation of very clear contrasting slides, providing slides early, so that we could post them on the website for those that preferred to have slides to go along with the presentation, and if available, having a script early, so that we could actually provide that to attendees as well.

One of the other changes that we've made over the last several iterations is having a very clear review or rubric. So, the bigger this gets, the more submissions we have for panels for presentations. In order to take advantage of those previous presenters or other people within the various fields of actually doing the review for accepting presentations, we created a rubric and a standardized form for here's what the abstract looks like. Here's what they've requested to present, you know, in terms of timeline panel, individual that type of thing. And here's your rubric for it, and it made the entire process much, much easier again for an all-volunteer organization.

### Slide 4: Expanding the Summit

**Sara Olsen:** And as we talk about expanding this summit, and where it's come from, and where it's going, Paul mentioned it started several years ago. And it was just one day event. It actually started in 2016 in the basement of a library that had a power outage on the day of the summit. So, in 2019 we had 250 attendees and it was still in person at the time. Thirty one percent identified as having a disability, 20% percent identified as being a family member of somebody with a disability and 33% percent were researchers or professionals within a disability field. There's a lot of **positives** from that 2019 feedback – the networking opportunities, the representation of disabled people as presenters, the ability to be able to ask questions and to see where people with disabilities were taking their research or their advocacy.

There were **negatives**, too. The idea of the concurrent sessions. It was the single day, and in order to get everything to fit in, we had overlapping and competing sessions, and so attendees felt that they were restricted from actually being able to experience the full event because they had to pick and choose, or they had to leave one early to attend another.

We also made, in my opinion, a critical error in some of our accessibility options. We provided CART, so live transcription for our events. But we didn't have interpreters. So, those deaf individuals within the audience couldn't actually participate in the Q&A session. They could read what was being said during presentations, but that was it. Similarly, we did not have interpreters for the poster session, so you had deaf presenters who couldn't actually present their posters. Nor could they answer questions from other attendees.

So, we took that information and in 2021, between the pandemic and wanting to be as accessible to as many people as possible, we went entirely online. We moved from one to three days and removed all concurrent sessions. So, you could still pick and choose if you know what you wanted to attend. There were no competing sessions.

Every session had both ASL interpreters and CART transcription.

We had 872 registrants, and the max for any single day was 301, so we were able to work with 301 people at any given time. About the same in terms of 30% identified as professionals in the field, and researchers or other professionals. There were 48% that marked "Other" in the post-conference survey and that "Other" comprised activists of people with disabilities. That was the reason they were attending and we had 60% that were first time attendees. Again, lots of great feedback! The slides were clear, the captions and the interpreters were easy to understand.

There was some feedback on the links for the sessions because we had individual zoom links for each one. They were a little bit hard to find, or maybe not as easy to find as they would like.

And what was missing was the networking, so I'd also be interested in anybody who's listening to this presentation today if they have ideas on how to maximize networking in a virtual environment, we're currently fielding ideas for 2023. And our top sessions were one on self-advocacy and one on policing the disabled body. So, I'll kick it back to Paul.

## Slide 5: Making the Summit Accessible

**Paul Jaeger:** Thank you. So, as we've talked about so far, and as Ron and Nedelina will go into in a lot more detail in a bit, the key thing of when you're holding an event for disabled people, making sure every element of it is accessible. And you know that from the announcements to the registration, to the platforms of delivering, the whole event to the follow up evaluations to support during the event.

But accessibility, we found, really is a very comprehensive thing that goes beyond the technological when you're thinking about a very large multinational multi-disability group. And one way we've refined in thinking about this ourselves, our situation but it's also ideas that we think are pretty useful in thinking about disability beyond just sort of community sustenance, thinking about it in terms of when

you're working with a group of disabled people. There's both a *Disability Tax* and an *Accessibility Tax* to keep in mind.

## Slide 6: Accounting for the *Disability Tax*

**Paul Jaeger:** So, you may be familiar with the idea of taxes, the emotional and economic extra weight on marginalized population. So, you may have heard of the *Pink Tax* or the *Black Tax*. When you're talking about disabled people, it's really two different kinds of these extra weights in parallel. So, if you think about the Disability Tax that is affecting everybody who is participating in your event you know that's the inherent discrimination that affects marginalized groups. That is more familiar, so discrimination in hiring, promotion, retention, the expectations of providing extra value, being the person who can't decline the extra labor, being always assumed to be the representative who can speak, for you know roughly, being the Lorax for the population you are a part of and so there's all of that and with disability.

There's also the element of everything has sort of assumptions of able-bodiedness built into it in most organizations. So, the Disability Tax is a pretty comprehensive thing, but it has a companion when you're talking about disabled people and the extra weight that society puts.

## Slide 7: Accounting for the *Accessibility Tax*

**Paul Jaeger:** And so, with the *Accessibility Tax* it's keeping in mind all of the extra technologies or interfaces that require time to learn effort to use money to purchase. So, there's extra labor, extra financial cost simply to achieve accessibility. So, you can build as much accessibility into your community into your event as possible but you're still going to have people who are part of it, who are relying on assistive technologies through their own machines.

So, thinking about how do we support emotionally and literally technologically, and the people who going to our events while using extra hardware, or having the delays and the extra effort to keep them in, you know, to keep their machines engaged with everything that's going on. And so, when you think about *Accessibility Tax*, these things might include ensuring effective accommodations, navigating built barriers physically or technologically, and then this may not come into play with your community or your event. But it might. But the extra documentation and disclosure that's tied to accessibility that no other group has to deal with.

## Slide 8: Accounting for the *Taxes*

**Paul Jaeger:** So, we learned when we started to articulate these things through working with the Summit and learning from it and trying to get better at it. And so, you can see, we actually wrote a whole article trying to explain these things, but we really believe that thinking about both of these kinds of taxes are pretty much essential when you think about making an event, a community or an organization truly inclusive.

## Slide 9: Lessons Learned

**Ron Padrón:** So, we're going bounce around a little bit between myself and Nedelina talking about more of a deep dive into how this works, how we pulled it off all the nuts and bolts that went into it. So, I'm

going to start off by talking about advertising. As you saw on a previous slide, the last Summit was a virtual summit, and it was so far beyond what the previous elements had been as far as reach and scope.

We had almost 1,000 attendees from fifteen countries. You also noticed in some of the stats that Sarah provided that only about 30% of the folks who attended identified as scholars or researchers. A lot of the folks that I think was almost 40% of the people who attended we're attending because they were somebody who identified as having a disability and 69% of them were folks who this is their first time ever attending the summit, and a lot of this was really intentional, because the way that we approach this and the way that we approach the journal which we'll talk about once again is really with a focus on community and community building.

And so it's not meant to be this sort of circular conversation happening within the ivory tower sort of thing. It's really supposed to be a community conversation, bringing people together to learn from each other's experiences here by each other's experiences. Yes, there's definitely parts of it that are research based or best practices based. But there are also a lot of parts that are conversations or presentations or sessions around lived experience or shared experiences.

## Slide 10: Advertising

**Ron Padrón:** So, part of the way that we advertise this is, we have a listserv which includes past registrants. So, if you register for the conference, you stay on this list. The listserv includes as well as presenters. It has about 1,200-ish members so far. A note real quick is we are going to be sending out a Call for Proposals for the 2023 Summit. So, if you would like to register for this listserv, you could do so at the address that you see there. Also, the link that was dropped in chat takes you to the website and at the bottom of the website for the Including Disability Global Summit. There is this website. This address is also there as well. So, you can also find it there.

We also utilize our existing networks. And so we mentioned that, many of us are associated with the President's Commission on Disability Issues at the University of Maryland in College Park. So, we utilized that as a way of getting information about the Summit, whether it's Call for Proposals or just registration out amongst our various networks, whether they're professional or community networks. And we also utilized various disability, student communities and resources, because we really also wanted to make sure that students were engaged in the summit either as attendees or as presenters we had. We'll talk a little bit about how we kind of structured the Summit, and the different sessions were thematic as we kind of realized some things that were coming out. But there was a session that was students presenting. So, we had undergraduate students, and we also had graduate students. I think this was sort of the first foray into trying to use social media for this, and so we used our Twitter which is the only disability one! We're currently exploring rebranding but we use that to kind of start to build a following and a presence that we then heavily relied on during the actual summit itself.

## Slide 11: Fundraising

**Nedelina Tchangalova:** In order to continue building a stronger and more inclusive research and educational community for people with disabilities, we need additional resources to take our vision and make it a reality. And as Paul mentioned, our biggest priorities are to ensure the summit is affordable

and accessible for all. The total cost for the event, including accessible web platforms, recording and captioning for moderated conference and networking sessions, interpreters, and digital support for d/Deaf, hard of hearing, and blind or low vision attendees was \$40,000. We didn't spend it all. It is a good sign, but we had to reach out to various departments at the University of Maryland, sending them personal emails. This way, we established our relationship with these individuals, and we continually contact them for every summit to solicit fundraisers.

We developed five levels of sponsorship to accommodate any department budget. We also applied for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion Grant. As I already mentioned earlier, our outreach to potential sponsors emphasized Summit priorities which are the event to be fully accessible and free for attendees. We use these sponsors, as already mentioned in the previous slide, we use them for advertising the Summit as well.

## Slide 12: Registration

**Ron Padrón:** Alright, so registration for the conference or for the summit was done through **Google forms** so that way we could export things to Google sheets for us to kind of manipulate as needed. And as we receive registrants, they were added to the **email list** to receive updates, and also so that way they can be included on future outreach about future summits in the journal and anything else that we might be doing or think that would be of interest to this population.

**The registration form** itself specifically asked for names, pronouns, and email addresses. We also asked for the institutional organization, affiliation and department, so that way we could kind of track some data and figure out who and from where attendees are coming from, and from what disciplines. This is mostly just for us to kind of then parse through things at the back end, and see how far reach was, and if there are specific groups that we were noticing. We also asked how folks heard about the Summit. This is something that would help inform how we advertise, and how we outreach in the future, and it's definitely informing conversations.

Now about how we will advertise and outreach for the 2023 whether they require sign language, interpreter, and then any additional access needs that they might have, that we may not be thinking of. So, that way we can incorporate those into the discussion and see how we can make those accommodations possible, indicating if they're interested in attending a specific session. So, folks could just say they wanted to attend the whole thing. Folks could just say that they were only interested attending the keynote or other sessions. This helped to give us sort of a vague-ish sense of expected attendees for the different sessions so that way, when we're recruiting volunteers to help manage everything, we kind of had a sense of how many sort of virtual bodies are going to be in the room, and that if we were limited on how many volunteers we had versus Big Session, we could allocate accordingly.

And then, if they were interested in volunteering for the Summit. So, we mentioned that the coordinating committee is about ten people. But on top of that we had dozens of volunteers, some of them students, some of them professionals in the field, some of them friends and family that we roped in to help make this happen. The behind-the-scenes part of this was an incredible lift both leading up to the summit, and then, during the actual three days of it, just making sure that we were responding to any accessibility needs, or any concerns that were happening in real time.

## Slide 13: Real-time Participation

**Ron Padrón:** Speaking about real time so we've mentioned a few times that one of the things that we couldn't replicate in sort of this virtual space were the organic, networking opportunities that occurred. So, we experimented here with ways to kind of make it seem like it was an event that was happening real time. One of the ways that we did this was live tweeting the Summit. We had premade templates that highlighted the upcoming speaker speakers, lectures, sessions, all of these things that we could use. We scheduled them to go out about 10-15 minutes before each session. That way, if folks are following that they could remember to attend the summit, but also we didn't lock registration once the summit started. That way if somebody happened to just come across through the use of the hashtags, or if they had just started following us, they had a link for them to be able to register. We were monitoring that in real time to make sure that as new registrants are happening during the course of the summit, then they would be added to the list that way. They would get the zoom links and the reminders that were going out.

We, also myself, Stephanie Cork and another volunteer, we're sitting in on sessions and live tweeting quotes and reactions based off of what we were seeing in the Zoom chat, or based off of what the speakers were presenting about. We're also live tweeting links to resources, provided that by the presenters. This was really helpful for us to have in advance. If there was a script for the presentations, that way we could have things queued up that way for the presenters. We're talking about different resources. We could link them out.

And I mentioned before that the social media was managed by multiple volunteers. We also wanted to make sure that the Q&A components of any sessions ran as smoothly as possible. And we had volunteers. We had two on Tuesday, helping to manage the Q&A components to make sure it was as real time and smooth as possible. The moderator, who is facilitating any particular session, had access to a Google doc where a volunteer was sitting in there, and pooling questions that were appearing in chat during the course of the presentations. We would ask people to drop their questions in chat and let them know that they would be compiled. And then the moderator asked the questions during the Q&A component. We're able to pull those questions and then, of all given limited time that we had for Q&A, the volunteer could prioritize certain questions or notice themes that are coming up and selected representative questions to address that topic. And they would elevate those to the top of the Google Google Doc. We usually put them in bold so that way the moderator didn't have to go hunting for questions to ask. They were all there, and as they were asked, and we would strike them through so the Moderator could go to the next one.

## Slide 14: Languages and Captioning

**Nedelina Tchangalova:** We tapped on the existing resources and worked with the camous Accessibility & Disability Service to provide live captioning (CART), ASL interpreters and CDI for keynote speaker presentations. It was really convenient to work with this department so we didn't have to look for any external resources and services.

For pre-recorded videos and recorded presentations, we used Panopto software to request and provide closed captions. These videos were shared with the registrants after the Summit.



## Slide 15: Software and Platforms

**Nedelina Tchangalova:** As we gained more and more experience with Zoom during the pandemic, we used Zoom for all live presentations. We identified the experts among us, as well as volunteers to moderate the sessions via Zoom. The recorded videos were uploaded in YouTube after being closed captioned in Panopto. We had several people from our committee who sent out tweets at various times before, during and after the Summit. We had multiple modes of delivery, to accommodate different abilities to process information, as you see listed in this slide: pre-recorded presentations with live Q&A, live lectures, interactive workshops, PDF and plain text event programs, and also copies of PowerPoint presentations, of course, with the presenter's approval.

In terms of accessible technology, we had the live captioning provided as a link where people could access on a separate screen and adjust the font size. Also, we provided the automated closed captions provided through the Zoom platform. We also provided Live ASL. We had a dry testing with the interpreters to make sure the light, the background, the position of the interpreter on the screen is appropriate and clearly visible without any other distractions.

## Slide 16: Continuing Conversations

**Ron Padrón:** And then, as Sarah mentioned at the beginning, the Summit is every two years, and so there is a conversation about how do we keep this going in between. We got a lot of really positive feedback during the summit itself as responses to Twitter, and then in sort of the survey that we did afterwards and there was a lot of momentum. We wanted to keep the momentum. We were like, how do we batted around a lot of ideas, looked if we do sort of small workshops. Something that's like a scaled down version of the submit that's maybe just a one day or one afternoon in the off years.

Also, what we landed on was creating a journal. The journal is called, *Including Disability*, and it kind of keeps the same name as the summit, which is that it is not meant to be this sort of high academic sort of platform. It is a space to elevate disabled voices, and to continue the conversation around disability and accessibility. And in a way that is community oriented, and community based. And so we definitely do have, we have one issue out so far.

The next issue is coming out by the end of the year. The first issue includes essay versions of our two keynote speeches, as well as the Disability Accessibility Tax that Paul mentioned, and I believe there's another thing in that. I'm blinking on right now. And the second one is the theme of that is called **Naming Disability**, and it's a conversation around people's relationship to how they name their disabilities, or how that name being identified as a disabled person, a lot of that conversation around disability like or person first language. The purpose of the journal is to keep a community oriented in a community led conversation happening in between the summits. The goal right now is to have two issues a year. We have sort of themes planned out but obviously, as things in the world happen, we you try to respond to those as well.

I guess I will put a pitch out there that we're always looking for submissions, or I was looking for reviewers. And so, if this is something that you're interested in getting involved with, feel free to reach out to us. You can find information on the Including Disability Journal link.

## Slide 17: Thank you for listening!

**Ron Padrón:** Yeah. And then, I think that is it. So that is our presentation. And we made good time, which is notable for us. And I guess we can turn it over for questions now.

## Questions & Answers

**Sara Olsen:** So many questions. It's hard to think where to start. It looks like Eric has his hand up.

**Eric "Murph" Murphy:** I did. I was trying to find my little marker thing. Hello! I was wondering, in regards to creating this environment of unconditional positive regard, something that it you could create support this community, was there any conversation about that – the system versus me – and that feeling of alienation, the mental health aspect of it is what I'm wondering, what's there? A lot of conversation about that.

**Sara Olsen:** I've been involved since 2019, and I don't think it's been a part, an explicit part of our conversations about the summit. However, there were several submissions, and themed panels associated with that in our last one. But that's, I think a great conversation to have, and just not one we've addressed yet. That I recall. Paul, I don't know if you and Stephanie had conversations like that early on.

**Paul Jaeger:** Yeah. We did in the first couple... a lot of the work as we tried to set it up, was figuring out how to even though, you know, those were the in-person ones. So, the focus really was on maximizing accessibility and in welcomingness to all aspects of disability. So, yes, initially, we really did try to think through how can we present things so that people from all different kinds of disabilities, whether as a researcher, an educator, or a member or a family member could feel supported and contribute to the event with their research or perspectives. And so from the beginning we've had a really wide range of disabilities represented. So yeah, it it's, it was part of establishing the yeast of it was trying to figure out how do we use language to make it clear that all groups are welcomed from within disability.

**Sara Olsen:** Paul, if I can piggyback off of that, I think part of the way we do, it is sort of how we live as organizers and support each other keeping in mind what we want the summit to be. I think we are also kind to each other from a mental health perspective, and by doing that it comes across and how we interact and what's expected from attendees and presenters. Mistakes are okay and nothing to anybody's fault, and it's about bringing the community together, regardless of what you know. It ends up looking like, and I think, having that mentality and sort of true belief in internally comes across in the way we present ourselves, or at least I hope it does.

**Eric "Murph" Murphy:** Thank you very much, Sara!

**Lesley Cottrell:** Molina, did you have your hand up to? Or was that...

**Melina Danko:** I did. I have a lot of logistical question. I was laughing around because I'm sure that it's difficult, especially with only ten of you. I heard, you guys, mentioned Zoom. Was there a specific platform or software package that you had to get that would accommodate over a thousand people? And then also, I guess, how did you work out the accessibility components for the presenters that would be delivering? Did you guys have teams that would work on that as a part of your committee? Or did

you provide guidelines to the presenters, and the expectation was that their materials would all be accessible?

**Ron Padrón:** I can start answering the question, and it kind of passed off to other folks. As far as purchasing stuff we paid for, CART as well as ASL, but for the Zoom platform and stuff, we just used the University Zoom license. The Zoom seminar rooms that are incorporated with our license have a fairly high attendee cap. That was just something that we were able to utilize off the bat. As far as the other question. I know we did ask for and I'll pass it over to, I think Sarah and I think they might know this a little bit better, but we definitely did provide guidelines for how we would like things to be submitted. That way it was easier on our volunteers and our team but I think that Nedelina and Sara could answer that better.

**Sara Olsen:** I'm actually going to give it to Nedelina because she was really the powerhouse behind any print or downloadable material that was accessible.

**Nedelina Tchangalova:** Yeah, whenever I saw any of the documentations or the slides, I try to run the accessibility check and communicated with the presenters whenever there was some issues, but in the majority they were pretty mindful of the conference that materials that have been made accessible, anyway, accessible to everyone.

**Melina Danko:** And one more question. I'm: sorry. How far out do you guys begin planning for your next one, because I know it's every two years. I mean, do you eat, sleep, and breathe the whole time, or do you give, allow yourselves some downtime, and then hit it hard?

**Ron Padrón:** In the day after it's done. We definitely have a debrief afterwards. I think we had a debrief like a few weeks, a couple, not too long after it ended. We're all taking sort of a contemporaneous notes as what was working, what wasn't working, our thoughts, and we met and had a debrief after, and kind of said, here's what went well, here's what we need to do in the immediate like aftermath of it, especially like getting the recorded videos transcribed. There was some post summit admin that needed to happen. But then, Sara, what would you say that we started up like really planning?

**Sara Olsen:** One of the things we did after the last summit was to create the handbook that actually had a nominal timeline. And so the timeline starts about eighteen months out. It starts to get kind of really picks up, six to eight months out, but we're looking to capture theme ideas. Early on start to send out Save the dates, that type of thing. The planning and thinking about what the next one looks like starts very late, about eighteen months out, and starts to get pretty heavy about ten months out.

**Nedelina Tchangalova:** Another thing that we are planning because you see the new website is not up and running yet. This is another item that we had to take into consideration. Some of the organizing committee left the university, and they don't have access to our web server. We had to figure out how to provide better access to everyone in the committee, because you know, many life things happen and people come and go. So right now, we have two websites, and we are trying to transfer all the content to the new website right now.

**Lesley Cottrell:** Since Covid, you all mentioned a silver lining that we've all broadened our horizon, we had every other year. We go back to back between our TBI [Traumatic Brain Injury conference] and West Virginia Disability Conference is something very similar. It's around the time that you all are doing this April. But now International is becoming our backyard, right, as you as you've mentioned. My

question relates to and it kind of speaks to before we let everyone in. Where do you see this going? Do you think if we're all going international, that we start collaborating on disability related, and our communities get bigger? And if so, how do we do that? Does your group of ten become twenty? Because you've added people, or do we still connect but keep independent? What do you think?

**Sara Olsen:** I'm going nominate Paul to answer this question, because I think he has some, some no pun intended vision for where this is going.

**Paul Jaeger:** Well for one of the things that we've been really happy about our ability to bring people together across so many different disciplines and disabilities has been the new research that people form on their own through connections they make at the summit. And there's lots of that kind of collaboration that becomes feasible because of technology. The bits of fusion to create new perspectives on disability across disciplines or disabilities is one thing that is a spin off from the summit that we don't have a hand in. One of the things where the summit can create new things going forward.

Yeah, we definitely hope to keep expanding. This is that Sarah mentioned early on that we had people presenting from 15 different countries. You know that that kind of level of interaction is just amazing. Especially when you consider what some of the things covered. We had someone from Eastern Europe talking about how they're reforming their social services in the government to expand services specifically for people with disabilities in the country of Georgia. A little later that same day we had someone presenting from a country in Southeast Asia talking about voting. It drives to increase participation of disabled people in voting in their country.

And the more voices from the more different places we hear not only do we learn more about the different problems and the commonalities but we have an opportunity to influence by what people learn what's going on in so many different places, by people being from all these different places, and walking away with, Hey, let's try that, or we never thought of that. The alchemy aspect that we've always emphasized of bringing so many different perspectives together really helped along by the big increase in people from all over the world wanting to be involved in events virtually. Yeah, this is for us. This really is a great opportunity going forward to keep expanding the voices from the different places in this. And if that leads to more collaborations with other groups, on our part that's fantastic, too.

**Lesley Cottrell:** That's true. I mean it is a small world when you get on here, and you hear similarities and even differences. But then you start looking at the culture surrounding culture, and I know several of us have had those conversations. Many of us are on here, where disability intersects with race, with community, with other aspects of culture, other parts of our identity. And so, I'd be curious to see and hopefully we could submit some things to your summit. Any other questions or comments? And Teresa thank you for including the platform piece. Did you want to say anything to that, or are you all familiar with Gather Town [<https://www.gather.town/> - Gather is a video chat platform designed to make virtual interactions more human].

**Teresa Bhaile - PBSP (CED) - she/her:** I was first introduced to Gather town through Science Fiction conventions. This is, I'm a big nerd, and I go to those things. It's built as a 16 bit video game interface. I don't know about how accessible it is for those, maybe with vision impairments. You have these little 16 bit characters that you can personalize a little bit. But then they travel around this virtual environment. And when you get close to someone else, then video things pop up and you can join in a conversation with a person or a group of people just like you would in a convention or at a conference. You can go to

rooms and be put into a specific zoom room for that particular kind of like panel kind of thing. So, it would certainly be something to look at if you're still looking to increase that networking because it would provide through the little 16 bit characters that kind of sense of being in the same place with them and able to interact with anybody who happens to be on the screen. But you definitely would have to check into it about how accessible it is or can be made, because I just don't know anything about that.

**Eric "Murph" Murphy:** I'm looking at it right now, and so this is awesome looking. It is that 16 bit, I mean, this is hilarious, but I see when you pop up next to somebody, a screen pops up like we're looking at each other right now. That is really creative. Nice. So, thank you.

**Lesley Cottrell:** Check it out and use it. Any other questions or comments? Well, we really appreciate you guys taking the time to... Oh, sorry.

**Paul Jaeger:** Well, Leslie, I just sorry, I just wanted to circle back to something you said before the last comment about that platform. Ron did mention this earlier but please do if you're interested, we'd love to have submissions for the next summit. We'd love to see papers for the Journal. We really do want these to be welcoming and inclusive of everybody's voices and interests. The mention was made of intersectionality. We've had a lot of stuff at the summit on intersectionality in some really amazing and creative ways. If that is part of your work, we certainly would be happy to see it. We want these to be places where people can feel like they can contribute. So, please consider it with your own work. Thank you.

**Lesley Cottrell:** No, thank you. We will. We will definitely. Those are in the chat, the links, and then they're also embedded in the slides. And if you all are okay with that, we'll circulate the slides as well, so that they could have those links because there were other important links to. But thank you all very much. We will definitely. We've learned a lot from you today. We know it's a lot of work and thanks for joining our little piece of national network. Everyone have a great day and talk to you later!

Thank you.