

MUSEUM ACCESSIBILITY HOW & WHY

[BIT.LY/AMA12ACCESSIBILITY](https://bit.ly/AMA12ACCESSIBILITY)

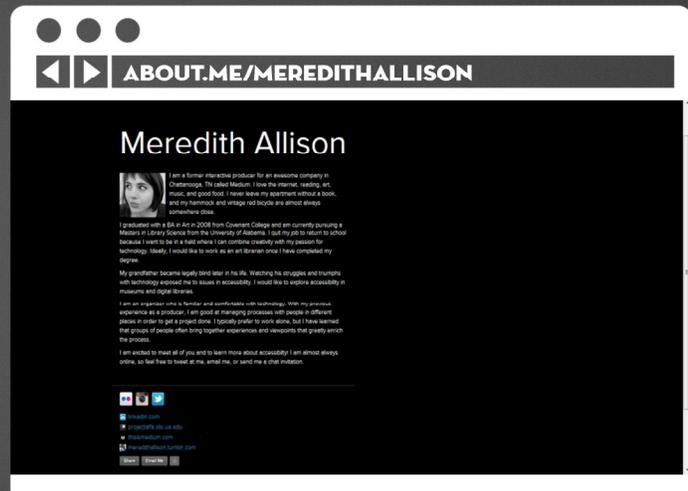
- We'll talk about the "why" and "how" of museum accessibility: why museums should ensure their spaces and collections are accessible to people with disabilities and ways to do so.
- We'll share specific examples of accessible exhibits and programs, and you'll leave the session with tools to help you provide greater access for all visitors.

MEREDITH M. ALLISON

PROJECT ALFA FELLOW
PROJECTALFA.SLIS.UA.EDU

**SCHOOL OF LIBRARY &
INFORMATION STUDIES**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA**

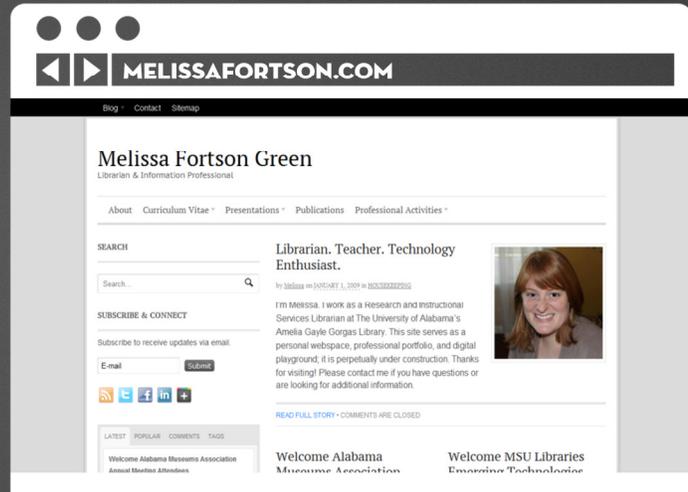


- Meredith introduces self, talks about background, research interests, etc..

MELISSA FORTSON GREEN

RESEARCH &
INSTRUCTIONAL
SERVICES LIBRARIAN

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA



- Melissa introduces self, talks about background, research interests, etc..

WHY

- Why is it important to ensure our spaces and collections are accessible to people with disabilities?

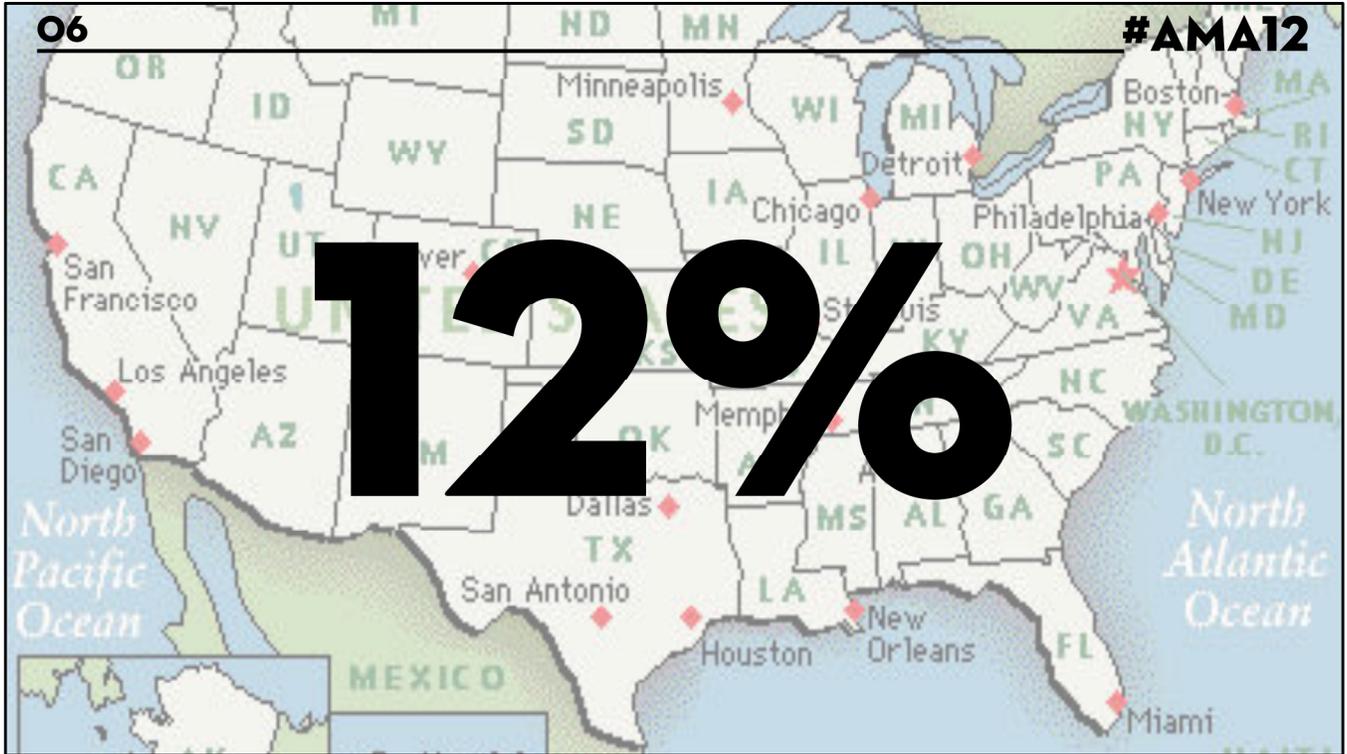
O5

#AMA12



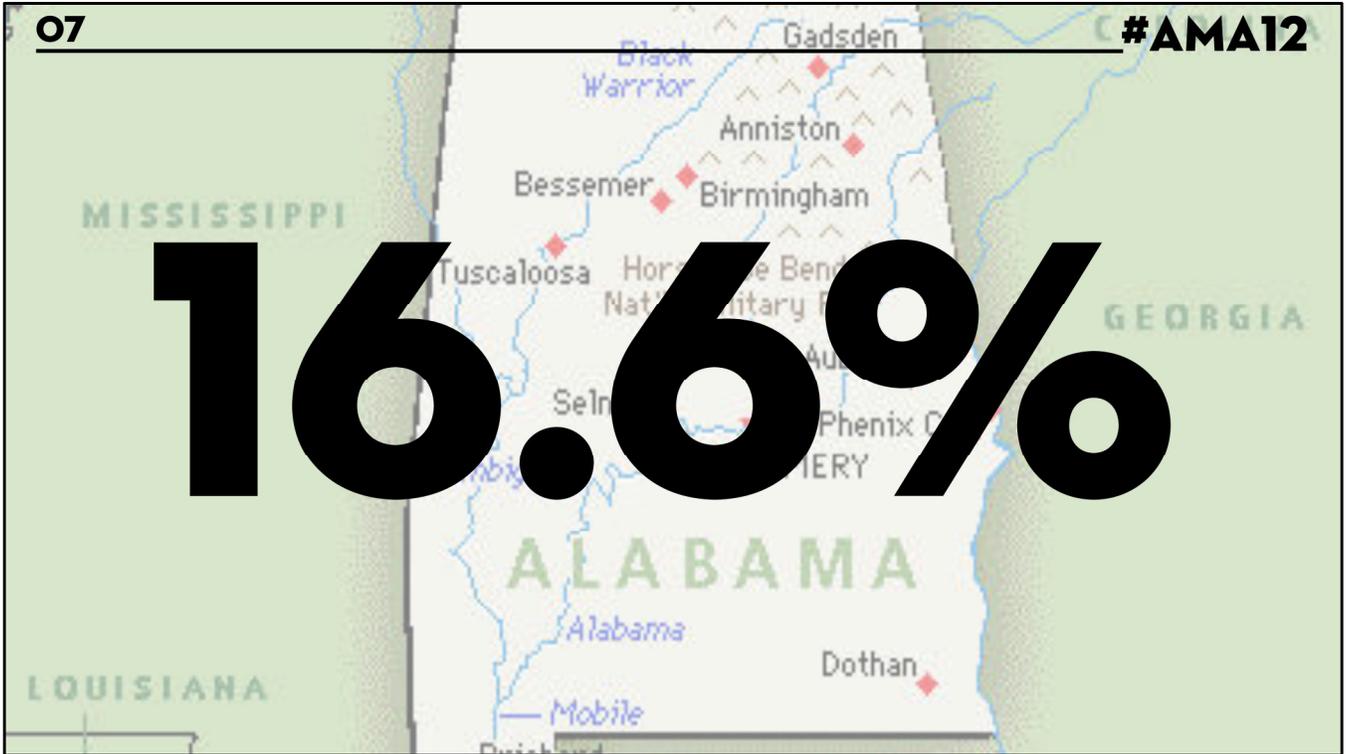
YOUR VISITORS

- Your visitors.

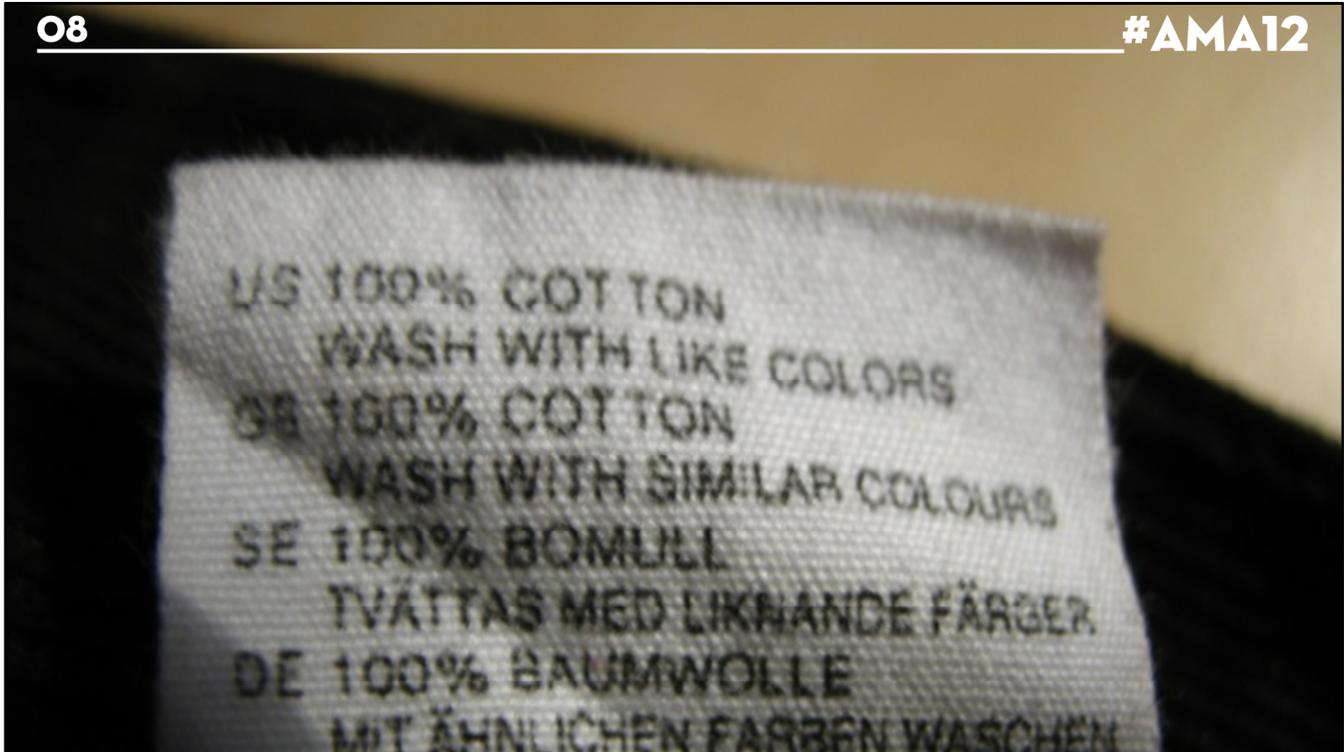


- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 12% of the United States population report having a disability;

16.6%



- in Alabama, the percentage is 16.6%.



- About those labels...
 - survey data are unreliable (what is a disability?)
 - while we may talk about 'people with disabilities' or specific disabilities for purposes of this presentation, in general, disability is not something to be singled out
 - the disability experience is the human experience
 - will impact us all at some point
 - choices we make in our design will be of benefit to all users, regardless of ability
 - captions & hairdryer
 - accessible websites & SEO

**“A PHENOMENON OF THE
EXPERIENCE THAT OCCURS BY
THE INDIVIDUAL INTERSECTING
WITH THE ENVIRONMENT”**

- Valerie Fletcher on redefining disability.
- We create accessibility and disability through our design choices.



CONNECT

- Another reason why? We engage the entire community by creating something usable by all people.



ACCREDITATION

- The American Association of Museums publishes a list of ‘characteristics of an accreditable museum.’
- Depending on if you’re accredited, are working towards accreditation, or none of the above, these characteristics provide some guidelines with which you must comply, some standards to which you can aspire, or just some really good suggestions.

AAM CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ACCREDITABLE MUSEUM

THE MUSEUM...

- IDENTIFIES THE **COMMUNITIES** IT SERVES, AND MAKES APPROPRIATE DECISIONS IN HOW IT SERVES THEM.

THE MUSEUM...

- STRIVES TO BE **INCLUSIVE** AND OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR **DIVERSE** PARTICIPATION.

THE MUSEUM...

- DEMONSTRATES A COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING THE PUBLIC WITH **PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL ACCESS** TO THE MUSEUM AND ITS RESOURCES.

THE MUSEUM...

- **COMPLIES** WITH LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL LAWS, CODES, AND REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO ITS FACILITIES, OPERATIONS, AND ADMINISTRATION.

THE MUSEUM...

- PROVIDES **PUBLIC ACCESS** TO ITS COLLECTIONS WHILE ENSURING THEIR PRESERVATION.

THE MUSEUM...

- UNDERSTANDS THE **CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS OF ITS EXISTING AND POTENTIAL AUDIENCES** AND USES THIS UNDERSTANDING TO INFORM ITS INTERPRETATION.

THE MUSEUM...

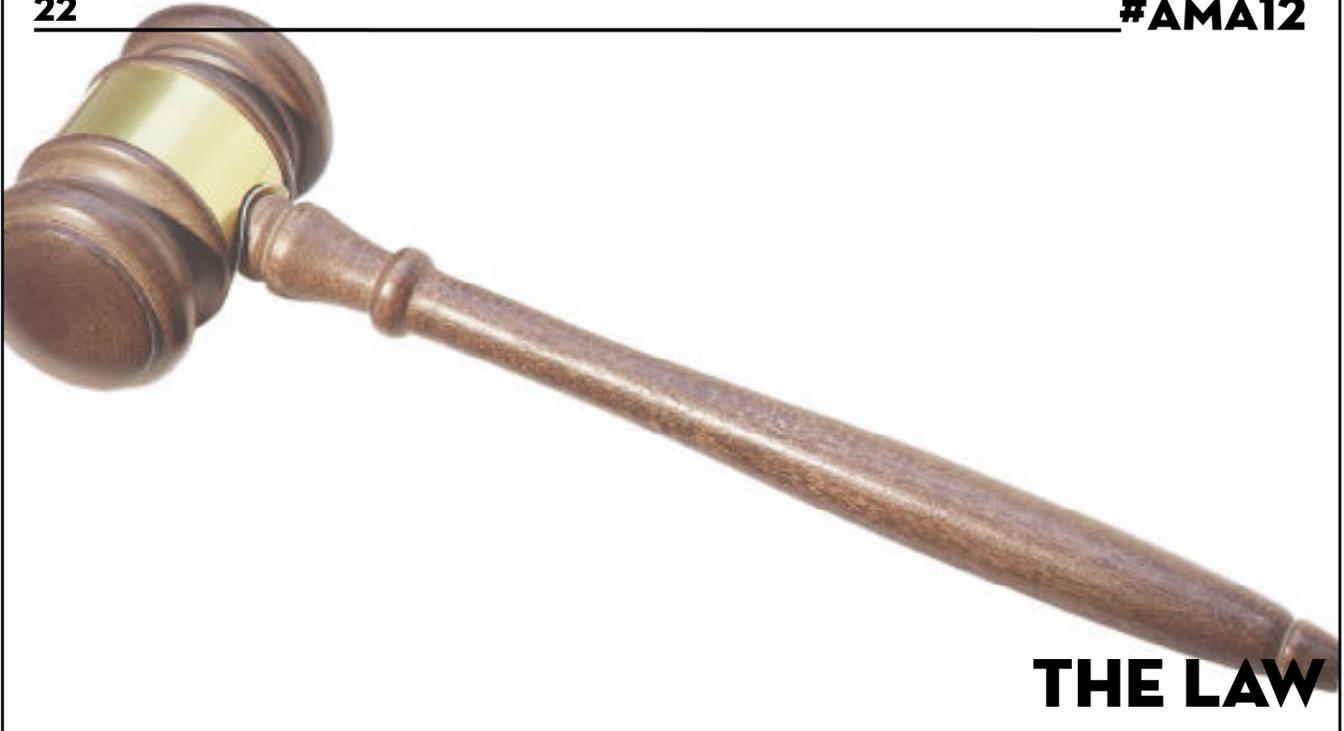
- **USES TECHNIQUES, TECHNOLOGIES, AND METHODS APPROPRIATE TO ITS EDUCATIONAL GOALS, CONTENT, AUDIENCES, AND RESOURCES.**

THE MUSEUM...

- PRESENTS ACCURATE AND APPROPRIATE CONTENT FOR **EACH OF ITS AUDIENCES.**

THE MUSEUM...

- **ALLOCATES ITS SPACE AND USES ITS FACILITIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COLLECTIONS, AUDIENCE, AND STAFF.**



- We have talked about some 'carrots'- benefits or rewards of making sure your museum's offerings are accessible- and now, the sticks.
- There are 3 primary federal accessibility laws that "require all organizations that serve the public or receive direct or indirect federal funds to enable people with disabilities to enjoy the benefits of the organization's services."

REHABILITATION ACT

- Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (“Rehabilitation Act”) (29 U.S.C. § 794 for Section 504)

ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS ACT

- Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (“ABA”) (42 U.S.C. § 4151 et seq.)

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”) (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.)



WEB

- Also applicable: laws and regulations related to web accessibility:
 - Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act
 - Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act
 - ADA



- May also apply:
 - IDEA



- Finally, state and local statutes or regulations.
- We should ensure our spaces and collections are accessible because it's the right thing to do, not out of fear of getting sued.
- Knowledge of the laws may help when advocating for change, though.

HOW

- We've talked about why it's important to ensure your museum is welcoming to people of all abilities; now, let's talk about some ways to do that.



COMMUNICATION

PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

**PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES**

~~**HANDICAPPED**~~

~~**DISABLED**~~

~~**CRIPPLED**~~

~~**SPECIAL NEEDS**~~

**HE HAS AN
INTELLECTUAL
DISABILITY**

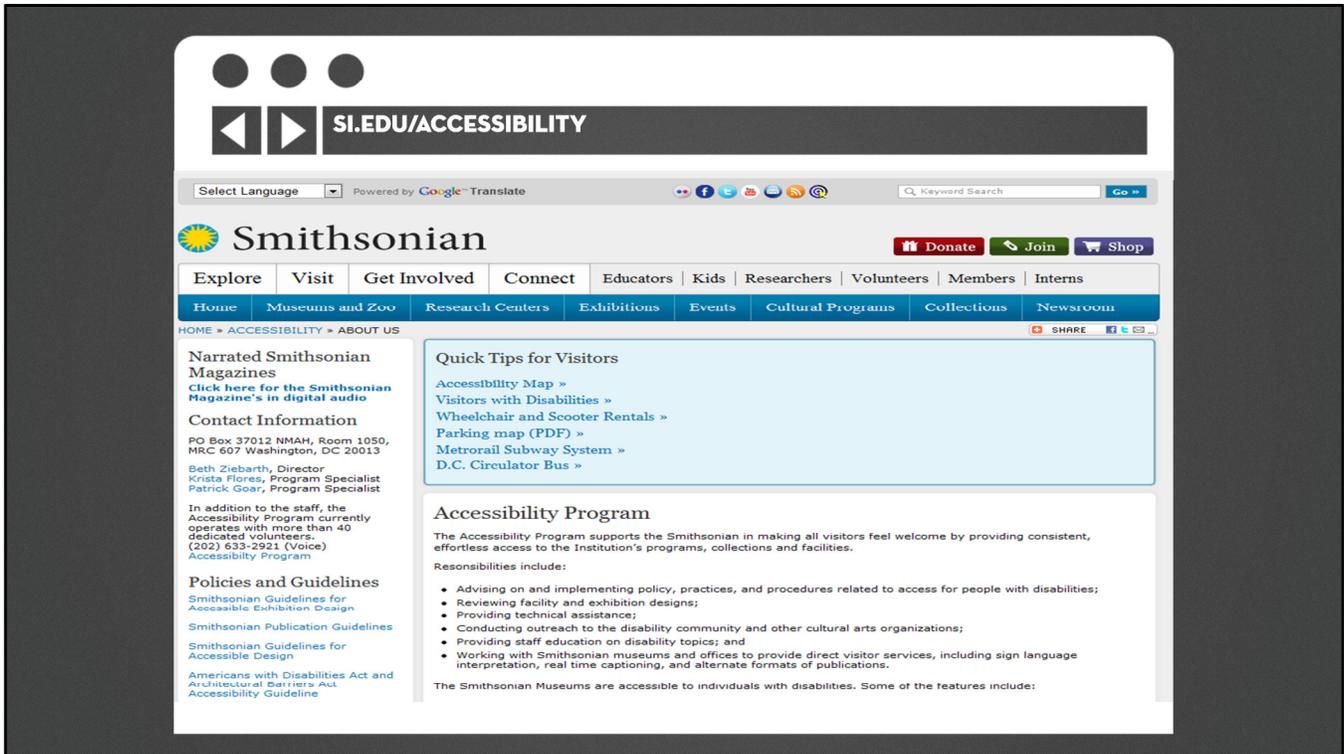
**HE IS
~~RETARDED~~**

**SHE USES A
WHEELCHAIR**

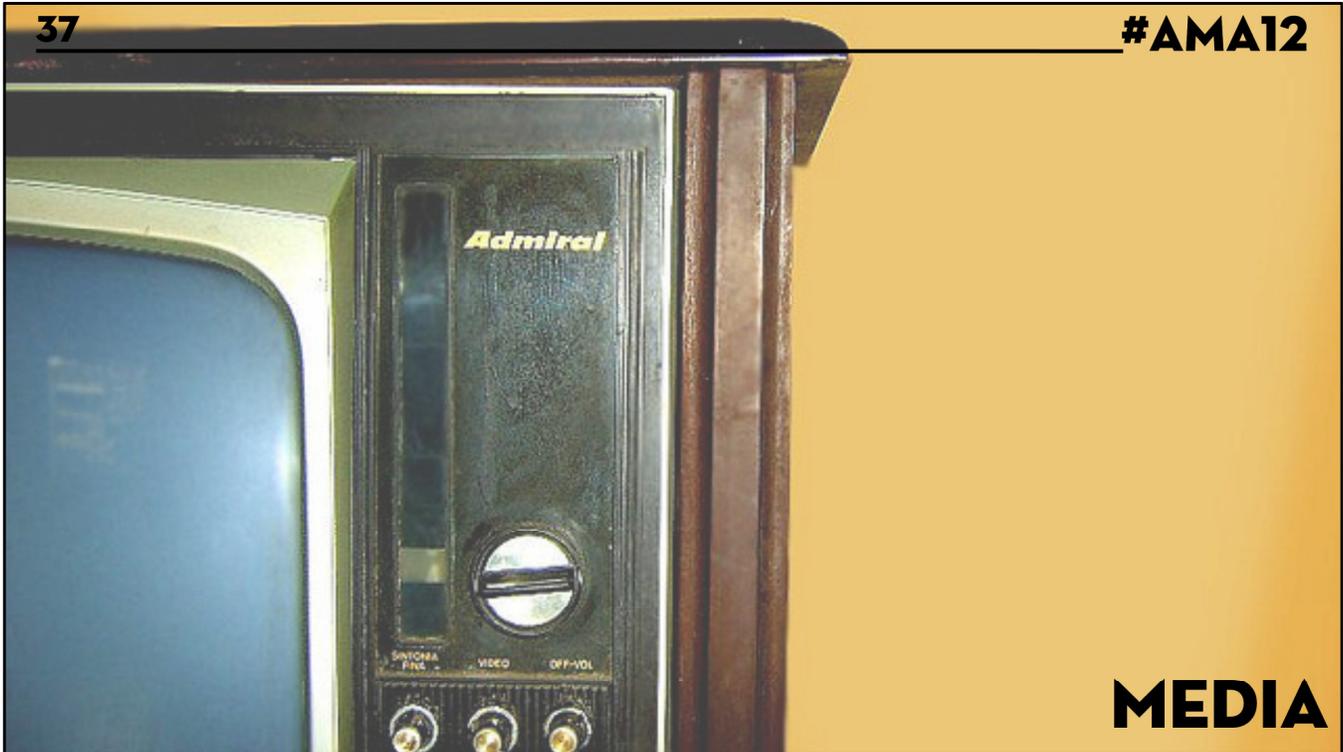
**SHE IS
~~WHEELCHAIR~~
~~BOUND~~**



MARKETING & OUTREACH



- Website should:
 - be accessible
 - highlight accessible facilities, programs, services, etc.

**MEDIA**

- Media should
 - be accessible
 - are your commercials captioned? your YouTube videos? your podcasts?
 - utilize multiple means of representation (will talk more about that in a minute)
 - depict people of all abilities

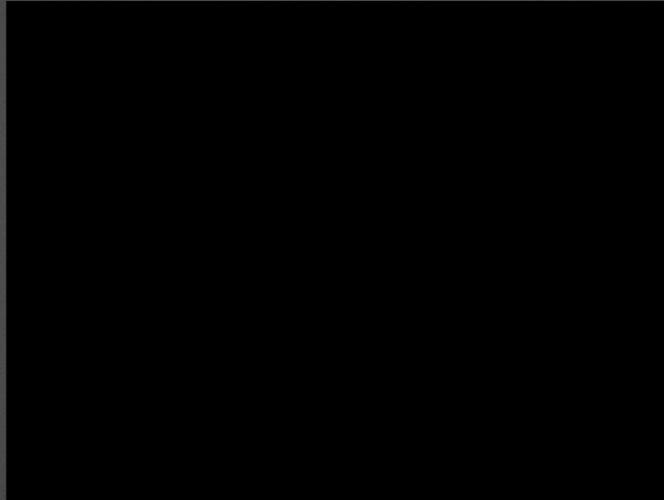


- Think about how you can reach out to people w/disabilities and their families- not just to market , but to involve in planning (spaces, programs, events, etc.)
 - Who? How?

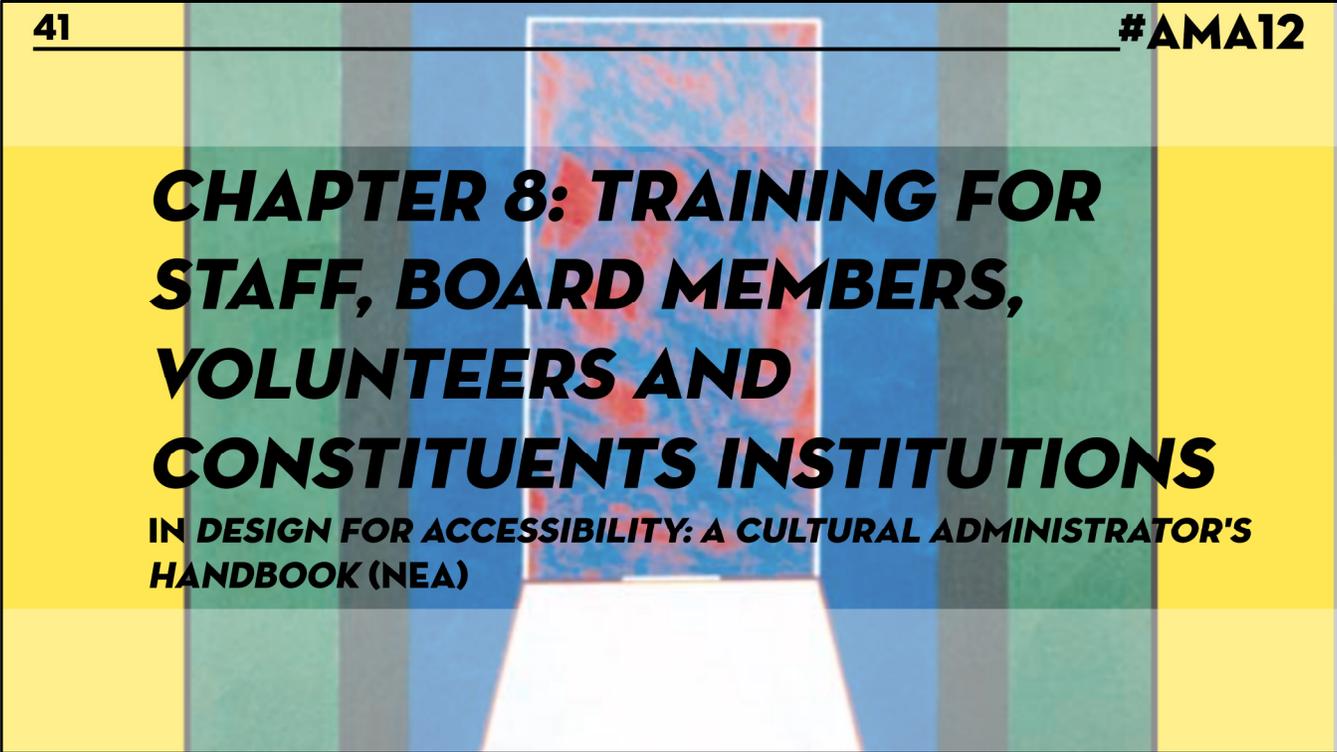


- Another way to ensure yours is a welcoming space for people with disabilities: increase your own awareness and provide training for staff and volunteers.
- Some great resources for this:

ART BEYOND SIGHT



- Art Beyond Sight organization offers a free, online resource: 'Training on Disability and Inclusion for Museums and Cultural Institutions'
- Several videos accompany the training. Here's one.



**CHAPTER 8: TRAINING FOR
STAFF, BOARD MEMBERS,
VOLUNTEERS AND
CONSTITUENTS INSTITUTIONS**

**IN DESIGN FOR ACCESSIBILITY: A CULTURAL ADMINISTRATOR'S
HANDBOOK (NEA)**

- NEA handbook: 'Design for Accessibility: A Cultural Administrator's Handbook'
 - "Chapter 8: Training for Staff, Board Members, Volunteers and Constituents"

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

- As we continue to talk about how to make ourselves more accessible, I'm not going to focus on architectural specifications or specific modifications or products.
- Instead, what I'd like to do is suggest a framework to guide you in making your own decisions; that framework is universal design.

“KEEP THE LARGEST POSSIBLE AUDIENCE IN MIND IN OUR DESIGN DECISIONS, ENSURING THAT OUR FINAL PRODUCT SERVES THE NEEDS OF THOSE WITH DISABILITIES AS WELL AS THOSE WITHOUT”

- UD is “the idea that we should always keep the largest possible audience in mind in our design decisions, ensuring that our final product serves the needs of those with disabilities as well as those without.”



- Originally used in reference to architecture, "universal design" meant designing spaces that could be used by people of all abilities.
 - Example: curb cut. Wheelchairs, strollers, kids with wagons.
- When applied to learning, universal design "is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn."

MULTIPLE MEANS OF...

REPRESENTATION

ACTION

EXPRESSION

ENGAGEMENT



- Instead of categorizing learners and dictating instructional approaches according to their labels, UDL "can be accomplished by providing multiple means of representation, action, expression, and engagement."

MULTIPLE MEANS OF REPRESENTATION

- To get a better understanding of how UD works, let's look at what 'multiple means of representation' can mean for museums.

DISPLAY INFORMATION IN A FLEXIBLE FORMAT

- We all learn differently.
- People with sensory disabilities, learning disabilities, etc. may need to approach content differently; others may simply grasp information better through visual or auditory means vs. print.
- There is no one means of representation that is best for all learners, so we need to provide options.
- One way to do that is to display information in a flexible format.



- You want to display information in such a way that these things can be varied:
 - “The size of text, images, graphs, tables, or other visual content
 - The contrast between background and text or image
 - The color used for information or emphasis
 - The volume or rate of speech or sound
 - The speed or timing of video, animation, sound, simulations, etc.
 - The layout of visual or other elements
 - The font used for print materials”

OFFER ALTERNATIVES FOR AUDITORY INFORMATION

- You want to offer alternatives for auditory information:
 - “Use text equivalents in the form of captions or automated speech-to-text (voice recognition) for spoken language
 - Provide visual diagrams, charts, notations of music or sound
 - Provide written transcripts for videos or auditory clips
 - Provide American Sign Language (ASL) for spoken English
 - Use visual analogues to represent emphasis and prosody (e.g., emoticons, symbols, or images)
 - Provide visual or tactile (e.g., vibrations) equivalents for sound effects or alerts
 - Provide visual and/or emotional description for musical interpretation”



PROVIDE NON-VISUAL ALTERNATIVES

- You also want to provide non-visual alternatives:
 - “Provide descriptions (text or spoken) for all images, graphics, video, or animations
 - Use touch equivalents (tactile graphics or objects of reference) for key visuals that represent concepts
 - Provide physical objects and spatial models to convey perspective or interaction
 - Provide auditory cues for key concepts and transitions in visual information
 - Follow accessibility standards (NIMAS, DAISY, etc.) when creating digital text
 - Allow for a competent aide, partner, or “intervener” to read text aloud
 - Provide access to text-to-Speech software”

ACCOMODATIONS

- Universal design is designing things to be universally accessible , or “getting it right the first time.”
- Accommodations are things we can do to make a built environment more accessible to people with disabilities.



- I think of accommodations as the things that are “available upon request”:
 - wheelchairs
 - touch tours
 - audio tours
 - interpreters
- Can you think of any others?

EXAMPLES

- We've talked about some of the ways you can make your museum more accessible and why it's important to do so.
- Let's look at some actual examples of museum accessibility in action.



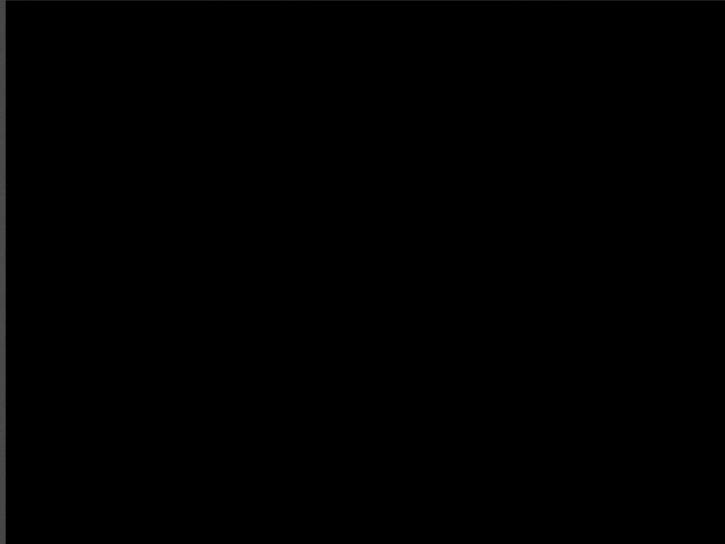
- MEREDITH: Atlanta-Fulton Downtown branch
 - The library has a section of interactive art that all users are able to engage with. All of the paintings in this exhibit have tactile components so that their visually impaired patrons are able to enjoy the works just as much as the sighted patrons. This fall, I was at the exhibit with a friend who has been blind since birth. We went over to one of the paintings, and I described it to him as he felt the work. When his fingers came to the smoke curling out of the chimney, he got really excited and told me that this is the first time he has understood what it looks like for smoke to “curl”.



- MEREDITH: MoMA
 - The Museum of Modern Art has several different accessible features, but one of my favorites is their, “Touch Tour”. A trained guide takes the patron through a guided tour of the museum where they are allowed to touch selected sculptures and objects while the guide describes and informs them about the work.
 - <http://www.moma.org/learn/disabilities/sight#course2>



- Smithsonian
 - Accessibility features include:
 - “Accessible facilities;
 - Open captioning of exhibition videos;
 - Audio description incorporated into some exhibitions;
 - Tactile elements included throughout the museums;
 - Tactile and/or verbal description tours can be arranged by contacting a museum with two –weeks advance notice;
 - Sign language interpretation is available for scheduled tours by contacting the museum with two weeks advanced notice;
 - Access services can be arranged for public programs by contacting the museum in advance;
 - IMAX movies shown during regular museum hours of operation offer assistive listening devices, audio-description and rear-window captioning; and
 - Publications and brochures are available in alternate formats.”



SMITHSONIAN

- Here's a brief video about Art Signs, an accessible program offered by the Smithsonian.
 - YOUTUBE: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4usBBtLin8>



- Smithsonian's "Whatever Happened to Polio?" exhibit
 - Involved people with disabilities in the planning process
 - Anticipating the needs of visitors, they provided seating with backs and arms just outside the exhibit
 - Presented information in multiple ways: "visually, audibly and tactilely." Visitors were oriented to the exhibit with a tactile map that "was color coded to the exhibit components for sighted people and visual learners; it also had raised Braille characters and an audio version with description of the immediate area."
 - Audio was delivered using a "hypersonic sound speaker with a very tight directional beam focused on a textured spot on the floor different from the flooring around it."
 - Model iron lung provided a "visual, tactile and audible experience. They could feel the shape of the iron lung and—really importantly—hear the sound that the iron lung made. They could feel the pressure of the iron lung by inserting their hand and arm into the model."
 - Visitors touched a 3D model of the polio virus.
 - Also provided a "cart full of toys and games that all related to polio in some way, such as the game Candy Land. The developer of Candy Land was a man who had polio."



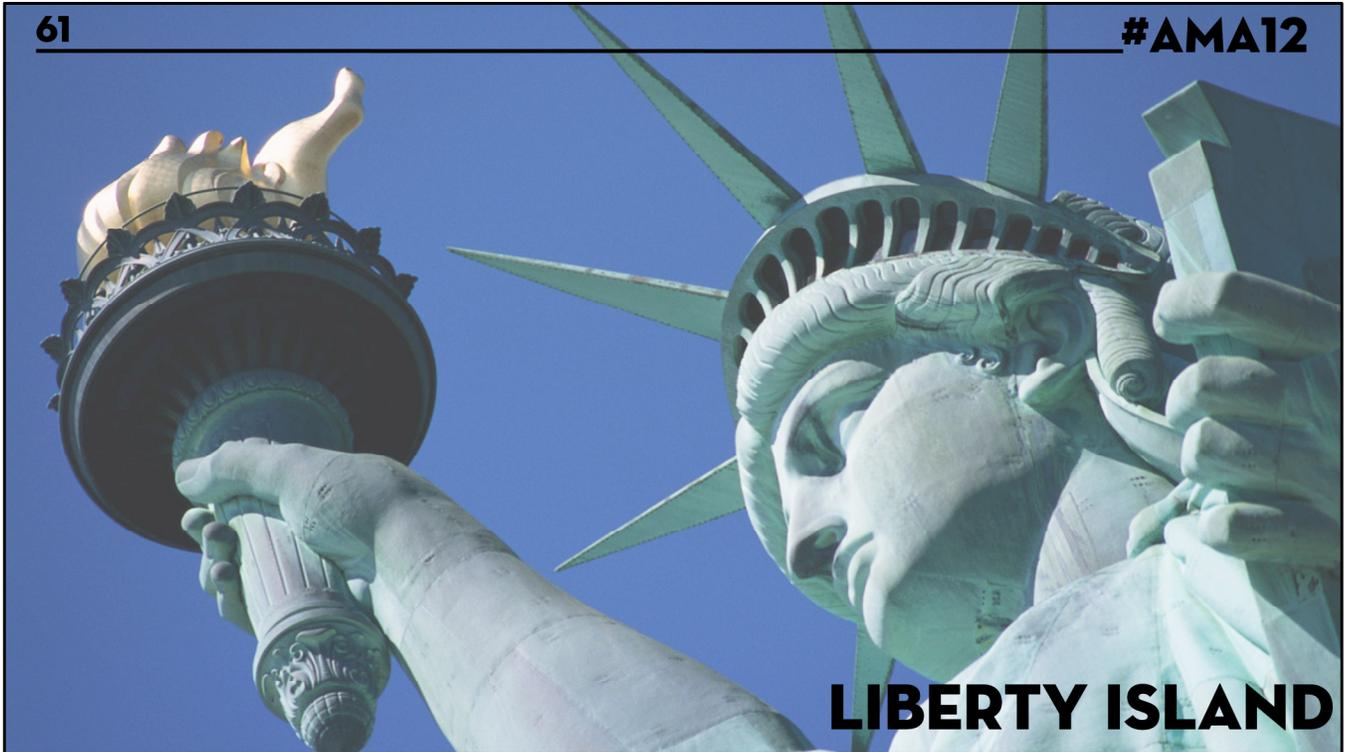
FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO

- Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco won an American Association of Museums Accessibility Award for a Toulouse-Lautrec exhibit
- Exhibit comprised of 300 objects, primarily two-dimensional works on paper
- Special access included:
 - “assistive listening devices
 - wheelchairs
 - large-print museum floor plans and notebooks with large-print versions of the exhibition labels
 - tours for visitors with any disability given by experienced Access Docents
 - tours in audio format for visually impaired visitors and in print forms for hearing impaired visitors
 - Sign language interpretation was provided upon request.
 - The exhibition's resource room contained additional information about the exhibition
 - Teachers' Workshop featured hands-on art projects adaptable to all skill levels.
 - Finally the Museums arranged for a special Access Day, when the exhibit closed to the general public and was open to crowd-averse people by appointment.”
- “To make the exhibition even more accommodating, staff provided ample seating throughout the exhibition space; installed and lit the objects, artifacts, and labels so that they could be seen from different heights; and produced labels that were easily understandable and designed with sufficient contrast and size to be readily visible.”
- Museum has a committee of Access Advisors: fifteen consumers with disabilities and experts in accessibility, art, and museums.



GREAT FALLS TAVERN MUSEUM

- Great Falls Tavern Museum in Potomac, Md., part of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historic Park.
- “There’s a model that will tactilely enable anyone to examine [the locks] system. It’s in three different sections: the exterior of a boat, the boat sitting between two different locks and a cutaway so you can see the interior of the boat. This adds to the experience for people with various learning styles—in particular, people with cognitive disabilities. The three different sections make it a little easier for all people to learn about the process.”
- Smelling table with tavern aromas: liquor, the cargos, spices, foods.



- 3D model of the island.
- Not able to make statue physically accessible to those unable to climb, but:
 - “A Trip to the Top” video “shows not only the physical environment but people exerting themselves as they’re going up through the statue. There’s a readout with a temperature gauge; whether you’re there in the wintertime or in the heat of the summer, you know what the temperature is, and you get to see what other people are going through as they climb those ladder-style steps.”
 - Reproduced pieces of the statue and made them available to touch, like the face,
 - Cutaway, seven-and-a-half foot model of the statue. Someone who is physically unable to get to the top can have a very good experience looking at all components of the statue.
- Audio description with tactile numbers (push buttons on device and hear description).



- Provides people with visual disabilities "the opportunity to come in touch with ancient greek Culture... At the same time it was realized that the ability to touch and feel the exhibits was an excellent new way of approaching the ancient greek civilization not only for blind but for sighted people, too."



QUEENS MUSEUM

- Here's a brief video about Art Access, an accessible program offered by the Queens Museum of Art.
 - YOUTUBE: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phDm72RI5a>
 - Video also provides an example of descriptive captioning.



- Access to Art
 - Tours designed for groups with disabilities
- Artful Adventures
 - Groups of children and teens with disabilities
- Beyond the Screen
 - Self-guiding materials for visitors who are blind or have low vision
- A Feeling for Form
 - Tours of the collections through tactile exploration of selected sculpture and furniture, and through verbal description, tactile diagrams, and objects for artworks that cannot be touched.
- A Hand's Reach to Art
 - Gallery tours, performances, and demonstrations presented in ASL

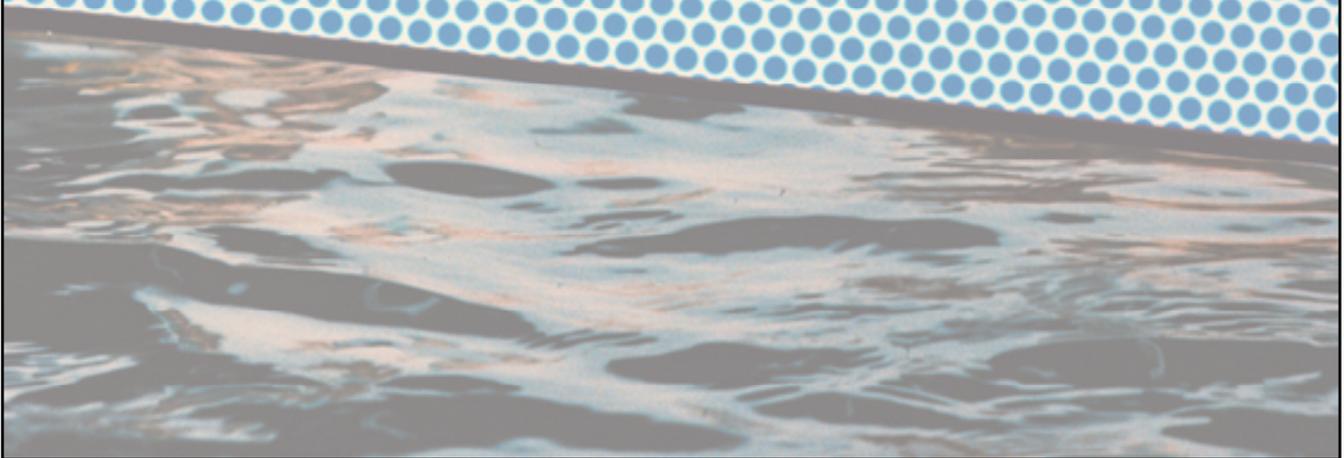


- Incorporate UD in the design process:
 - “In our experience, the best way to achieve intellectual access to exhibits is to incorporate Universal Design - i.e. choices - into the development process. It is not possible to make an exhibit that is completely accessible to all visitors, but it *is* possible to present the exhibit’s main ideas in a variety of ways, so that a wide range of visitors can choose among them and come away having enjoyed themselves and having gotten the main messages.”
- Examples:
 - “In "What’s The Message?", the message is "FIRE!!" and the media are a siren, a flashing light and the smell of smoke.”
 - Secrets of Aging
 - show visitors the amount of change that had taken place in just one technology, the telephone, during the lifetime of a 100-year-old
 - added sounds from the phones and imaginary phone conversations to make this component accessible to someone who is blind.
 - added scripts of the spoken conversation so that visitors who were hard of hearing would not feel left out.
 - scripts had an even broader use since: many parents read them while their children listened to the audio messages (UD)
 - component that focused on the changes of the heart with age: listen to the sound of the heartbeat at various stages of life,

DISCUSSION

- Questions, comments, resource sharing.
- Scenarios (time allowing).

THREE LANDSCAPES



- Whitney Museum of American Art - Three Landscapes: A Film Installation by Roy Lichtenstein
- This exhibit presents a triple-screen film installation by Roy Lichtenstein that explore the artist's fascination with form and cinema.
- How can video installations be made more accessible? Significant aspects of the artwork could be missed if a patron is blind or deaf.
- <http://whitney.org/Exhibitions/RoyLichtenstein>

X-RAY VISION: FISH INSIDE OUT



- Natural History Museum - X-Ray Vision: Fish Inside Out
- Using the latest digital x-ray technology, these images show the detail and stories of fish skeletons. This exhibit is based on work being done by scientists at the museum as they try to better understand the evolutionary development of fish.
- How could this exhibit be made more interactive so that children with cognitive disabilities are better able to engage with the images?
- <http://www.si.edu/Exhibitions/Details/X-Ray-Vision-Fish-Inside-Out-4697>

FIRST LADIES



- American History Museum - The First Ladies
- This exhibit looks at how the role of first ladies has changed as the role of women in society has changed. The exhibit contains more than two dozen gowns from first ladies including: Michelle Obama, Barbara Bush, Nancy Reagan, Jackie Kennedy, Dolley Madison, Mary Lincoln, Edith Roosevelt, and Lady Bird Johnson.
- How can people with visual impairments still participate in this exhibit?
- <http://www.si.edu/Exhibitions/Details/The-First-Ladies-4722>

**THANK
YOU**

**MUSEUM
ACCESSIBILITY
HOW & WHY**

[BIT.LY/AMA12ACCESSIBILITY](https://bit.ly/AMA12ACCESSIBILITY)