

AT Banter Podcast Episode 288- Canadian Accessibility Networ...

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SPEAKERS

Steve Barclay, Rob Mineault, Tony Labillois, Mandi Crespo

- S** Steve Barclay 00:41
Hey and welcome to another episode of AT Banter. Banter, banter, and insert cowbell here.
- R** Rob Mineault 00:49
Oh yeah, that's right. Yeah, we don't have a cowbell. We have no cowbell this week. Okay, so let me break into the audience for right off the right off the bat. So, hey, oh, hey, hold on. Well, we got to do the - see you see completely derailed me, Steve. Hey, this is the of course the podcast where we talk with advocates and members of the disability community to educate and inspire better conversation about disability. Hey, my name is Rob Mineault. And joining me today, Mr. Steve Barclay.
- S** Steve Barclay 01:20
That is me.
- R** Rob Mineault 01:22
And that's and that's it. Alone at last Steve it It only took six years. But it's just it's just you and me today.
- S** Steve Barclay 01:30
Yeah, we finally shed that dead weight, huh?

- R** Rob Mineault 01:32
Yep, absolutely. Phew. Oh, man. Yeah. Mr. Ryan Fleury is off at the dentist and Liz Malone is in whereabouts unknown. We're not really sure what she's up to. But she wasn't able to make it.
- S** Steve Barclay 01:46
So let's assume she's in paradise.
- R** Rob Mineault 01:48
Yeah. Okay. Sure. Sure. We'll give her the third degree next week when she returns and we'll get the the entire story of exactly where she was. How're you doing?
- S** Steve Barclay 02:00
Excellent, most excellent.
- R** Rob Mineault 02:01
Excellent. All right. Well, before we go into the weeds at all, Mr. Steve...
- S** Steve Barclay 02:01
Yes?
- R** Rob Mineault 02:03
What are we doing today?
- S** Steve Barclay 02:12
Today, we have two folks joining us from the Canadian Accessibility Network. We've got Tony Labillois and Mandi Crespo.
- R** Rob Mineault 02:22
Hi, guys, welcome. Welcome to AT Banter.
- T** Tonv Labillois 02:25

Tony Labillois 02:22

Hi. And thank you very much for reminding us.

M

Mandi Crespo 02:27

Thank you so much.

S

Steve Barclay 02:28

Great to have you.. I've been doing a little bit of reading about your program, but maybe one of you can pick up and run with a quick overview of what what you do there at the Canadian Accessibility Network. And yeah, tell us about that.

T

Tony Labillois 02:47

I'm the Vice President of Governing Council of Accessibility Network since 2020. And I'm also the chair of the Advisory Council of this network, now made of more than 60 organizations coming from different sectors, including academics and business, corporations, government departments, nonprofit organizations, that we're trying to even more diversify even more than membership. But we're proud to say that in less than two years, and maybe a little bit than two years, actually, we have more than 60 collaborating organizations in the network, more than 100 people that come from across Canada, at least seven provinces, if not more, right now. And we try to improve accessibility all together. I think we're stronger together. You can discuss about that a bit later. But let Mandi talk a bit about her role. The National Office and the network is done by Carleton University. And Mandi is part of that.

M

Mandi Crespo 04:07

Yeah. Great. Thank you, Tony. Yeah, so I'm the program manager of CAN as we call it for short. And as Tony said, it is came out of Carleton University and is the national office is housed at Carleton. And I think it's a it's a really special place to be right now. Because Carleton University for a long time has had a reputation about advancing accessibility. We've got really great programs and supports for students with disabilities. And from there it has grown into much more over the years. And now Carleton really is a hub for advancing accessibility for for all people across Canada. And so the idea of the Canadian Accessibility Network came about a little bit over three years ago. Oh, three, four years ago. And it's it came out of what we call the READ initiative. The office that I'm in, READ initiative stands for Research, Education, Accessibility and Design. And so it's an office at Carleton that is really about supporting accessibility, not just for students, but for everyone at Carleton, and then a lot for outside of Carleton. And so the READ initiative had this idea to create a network and, and really bring people together across the country and across sectors, as Tony said, and so the campaign started in the end of 2019, with a Summit event. And since then everything moved to online. So ever since then, we've had an online network and have been building and growing for the past a little bit over two years, like Tony said, and and our focus is to, to both just bring people together overall, but also to focus in the areas of community engagement, employment, education and training, policy, and research, design and innovation. So we have different

groups that get together in those areas. And then we also have the advisory council that that Tony is the chair of where anyone can come and and talk about what we can do to support each other and, and really learn from each other across the country.

R

Rob Mineault 06:33

So that's really interesting. The timing is interesting, because when you first started up, of course, it was it would have been pre COVID. And then, like you said, we went into COVID. And everything went virtual. Was there a little bit of a silver lining to that? Did that shift to to every moving everything online, did that sort of help the network sort of expand its reach really naturally?

T

Tony Labillois 07:04

I will say that it yeah, we were probably born a bit the same time, then the COVID-19 virus, we didn't spread as quickly yet. We didn't stop society, we're trying to enable society and the economy for a more inclusive participation of everyone, including people that don't necessarily consider themselves as as people with disabilities, traditionally. So COVID brought a few things, the pandemic brought a few things to us. Yeah, it gave us the tools to work even more quickly, more efficiently online. We didn't expect it to be fully virtual. But that's what it's been so far, we hope to eventually see some of us together in future Summit one day, but we know that we can function very well and attract others very well and stayed in close connections in collaboration throughout the sequence, the change in our lives that we face. So it's, it's yeah, it brought something as a catalyst in terms of technology, but also some events in 2020. Brought equity, diversity, inclusion, and therefore accessibility. At the same time at the forefront, the preoccupations in many modern countries, including Canada, there's a there was an opportunity there to raise more awareness along these lines towards accessibility. And also the fact that as I was mentioning, some some people, as we say. I work in Statistics Canada, usually, so we do surveys, on the getting survey on disability, by the way, if you receive the questionnaire and the people listening to this, if you receive the questionnaire, please fill the survey. It's very important. It's done after each census. The last one was in 2017. And we're currently in collection for 2022. And if you need to understand the world of accessibility and persons with disabilities, we have results for you at StatsCan. So traditionally, there's some people that are there and because of the definition we have, in that survey, we think, as defining disability, with the social model, so it's not really the medical aspects that we're looking at. It's really the barriers that people are facing in their lives. But daily activities in their daily life or in society or in participating in the economy that we'll look at. So, same thing happens for COVID-19, suddenly, the environment was changed someone with respiratory disease are someone with a weak immune system, or someone who suddenly fears the public space. And now of fear, even more, or as more anxiety than in the past, suddenly, they don't consider themselves as persons with disability in the traditional sense, but they have new barriers, they have suddenly and new activity limitation, because of that context, that changed for all of us. And the situation is exacerbated for them.

S

Steve Barclay 11:02

You guys do research projects as well, correct?

M

Mandi Crespo 11:06

At can we, we don't do research projects. And yet we're connected to a whole network of people that do research projects. So even at at Carleton, and within the READ Initiative, we, we have a lot of research projects on the go. So it's an interesting kind of, kind of place to be in with CAN, where CAN brings together people around research, and we've even begun applying for research grants that bring together our different collaborators across the network. But we don't particularly do research through CAN. So we're more of a network and and the research comes out of the network.

S

Steve Barclay 11:49

I see. Okay. Yeah,

T

Tony Labillois 11:51

The research is shared in the network. And it provides a catalyst for identifying key issues, from the different partner organizations through the Advisory Council we were talking about a bit earlier, and that I have the privilege to chair we use the Advisory Council as like an antenna to collect all different issues or different questions on a specific issue. And to get input in all kinds of ways. And we've been very fortunate to use that technology for organizing part of the meetings that we have in two workshops, so that we could collect the wisdom from each of the representatives, the 60 organizations that are members of this Advisory Council. And another part, we also use that antenna to make sure that we broadcast to each other who went research or what awareness activities or what other good initiatives that members and member organizations are doing. So it's actually to get input for to that works, orientations, and actions, most importantly, but also to share information from the different partners, from the network departments, but from different partners to each other's as well. And that's why I was saying earlier, I feel that we're much stronger together. When we know that we can rely on that network. And on its mechanisms that have evolved in the last few years already. Because we have an Advisory Council, we also have a Governing Council and we have some domain area committees, but we're also looking at new approaches like a CAN Connect forum where that happens regularly and where people can share even more in detail and tackle more detail specific issues.

M

Mandi Crespo 14:14

And Tony I think that's that's really what it's about. That ability to share information and and support each other's ideas and initiatives and like we just started a newsletter and the first one went out at the beginning of this month. And we ask all CAN collaborators to contribute to that newsletter and it ends up being a pretty long newsletter. Lots of information in there. But when we send out the first one, the feedback we got was I've never seen such a breadth of information about accessibility all in one place. So it's that idea where you can you can go to one place and really find out what you need to know. Or if you're looking for someone to collaborate with or partner with or, or just want to connect with other people who may be doing similar work to you in different places across the country. That's really what where CAN plays

its role. So I think we're as a two year old network, we're just starting to get to that point where we're we're seeing the benefits of, of putting people together and seeing where those relationships can go. So it's, it really is in that building phase, and it's it's building, I would say, pretty, pretty quickly. At this point, we're getting a lot more people very quickly involved, and which is an amazing thing I there's so much room for for more involvement, I do want to say we are accepting new collaborators right now. So if there's anyone listening across the country, anyone from any sector, anyone that's involved in accessibility at all, that wants to be involved in the network, and you can be and we are accepting both organizations and individuals who want to be involved. And so if you are interested, the best way to find out more is, is shoot us an email at CAN@carleton.ca and we can get you more information about about being a part of that network. Kind of the benefits of being involved is like Tony said, it's that getting to meet other people, you get to be on the Advisory Council where you meet with others three times a year, and hear that that national voice of accessibility, what is what are people struggling with? Or what challenges are we facing? And what could we really do together that we can't do separately, that's where we spend our time thinking about? What what we can move forward together? And so some of the things like Tony said, that we've been doing a lot of lately is we are in Ottawa, we've got a lot of collaborators that have experience with policy, with government. And, and so it's been a really good good way to, to hear what everyone is saying across the country, and and then start providing some input to government and policies and thinking more about the directions that we want to see taken across the country and how we can help influence decisions and policies and the way things are being shaped right now. So it is a very powerful place to be, since we are in the Capitol, and at Carleton and have have partners and collaborators from across the country. I do find it really interesting, too, that, you know, the timing of all of this is lining up to because, you know, the, of course the ACA was launched in in 2019. Did that sort of have any influence on in the creation of the network?

T

Tony Labillois 18:06

I think it did. I think it's also a perfect timing to launch such a network so that it can support that such a new legislation. And it can bring more alignment towards suggestions of what to do to move society and economy in Canada towards universal accessibility. That being said, in the network organizations, I have the right to disagree that some topics for which some members will probably say that we should go in one direction and other members would argue that we need to go in the opposite direction. And we know that this can happen and it will happen. And that's fine. But we try we're trying to build on the consensus that we find in our conversations, and then to influence key players like Government of Canada, like other major organizations, not hide it that I would welcome more larger players in the private sector, as I think they can certainly learn a lot and they can make a difference by being members because suddenly they have lots of opportunities to inform the members of what they aim to do to make that more accessible place. Or certain aspects. Let's say that they're involved in as well as opportunities to suggest things to others on what we could do together. So yeah, the same places where we are following the spirit of the Act. And we want to make sure that we support the government and the other stakeholders into achieving accessibility. I mean, for example, when I was talking about getting involved, I got involved a bit by coincidence. And suddenly, in May 2020, I received an email from someone in office for public sector accessibility, that knows my involvement. For the last 20 years, I just jumped in for persons with disabilities in Statistics Canada, and in the most recent years, even more actively in the public service. And suddenly, as CAN was recruiting members for their governing council, someone there thought that I might be interested and potentially a good candidate. So I remember reading one other email relatively late at night, and suddenly looking at the saying, Well, okay, that sounds interesting.

Maybe I should look at the forums and see if, if, if I have something to bring forward and I drafted something in the next hour and suddenly submitted my draft to the person who has asked me if I would be interested. And to my surprise, he didn't even give me feedback, he just said, excellent, then sent that directly to people. And then a few months later, and long story short, I mean, I was involved. And I filled that form very quickly, because of my passion for making the world more accessible for my desire as an individual that was born with very low vision, I felt that there was an opportunity here to make a bigger contribution to give back even more.

M

Mandi Crespo 22:18

For me, as someone at the national office, my favorite thing about CAN is that it's not, it's not driven by Carlton, it's not driven by the national office, it really is about bringing community together and allowing community to guide where this goes. So I, which is what I love, I love that we're in a place where we're constantly asking the network, what do you want to do? Where do you want to see this go? Where can we support you? And people can bring forward ideas or say, this is where I think we need to put our energies right now. And, and we as a national office, we're here to support those ideas and, and provide administration or, or project management or whatever it is that we can do to to help move ideas forward. So so it's a pretty cool place to be and and get to share ideas with other people and then have support to really move ideas forward that maybe maybe you couldn't do on your own.

R

Rob Mineault 23:21

Yeah, I mean, I have to say, the network is such a great idea. You know, Disability Resources historically, was part of the problem with it is that they're incredibly spread out. Because I mean, really disability, it's it, there's, it's such a huge gradient, you have all kinds of different disabilities, and everybody, even within those individual disability communities have different needs. So it can be the idea of accessibility can be an incredibly challenging one to try to tackle. And so with a network, you know, you you do have these, you know, all these resources available to you. And you can just go to the network and ask questions and get advice. Because for an organization or an institution, or a business that's looking that wants to become more accessible, sometimes they don't even know where to start. So having a network like this, to rely on to ask the questions in sort of a safe space, I think is incredibly important and a really great idea, and it just makes me wonder why the heck we didn't think of this before.

M

Mandi Crespo 24:37

No, I would just say because it's very challenging for the reasons you said, Rob, like, because it's it's that diversity of perspectives and and yeah, everyone, sometimes people need all different things. And at the same time, we are experiencing exactly what you just said to where we see people coming together from across different areas or sectors and sharing ideas and going, Oh, why? Why didn't we connect before? So, like we had an event, two weeks ago, we have every every month or two, we have a CAN Connect forum, like Tony said, and at our last CAN Connect forum, we opened it up for a conversation about employment post-COVID. And what does that mean? What do we need to be thinking about? What's happening right now that we could be taking action on across the country? And we had people from from all over, we had

about, we ended up with about 70 or so individuals that came had breakout rooms and, and just had such amazing conversations. And it's both for people within CAN, within the network and people outside of the network and also attend these, and you just learn learn from other people. So we had people on on separate coasts that were saying, Oh, what you're doing might work here. And so I think it was it's such a neat opportunity to get to see that. And then we're also working on a few different projects, like Tony mentioned, a lot, we've we're hearing a lot about the need for more like environmental scans, or, or resources that encompass a lot of what's happening across Canada. And so we're really focused right now on, on, on moving towards building resources that people can access and go, Okay, we want to know more about employment of persons with disabilities, there's a million resources out there, where do we start? Where do we go? If we don't know anything? Or where do I go if I need more expertise? So we're working on within our network to, to build out those resources as well. So I would say you're gonna see a lot of really wonderful things coming out this year. We've got a lot of good things going. But I have a lot of I'm hearing a lot and seeing a lot for people within the network that I think is going to be pretty game changing within the next year, just that ability to share resources and information across the country.

T

Tony Labillois 27:16

And that that makes it very exciting when Mandi says that, for all of us who are involved in that. You were saying, Rob, why did someone why didn't someone do this earlier? Well, we are very fortunate to have the commitment of Carleton University to at least have some core resources to make sure that there's a coordination, I think at work is important, but making sure that there's a clear commitment by a player like Carleton University to make sure that this network stays alive and stays healthy. Over the long run, I think is a key for success. You alluded to the intelligibility of human situations. Yeah, I will, I will say that, in my 20 years as champion, I witnessed all kinds of, let's say, activity limitations that people are facing, but then an immense creativity and very much more diverse approaches to cope with the activity limitations and to overcome them. And we can learn from the lived experiences of the clients of certain organizations, or have some of the the members of the network to move forward because it's complex to make things universally accessible, is a complex task, especially with such a quick pace for certain products and certain services that which evolved. I mean, it is a daunting task for an organization, for one organization alone. So that's why we feel that as part of a network, we are further along and closer to achieving even more broader accessibility.

R

Rob Mineault 29:16

Yeah, well, I mean, and that's really why that's why Universal Design is such an important concept because, you know, to try to keep up with technology that you're right is constantly evolving, and it's evolving at a pace that it's impossible to keep up just even as a consumer. But you know, by so by the time you know, you make you make one piece of technology accessible well then by then it's evolved into something completely different. And you're sort of constantly sort of chasing after the technology. And that's why like universal design and getting organizations and manufacturers on board who are building devices and software and apps from the ground up and building through the lens of universal design is so important. We're not like sort of trying to sort of always chase this stuff with with an accessibility bandaid.



M

Mandi Crespo 30:10

Yeah, I think that's a great point. And I know it, this won't air for a few days. But we also have an event going on through the READ Initiative at the CAN National offices. it's called Enable Ottawa and it's a it's a conference, a two day conference that's tomorrow on the next day that is about Assistive and Adaptive Technologies. And so it is a chance every year to hear about all of the great technologies that are that are happening right now. And things that are coming up in the future and learning more about about staying staying ahead of that curve, or on on the curve, at least of all the great new things that are coming up.

R

Rob Mineault 30:54

And now how often do you guys have events? In general?

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Mandi Crespo 30:58

Well, the READ Initiative like that event, I just mentioned, Enable Ottawa what happens every year. And then we also have workshops that happen throughout the year. For CAN we just started our series so that it Can Connect forums, we had the first one in January, and we've had one of those once a month, we've had a different session with a with a different different topic. They're all virtual, they're one hour over the lunch hour here and Eastern Standard Time. So I know for our people on different coasts, that that is different time zones. But for us, it's from 12 to 1. And so right now it's once a month, we're taking a little break over the summer, because we know a lot of people have have competing priorities over the summer. And that's, that's okay, you need to need to get out and enjoy the sun a little bit too. So we'll come back in August with our CAN Connect forums. And then we're also looking at having a professional development series that would that would start up in the fall as well. So you'll see at least one event a month from CAN in August and after that. And then we also have our Advisory Council meetings three times a year, we have five different domain area committees to get involved in. And and those meetings will start taking place in the fall, each of them will happen about three times a year and be an opportunity to connect with different communities. So we have no shortage of ways to get involved in the network, you can, if you want to join the network you can get involved in by just being on the Advisory Council. Or you could also be in some of the smaller committees, you could do project work or or you could just receive the newsletter, which comes out every few months, every two months. So lots of different ways that you can get involved based on your availability and what you're able to contribute at that time.

T

Tony Labillois 33:00

To that newsletter, or to special emails sent to the Members, you can learn about even more activities that are broadcasted by some of the collaborators that are participating in the network.

M

Mandi Crespo 33:17

Yeah, and we also are on social media as well. So if you want to follow CAN, we're on Twitter that @cancollaborate is our handle. And on LinkedIn, you can look for CAN the Canadian Accessibility Network and and that's a really great place to see all the activities that are

Accessibility network and and that's a really great place to to see all the activities that are happening within can collaborate or organizations as well. We do lots of sharing each other's events and and learning opportunities that research it anything that we hear of that's happening or that we see anything at all that's coming out, we are there to share it and help other people connect.

T

Tony Labillois 33:59

I'm also on LinkedIn. So if you want to connect with us, or any of the people who want to connect with us. I mean, you're more than welcome. And I think we're both very passionate about these things. And we are always looking for other allies.

M

Mandi Crespo 34:18

That's right. I don't know if you can tell we both like to talk to so I'll be happy to tell you more.

R

Rob Mineault 34:26

You guys are a podcasters dream we can just we're just we're just sitting back and putting our feet up and relaxing and letting you guys do all the work. Please give the website again because I can't stress enough. You guys are doing amazing work. This is an incredible idea. And the fact that you guys are only two years old and you've guys have have come so far, I think says a lot about just how much work you're putting into it. But also I think I think the temperate is right out there, people are interested in accessibility. And I think that one of the big barriers has been, a lot of companies just haven't really known where to start or where to go. And I think that, that the network is going to really provide that for a lot of people. So by all means, give them the website. Again, if if people are interested, we'll have all of this information in our show notes as well. But just the website, and if anybody is interested in chatting with either of you, maybe your contact info.

M

Mandi Crespo 35:34

The website is carleton.ca/read/can. Or you can just search for Canadian Accessibility Network. And you can reach out to us Our email is can@carleton.ca. So that's, that's the easiest way to contact us. And I reply to that email. So you get me Otherwise, you can you can also just reach out to me, my, my personal email is mandi.crespo@carleton.ca. And I'm sure you can add that information into the podcast too, if you'd like. But yes, so that's that's the easiest way to reach us is, is probably by by email. I give you a phone number, but but most likely, you don't even get phones anymore. It's we're all about find us on social media or send us a message.

R

Rob Mineault 36:31

You know what, I can't even tell you when the last time I phoned anywhere and didn't get a phone tree. Robots pretty much robots are gonna take over the phone lines everywhere.

T Tony Labillois 36:42

That's right. You see other opportunities, which the accessibility network should be discussed, like other podcasts or other social media, other anything here, conferences, whatever, we're looking for more visibility for network. So we need more allies like you, if you can suggest things, or partners and so on that we should approach?

R Rob Mineault 37:13

Awesome. I'll be happy to.

S Steve Barclay 37:15

Well, I thought about three while we were talking.

M Mandi Crespo 37:20

Rob, I would say two I love the the point you made earlier about, like companies or organizations that organizations that may be looking for information about accessibility, this is a great place to go. Or even for those seasoned professionals who, who have worked in this worked in accessibility for a long time and are just looking to expand their reach and share information. This is this is also a good spot.

R Rob Mineault 37:45

Yeah, I mean, you know, it's interesting, you know, we last week we or our podcast, we just kind of sat around and talked about accessibility. And even amongst us who sort of are veterans in it, it can be a really, really hard topic to really wrap your head around and to really come down in any one given spot, with definitions, or what makes something accessible to one person may not make it accessible to somebody else. So having a network like this, and having so many resources, I think is just as essential in order to really drive the ball forward.

T Tony Labillois 38:22

Absolutely. And plus the fact that if suddenly, the more we are, the more influential we will become, if suddenly we have large businesses, different than organizations at different governmental level, for example, or different nonprofit organizations and so on. I mean, the more we are under that umbrella, the in that catalyst, the more suddenly we can claim that for the things we agree on that that they're needed, and that we can align them you were talking about standards earlier, and about how faster and things evolve. Well, at some point, hopefully we can influence the choices of for some of these things in society or the network. At least for what we know is absolutely, even if we were to disagree on some of the other things. That's already a plus for influencing more rapidly. The accessibility agenda.

R

Rob Mineault 39:21

I love it. See, I love your I love your guys's positive attitude, too. I have to say, we're gonna get there.

M

Mandi Crespo 39:28

That's right.

T

Tony Labillois 39:32

To see that we're so much on the same page without even any previous practice or discussion.

S

Steve Barclay 39:41

Or, you know, my experience. I've been doing this for over 30 years now. And you know, I've seen so many examples of communities fracturing and becoming less and less cohesive and less and less cooperative. So anything that that kind of pulls it all back together I view as In a very, very positive influence.

M

Mandi Crespo 40:03

And I think what you mentioned earlier, too about the timing, I think the timing is just key right now, because it is a moment in time where, where people are thinking about equity, diversity and inclusion in a way that maybe they weren't before. They're thinking about accessibility, we have the Accessible Canada Act that is having, you know, Crown corporations, and anyone that that is under that federal legislation that must be looking at this. And so we do have even, we have organizations that have come and been joined CAN and said, we've had to do this. But now we want to do more. And we don't know where to go from here. You know, this isn't enough. And so, yeah, so I think it's that bringing together people from from not just across the country, but from different levels of of knowledge and information about how do you go about making change. So I yeah, I think it's definitely not something that only one one person or one organization can do. And in this moment, I think it if we can pull together in the right way right now, this could be, I'm very probably to altruistic, but I think this is a key moment where we can really drive change for accessibility, but we can't do it alone. We have to do it together.

R

Rob Mineault 41:29

Yep. Well, thanks again, guys.

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Mandi Crespo 41:32

This it's been so fun. Steven. Rob, thanks so much for having us. And Tony, you're just a pleasure. It's a pleasure to be your sidekick.

T Tony Labillois 41:43

Like, I really liked our first experience together. And with Rob and Steve that we didn't know, we had never spoken to before. So that shows all planets can be aligned when we talk about accessibility.

R Rob Mineault 42:00

Exactly. Accessibility bringing the world together.

T Tony Labillois 42:06

One last thing I can't resist. But when you make things accessible, it's not just for people with an activity limitation, that some issues are exacerbated for some humans, but you make the world accessible to more accessible to everyone.

R Rob Mineault 42:25

All right. Well, thank you again, guys. And like I said, anything else we can do to help, happy to have you guys on at any time. If we can help out in any way, if you have an event that you want to come on and promote just reach out anytime.

S Steve Barclay 42:44

Takr care. Have a great evening.

R Rob Mineault 42:46

Okay. Wow, they were talkers.

S Steve Barclay 42:49

Yeah.

R Rob Mineault 42:50

But that's nice. I listen, I like talking to people who are passionate about accessibility. I mean, that's awesome.



S

Steve Barclay 42:57

Absolutely. You know, I was, I was so impressed when I when I got onto their website, and I started looking at all of the organizations that are collaborators within that network. They, you know, they've got a really solid lineup of, of, you know, colleges and universities, right across the country. As well as, you know, consumer organizations, private enterprise, you know, all kinds of different organizations that are, you know, dealing with different areas of accessibility of, of inclusiveness. It's, it's really neat to see, and this is a network that could really grow out and become a huge factor in how Canada moves forward in terms of addressing issues around accessibility and inclusion.

R

Rob Mineault 43:52

100%. Yeah, I had the same experience. And when I went to the website, frankly, I was shocked to learn that, that there were only two years old. Because it to me, it looked like it was a 10 year old project. Because they've they've come so far in only two years.

S

Steve Barclay 44:10

Yeah, indeed. And another thing I noticed is that there's some there's some glaring gaps of you know, national organizations that really should be part of this.

R

Rob Mineault 44:19

Yeah, exactly. I mean, I like I looking at their at the list, I thought you we could fill this up with like, 20 more overnight, you know, and just thinking of different organizations, that it's a no brainer for them to be members of that they're not yet. So, yeah, I suspect that we're going to see a lot of growth and we're going to be hearing a lot more from from CAN. And really like, you know, when you when we really start to think about it, and especially on the heels of our conversation last week, this is a no brainer. This is of course, this is what we need in order to move this forward. Because how are we going to really, you know, learn about how to do Universal Design properly, or how to build out accessibility properly without something like this, like shared resources and a lot of different conversations going forward. I mean, I think it's just impossible for one for one committee somewhere to try to try to figure out policy for an entire country.

S

Steve Barclay 45:21

When you think about the number of times that we've talked about organizations who have, you know, launched off and said, Oh, we're going to do something, and it's going to be accessible, but then they've never really gotten buy in or opinions of people within the community itself. Oh, you know, we know we know how to do it. You know, if you're, if you're going, if you're going to try and make something that that, you know, is universally designed, you need to have voices, you need to have input, you need to have experience from the community. And this is a place that can provide all of that in such a meaningful way. So fantastic organization.

R

Rob Mineault 46:06

Yeah, absolutely. I'm excited. I'm really excited about accessibility, which is, which is good, because it is National Accessibility Week, but of course, when this airs, it won't be, but that's okay. All right. Well, see we did fine without Ryan and Lis.

S

Steve Barclay 46:24

Yeah, see, once we get rid of the dead weight, we're, we're streamlined.

R

Rob Mineault 46:28

I mean, I feel like we're a lot lighter. I feel it is nobody's stepping on each other. That was a well, a well produced and pointed episode that will go down in history as probably one of the better AT Banter podcast episodes. But we could be biased.

S

Steve Barclay 46:47

Slightly. Yes. But I am looking forward to having them back.

R

Rob Mineault 46:50

It's true. There's a little too much heavy lifting going on.

S

Steve Barclay 46:53

Right. I talked in this one more out of any of our podcasts, I think ever.

R

Rob Mineault 47:00

Well, listen, right, keep preparing for some more heavy lifting because now we got to figure out how to do this outro. Hey, Steve.

S

Steve Barclay 47:09

Hey, Rob.

R

Rob Mineault 47:11

Where can people find us?

M Mandi Crespo 47:14
Well, they can find us online at www.atbanter.com.

R Rob Mineault 47:19
Hey, they can also drop us an email if they so desire at cowbell@atbanter.com

S Steve Barclay 47:25
insert cowbell sound here Yeah, it's just not the same with no Ryan on the cowbell.

R Rob Mineault 47:32
No really isn't.

S Steve Barclay 47:37
They can also find us on Facebook. They can find us on Instagram. They can find us on Twitter.
We're just all over the place.

R Rob Mineault 47:48
Yep. In more ways than one.

S Steve Barclay 47:50
Yeah. Do we have a LinkedIn page?

R Rob Mineault 47:54
Yeah, we do. We do.

S Steve Barclay 47:56
Why do I never Why do I never mention that?

R Rob Mineault 47:58

Because we yeah, we need to work on that. I need to post more to it. Just one more place to post but yeah, we do. Well, I think that is going to about do it for this week. Of course. Big thanks to everybody for listening in. And big thanks to Mandi and Tony for joining us. And we will see everybody next week.