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SPEAKERS

Ryan Fleury, Lis Malone, Steve Barclay, Tanner Gers, Rob Mineault

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R Rob Mineault 00:07

   Hey, and welcome to AT Banter.

S Steve Barclay 00:22

   Banter, banter.

R Rob Mineault 00:27

   Hey, my name is Rob Mineault. Wow that was a really good cowbell strike. I think Ryan has been practicing.

R Ryan Fleury 00:33

   Thanks very much.

R Rob Mineault 00:34

   Yeah. Wow. Okay, that's quite the difference. Hey, this is 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 Ryan Fleury.

R Ryan Fleury 00:57

   Hi, I'm here again.

R Rob Mineault 00:58

Full of energy. Joining us as well, Miss Whole Foods, Lis Malone.

01:17

Okay, next to Ryan, I'm more of a half and half food diet person.

R Rob Mineault 01:25

Yeah. There you go. There you go. And Mr. Steve Barclay is here as well.

S Steve Barclay 01:32

Nachos. We all need more nachos.

01:34

Absolutely. The world would be a little nicer place if there were more nachos for sure.

R Rob Mineault 01:42

Yeah, I mean, really, is there anything that you couldn't improve upon by sprinkling nacho cheese on it? I'm thinking no.

01:50

I do have a little gripe about nachos. If you go to a restaurant and they do the melted cheddar, as opposed to the Queso cheddar. It just completely effed up because I'm like, like, the whole thing of cheese like yanks off in one ship.

R Rob Mineault 02:08

Yeah, I would agree with you. I think it's rare to actually find a place that does nachos really well. I think a lot of places do nachos but a lot of them aren't very good at it.

02:22

They don't put the love into it. They don't know. They don't have the wherewithal to think ahead about how does a group devour said nachos?

Rob Mineault 02:34

I know. Yeah. Or that he's there's a pub that near me that does. I forget what they call them. But it's like nachos except instead of using nacho chips they use like waffle fries.

Steve Barclay 02:43

Oh, the John B pub.

Rob Mineault 02:45

Yeah, that's right. Yeah, those are good. Those are really good.

Steve Barclay 03:05

We were on a family trip when your years back and when we were in Rom we just been into the Vatican and we were all tired and hungry. So we sort of looked around to see what was there. There was an Irish pub, just just around the corner from from the Vatican. So we went into this Irish pub and sat down and one of the things that they had on the menu work nachos, so we ordered the nachos. And they brought the nachos and the nachos were made from Doritos, like flavored Doritos. Nacho flavored Doritos with cheese on top and toppings and stuff. And yeah, they were delicious. They were absolutely delicious.

Ryan Fleury 03:57

I'm down with Doritos

Lis Malone 03:58

That would be Rynachos. Yeah, Doritos

Ryan Fleury 04:05

Rynachos.

Rob Mineault 04:07

I love it. Right? True, man.

˘ 04:11

if you put them on, ravioli but they would be Robnachos

R Rob Mineault 04:15

I like the idea. I've had worse things named after me.

S Steve Barclay 04:25

So this this must be a food show we're doing.

R Rob Mineault 04:31

This is a lesson for me because I'm realizing that whenever I asked you guys like how you're doing like I just get a lull but if we launch into talking about nachos and everybody has plenty to say. So just open with food.

R Ryan Fleury 04:44

Exactly.

R Rob Mineault 04:44

What you had, what junk did you ensue consume? Anyways, enough on that. Let's get right to the show because I'm excited. Hey, Ryan.

R Ryan Fleury 05:09

Yeah, Rob? What the heck are we doing today? Today we are having a conversation with a previous guest who has been here before. That's why he's a previous guest. See what I did there. Tanner Gers is back. If you want to find out more about Tanner, visit www.atbanter.com and listen to our past conversation with him. I have a long introduction written, but go back and listen to that show because we cover most of it there. Tanner is back with us today to talk about something new he's been working on. He's the Managing Director over at Accessibility Officer. So Tanner, welcome back.

T Tanner Gers 05:47

Thank you all so much for having me. Superduper excited to be here. It's like so organic the conversation with you guys. Like I'm going into it like we have already started the podcast, you guys were like, calm down there chili pepper.

Rob Mineault 06:06

You came in and we were already bantering, you thought we already started the show. That's just what we just do before the show.

Steve Barclay 06:14

The nice thing about having an edited podcast is we can put that comment in anywhere we like.

Tanner Gers 06:22

Thank you guys again for having me on. So yeah, and please go back and listen. I'm not gonna like rehash the whole story, right. But in I've been in the Digital Accessibility space for almost 10 years now. And in 2021, I founded Accessibility Officer. And and as a Digital Accessibility Agency and Disability Employment Consulting Company, although the Disability Employment stuff hadn't taken off yet. But the accessibility business was growing. And I wanted to hire blind talent, that was super-duper important to me, because, you know, in the other episode, you'll hear about, you know, how I lost my sight when I was as a young adult in an auto accident. So understanding that discrimination, the barriers, the stigmas, the stereotypes, you know, it was very important to me to hire blind. I just couldn't source readily blind talent with the technical skill or ability at the level that it needed to be to do the job. And so I built a training program. And my partner and I built a training program. And we brought that to our friends at Helen Keller National in New York and said, hey, look, we got this program here. They liked it and wanted to bring it to vocational rehab in New York, the Commission for the Blind. We piloted that in 2022, that was a success. And after that first cohort, they wanted to expand it across the nation. So we've been doing that since then. And continuing to improve and build upon this program to make it the most robust program possible. It's really, my philosophy is that we've got to get more blind people in career pathways where we know we can create success, because we got a wedge in in our lanes where we're really strong so we can really start to change those stereotypes, the stigmas that cause that unconscious bias against us, right? And then we can start to open up the opportunities even further, we got to blaze that true, though first. And that's all you know, all of that is to, you know, to help us support our vision, which, you know, Accessibility Officer. The US disabled unemployment rate is the same as the US unemployment rate. And if we're ever going to do that, we got to get a crap ton of blind people jobs.

Rob Mineault 08:56

So what kind of what kind of training does all of this entail?

Tanner Gers 09:01

Um, great question. So, we want to like digital accessibility is my bread and butter. Just like you know, we want to replicate this model what we call the Certify Apprentice Transition Model. We want to replicate this in other industries, right? So again, those lanes where you know, you

know, contract closeout, management, cybersecurity, IT tech support, except, you know, bookkeeping, etc. But, so, but digital accessibility is my bread and butter. So that's why we're starting here. But the the the training is 14 weeks, very intense skills assessment, hard skills assessment is required to make sure that you have the prerequisites that to do the program, like can you you know, are you in using a screen reader fast enough? You know, do you have strong Computer Management, a key management, calendar management, time management You know, oral written communications, etc, want to make sure that you have the fundamentals so that you can succeed in the program because it is intense. And if you have learning curves there, it's going to be super intense when you meet the learning curves in the program. But week to week, across all of the WCAG 2.1. now 2.2 (we upgraded our program to 2.2. across all of those success criteria), over 12 weeks, we teach you one in a live lecture, a this is the success criteria interactive, you're asking questions, we're going to we're troubleshooting issues, we're showing where the success criteria happens, situations where it's relevant, problems that you might run into, contextual awareness about each success criteria. And then later in the week, we have the live workshop, we have a blind screen reader user walking us through, this is how we test the success criteria. Here's the actual components and elements. This is why this is important. Here's how we report on this is basically week by week by week, actively, technically how you become a Digital Accessibility Tester. And then one on one, you meet with the lead instructor every single week, to go deep dive on the areas where you need a little bit extra support. You know, I need help with this component, I'm not really understanding this, or I've really got to improve my issue right up here. And so that's what the one on ones are for. And at the end of the 14 weeks, you know, successful graduates, they take two certifications, or they get two certifications. We're working on getting our program right now authorized under the Department of Labor to be a registered apprenticeship program, because we've got the training program, and then successful graduates actually earn two thirds. One is the DHS Trusted Tester Certification. And because that's that third party certification, we can get this as a wrap. And, and then there's the the Cat 2.2 Certificate, which is, you know, validating that you have demonstrated the knowledge, skill and ability to test and report against WCAG 2.2. Those test results, they're evaluated by three human beings, three digital accessibility experts, and it's the majority vote on yesno according to our grading rubric, how we evaluate these reports, you know, we have a rubric for that. And then you earn that, so you earn your certification, successful graduates, and then we guarantee a job in our apprenticeship. So this is, you know, part of the way we're trying to walk the walk. It's not cheap, right? There is additional stuff that we have to do in this apprenticeship to support everybody to get them to the point where they are, you know, employment ready as a digital accessibility tester. But you're guaranteed work as a as a tester, you're going to work with our clients, our customers directly. It's going to be government, it's going to be E-commerce, it's going to be digital design and development agencies. And you work with our customers with our guidance. And you know, in producing this work, and we're going to give you consistent professional feedback, but you want to make sure that you've got the professionalism, the etiquette, how to communicate, how to really drive change, as a digital accessibility tester, so that when you step into the industry, when you're ready, whether you're working on another consultancy, doing testing, you're working for a federal contractor, you're working for a federal agency, or you're working at a big fortune 500 company, whatever the environment is that you had enough exposure to these different workplace applications, these different environments, the different developers, the different software development life cycles, that you're ready to, you know, not just gain employment, but retain.

R Rob Mineault 13:57

And what's the demand like for for digital accessibility testers?

T **Tanner Gers** 14:02

So it's, it's tough to, like, just put a stick in the sand and be like, this is the demand because it's growing so fast right now, as you guys are, I'm sure aware. The new regulations just came out for state municipalities. So, you know, we're closing a deal right now because of that. There's a lot of fear in these local agencies. If you know anything about the the local government space, you know, a lot of these administrations put responsibility on the lower level agencies, you know, that are beneath the state level. And you know, so they become responsible, and they're not going to get support from the bigger system if they if they're not doing the right things. If they're not following the instructions passed down by their government leadership, then they're going to be they're going to be hemmed up. So yeah, so the demand is definitely increasing this internationally too, right? So we got the European standards, we got the Canadian standards, accountability looks like it's going to be moving forward in Canada, we'll see it lag in Europe, if anything at all, with regards to the legislative front, but that's definitely going to be increasing here in the United States, especially as we see evolutions in legislation where we might be having the actual designers and developers of the websites of the mobile apps being now responsible themselves, they're now culpable. It's like, no different than, you know, hey, a company getting sued, because their, you know, their, their guns, you know, were the ones that involved in the shooting, you know, they were complicit at whatever degree right. So, very similarly, you know, there was just a case that came down in California, where the designer, the designer and developer of the California Parks website, you know, they were held responsible for creating an inaccessible website. So, you know, so the demand is certainly increasing.

R **Rob Mineault** 16:08

Wow. And that's perfect. That's exactly what, you know, what we've been after for many years. And it sounds like it's finally starting to happen.

T **Tanner Gers** 16:16

Yeah, I hope so. I mean, and I think that it's one of the I mean, you know, COVID has been terrible. But for the disability community, I think it's showing the real big light on a lot of the gaps. And, and so companies, I think, are now being forced, you know, whether they want to or not, I think they're kind of being forced into this adoption.

R **Rob Mineault** 16:36

Yeah. Well, I mean, you know, and we've been saying this for years is certainly you can present a business case even. Yes, it's an investment, and there's some work involved, and there's some money that you need to put into it. But at the end of the day, there's there's definitely a business case, you're bringing in customers, you are serving a larger base of customers that are going to appreciate you taking those steps to make your app, your website, whatever your

product accessible - but it was even hard to convince businesses in that degree. So being being held accountable to the government for these things is pretty much what needed to happen. I think.

T Tanner Gers 17:13

I couldn't agree with you more on both points, right, yeah. You know, we try to educate customers like, I like lovingly and jokingly say, like, I'm always trying to put myself out of business, like in that in two ways. Like, you know, what I'm trying to build the business, that's so much better, but it would put my business out of business. And at the same time I want to, you know, democratize accessibility, I want it to be, you know, like turning on the light switch. You know, we walk into a room, and, you know, we know that electricity is going to be there, we put our outlet, or our charger into the wall, like we expect that to be there. And digital accessibility should be no different.

R Rob Mineault 17:57

But do you feel like there's still a little bit of a barrier for businesses just based on the fact that you know, accessibility as a term? And to describe it to them, what that means, and how to implement it, it still feels complicated to a lot of businesses, I would say. What's your what's your sort of take on it?

T Tanner Gers 18:20

I mean, it's total perception shift on what it means to have an accessibility violation. To have an accessibility violation means you've got crap code. The accessibility violations or derivations are derived from not conforming to the WCAG's recommendations for how to design and develop digital assets. Like this is the international body that's like kind of setting the rules for the Internet, not just accessibility rules, but the rules for how to build websites and mobile apps across across the web. And so if you're not accessible, then, you know, and you can't really bridge the gap between a bug of quote unquote, functional bug and a quote unquote, accessibility bug. Shout out to Sherry Bernheimer, who was just talking about this on LinkedIn. A mature, a company with a mature accessibility practice has those bugs integrated, there's no difference between the two. It's really more about like, kind of, I would say, my perspective was it's more about severity. Is this a roadblock? Is this, you know, how, you know, what's the what's the impact of the users, and we make decisions like that. There is no way any company would ever ship anything if you couldn't buy it. And why are we doing that for 20% of the population? Right? Never do that for the 80%. Right? But we do it all the time for the 20%. So helping create that that little perception shift is so you know, is is being it's proven to be more difficult.

R Ryan Fleury 19:58

For those of us that are using software that may be somewhat usable, but not accessible. Are there tools that we can use to provide a report that we could then submit to manufacturers? Because if I call up, you know, boss, for example, because my guitar amp software is not

accessible, they're gonna look at it and go, yeah, okay. So, you know, what do you want me to do with this? I'm not an accessibility tester. So how do you provide proper feedback to them so they can possibly address the issues?

Tanner Gers 20:35

That's a great question. A couple things. Shout out to Dr. Chris Law, who's creating a new way to report on product accessibility. Things like dishwashers, or guitar amps or TVs - I don't know, that's not my expert domain. And I know it's not what you're asking about, but I just wanted to give a call out to that and bring awareness to what he's doing. I think it's great. The with regards to the software side, oftentimes, you're gonna be worried, you know, boss is really a middleman. Right, they've procured that app to be developed, it's, you know, for them to have an internal development team that actually built that mobile app from scratch is like, probably doubtful, they felt more likely they had a project management team with some technical resources that were, you know, responsible for the website or other things. And we're kind of overseeing this app development. And, you know, it's definitely possible they could have built it internally, but it's not that likely. And so then the question becomes, you know, how does boss procure. Because we, you know, they just when they were figuring out how they were going to buy all of this stuff, they didn't have enough digital accessibility, best practices, for procurement built into their buying cycle to mitigate this stuff.

Ryan Fleury 22:06

Right. But those of us who are end users of said product, wouldn't know any of that back end stuff. So is there a resource or a tool, you know, even for PC software that's made by an audio interface company, you know, like, you say, we've got WCAG, and we've got, you know, different tools we can throw at websites, and they'll generate an accessibility report good or bad or indifferent. But how do we as consumers provide proper feedback to manufacturers and suppliers, or, you know, just feedback to show where the holes or the gaps in said product might be, you could make this way more usable, and a lot more attractive to more people.

Tanner Gers 22:55

Hopefully, they've got an accessibility policy in a way to report accessibility violations. As an end user, that's what I would do. If they don't have accessibility statement, I would fill out their contact form and, and ask, you know, who do I need to speak to? If you want to go super further, if you know, you're, you know, a passionate, you know, brand advocate and you want, you really want to make this happen, I would go to LinkedIn, and start hitting up the product teams. And just messaging and create that conversation. And then the action steps I would take, because even if you don't know how I like to technically do it, if you can technically talk about it, you know, you can give them enough details to kind of make things happen, right. And so how might we do that, we could definitely do it in a written way, we definitely do it in a screenshot way, the most effective way might be to actually do a live when you're on like a Zoom meeting or something to share your screen and show them what you're doing. If it's a mobile app, or something like what you're describing, that's a little bit that's more difficult to share your screen. However, you could do the screen recording from your phone, and then do the and then share that that is surprisingly helpful for sighted developers because they can

see, you know what you're doing. If you're able to narrate on top of that what you were doing in the process, that would be helpful. I've done that for LinkedIn, and you know, tagged up Jonathan, who's a friend of mine, and you know, and he got it done, right. And as a user, that was important to me, because I'm like, dang, you know, I use this platform all the time. And they just like, put us back in the stone age. Yeah. So those would be those would be the three ways is one look for the accessibility statement and Contact Form to go through the regular Contact Form. Three, hit the product owners up on LinkedIn, anybody on the product team, and the best way to really convey things is live in a demonstration. And if you can't do it, the next best thing is video.

R Ryan Fleury 24:58
Those are great.

R Rob Mineault 24:59
It's such a good point, I think because I think that as consumers we have it just kind of beaten into us that a the product is the product, and there really isn't anything you can do about it. Perfect example happens to me actually, and Ryan gave me a hand with this last week. But the organization that I worked for, we were looking into the possibility of, of having our employees be able to log into our payroll system, the software package that we use, for payroll, to be able to go in and request vacation days through the system. And so the question was, you know, is that process going to be accessible? So I had Ryan give me a hand in going in and using JAWS and seeing if we could navigate it. And your the really frustrating thing about it was nine tenths of it was accessible with the exception of one button needed to request vacation, which kind of makes me think that all the other nine tenths of the accessibility was really just happy accident. It wasn't actually, they didn't actually do an accessibility pass, it was just pure luck that it was because if they did try to make it accessible, and then screwed up on that one button, though, that would be almost worse.

T Tanner Gers 26:34
On no.

R Rob Mineault 26:34
Yeah, well, you know, and so, you know, even when he you know, I went back to the bosses, I was like, yeah, no, it's not gonna work. The system isn't accessible. And they're like, okay, well, I guess we wont do that. And so but it didn't even occur to me that, hey, you know, what, maybe we should go to these guys and be like, hey, do you realize that your product isn't accessible with screen readers and that's actually holding us back as an organization? You know, I hadn't even really considered doing that, because I hadn't really thought that that was something that that would be an option. But now that now that I'm talking to you totally should, because that's the only way to affect change. Like, if we don't tell these companies, hey, your

product is inaccessible, or hey, you know, we're having trouble, you know, accessing information on your website, because it's inaccessible, then they're never really going to know, and they're not going to really think it's an issue because no one's complaining about it.

T Tanner Gers 27:39

Clearly, I agree. I completely agree. And this I mean, you know, this is something that can be replicated. And it's such a great point, Rob. So thanks for driving it home.

R Rob Mineault 27:49

And so talk to us a little bit about about this whole certification process and, and how that's going. Because from what I understand, that can be a fairly complicated process as well.

T Tanner Gers 28:02

Yeah, I mean, no, no disrespect to the IAAP. I mean, they are definitely an industry recognized certification, you know, they're certified accessibility professional. What is it, CPACC Certified Professional and Accessibility Core Competencies is, you know, is the certification that will help you get a digital accessibility job, which is hilarious, because it's really just about theoretics, it's just about higher level information has nothing to do with digital accessibility testing, per se. In other words, it's based on it's like, it's based on a body of knowledge, read this book, answer these questions. You know, our certification process is a little bit different and I respect that like, that's, that's a scalable certification and membership model. However, the our certification process is much different. We basically do an accessibility on it, test and report, and we're going to review it, and three people are going to do it. And and we know what the violations are, we know what the things are. And so we evaluate the quality of that report based on that knowing we'll do the repro steps, we'll see how you know, what they're doing, what they're experiencing, and we'll break down that report. Can you test and report on digital accessibility 2.2 and put that information in an actionable way that actually creates change? Can the developer will a developer look at this report and have questions? Well, they know exactly what to do.

R Rob Mineault 29:43

You know, we've been hearing rumblings within within the programming community about you know, obviously about concerns about AI and how you know, AI has has the potential of taking over a lot of programming jobs, you can plug a lot of things into Chat-GPT and tell it to write extract this particular code, and it will. I'm wondering if all of that code that it spits out, if it's programmed to be accessible code. Well, that that could also be a little bit of a game changer. Is this something that's that's on your your radar at all? Or have you thought about that?

T Tanner Gers 30:21

Oh, absolutely. I mean, we're, I feel like we're strategically positioned very well for AI. And let

me explain that. So I think we're about five years away before AI is like, really where we fear might be. And manual testing done by human beings is not going to go away anytime soon, even though we'll have general artificial intelligence, you know, within that five year window, so even though we'll have artificial intelligence that will be able to build websites and do it in an accessible way completely based on prompts or whatever, will still require manual testing. And that won't just be in the digital accessibility field. I'm not a futurist. But you know, Ray Kurzweil thinks 2029 is the year.

S   Steve Barclay   31:20
     Yeah. Ray Kurzweil is a smart guy.

T   Tanner Gers   31:22
     Yeah. Yes. I may be aging myself a little bit but you know, I used Kurzweil 1000, it was actually the only software that got me through business school. He hadn't yet an accessible calculator on there.

S   Steve Barclay   31:34
     And I might be myself too, because I've had lunch with Ray.

T   Tanner Gers   31:45
     So what did we do about that? You know, tactically? Well, I think that we build the software that supports people with disabilities really fast, really accurately. And so that they can be as competitive or more competitive than their sighted counterparts.

R   Rob Mineault   32:08
     They're already building AI into all of the browsers. You know, they all have AI components now at this point, but a lot of it's leaning into, like the search part of it. But if they build in AI, into the process of the browser and the process that it goes to, when it reads a webpage, really, is there any reason why it couldn't actually on the fly, like turn bad code into good code and spit out something that is accessible? Much in the same way is that I think eventually what's going to be happening is that AI is going to be loaded into the browser so that when you go to a website, and it pulls up a graphic or a picture, it is not going to matter if that thing is Alt Tagged in the code, it's going to look at that picture and be able to spit out a description, just within the browser itself. So I don't know maybe maybe there's there's there will be something where it's able to rehabilitate bad code? I don't know.

T   Tanner Gers   33:17
     Yeah, it certainly will be. It certainly will be absolutely. And forth, you know, the evolution of that will be first it'll start to make suggestions based on data sets, those data sets will get

that will be first it'll start to make suggestions based on data sets, those data sets will get tuned up and refined. And so then the recommendations will come close to flawless. Once they become flawless, then they'll be able to start throttling AI's manipulation of that on its own dependency, right. So hey, I found this problem, I'm gonna fix it. And they'll authorize AI to do that at certain components or element levels, maybe not global, maybe individual page, you know, cetera. And then once that competence increases over time, then it'll be, you know, close to full, maybe we need to have manual authorization for specific elements, maybe because of regulations passed out by Congress. We can't actually have the final green button pushed by AI that every real decision that has a public facing outcome, like a website needs to be reviewed by human before it's actually pushed live. I think that AI is moving fast, but we also underestimate, you know, laws. And, you know, if those are put in place, which I believe that they will be, and I'm not, I'm not basing our organizational strategy on this hypothesis. But as, as I imagined regulations get tight on AI I feel like real decisions that have a public facing impact. We're a long, long away from Ai just having that complete autonomy.

R **Rob Mineault** 35:09

Thank god. Thank god somebody has a brain that's in charge.

T **Tanner Gers** 35:15

Yeah, I mean, and when you see some of the stuff that's going on, like, it is uncanny what they're doing like now. So you get to like the Boston Dynamics robots doing all the crazy stuff. Now imagine they've got operating systems and AI, doing the crazy military level AI stuff. You know, I was watching, I was watching a video of this robot, you know, responding to oral feedback, and then performing duties within a home environment. And the latency was noticeable. It was like, it was so good. But then it was like, oh, it took just that half a second of delay where you're like, oh, that's AI. But that's right. And so like, in five years, holy smokes.

R **Rob Mineault** 36:03

Yeah, no, exactly. It's only getting better and better. There was some sort of a I think an ex-Google employee that I was reading an article about, basically talked about Chat-GBT 5, which I guess is, is you know, obviously still way away in in development, because for hasn't even come out yet. But he was like Chat-GPT 5, the world is not ready for it. Like we can't, we can't actually release this because it would collapse society. So I mean, that you know, this is this is all definitely within reach. We just have to be really careful on how we roll it out. So you know, that's what everyone's I think hoping for is that we just do it the right way.

T **Tanner Gers** 37:02

When they release 5 though, it's going to be it's going to be mind blowing. And I recently heard Sam Altman on, on an interview. And these guys are smart. Like, they're not just smart to build it. But like, how they're changing cultural consciousness, right? They're like, how do we get like, we can't just dump this on the community when it's ready. Like, we've got to create a way to

kind of normalize cultural awareness of and at least some adoption of this tool. How do we do that? Chat-GPT was born. We give users a tool in a really low level way that helps them interact with AI to begin to conceptualize how powerful is.

R Ryan Fleury 37:44
The first one is free...

S Steve Barclay 37:48
That's right. They are in school of marketing.

R Ryan Fleury 37:52
Yeah.

R Rob Mineault 37:54
Well, you know, it is it is interesting, I find it I do think that it's it's interesting how, as a society, we've embraced it. And I think that we are cautiously optimistic, I think, in general of people, but I do still feel like when somebody says something like, oh, we you know, this sounds like AI wrote it, I feel like that's still, at this point, a negative connotation, and people are, they're making a specific statement about that that's not positive. And I kind of think that that's good. I think that, you know, if if everybody went whole hog, and just all of our graphics, all of the writing everywhere, is all just going to be AI content. It's just that that's not what we're after. It's great for, like you said, a tool to use alongside, you know, being creative and you know, either writing a piece or creating a graphic or something. Undoubtedly, it's going to help make things easier and better and faster in that sense, but we can't rely on it as a crutch.

T Tanner Gers 39:07
No, I agree. Well, quick poll of the audience. If you guys had the chance to do the Neurolink, and no guaranteed that you're gonna live there's no gonna be no deprecations to any of your function. Would you do it?

R Rob Mineault 39:23
Remind me what Neurolink is. Is that Elon Musk's thing where he?

T Tanner Gers 39:28
Yeah, it's like the it's like that they're using to like, you know, control things with your mind is supposedly, what he says. It's like, what is gonna get so good. It's like having, like, the most

powerful version of Chat-GPT like in your head, so it's like, oh, you're going to China, and you don't know how to speak Cantonese. And all of a sudden, you don't need Google Translate because your mouth is like, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

R Rob Mineault 39:54
Yeah, I mean, hey, listen, if there was no if there's no ill side effects, I mean, I'd be tempted.

T Tanner Gers 40:02
I think the closest thing I've seen it is like, that we may be more aware of as the Matrix. It's kind of like the Matrix like, oh, I need to learn how to ride this motorcycle.

40:10
Like, like the best line from the whole movie. I know Kung Fu.

R Ryan Fleury 40:17
Exactly. I'd take that start that stuff.

40:20
Keanu does not know Kung Fu. Sorry.

R Ryan Fleury 40:29
Anything to improve the human race I'm for.

T Tanner Gers 40:32
Yeah, it's scary, but I think I would do it.

R Rob Mineault 40:36
Yeah, yeah, I would, I would just be afraid of just becoming that really annoying person that like knows it all, where you're just like, at parties or whatever, and just correct everybody. You gotta, you gotta be careful about that. So you got to use it sparingly.

S Steve Barclay 40:50

And less because I seem to be correction guy today. Keanu actually does know Kung Fu.

41:13
Well, then His form is ugly. Sorry.

Steve Barclay 41:19
Well, it's probably because he's done too many martial arts and kicking.

Lis Malone 41:24
Sure.

Tanner Gers 41:25
He's the Bruce Lee of motion pictures.

41:27
Oh, please do not Oh my god. Do not even put Keanu Reeves with Bruce Lee in any sentence. Wow.

Steve Barclay 41:37
Easy. That's our Canadian bud there.

41:39
Let me just tell you I'm I'm a martial arts purist.

Ryan Fleury 41:44
Next week show a tribute to Keanu.

Rob Mineault 41:52
Who knew Lis was so passionate about martial arts. We're learning more. I bet she'd probably probably a belt in something.

Lis Malone 42:03

I'll belt you in something.

Rob Mineault 42:08

There she is. Okay. Well, listen. We've we've geeked out about accessibility and speculative technology for most of this episode. But I do want to I do want to kind of catch up a little bit on just on you Tanner and sort of what you've been up to, because last we talked with you, you were looking into some soccer, you were in the Paralympics. Give us a brief sort of a brief overview of what's been going on with you in other areas.

Tanner Gers 42:44

So I am like, unfortunately, I'm going to be retiring from Beep Baseball. And it's sad, because I was like, literally earlier this year, I was like, you know what I think I can, I can hit baseballs really far for another 5 or 10 years. And I want to be like Kareem Abdul Jabbar just has some kind of crazy number of runs. For context. Last year, I was I scored the most runs that anybody at the World Series, and I'm the only person to ever score 50 runs in a World Series. And and then, as I was telling you guys, earlier, you know, I lost my sight in an auto accident, after a traumatic brain injury. And I've had, you know, a multitude of, you know, pretty severe six concussive events. And it really is really started to affect me in my cognition. And, you know, in 22, I was playing blind soccer. And, you know, I ran into the wall so hard that I got, I thought it was sick. I thought it was just sick. I thought I had the flu, but I was throwing up, I was nauseated. I was dizzy and disoriented. I couldn't quit. You know, this was like a talent identification count. And whenever I wasn't, like, literally playing, I had to lay down. And so this was like, you know, two days in a row, and then on the fourth day, you know, on the way to the airport, they're like, yeah, you've been like, severely concussion, you need to go and sleep. And at the time, you know, 2022, right. Like, I'm, I'm in the thick of building this business. And I was like one night a week, all nighters are normal. A lot of weeks, like two nights a week. all nighters? No that was just normal. As I am about to go hard, like I can't sleep. And so I did, I did an all nighter, and then and almost another all nighter. And then Halloween 2022 walking down the street and then I have what I call my first "Men in Black" moment, which is, you know, when they see the aliens and Men in Black and they put up that little flash device, and they kind of wipe their memory away like a flashlight. And no one remembers or knows really what's going on. And so all of a sudden, like, I don't know what's going on, I don't know where I'm at, I know that I'm walking in them in a conversation. I don't know what we're talking about. I don't know who I'm talking to. And it takes me like time to figure out what's going on. And so that happens about 12 times, or so over the next several months. And then it's like, I don't know if it's just me, but like, I bumped my head all the time. Like all the time. I might leave a cabinet open, or I might run into a partially open door, or whatever. And I'm just banging my head. I don't know, that's just me. But I banged it again, really hard on in a stairwell, and I was on my way to a conference. And we drive there, it's like 40 minutes later, and I can't go in. Like, I'm I just can't. And I'm sitting there in the car. And there was like another like Men In Black moment. And and what scared me was how close it was to me hitting my head. And I was just like, you know, you know, and I hit my head in Beep Ball. I've been knocked out, you know, people run into you,

you might run into a pole. And I got a five year old daughter. And I just like, you know, I hate it. I hate it. But I have to step away because I just I you know, I don't want one really bad luck to be the last one.

R Rob Mineault 47:03

One of the things that that amazes me about you Tanner, is that despite of all that, in the what is it two, it has been two years or three years that we last talked to you. Yeah, we'll say three years. We'll say three years. You've completely built a business from the ground up, done all this certification stuff. Like with the show, like I don't know what what have we have done. I mean, we've haven't even got a new cowbell. We still using the same cowbell.

R Ryan Fleury 47:29

Hey, we came up with Rynachos.

R Rob Mineault 47:33

That's true. I think I've kept two plants alive. And I've, I've managed to clean my Keurig coffeemaker. Last weekend, I managed to figure out how to take it apart and clean it. Three years. That's it. So listen, you are you are rocking it, sir. And we knew that from the first time that that we talked to you, you did gain a little bit of a reputation as an overachiever and you are continuing to track some amazing work.

T Tanner Gers 48:16

Man, I just, I just really passionate about changing the perspectives as a culture about what it means to be blind and what we can do in the workplace. I don't know how much longer I got but dammit. I'm gonna be I want you know, I'm willing to die for this.

R Rob Mineault 48:43

I don't think it'll come to that. It's hopefully not necessary. But this is how we feel we all feel the same way about this show. Right guys? We would die for it.

S Steve Barclay 48:57

I would suffer a minor sprain for it.

R Rob Mineault 49:00

Come on. We won't even be late for our own dinners for the show. We get we get pissed off if it's like 10 minutes late.

Ryan Fleury 49:10

That's right. The hockey game started 10 minutes ago. Are we done yet?

49:16

Yeah, that's usually me. You know what, I give up and just start watching it in the background.

Rob Mineault 49:26

The dedication to the show knows no bounds.

Lis Malone 49:29

Hey, we're in the playoffs.

Ryan Fleury 49:32

Game Two tonight.

Rob Mineault 49:34

Okay. Tanner, where can people find more information about Accessibility Officer? Where can they contact you if they're interested? Plug away sir.

Tanner Gers 49:48

Oh, thank you guys. Yeah if you're a job seeking candidate with a disability and you're just like tired of getting rejection letters, check out our Getting Hired playbook. And if you're interested in a career in digital accessibility, check out our certified accessibility Tester program. And all of that is under the vocational rehabilitation page at AccessAbilityOfficer.com.

Rob Mineault 50:15

Excellent. And we will make sure that we link that in our show notes as well.

Tanner Gers 50:22

I'm on LinkedIn if you guys mess around with that.

S Steve Barclay 50:27
I sent you an invite at the beginning of the show.

R Rob Mineault 50:30
Oh, look at that.

T Tanner Gers 50:32
I'm flattered Thank you.

R Rob Mineault 50:36
Have you accecpted yet, what the hell are you doing?

R Ryan Fleury 50:42
Who is Steve Barclay? Block block.

R Rob Mineault 50:53
Thank you for coming back and chatting with us. Invitation is always open to you, sir. Come on back and we'll geek out some more about accessibility or whatever the heck else you want to talk about. You're always welcome here.

T Tanner Gers 51:06
I appreciate that. Because it's my favorite place to get more cowbell.

R Rob Mineault 51:11
More cowbell. Ryan, give it to him. Perfect.

T Tanner Gers 51:17
Appreciate it. Thanks. Nice to meet you, too. Thank you guys.

R Ryan Fleury 51:22

Ryan Fleury 51:22
You bet.

Rob Mineault 51:24
It was very cool talking to him again. I did enjoy that. It's good to catch up.

Ryan Fleury 51:29
Nice deep dive. Yeah. Yep.

Rob Mineault 51:32
Yeah, it's it's always great. Great to have a guest that does more with a concussion than we do with four of us non concussed.

Ryan Fleury 51:46
I guess it's making us look like we're under achievers.

Rob Mineault 51:51
But it elevates the show.

51:57
Well, as they say, it's all about who you know. Yeah, we know people. We don't have to do it. We just have to know who knows how to do it.

Rob Mineault 52:07
Exactly.

Ryan Fleury 52:09
Nice.

Rob Mineault 52:10
Exactly. What what do we know about creating content? It's why we have guests that basically. do all the work. See who's the dummies? They come, they do all the work. I ask questions and

do all the work! See who's the dummies? They come, they do all the work! I ask questions and you guys play Sudoku or whatever you guys are doing.

Lis Malone 52:27
Work smarter.

Ryan Fleury 52:28
Work smarter, not harder.

Rob Mineault 52:30
Nice. I like it.

52:32
I mean, hell, we'd still be talking about Ryan's McDonald's he's having tonight.

Rob Mineault 52:36
True again.

Ryan Fleury 52:37
So I'm thinking right nachos but anyway...

Steve Barclay 52:39
So what do you have in from McDonald's? What what's your what's your order?

Ryan Fleury 52:44
Tonight I'm just gonna do two cheeseburgers medium fries and 10 Nuggets.

Steve Barclay 52:54
We did we did McDonald's last night. The first time we've had it in ages. I did the Quarter Pounder BLT, which I love and, and six nuggets as well. But I got the large fries because I friggin love them.

Ryan Fleury 53:07
I know. Yeah.

Lis Malone 53:09
Their fries are like crack cocaine.

Steve Barclay 53:11
Oh, they are they're the worst. They're Yeah, they're totally addictive.

53:14
Are they are they the same by you? Where they they're salty with like a sweetness to them. That's kind of their secret. I heard that they that they spray like a sugar water when they fry them and then so it creates like a sweet and sour two part parts of salty.

Steve Barclay 53:31
I've never I've never heard that. I know they cook them in peanut oil, which makes a difference and and then yeah, salt. Lots of salt. That's assault.

Lis Malone 53:40
Yeah.

Rob Mineault 53:43
So listen, we are we are putting together just through osmosis or whatever, just through doing this stupid show a recipe book. Rynachos are all part of the AT Banter cookbook. We got to have a barbecue. Now the weather's warming up. I should throw some stuff on the smoker some ribs and some chicken on the smoker and do it. Why didn't why we start a food podcast, I don't know

Ryan Fleury 55:14
Because we know nothing about food just like AT.

Steve Barclay 55:29

We should make that a segment of the show. Screw these dad joke one.

Ryan Fleury 55:38
Oh no because our ratings went up but the Dad jokes.

Rob Mineault 55:41
Think of how much it'll go up with with a recipe for Rynachos.

Ryan Fleury 55:49
we shall see. Oh email to cowbell@atbanter.com

55:57
Hey Ryan.

Ryan Fleury 56:02
Rob I'm Rob

56:27
They can find us online www.atbanter.com

56:38
Or at the McDonald's drive thru.

Rob Mineault 56:42
Oh, yes, that's true. Well, Ryan's got a McDonald's like right across the street from its place. Trust me we hit that place a lot when we recorded in the Guitar Dungeon.

Ryan Fleury 56:55
Breakfast lunch and dinner.

R Rob Mineault 56:57

Yeah, hey, they can also drop us an email if they so desire at cowbell@atbanter.com. Yeah.

S Steve Barclay 57:18

I'm not talking about social media no more. It's poison.

R Rob Mineault 57:20

There you go. All right. Well, I think that is going to do it for us this week. Big thanks, of course to Tanner for joining us, and we shall see everybody next week.

S Steve Barclay 57:39

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