

Questions and Replies from University of Washington ITS4US Phase 2 Webinar:
Transportation Data Equity Initiative held on July 12th, 2023

How long did it take you to gain the rapport with the different groups and ensure they all worked towards a common goal?

- Some groups were a lot more hesitant to engage with us, but I think the biggest question groups and advocacy organizations had is are you in it for the long haul, or are you going to use up our time? Building that level of rapport is really about demonstrating that your intentions are clear, what you're building is clear, and that you are continuing to build for accessibility. It's also important to really have that intention of building as a core capacity as opposed to just using people's time, and to achieve the accessibility end as opposed to just the accessibility process.
- By now, we have been pretty successful at gaining traction with some local organizations that recognize we are building this together. I think like any human endeavor there is a lot to be said for building trust and engagement. As people change in different organizations the legacy that your organization can have is really about providing organizations with resources, whether it be services or tools, that enhance what it is that they do and their engagement with their own constituencies.

Did you ever work within the community to gain insight from them or did you select a control group?

- We have a control group in a different study that we have run jointly with the Makeability Lab. The control group is a group of approximately 400 participants who are university students that cannot self-describe as having a disability, but that study did end last year so we haven't had that control since then.
- We have partner organizations that have engaged people with disabilities in working with us both in terms of participatory design (the process of ongoing engagement such as "oh we have these new features, will you take a look at them and tell us what you think?"), as well as in the use of applications. This can include individual community members who are interested in transportation or non-motorized transportation, who often show up to everything. At the same time we also partner with advocacy groups and groups that have outreach in the community where we have variable people showing up.

How did you gain the collaboration of the accessibility experts?

- Prior to our ITS4US funding, collaboration was about going out there, telling them what we were doing and asking whether they were interested in collaborating. A lot of the distrust in the community is about "whether you are going to just dump technology on us and take off." Building those relationships for the long term has been part and parcel of what we were doing. Now that we have more extensive funding and can do this at a larger scale, we've been really successful at hiring people with disabilities to work with us so that our team has grown. We have people who use accessible technologies on an ongoing basis and that has been a tremendous growth. We think it's important to do this on an ongoing basis and feel fortunate to have the ability to do so.

In one of your earlier slides you had a photo of a Tactile Map, how does that work for the person to get updates with construction on roadways and continual changes to pedestrian features on roadways?

The idea of what we are building for the tactile map project is that it allows you to download a 3D model of whatever sidewalk information is currently out there. The ideal turnaround process for someone who actually has a 3D printer is a 5-hour turnaround. We are currently working on being able to download those 3D models also for variable and dynamic displays as more and more of these become openly available. That is the long-term vision for that because the information about the environment is dynamically changing so using those dynamic haptic displays or touch displays is really the long-term vision for that.

How can one achieve an inclusive design when the available target users seem not to have an idea of what their preferences are?

This question was not answered during the Webinar.