**Driving Usability Through Accessible Tech\_ Intel's Darryl Adams & Cephable's Alex Dunn**

0:18
Good day, everyone.

0:19
Welcome and thank you for taking the time to join us.

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My name is Crosby Cromwell and I'm the Chief Growth Officer here at Cephable.

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We are so excited that you found your way to us for the first webinar in our enterprise series where we will focus on accessibility and the importance it has in the marketplace as well as the workplace.

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We're kicking off today with a critical topic of driving usability with accessible tech.

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And we have two amazing thought leaders, if I do say so myself, who are working in the industry in very different company structures or with different viewpoints, but with an absolute shared passion to ensure digital experiences work better for people with disabilities.

1:03
So I'm going to give you very short BIOS for both Alex and Darryl, who have done a million and one things in their individual careers so that we can spend as much time in our next 30 minutes that we have together in conversation and hearing the insights that that they have for us today.

1:22
So at first, we have Alex Dunn.

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Alex is the founder and CEO of Cephable.

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We are an innovative, accessible software that enables users to control their devices through voice commands, facial expressions, body gestures, and more.

1:38
Before founding Cephable, Alex held key roles at Voiceify and other companies, focusing on software architecture and engineering.

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His dedication to accessibility has earned him recognition, including being named a Microsoft MVP and receiving the Forbes 30 Under 30 in Boston.

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And in 2024, Alex also won the South by Southwest pitch competition, further highlighting his contributions to the industry.

2:05
As an international speaker and software architect, Alex will share his expertise and vision for creating a more inclusive digital landscape.

2:15
Next, we have Darryl Adams.

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Darryl is the Director of Accessibility at Intel.

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He leads a team that works at the intersection of technology and human experience, helping discover new ways for people with disabilities to work, interact, and thrive.

2:31
His mission is to connect his passion for technology innovation with Intel's disability inclusion efforts to help make computing and access to digital information more accessible for everyone, and to make Intel an employer of choice for employees with disabilities, both present and future.

2:49
So both Alex and Darryl are here to share key insights, solutions, and just to have a candid conversation with us about what's on their mind for the future of accessibility and accessible tech.

3:01
But before we get started, we have a few housekeeping items just to run over.

3:05
A transcript of the conversation will be available below in the description, and the Cephable team is here to answer any of your questions in the chat as we stream the webinar.

3:14
Please feel free to turn on closed captions if you desire and reach out to us for any access issues that you're having with the content.

3:22
We can't wait to talk to you in here to work through anything that you need.

3:25
So Alex and Darryl, I'm going to come to you Before we get started with our questions, I'd love to ask you three rapid fire things so we can get to know a bit about you all beyond what is on the bio and what you're doing in your career.

3:37
So here, here, Alex, I'll come to you first.

3:40
So what is one app on your phone, on your iPad, on whatever device?

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What, what's 1 app that you wouldn't want to live without?

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What's a favorite brand or company separate from Cephable that you admire?

3:56
And then if you could be a singer or performer, solo band, any point in history, who would you want your voice to, to sound like, to sound like?

4:04
OK, great question.

4:06
So favorite app brand that that I identify with.

4:11
And then basically whose, whose singer voice do I want?

4:14
So in terms of apps, this, it's an interesting one.

4:18
I, I actually go right to my laptop instead of my, my phone or tablet, although my phone's with me at all all the time.

4:24
I tend to lean towards bringing my laptop just about the same places.

4:28
And for me, the, the app that I go to the most is, is actually just Visual Studio Code.

4:32
I don't write as much code nowadays as I as I used to being in more of an executive position, but it is still like my comfort zone to go tinker with things or, or just sort of like play with an idea.

4:43
I had to try to sort of bring some part of that to life.

4:46
And so usually it's, it's my laptop and, and Visual Studio Code just jumping right into something.

4:51
In terms of brands, I actually, I don't really identify heavily with a lot of brands, but I am gonna say the one that I definitely consume the most of is Chipotle.

5:01
I, I eat a lot of burritos.

5:04
So I can't necessarily speak to like their, their company side of things, but the food definitely keeps me coming back.

5:13
And then in terms of singers, for those who who know me well, know that the answer is gonna be Elton John.

5:20
Every time I do karaoke, I start with Benny and The Jets and, and try to shock people with the fact that I can hit the high notes even though I can't hit most of the other notes.

5:29
So I just, I, I wish to be more like Elton John in terms of what my voice could be.

5:33
So good.

5:34
So good.

5:35
Darryl, how about you?

5:35
All right, so let's see.

5:38
So we're thinking, so apps I, I think I consume most of my, my content through audio.

5:45
So, and I spend, I think the, the app I use most on my phone is Audible.

5:49
So I'm gonna have to give them a shout out.

5:51
I, I spend hours and hours listening to audiobooks and consuming information that way.

5:58
I think as far as companies like the other thing around it kind of in in keeping with the audio theme is I'm kind of a music file like, or an audio file, although I'm deaf in my right ear.

6:13
So I'm, I'm going mono here, but I, I really can't live without my Sonos system.

6:17
So Sonos is a company.

6:18
I, there are, they're kind of the soundtrack of my life and it's always on.

6:22
And occasionally if we have a network outage, like it's just like a panic, like there's no music.

6:28
What are we gonna do?

6:30
So I think that's a that's a big deal for me as far as who I wanna sound like.

6:35
I I'm a huge U2 fan, so I'm gonna go Bono.

6:39
I think you can't go wrong with that.

6:41
Global, a global voice and and great music.

6:45
So, so good.

6:47
Yeah.

6:48
Great answers from both of you.

6:49
So now we need a little Elton John and Bono duet.

6:51
I think it's some point.

6:52
But yeah, I'm gonna have to get some copyrights to be able to stream some of that as part of this webinar.

6:58
Yeah, No, but it's good to get to know a little bit about you all as we move into our questions.

7:01
And I, I do want to start us off sort of with a a same page question is we're thinking about who is listening and who's joining us today for the webinar.

7:12
What do you want them to know about the current thinking of people with disabilities as a consumer market or accessibility as a business imperative based on disability as a consumer market?

7:23
So Darryl, let's start with you.

7:27
You know, I think so such a, this is such a foundational question.

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So thank you for for leading with this.

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But the, the disability community, the one thing I want to say about this is that this is no matter how you, you, you, no matter what your awareness is of the disability community, I think this community is bigger than you think.

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When we think about the breadth, it's, it's spanning all the, the spectrum of types of disability, whether you're it's the sensory impairments, mobility impairments, cognitive impairments, all of these things.

8:02
And then on top of that, you've got the, the, the, the spectrum of like severity.

8:09
And so you've got people who are experiencing severe disability versus those folks who have maybe some minor impairments.

8:17
And I think the challenge here is that a lot of people today, and I'll pick on folks that are experiencing hearing loss.

8:25
They, they're going through life with a, with this understanding that they, that they're not hearing everything, but they are not considering themselves part of the disability community.

8:35
So they don't really count themselves.

8:38
But clearly if you're not able to hear what's going on around you, it's an issue.

8:42
And it's an issue that that that technology can really play a role in resolving.

8:49
And so when I think about that, that community at large, it is, it is significant, it is global, it's a community anyone can join anytime.

8:58
And if actually if you live long enough, you will.

9:00
So it's, it's kind of a, a foregone conclusion.

9:03
So I don't think we should, we need to be careful not to underestimate the, the power, the purchasing power of this global community and the influential, the influencing power both from a from a product marketing perspective as well as just how you how companies think about talent and bringing folks into the workplace.

9:26
Yeah, so, so important.

9:28
Alex, what would you add?

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I, I first of all want to sort of echo everything Darryl said.

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The way that I sort of think about it from the consumer market side is that every individual with a disability is, is very unique.

9:40
And then the way that we in terms of like technology and platforms approach the market of individuals with disabilities, we have to take that even further than the sort of standard like every person is different.

9:51
It really comes down to the way that folks interact with technology can be very different and it creates a lot of challenges.

9:58
It it means that it's really hard and arguably impossible to have a one point solution for just making everything accessible, right.

10:07
But I do think beyond the, the individual, what it means for businesses is, is that there is an investment needed to be able to actually get to accessibility and to get beyond like the bare minimum of accessibility to say, yes, you, you technically as an individual could access this.

10:24
But like you might have a harder time.

10:26
It might be you might have a, you might need more time to do it.

10:28
It might be more difficult.

10:30
You might not be able to do it as often, whether it's from an impairment or something else or from a lack of, of assistive tech or a lack of accessibility.

10:38
But what we are seeing in general at the macroeconomic level is that companies that are investing in accessibility, whether at the very beginning, which I always will recommend, or even after the fact, and they're they're getting going on their real, you know, sort of solid accessibility journey, is that they're reaping the benefits of it.

10:57
There's not a whole lot of case studies out there of people that were like, yeah, we put all this money into accessibility and then we lost all this, this money and it didn't go anywhere.

11:05
It, it has a very clear return on investment in terms of unlocking new users, in terms of unlocking more productivity and creative creativity from employees when thinking about accessibility on that side.

11:18
And that overall, it's, it's a market that's that of individuals sitting there waiting to use your services, your apps, your devices, and they're waiting for you to tell them that, that, that they can.

11:30
And so I, I think the, the companies that are investing early are, are really the ones that are going to get the most out of it.

11:37
It's so good from both of you and with building on the idea of what companies are invested investing in, because this is your world's, this is what you all are entrenched in.

11:46
Are there things that are out right now that you are really excited about the advancement of or the possibility of or things that you're hearing mumblings not not quite yet out in the marketplace that you'd want us to know about or pay attention to?

11:59
And how is that shaping what's next basically?

12:03
So Alex, let's come back to you first.

12:06
Yeah, I think there's the major disruption is in the latest and generative AI creating more ways to interact with digital services beyond things like a typical screen and and user interface.

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I think having more options, more ways and and a a more equitable playing field to start on with new AI is, is opening up a lot of opportunities.

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I also think it's totally separate from that.

12:30
The gaming industry is seeing a big wave of people caring about accessibility, implementing accessibility from the ground up with their games, retrofitting new forms of accessibility options or tools into existing big titles and finding that, you know, going and, and putting those things out there to the world is, is bringing more players, you know, to their ecosystem.

12:50
So I think like we've we've seen waves of of accessibility that have a lot of times come from things like legislation that have kicked off stuff and like webs, web user interfaces, media.

13:00
We're starting to see a very large wave in gaming.

13:02
And also, you know, AI is just being a major disruptor in the space.

13:09
Yeah.

13:09
And I would actually.

13:10
So I definitely want to echo that last statement around the disruption.

13:15
I think that there's, there's a, there's not only new capabilities and new applications coming to market, but I think more importantly there's a convergence of technologies and at a price point that makes sense for for consumers.

13:32
And so if we think about the, the, the improvement of sensing technologies, whether on mobile devices, on, on laptop devices, the cameras, all the things that are sensing, the being able to understand information about users and about their environments, all of that is increasing rapidly.

13:55
And then you take all of that new sensing data and apply AI algorithms to, to better understand that data and to provide insights to users and to have systems that understand their users.

14:08
So I think one of the most exciting things to me at this point is the, this next generation of, of devices that will fundamentally know their users at a, at a, at a deep level.

14:21
So if I, and then this is where accessibility comes in, if, if I'm a user that has this experiencing a barrier with technology, the technology should understand the, the, the limits of your eyesight or of your hearing, or if the fact that you're maybe not able to interact with the keyboard or the mouse.

14:40
And it should be able to provide an experience for you that that works and that is that is configured and, you know, customized to your needs and preferences.

14:50
And so that works really nicely for within the disability context.

14:54
But I think it applies to everyone.

14:56
And I think the probably the, aside from that convergence of AI and sensing capabilities is going to be a, a real need for an underlying root of trust between a user and their technology that maybe doesn't quite exist yet today.

15:15
So there's an opportunity here to build trust and to establish trust.

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So when I share the, my, my personal preferences, so as an example, I'm visually impaired.

15:29
So there's certain things that I can't see on a screen, many things that I can't see on the computer screen.

15:34
My, my computer screen should give me, should, should show me only those things that I can see.

15:41
And so then I have no, no longer do I have a barrier.

15:45
In order to do that, I need to it, my, my system needs to know what I see.

15:48
And that might not be something I want the world to know.

15:51
Maybe it is, maybe it's not, but it's that kind of trust and it's that kind of relationship that we're, that we're going to be establishing between people and technology going forward.

16:01
And the, the thing that's most exciting to me here is that this, this isn't new.

16:06
This is new.

16:06
This is like a new industry.

16:08
This is these are new applications.

16:09
These are, this is new technology.

16:12
And we just, we had, we're just at the beginning of this journey, which is fantastic.

16:17
It's such an important point.

16:18
I mean, I think I'm gonna be thinking about that with the, the level of trusting your technology and your technology knowing you.

16:25
How are you thinking about disabled consumers being early adopters of technology?

16:31
I mean, disabled consumers have had to put up with a, a lack of access forever and always.

16:37
How do you think we can get individuals disabilities to be more comfortable with the the technology that is going to cater to their needs more and more as we go forward?

16:46
Alex, I don't know if you want to jump into that first.

16:49
Yeah, I, I think there's two sides to it.

16:51
I think there is the level of personalization that Darryl's talking about in some ways helps continue to build trust, but it also takes a level of trust to, to even enable those types of things.

17:02
I I also believe that there's, there's so much more advancement in hardware, not just in the sensing data, but literally in the compute, even like the, the new NP us in, in like the Intel Core Ultra, for example.

17:17
Like those types of new hardware empowers platforms like Zephable and others in the assistive tech and accessibility space to do more offline where you don't have to have the concerns of things like my microphone and my camera are connected to the Internet and therefore someone somehow is, you know, listening to me or seeing me.

17:37
It's all running just on my PC that is mine and it and I, it unlocks A level of of comfort to be able to personalize it.

17:46
I think when it comes to specifically early adoption, there's there's a lot of nuances and challenges to that in the disability space.

17:55
One being that a lot of new tech tends to be a little bit more expensive before it's proven in the market to then get down to a lower price point, which tends to be a barrier to entry.

18:05
Given that at end mass, this is very much generalization statistically, but that folks with disabilities have less spending power per person on these types of devices.

18:16
And also that like your typical consumer device is not going to get covered by insurance or, or anything like that.

18:20
So you have to be able to afford newer devices from the get go.

18:26
But as these devices generally get rolled out, as we have new hardware and new software as part of that, then it it becomes easy to, you know, roll out more holistically.

18:35
Now, on the software side, people with disabilities tend to be the earliest adopters because there's a necessity to try to find ways to navigate access for yourself.

18:46
It's also to some extent part of what we refer to as as the disability tax.

18:50
Not just on having to spend money on assistive tech as an individual, but also having to put in that extra effort to like figure out how to make it accessible for yourself versus what Darryl was saying with like these things should just be accessible and kind of figured out for you based off what it knows about you.

19:06
So it it's very interesting in terms of like the sort of early adoption side.

19:10
the IT what we see, at least in terms of studies and and anecdotally from our users is that folks with disabilities are way earlier adopters of software, but they tend to be some sort of like middle market adopters of, of new hardware.

19:25
Interesting.

19:25
And Darryl, did you want to add?

19:28
Yeah, I just was going to note that I, I think in the that historic context of the, the assistive tech industry and the challenges with the fact that a lot of these products do tend to be niche products and therefore don't benefit from the economies of scale.

19:45
And that's one of the drivers for me personally is to think about how we how we bring capability and feature sets into mainstream products that that are not specific to a, a, a, a classification or a category of disability, but.

20:00
But are still very useful in those contexts and that way we can deliver those types of experiences to people at the at, at mainstream price points, at, at scale of 10s and hundreds of millions of units.

20:14
And so that's the kind of thing I, I can usually go back to is how do we brought, how do we bring new experiences to people at scale and therefore bringing down the, the, the price barrier that sort of coincidentally or accidentally sets up perfectly.

20:30
What I, Darryl, I'd wanted to ask you next is we're thinking about Intel, specifically you, you've already touched on AI, but how is that playing out in Intel with what you are excited about from an accessible standpoint?

20:44
What are successes that you all are seeing or where are you spending your time right now?

20:50
Well, so I think it's probably in some cases similar to a way of a lot of large organizations are, are tackling AI at the moment.

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But it, it, it's, it's pervasive throughout everything that we do into a literal sense.

21:04
So everything that we think about as a, as a manufacturer, as A, and as a product design company, all of the work flows, all of the, the processes are in process now of being automated in typically either just through automation and or AI assisted automation.

21:26
And so every, every workflow is being evaluated across the company.

21:30
And so that that's happening at a very foundational level and very broad.

21:35
And then we're also diving very deep into the, the notion of responsible AI and setting up the, the structure within the company that enforces the, the development of responsible AI solutions from from data sets to models to to implementing AI solutions and services across the company.

21:57
And for our, everybody has to go through the same process of vetting and ensuring that we're achieving or, or we're not, we're minimizing the possibility of unintended consequences of what AI can do.

22:13
So we're, we're taking that very seriously.

22:15
And then just as a, from a, from a, from the people component of the, and the employees and how we interact, we're experienced or experimenting with various generative Gen.

22:27
AI models and, and workflows to see how we can more effectively work together and just just be more efficient as a company.

22:39
And we're working through that.

22:40
There's AI think there's a lot of really interesting things that are happening where we're able to just get some gain some efficiencies that were not available like in a traditional productivity suite.

22:54
But at the same time, I think there's just, there's a lot of challenges in the space because I think the, what we're seeing right now is that if you have, if you're, if you're an application developer, you're trying to embed AI into your application and that experience.

23:07
But if every application is doing that, then the user just now has 10s or hundreds of, of new AI experiences that they have to become familiar with.

23:15
And I feel like the, I think the end state answer here is that the AI needs to work for the user, not for the application.

23:22
And so I, I'm looking forward to more models where I'm in charge of my AI assistant and I don't need to understand the AI capabilities of all the assets and, and in applications that I'm interacting with, perhaps I'm not even interacting with them at all.

23:36
The, the AI does that on my behalf.

23:38
I think me owning the, the, the, the objective function of the algorithm is important rather than the, the application owner.

23:53
So it's these things that that I think are going to be most transformative over the over the the next two to three years.

24:01
Yeah, really good examples.

24:03
And Alex Darryl saying control and ownership of of the tech belongs to the user and making sure that that's the future.

24:11
That really makes me think about Cephable.

24:13
How do you think about that from an ETHO standpoint or the way that you've designed the the tech to work from a acceptable side of things?

24:21
Yeah, I mean, our our whole goal is to empower individuals to have ownership over their technology.

24:28
We, we say to control technology on their terms, going beyond like the sort of individual assisted tech side.

24:34
It's also empowering organizations to add this level of personalized accessibility to their own applications, their own devices, their own games and things like that.

24:43
Instead of trying to sort of like rubber stamp some version of like, yeah, we're accessible and instead actually taking things from a level of accessibility to a personalized level of accessibility to really a personalized level of, of usability and preference.

24:58
I think the, the innovations in in generative AI and also in the innovations in in sensor types of machine learning that that you know, a lot of what we do with things like computer vision pipelines and and adaptive speech recognition play right into that as well.

25:12
Like you have to know as a software, you have to know who your user is in order to personalize it for them.

25:19
And also it you have to do that without making the personalization a configuration that's constantly challenging and adding, you know, more taxing steps to go through just to to have a, you know, a level access.

25:32
Understood.

25:33
Go ahead, Darryl.

25:34
Yeah, So I I was thinking that that certainly in the in the context of sepable and the notion of bringing more multimodal experience to the platform that is a that's a it's a huge leap forward.

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If you think about we, we've had four plus decades of, of user experience that is the keyboard, mouse and and screen.

25:58
Whether we're thinking about a laptop or a desktop computer, it's been the same interaction model.

26:03
And now that we've got these, these, we're getting a handle on the sensing and the abilities of with, with AI to do to, to take that sensing data and translate it into insights and controls for a computer.

26:19
This opens up so many opportunities and brings down significant barriers that have been present for decades for people.

26:27
And I'm very like so.

26:29
So today, if nothing else were to change, I think this is a great leap forward.

26:33
But we're acknowledging that we are on the cusp of significant change, probably mostly LED as what we see today as Gen.

26:41
AI and that sort of similar algorithms that are creating experiences on the fly in real time.

26:50
When you couple multimodal interfaces with real time experiences, the the way that we, the way that we work with computing, the way that we interact with technology, it's just it's fundamentally changing.

27:03
It's an exciting time and with that, with all of the possibility with, you know, if we went to the stats of 1.3 billion people with disabilities globally or 13 trillion in disposable income annually, talking about disabled consumers as a marketplace that companies should go after, what what are the challenges that you all are seeing or hearing that companies are facing?

27:29
Maybe it's discomfort, maybe it's lack of knowledge.

27:34
Budgets aren't allocated in the ways that they should be.

27:36
What are the hurdles that one, companies are facing and two, how can they overcome some of those?

27:41
I don't know if one of you just wants to jump in immediately, but Alex, I could, I could start with you.

27:46
Yeah, I, I, I have some interesting perspectives having also background in sort of agency work and, and working with a lot of different corporations and doing things from accessibility audits to, to implementation.

27:57
Well beyond all the CEPHAL stuff, I think there there's a lot of different challenges that people face and you named a few of them.

28:03
Like we hear challenges in, in having to justify budget spend in order to get that allocated ahead of time.

28:09
There's also even just lower level things like we're not educating students that are studying things that computer science and engineering about accessibility well enough.

28:18
There's been some initiatives changing that, but if you're someone going to school, whether it's a university or a boot camp or something like that, to learn how to build applications and interfaces and, and other types of technology.

28:30
I, as far as I can tell, it's pretty rare that people actually talk about accessibility in that.

28:35
And so by the time you get in the industry, it's like a, it's a moment of like, now I got to learn this whole other thing and, and like what really is accessibility?

28:43
And there's not a lot of people even, you know, well educated enough in it in the industry to be able to really help at scale.

28:50
So I think some of the the challenges are sort of like really low level to that extent, at least when it comes to application development.

28:57
Beyond that, there's complexities to it, like we talked about before, every person's an individual, but every person with an with a disability has a specific preference or need in order to be able to interact with their tech.

29:06
And so having to build an application that is trying to accommodate all of those different things can feel overwhelming too.

29:13
Without the right solutions and bringing all those things together, you basically have a lot of people who don't really know where to get started or how to jump in or how to solve the problems and the problem feels overwhelming.

29:25
I think us in the accessibility space have, have a sort of duty to solve both of those problems really in order to solve the, the issue at scale across the, you know, I forgot the stat is like 98% of, of failing applications and websites that, that don't meet bare minimum accessibility requirements.

29:43
Like the, the need to solve that isn't going to be from a, a single point solution.

29:48
It's going to be a mix of education and specific solutions that are easy to implement.

29:54
It's a big reason why that's, you know, part of our focus on the selfable side when it comes to working with enterprises.

29:59
It's helping people as individuals with disabilities to add new types of controls, but helping businesses learn how easy it can be to add those controls directly and have someone bring their personalized set of controls to their their applications and devices.

30:12
But I still think there's more we all got to do on the education side when it comes to teaching developers, teaching engineers, teaching designers, teaching product owners and managers that like one these things matter and how to actually tackle the problems too.

30:25
Yeah, yes, I, I, I have to completely concur that the, the challenges around raising awareness are, are really difficult.

30:38
And it's something, it's has to be foundational.

30:42
It's everything starts with awareness.

30:44
And then we want to try to move people from awareness into in into activating them.

30:49
And the activation might be folks that are now able enabled in understanding how to how to create more accessible experiences.

31:00
But then also that activation includes executive level decision making and prioritization.

31:05
And it's just, it's a constant effort to continue to help people understand what we were talking about at the beginning of our conversation around the, the, the size and the value of this community worldwide.

31:20
It's not I, I do think of this as much more a business imperative than anything.

31:27
Like, you know, it's, it's not, we're not talking about like a legal requirements or something that's just nice to do.

31:35
This is something that is, it's should be considered fundamental.

31:39
And there is a disconnect.

31:41
I think in across industry in general, we've made a lot of progress, but for all the progress we've made, we can still see plenty of examples of where this is just, it's just not taking root yet.

31:53
And so the, it's like the, the need to continue to go back and start at the fundamentals and say, we need to make sure that everyone is, understands the space, is aware of it, understands the value that, that, that we're bringing to, to the world.

32:08
And how when you enable people with disabilities to connect and to contribute, you're bringing that much, you're, you're adding that much more into the economy, into our society.

32:21
And so it's just a, such a large concept.

32:25
And I think that part the, the, the size of this, this space, it's maybe in its own, you know, in its own right.

32:32
It's, it's part of the challenge.

32:33
It, it's getting this across to people that haven't really thought about it before.

32:39
Is, is a, is a, is a big conversation.

32:43
And so we just, I'm in the business of having that conversation a lot.

32:46
Yeah.

32:47
And it makes me think about companies are going to get this wrong as they work to get it right.

32:52
And Intel has put a stake in the ground, obviously, because, Dale, your job exists, your team exists.

32:57
How maybe it goes without saying, but how important or imperative do you think it is to getting accessibility right that you have dedicated roles and experts who this is the world that they know?

33:09
I think it's very important, but I, I think that you like, it's maybe like a, a pyramid in the sense that I think organizations need to you, you need to start with executive level sponsorship and understanding.

33:24
I think that to get programs moving forward and supported in reality requires a top down commitment that, that, that, that yes, this is important, but that's, it needs to be very much coupled with a with that more grassroots understanding and, and for people who are are doing the work, understanding the value.

33:48
And the thing that I've noticed mostly that most interesting over the years is that as I interact with individual contributors around the company, as they often they come from a space of either lived experience or they know somebody, maybe a family member or friend who is experiencing some, some barrier due to disability.

34:10
And so they have this intrinsic motivation to, to want to help.

34:14
And it's amazing to me how how common that story is.

34:18
And so I can bring people together with all of this, this, this shared interest and passion and build community around that, that, that, that, that desire to want to help and let that grow bottom up and let that meet in the middle with the top down.

34:36
The, the, the, the support from an, an, an executive sponsor, executive leadership.

34:44
When you do that, you, you, you create the environment and the, the necessary ingredients to grow a longer term strategic approach to addressing accessibility holistically, completely.

34:58
And in that process, I'm thinking about the data and analytics that's needed that we have to tell the story about.

35:05
I mean, Alex, you talked earlier about the business case of this.

35:08
What data do we need or what data are you all excited about?

35:13
If, if, if it exists to tell the, the business case of accessibility, I think there's, there's a lot more needed.

35:23
There's a, there's a lot of anecdotal data out there around the like, we invested this amount of money and we saw these returns.

35:29
But I think that a lot of businesses in, in a, in a very capitalistic way, have also started to see the competitive advantage of accessibility.

35:37
And now there's like this sort of like regression in a way of, of sort of holding some cards closer to their chest around the real value of it while they're still investing in it.

35:47
But I, I would love to see more of that come out.

35:51
You know, it's more to the public of here's here's where it did work for us.

35:56
Here was our approach.

35:57
Here's how we got it right.

35:58
And here's how we opened up that market of, of individuals with disabilities as our new customers or as how we, we unlocked all these new experiences from employees.

36:07
I'll say there are a couple companies that are very loud and proud about it.

36:12
You know, just to, to name one that comes to mind is, is Microsoft with how much they invest in both their employee accommodations as well as their own innovations from their research department all the way up through product around accessibility and their dedication to accessibility.

36:27
Individuals and, and experts being on every project of every product that that's being shipped.

36:33
You know, they're, they're, I think leading very loudly compared to some others and in a lot of ways sort of putting their, their money where their mouth is and their mouth where their money is in terms of where, where the spending value comes from.

36:48
I think the other side of data and analytics that tends to create some challenges for those of us in the disability space and in the accessibility space is inconsistencies around the actual market numbers.

37:00
You know, we'll see things like 1.3 billion individuals with disabilities from the World Health Organization, but then someone else will run like some smaller study and come to like a different conclusion.

37:10
And now you could just have competing numbers that are fighting and, and it builds this level of maybe distrust is too strong of a word.

37:18
But there, there's a level of scrutiny that it starts to bring when people like us are bringing these numbers to the table and explaining the, the, the size of the market.

37:28
But then someone goes and says, well, is it this number or, or is it this number?

37:32
You know, how many people are we really talking about here?

37:34
What is the real spend that's there?

37:37
I think consistency in how we talk about the market and how we prove it really is is some of the information that that I'm I'm hoping to see get a little bit stronger in the future.

37:52
Yes, the the inconsistency of the data is, is an issue.

37:57
I think as it makes the the the big numbers easily challenged.

38:03
If somebody wants to, to dive deep into, to understand exactly how you're going to translate the 1.3 billion people into something that's like a, that's going to move a needle at a, a particular company.

38:15
So that is I, I think I, I tend to, to express the, the macro economics in that way just as a, as a starting point.

38:25
But I don't, I, I, I personally am trying to not rely on, on those, those data points as the justification to make, to, to make decisions.

38:38
I think short of having very specific market data on on purchase like a purchase power and and loyalty and these types of things that would indicate that there are that's making accessibility and disability inclusive decisions for products make sense.

39:06
This is like I, I tried to tie the bigger picture into every person that we enable is, is then a contributor into that economy and the other parts that part of this that's that's pretty interesting is just that is kind of brand loyalty.

39:21
I think if you as a person with a disability, I recognize that when I, when I have, when I experience a barrier with a product or a service, it's really irritating to me.

39:34
And I will, I will immediately move to something else that that provides me a better experience and I won't go back.

39:42
And it's not that I'm, I, I'm not being like intentionally mean about that.

39:47
It's just I, I don't, people don't like to experience barriers.

39:51
We want it, we want the easy path forward.

39:54
And so like being the company that provides the easy path is a really there, there, there's a lot of ROI to that.

40:01
And you can.

40:01
You can slice and dice it in many different ways, but you want to give every individual.

40:08
A successful path into your product and hopefully your product is providing a, a valuable service to that individual.

40:19
If you do that successfully and do it broadly across our, you know, disability community, you're going to win a lot of, of lifelong customers.

40:29
And I think that's a, there's something to be said about customer acquisition and retention and the value that that brings in itself 100%.

40:38
And I would echo and say Ditto to everything you both just said.

40:41
There is some research from scope out of the UK that looks at the, the user experience and abandoning buying tech at the point of sale because of lack of accessible websites even.

40:56
And it was over 60% had abandoned the tech they were about to to buy at the point of sale because of the experience on the website.

41:03
And then over 50% at some point had given up on tech that they purchased because of the lack of accessibility and usability.

41:10
I mean, it's very key to to this population, which is, as we know, wherever the the stats are, is absolutely a global growing population.

41:20
But you know, if we think about kind of next conversation, the focus of today is usability.

41:26
And both of you have touched on AI and the growth of AI.

41:31
How, how is that going to or is improving the customer experience for people with disabilities, that intersection of accessible tech and AI?

41:42
Darryl, let's start with you.

41:44
So I think we're just getting the glimpse right now.

41:48
And the way I I think about our exposure to generative AI today is giving everybody a new context, a new language to talk about what how things can be and probably will be in the not too distant future.

42:03
What I, what I mean by that is if you think about the large language model concept and how it is conversational.

42:12
And so this brings in this whole new interaction model with technology being just a very human conversation.

42:20
And today we, we, we have exposure to this and we've see, we see the, the benefits and we see some of the, the, the challenges that the models have.

42:29
They're not always accurate and all these different things, but nonetheless we have this, we, we see it.

42:35
And so it now we can now talk about what this should look like going forward.

42:39
So I think the, the transformation that we're going to see is that we're going to have far more like fluid generated experiences.

42:53
And some of those experiences will be conversation, some of them will be generated visuals and supportive answers to questions and whatever makes sense contextually.

43:02
But it'll be the the the key here is that whatever is being experienced didn't exist before the question was asked.

43:09
It was generated by an algorithm, whereas today everything is more of a destination.

43:15
If I have a question, I'm going somewhere to a destination to for the answer, and that answer already existed.

43:22
I'm just going and finding it.

43:24
And I think that the implications of that are significant because if you are an application designer today, you're trying, if you're, if you're doing a good job, you're trying to design your user interface for as many people as possible.

43:40
And so, and hopefully that includes a, a good accessibility framework that works for as many people as possible.

43:48
Largely in reality, they don't.

43:53
But if you're that developer and you realize that the vast majority of traffic to your site is an algorithm, how do you think about your site like now, now, now your customer is an algorithm and how does that make you think about the design of that site?

44:11
So I think that's going to be a question a lot of people have to answer.

44:15
And so it's not to say that the the sites go away entirely, but we have to think more about programming interfaces as equivalents to user interfaces and allowing algorithms to work on behalf of of ourselves.

44:29
And I think there's just so much to this discussion.

44:32
We go on forever.

44:34
This is a massive change.

44:36
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

44:38
I mean, Darryl, I'm pretty sure just you and I could talk for like 3 hours about that one topic alone.

44:43
And we, we've borderline hijacked some, some panels in the past to talk a little bit more in depth about that too.

44:51
I think that, you know, from, from the cefable perspective, like we're, we're trying to directly tackle those challenges on, on usability using AI.

45:00
Like that's exactly what, what our approaches are.

45:03
And in a lot of ways, they'll even just kind of like described our, our road map earlier of, of how we change the, the way that people are interacting beyond a keyboard and mouse or a touch screen or, or these types of physical inputs and more inferred controls and actions and context that don't even necessarily need the full user interface.

45:21
But in situations where the user interface is there makes the interaction seamless.

45:27
You know, we're in, in sort of a, a intentional product design process of sort of stepping into that, knowing that like it's, it's a, a near impossible challenge to just rip every, every user away from the interfaces they know and be like, now you have a whole new way to interact with things.

45:43
And like this is the way it is.

45:45
And instead trying to sort of like bring these new types of interactions to existing interfaces, applications, game services, and then slowly sort of peel the onion back from there where we can automate and make it easier for the end user, You know, starting with things on our side.

46:00
Like, hey, I noticed you just switched to YouTube, but you don't have controls for YouTube.

46:06
So I'll make controls for YouTube so that you as a user are just talking to your computer to tell it what to do.

46:12
And it's just doing it, but you don't really realize behind the scenes, it's generating these things to bridge the gap of the way that you wanna interact to the way that the application expects you to interact.

46:22
In this case, things like traditional inputs and interactions like a keyboard and mouse or you just jumped into playing Minecraft and I know that you use camera controls a lot.

46:33
So I set it up for you automatically so you can use head controls to move your character on and, and voice controls for all these things, plus any other input you want.

46:40
And that's sort of the direction that that we're going in the near future in order to sort of be that bridge to these new types of interactions that are accessible and personalized from the beginning that are powered by both inference side of AI on the edge with things like computer vision and automatic speech recognition.

46:59
But really building on the the newer side of generative AI behind the scenes where you don't have to think about how Sefable is generating things for you.

47:07
It just is there as an interaction point to to create new ways to interact with existing interfaces too, which jumps all the way back to where we sort of started with Darryl thinking about the future of we're we're going to really need to trust our tech and our tech is going to know us.

47:22
And you know, that comes so full circle to that point at the beginning.

47:26
And this it is such a huge topic and somehow we've come completely to the end of our time so quickly.

47:31
I would love just closing thoughts for from each of you, maybe even under 30 seconds.

47:37
If you had a call to action for the folks that are are with us today and listening for how to start or continue or deepen their accessibility journey, What would that call to action be?

47:48
Darryl, I'll come to to you first.

47:50
Well, so I'd just start with there is no better time in history to be disabled than today and until tomorrow, I think, right.

48:00
It's this is a, this is incredible time of rapid innovation.

48:06
And so I, I think that if we're trying to solve and and be a part of the solution is to start from the beginning, like never start a project without accessibility in the conversation from the, from the first day.

48:23
The, the, the longer that you wait, the more likely it is that the, the result that you're, the, the product you're creating will will be deficient in that manner.

48:34
And I, I think that using an inclusive design approach, including people with disabilities from the beginning and recognizing that you're building for everyone is probably the single most beneficial thing that you can do.

48:48
Yeah, I would say my go to call to action is if you are someone without an existing accessibility plan, building devices or applications or games or services, go ask someone with a disability that's tried to use your stuff how it went because it it's going to be unbelievably eye opening to the underlying challenges that tends to kick off the real accessibility conversations.

49:13
If you haven't had those yet.

49:15
If you're some, if you're someone that is already working towards accessibility, I'd say there's, there's a, a, a pretty near term future where there's going to be new ways to interact with those applications.

49:26
And there's an, an opportunity to turn what might be accessibility work and initiatives into new levels of usability.

49:35
To really reap the benefit of the the market of individuals with disabilities that are out there and to actually create new experiences for everyone that are just easier and better, faster, more enjoyable.

49:46
Really, we all just such good insights.

49:50
Thank you for the time today.

49:51
It's been a really good conversation and I think we can take away bits and pieces that you've both talked through over the course of our time.

49:59
And for those who've joined us today, please feel free to reach out to us at cephable.com, sign up for our newsletter, seek out people like Darryl who are leading in this space through their insights and their work in the everyday.

50:15
And we look forward to our next conversation.

50:18
With that, we will we will say thank you for joining and goodbye.