

TRANSCRIPT OF THE CONFERENCE "WHAT IF WE LET USERS CUSTOMIZE THE INTERFACE?"

What?

Access42 has developed AccessConfig, a free, open-source, lightweight style selector that allows people with disabilities to use a site accessible according to their specific accessibility needs.

So what?

Navigating the various processes required to meet accessibilities is difficult. They vary for different people with different needs. For developers and users, accessibility standards are challenging:

- Nothing works really well everywhere;
- Nothing is homogeneous from one OS to another or from one browser to another;
- Nothing seems easy to access, especially for people with comprehension, reading and ability problems. Accessconfig was created to let the user define and manage accessibility settings according to what suits them individually rather than producing accessible materials according to general criteria.

If this trend were to grow, the accessibility of any material would no longer be the concern of the producer but would become solely that of the consumer. People with special needs would then be responsible for finding their own accommodations or facilitations.

References

- [Transcription de conférence « Et si on laissait les utilisateurs et les utilisatrices personnaliser l'interface ? » — première partie](#)
- [Transcription de conférence « Et si on laissait les utilisateurs et les utilisatrices personnaliser l'interface ? » — seconde partie](#)

- [AccessConfig — Access42 \(a11y.fr\)](#)

WELCOMING NEURODIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

What?

Microsoft, among several other large technology companies, are implementing a [neurodiversity recruiting program](#) into their talent management processes.

Many with neurological challenges – such as dyslexia, autism, ADHD, social anxiety, etc. - are unable to work and produce in a “standard” workplace environment. Nor are they necessarily interviewing as well as others in “standard” interviewing conditions. Yet, Neurodivergent candidates often possess qualifications and experience a company desires and that might well surpass other candidates.

The approach to Neurodiversity is not that those with neurological challenges or other disabilities need to be “cured” or work at a deficit; rather, they require a different (sometimes more) profile of resources to achieve ultimate efficacy.

So What?

Companies involving and accommodating neurodivergent employees report productivity gains, quality improvement, boosts in innovative capabilities, and broad increases in employee engagement. Ultimately, organizations are seeing evidence of equity and diversity benefiting the bottom line of organizations.

How we perceive who is and is not productive or, in other words, how we value “productivity” is and needs to continue changing. By reevaluating the various ways one contributes to an organization and redesigning how we enable people to contribute, organizations will gain the most from their employees.

Thus, accommodating and personalizing individual needs and preferences, is not favouritism nor wasting costs but instead investing in the future of your talent and your organization.

Sources:

- <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/diversity/inside-microsoft/cross-disability/neurodiversityhiring>
- <https://hbr.org/2017/05/neurodiversity-as-a-competitive-advantage>

U.S. COMPANIES OFFER ABORTION TRAVEL BENEFIT AFTER ROE DECISION

What?

The U.S. Supreme Court overturned the landmark 1973 ruling recognizing a woman's right to an abortion. The decision is a victory for conservatives who want to limit or ban and, in some states, criminalize the procedure.

U.S. companies offering the benefit include Walt Disney Co, Johnson & Johnson, online dating sites OkCupid and Bumble Inc, Netflix Inc and JPMorgan Chase & Co, the nation's largest bank.

Disney told employees that it is still committed to supplying access to quality healthcare, including abortions. Benefits will cover the cost of employees who need to travel to another location to access care, including obtaining an abortion. Facebook owner Meta will reimburse travel expenses for employees seeking out-of-state reproductive care.

So what?

- **Digital privacy-**

There are concerns about the potential use of personal data to punish people seeking information or accessing abortion services online. Tech companies must consider how they will respond to law enforcement requests for users' data, which could include targeting abortion-seekers or abortion providers.

- **A model for restrictive policies for the rest of the world-**

The U.S. could be an example for some countries to adopt more restrictive laws on women of their own. Poland, for example, has faced criticism from the European Union for severely limiting abortion but could soon argue that its close ally has done the same thing.

- **Potential changes to employee benefit plans, H.R. policies**

A poll found that 35% of organizations are evaluating potential changes to benefit plans but have not acted yet. Employers might also need to consider an action plan for employees who are not covered under the group health plan, which could include contract and gig workers and part-time employees, which would require significant logistical work from a compliance standpoint.

- **Effect on social and financial mobility and female healthcare**

According to economists, women who are denied an abortion have higher rates of poverty, unemployment and need for government aid. This affects the economic well-being and prospects of their children, as well as those of their families. Economists are also worried that overall female health care will suffer due to restricting or prohibiting abortions.

Sources

- [Disney, other U.S. companies offer abortion travel benefit after Roe decision | Reuters](#)
- [What the end of Roe could mean for the rest of the world : NPR](#)
- [The newest content moderation minefield for tech platforms: abortion posts | CNN Business](#)
- [How your phone could be used in abortion criminalization | CNN Business](#)
- [The Business Implications of Roe v. Wade | Workspan Magazine - Workspan by WorldatWork](#)
- [Experts say overturning Roe v. Wade will cause 'immediate economic pain' | CNN Business](#)

