

Reframing Universal Design: Creating Short Videos for Inclusion

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Within the field of universal design, policy development is often viewed as the optimum medium by which to enact change and to create inclusion. Policies, codes and papers are however, not accessible to all stakeholders and therefore limit the ability to create inclusion. Reframing universal design introduces innovative ways to communicate inclusion everywhere and every way, beyond policies, codes and papers. And communicating through an alternate medium like video, offers new ways to understand inclusion.

Video is a visceral medium, offering the opportunity to reframe universal design practice and education. It captures movements and can be co-created with people with disabilities. Video promotes a co-constitutive process and challenges externally generated knowledge to uncover a world perceived from different angles and viewed through multiple vantage points. Videos co-created for inclusion encourage detailed and rich embodied knowledge and experiences because information is prompted by association with one's surroundings. Significantly, videos have the capacity to excavate personalized knowledge of those with different abilities and uncover systems of exclusion that are often hidden or naturalized, and shamedly rendered invisible through policies, codes and papers.

Advocating for inclusion through/using video is a process that must consider key factors which are not dissimilar from those used when creating policies, codes and papers. Firstly, the audience needs to be considered, e.g. architects, policy developers or people with disabilities. Then the message being created and the creative methods or techniques that best communicate that message must be established. How the film will be co-created with people with disabilities and how and where the video will be disseminated is the third key factor in using video to advocate for inclusion. And of course, the purpose needs to be established: Is the video being created for empathy building, education, policy change, design or environmental changes?; Is the video being created for research, advocacy, storytelling, community building, artistic and creative expression, empowerment and agency, or all of these? Co-creating a video for inclusion is a multisensorial and accessible process that moves beyond written text (policies, codes and papers) and can incorporate subtitles, be audio described and include plain language summaries. As an accessible medium, videos can also break down attitudinal barriers from unconscious bias, stigma and stereotypes.

This research provides insights on how videos travel, often to unexpected places—reaching differing audiences and resulting in significant impact. The video *Wandering on the Braille Trail* (2018 <https://vimeo.com/user104713043/review/393821853/fd1edba92b>) is co-created with Sarah Boulton, who is blind and Janice Rieger and Megan Strickfaden dialoguing while wandering on the Braille Trail in Brisbane, Australia. Here dialoguing refers to walking while talking, pointing, gesturing and the other shared experiences that happen while co-inhabiting the built environment. *Wandering on the Braille Trail* articulates the importance of designing for disability, particularly urban wayfinding. It brings to light the needs of people who are blind or have low vision and highlights the design of the Braille trail as an agent of change.

This short 6-minute video has transcended different audiences, making them aware of the diverse navigational needs of those who are blind or vision impaired. In one year since its release, the film has been screened ten times for international, national and local audiences.

This example of universal design, using the creative medium of video has enacted change, has created inclusion and has informed policies, programs and papers. This success is in addition to being a creative work exhibited in three juried exhibitions. And in terms of transcending audiences this film has helped educate and inform professional practice in sectors such as building and development; urban design and community programs; government policies around inclusion and diversity; architectural and design education/practice; and now, to inform new research methods for inclusion.

Wandering on the Braille Trail has had *instrumental impacts* on state wide non-profit agencies such as museums and galleries. The *conceptual impacts* have been in broadening national and international community awareness, through screenings and exhibitions, that accessible urban wayfinding is necessary for all. *Capacity building impacts* have been created through workshop training that encourages professionals and students to create inclusive videos for impact. It is the *attitudinal or cultural impacts* that have increased stakeholder willingness to engage and collaborate with people with disabilities. The follow-up interactions such as new consultancies, presentations, advisory groups and new lasting relationships are evidence of the *enduring connectivity*. This one, 6-minute video has had far reaching impact.

The example here of universal design using alternate mediums like video, confirms that video impacts more than policies, codes and papers ever can. The creative medium of video can reach large and diverse audiences and stakeholders. And most significantly, new impactful relationships can be made, where people with disabilities have their voices heard. Videos are a powerful medium that can be used across all sectors to inform best practice in universal design and contribute towards creating inclusive and thriving communities.

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