



'Disabled' is a Verb

Reimagining the purposes of accessibility

Bethan Tovey-Walsh

Prifysgol Abertawe
(Swansea University)



- 
- **Introductions**
 - **Disability**
 - **Intersections**
 - **Accessibility**



Introductions

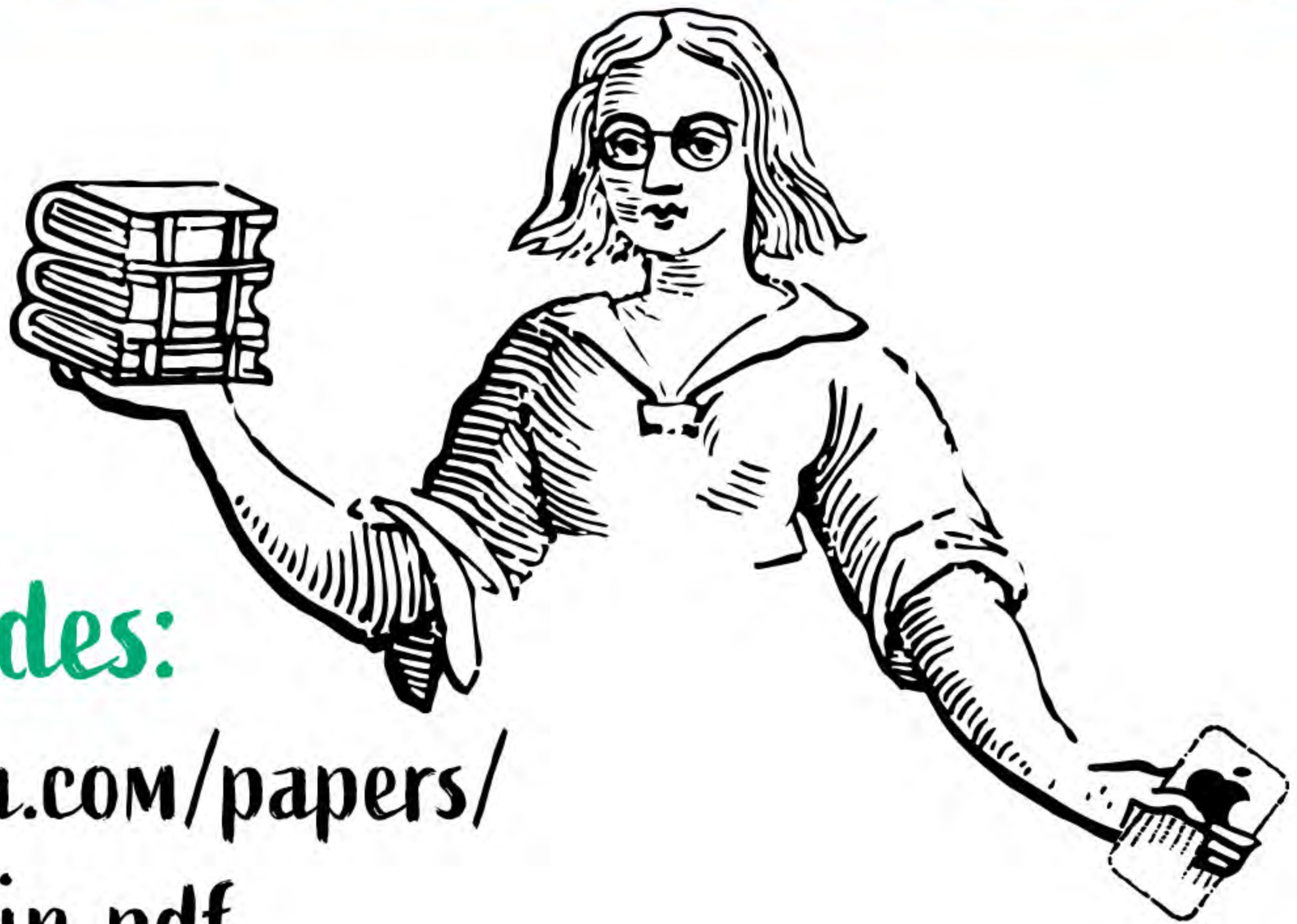




Prifysgol Abertawe
(Swansea University)

@LinguaCelta linguacelta.com

bytheway@linguacelta.com



plain slides:

[linguacelta.com/papers/
200923plain.pdf](http://linguacelta.com/papers/200923plain.pdf)

Disabled (adj.)

(of a person)

having a physical or mental condition that limits their movements, senses, or activities.



Disable (v.)

(of a disease, injury,
or accident)

limit (someone) in their
movements, senses, or activities.

(of an action or circumstance)

prevent or discourage (someone) from doing something.





Disability



Disability

Two illustrative examples

Bethan Tovey-Walsh

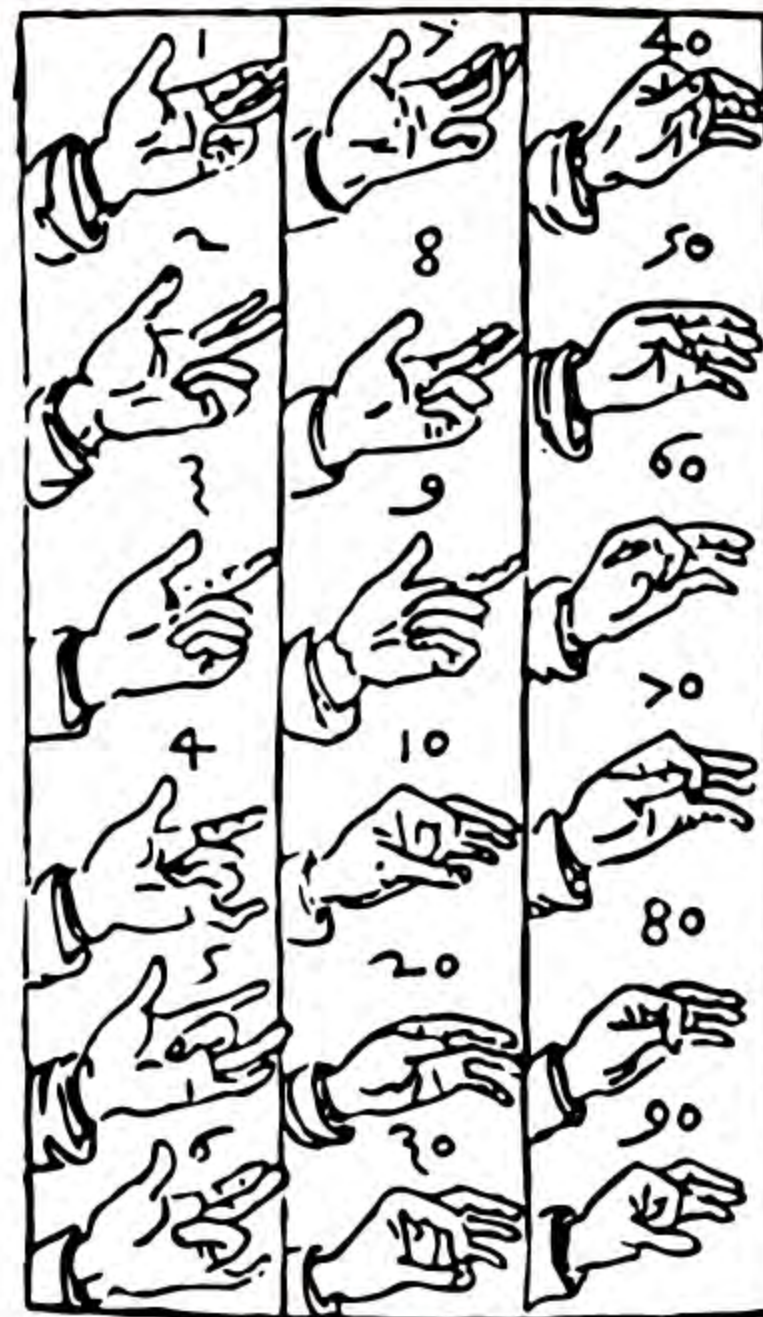


bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

"Sign language gloves"



Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



High-tech gloves translate sign language into spoken word

A phone app converts the signals from the glove

June 30, 2020 at 11:18 AM EDT - Updated June 30 at 11:18 AM

(CNN/Gray News) – Scientists at UCLA have developed a glove that translates sign language into speech in real-time.

The goal is to let deaf people communicate directly with anyone.

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

- 
- sign languages are all different
 - sign languages != just hand gestures
 - who benefits?

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

Myopia



Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Myopia is not a disability because it is easily correctable to the level of normal vision.

(U.S. Supreme Court ruling, 1999)

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Adults' eyeglasses were not covered by
Medicaid in 13 U.S. states in 2018.

<https://www.kff.org/medicaid/>

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



@linguacelta



In 2002, ~5 million U.S. adults at risk of vision loss could not afford eyeglasses when needed.

Zhang et al.,
Arch Ophthalmol. 2007;125(3):411-418

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

~108 million people globally had uncorrected distance vision impairment in 2013 - the leading cause of moderate and severe vision impairment (42%).

Bourne et al., Lancet Global Health 1:e339–e349

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



@linguacelta

Chrome File Edit View History Bookmarks People Tab Window Help

whova.com/portal/webapp/balls_202007/Agenda/1068994

Whova

Balisage: The Markup Conference 2020
Jul 24 - 31, 2020

Organizing your own event? Bethan Tovey-Walsh

Docugami

Sponsor level: Silver

MAIN NAVIGATION

- Home
- Agenda
- Attendees
- Community
- Sponsors
- Messages

RESOURCES

- Session Q&A
- Surveys
- Speakers
- Twitter
- WHOVA
- Feedback to Whova
- About Whova

Displaying agenda in your local time zone (4:36 PM) Switch to the event's time zone

Eliot Kimber

Unmute Start Video Participants 104 Share Screen Chat More Leave Meeting

Oak

High-Quality Microsoft Word documents from XML: The Wordinator

Mon, Jul 27, 2020 4:00 PM - 4:50 PM 19 Attending 1 Questions

Remove from Agenda Like session Rate Session

Many products make XML from Microsoft Word, but consider the reverse: making Word versions of your XML documents, thus using MS Word as an document composition engine. The Wordinator enables automatic creation of high-quality Word documents

Session Q&A Chat Community

Andrew Sales

proofing the Excel part of the spec was... fun

Laura Randall

Forced standardization, still standardization. Personally not going to complain about the why!!

Mary Holstege

There is always some kind of forcing business reason

Michael Kay

I've lost contact, is it just me?

Tom Hillman

Think so, Mike

(sorry)

David Turner

Phineas and Ferb...Dr. D always had "inators"

John Lumley

Eliot's last project will of course be the Terminator

Sheila Morrissey

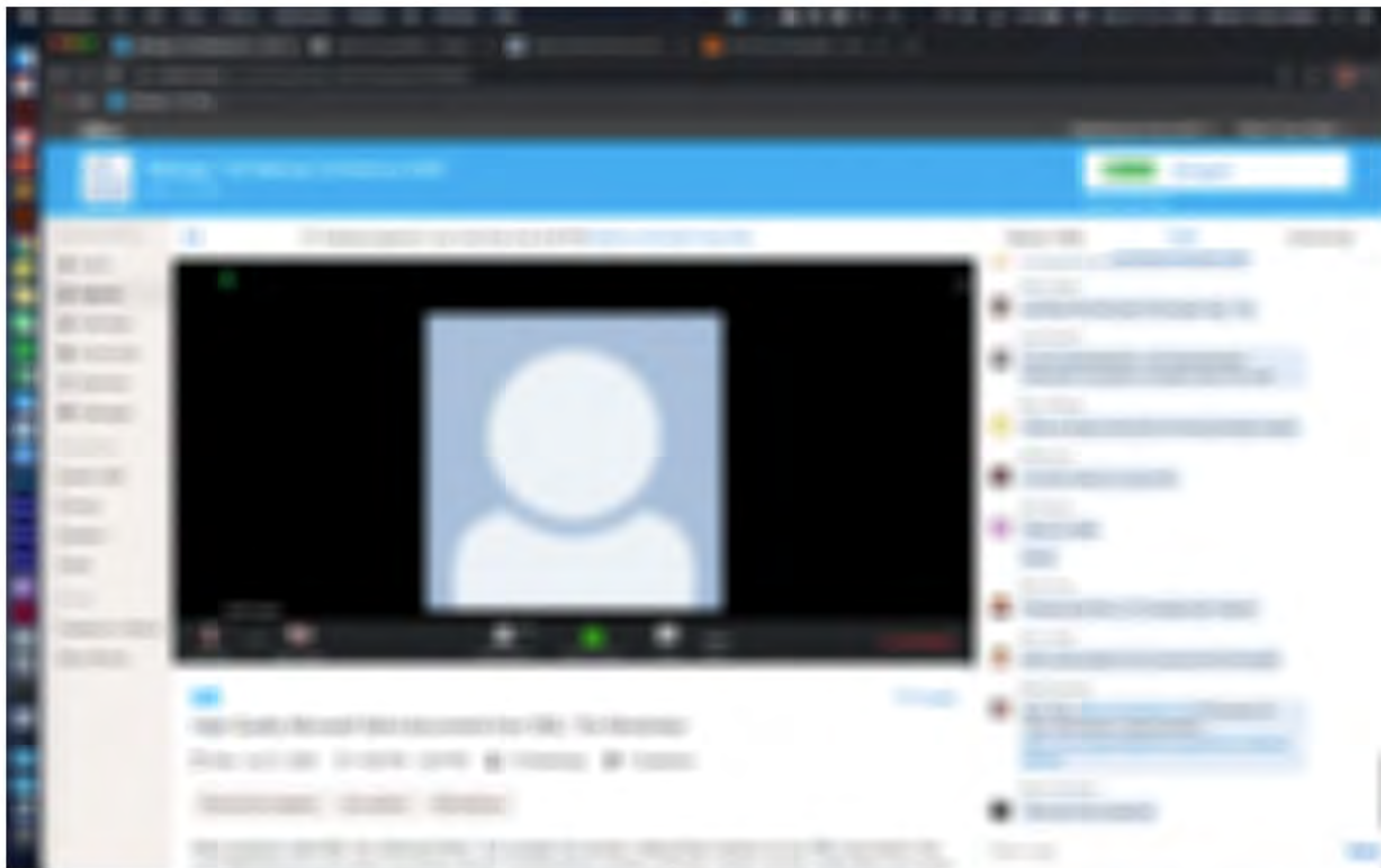
Syd: Syd: <https://poi.apache.org/> POI stands For "Poor Obfuscation Implementation". <https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/apache-poi-getting-started/>

Steven Pemberton

There are more questions

Write a reply Send

0 Likes





Disability

Legal problems

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

Common problems with legal definitions:

- ambiguous / contradictory
 - myopia is not legally a disability in the U.S., because it can be corrected
- most impairments that can be corrected with assistive devices are still legally disabilities

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

Common problems with legal definitions:

- ambiguous / contradictory
- rigid / conventional
 - in the U.K., drug addiction is not legally a disability
 - but addiction to prescribed drugs is legally a disability

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

Common problems with legal definitions:

- ambiguous / contradictory
- rigid / conventional
- motivated by political expediency
 - definitions (are designed to) allow gatekeeping of entitlement to support

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



@linguacelta

Common problems with legal models:

- ambiguous / contradictory
- rigid / conventional
- motivated by political expediency
- unilaterally produced

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

Social models

- focus on the context that produces disablement

Capability/Diversity models

- focus on the diversity of human embodiment
- focus on what is possible in the context

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

Disability

Impairment and disablement

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

Impairment

is a characteristic of the individual's body (including brain, cognition, senses, etc.)

Disability (or disablement)

is a process that results from impairment in context

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

What is disability?

Impairment interacting with context:

- physical or mental harm
- harm to dignity
- exclusion
- inequality
- denial of rights

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

Disability

Avoiding disablement

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

Approaches to avoiding disablement

- change the individual
 - doesn't scale
 - abdication of responsibility
 - denigrates disabled identity

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

Approaches to avoiding disablement

- change the individual
- change the individual's circumstances
 - doesn't scale
 - ignores systemic issues
 - tends towards idealization

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

Approaches to avoiding disablement

- change the individual
- change the individual's circumstances
- change attitudes
 - important
 - must be more than superficial
 - must be accompanied by practical measures

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



@linguacelta

Approaches to avoiding disablement

- change the individual
- change the individual's circumstances
- change attitudes
- **change social policy**
 - important
 - must include disabled people
 - must be enforced

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



@linguacelta

Approaches to avoiding disablement

- change the individual
- change the individual's circumstances
- change attitudes
- change social policy
- **change the environment**
 - we can do this!

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

TL;DR

- disablement arises in a variety of ways
- disablement is not a characteristic of individuals
- disablement is best defined by disabled people
(in collaboration with medical professionals
where necessary)

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

TL;DR

- disablement arises in a variety of ways
- disablement is not a characteristic of individuals
- disablement is best defined by disabled people
- we can reduce disablement by ensuring our outputs do not disable people

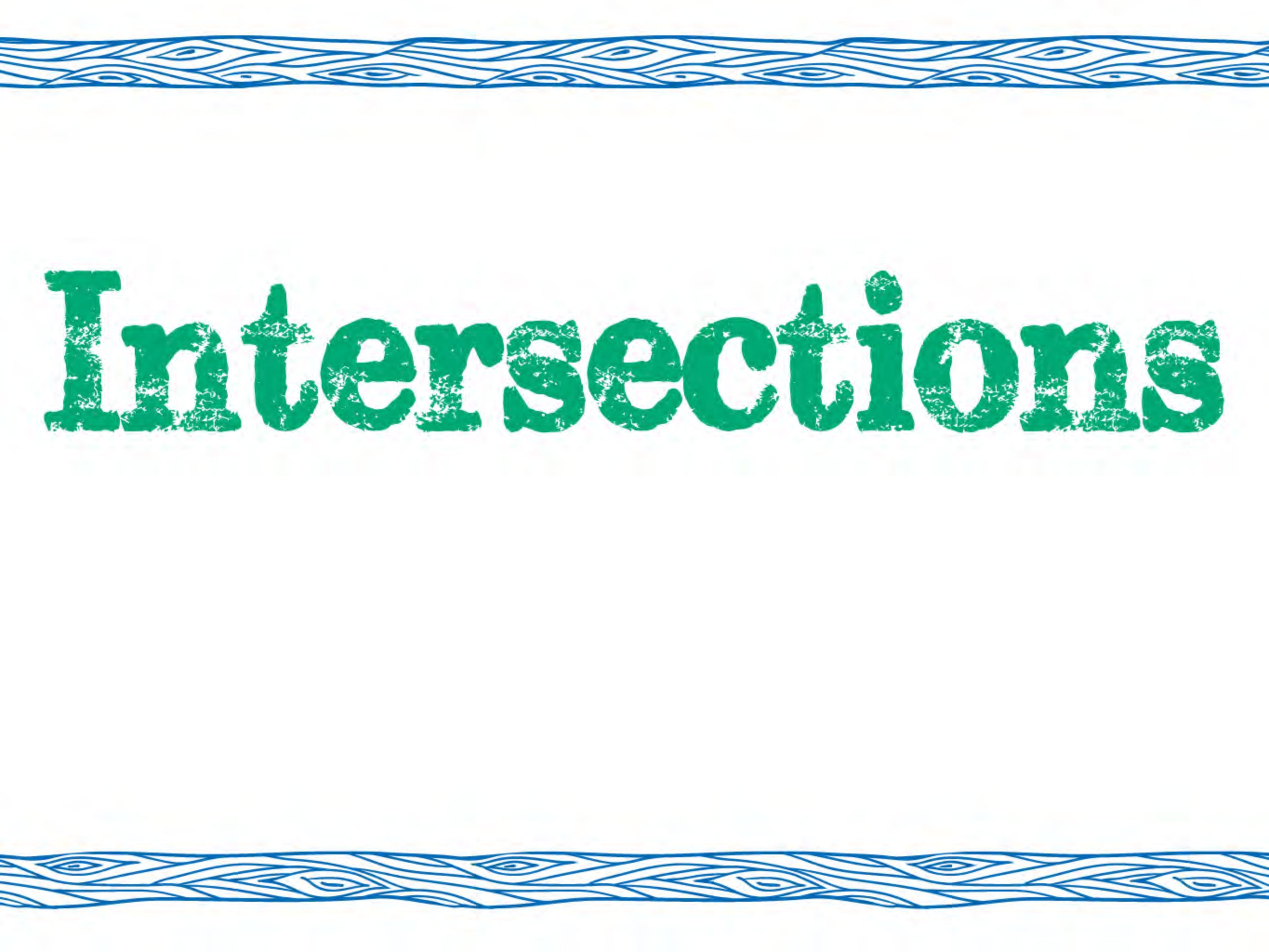
Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Intersections

Intersections

Disabled *people*

Bethan Tovey-Walsh  bethan@linguacelta.com  @linguacelta



Poverty

- medical care
- assistive device access
- housing
- food security
- mental health

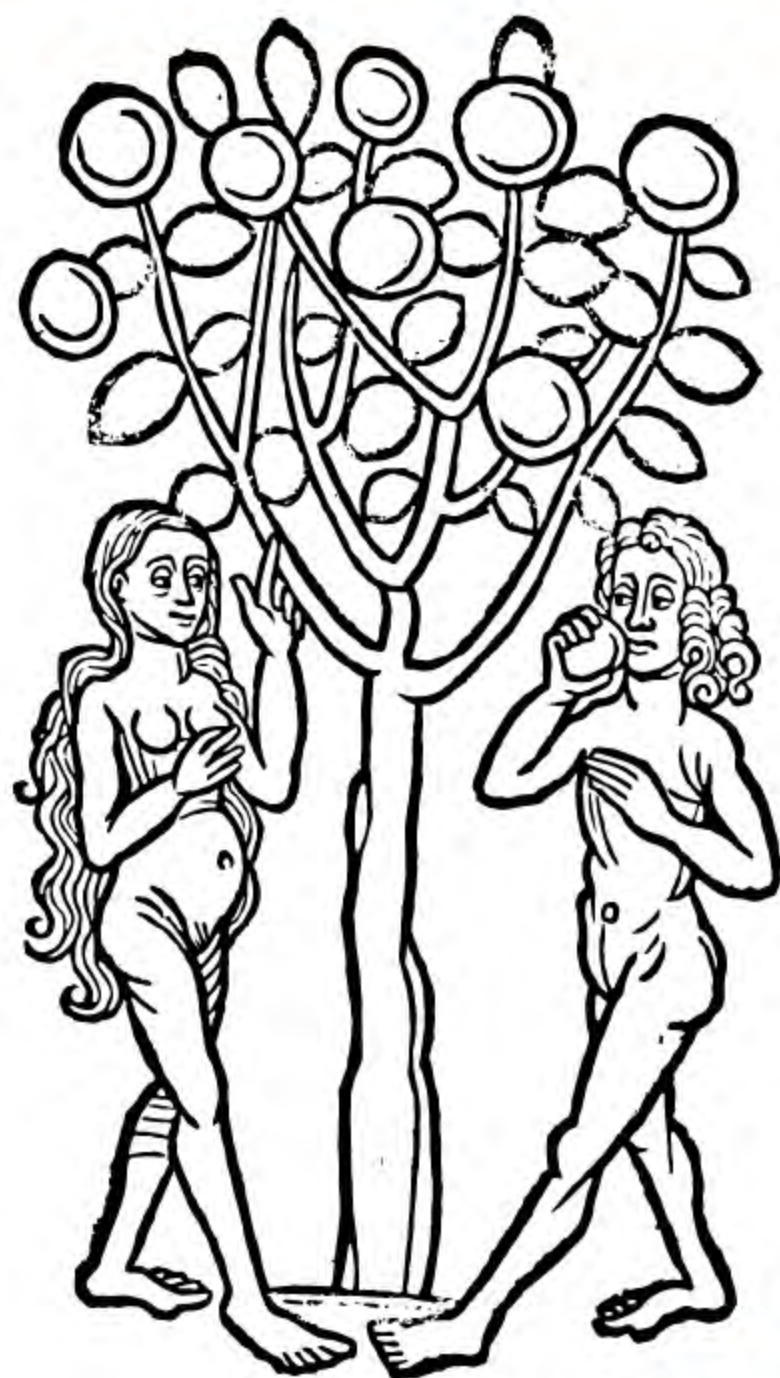
Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Sex & Gender

- work-related injury
- mental health
- menstruation
- pregnancy
- autonomy

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Language

- right to language
- education
- resource inequality

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Residence/Culture

- medical support
- security
- cultural attitudes
- religious requirements

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Race/Ethnicity

- representation
- design inclusivity
- impacts of racism
- medical myths

(h/t <https://medievalpoc.tumblr.com>)

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Accessibility





Accessibility

Environmental change

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Environmental change
- remove barriers

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Environmental change

- remove barriers

- increase affordances

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Environmental change

- remove barriers
- increase affordances
- offer choices

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Environmental change

- remove barriers
- increase affordances
- offer choices
- identify needs

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Environmental change

- remove barriers
- increase affordances
- offer choices
- identify needs
- **don't gatekeep**

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



listen to disabled people
hire disabled people

Bethan Tovey-Walsh

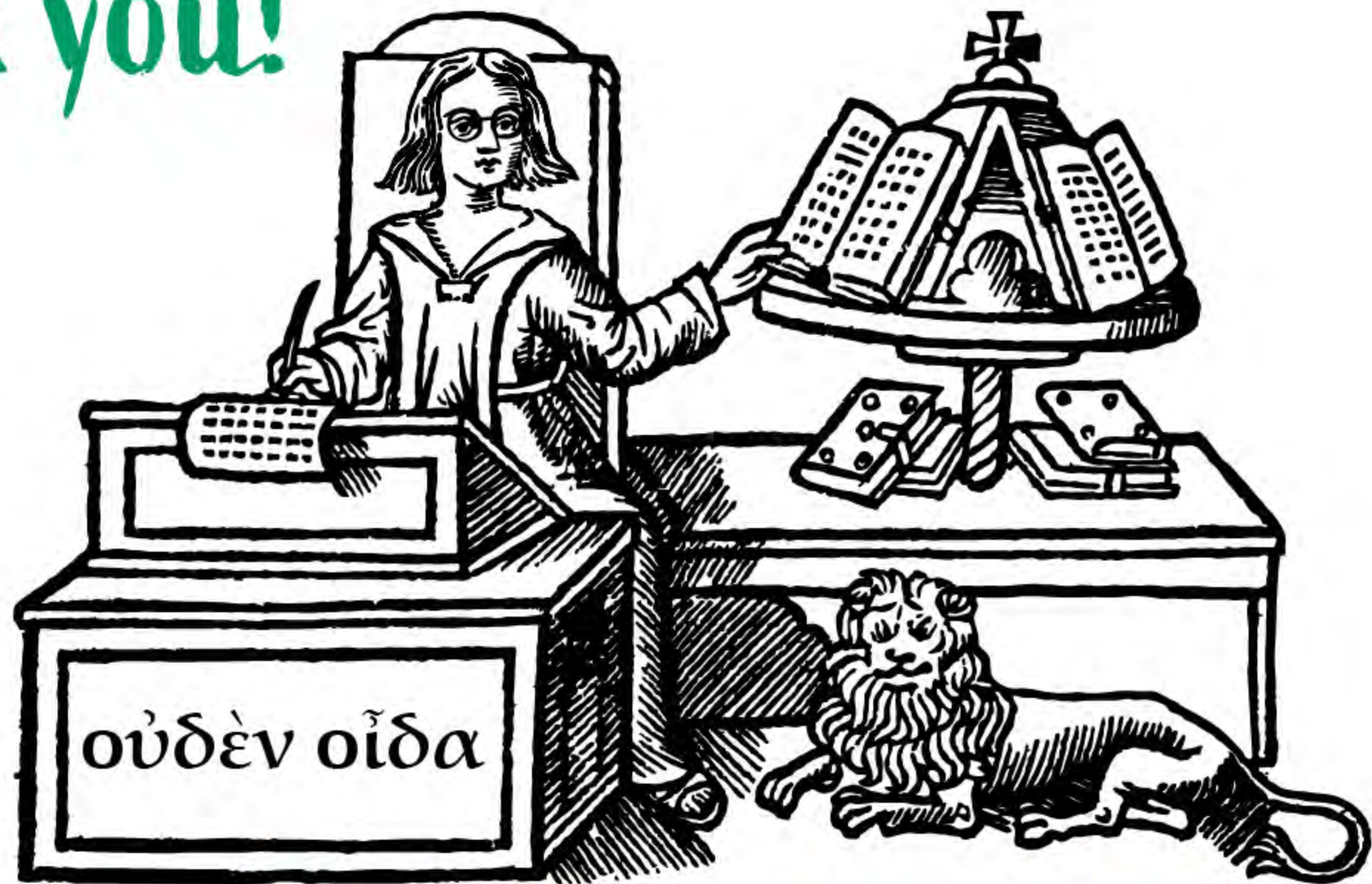


bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

Thank you!



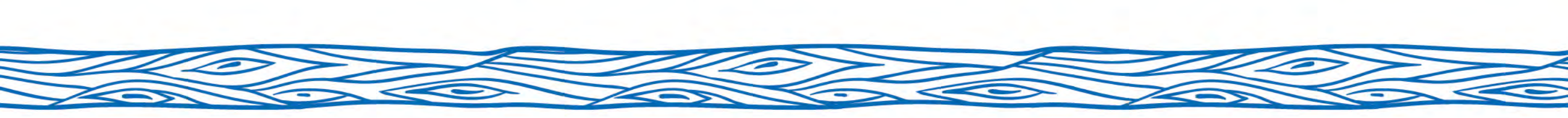
Bethan Tovey-Walsh



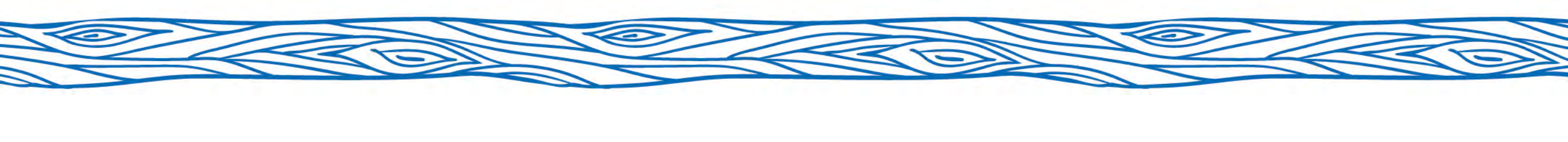
bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Accessibility





Accessibility

Environmental change

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Environmental change - remove barriers

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Environmental change

- remove barriers

- increase affordances

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Environmental change

- remove barriers
- increase affordances
- offer choices

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Environmental change

- remove barriers
- increase affordances
- offer choices
- **identify needs**

Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



Environmental change

- remove barriers
- increase affordances
- offer choices
- identify needs
- **don't gatekeep**

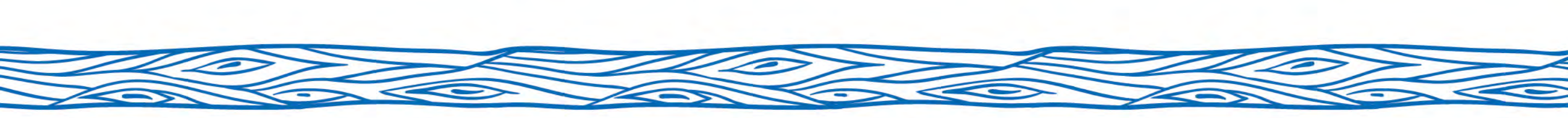
Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)



listen to disabled people
hire disabled people

Bethan Tovey-Walsh

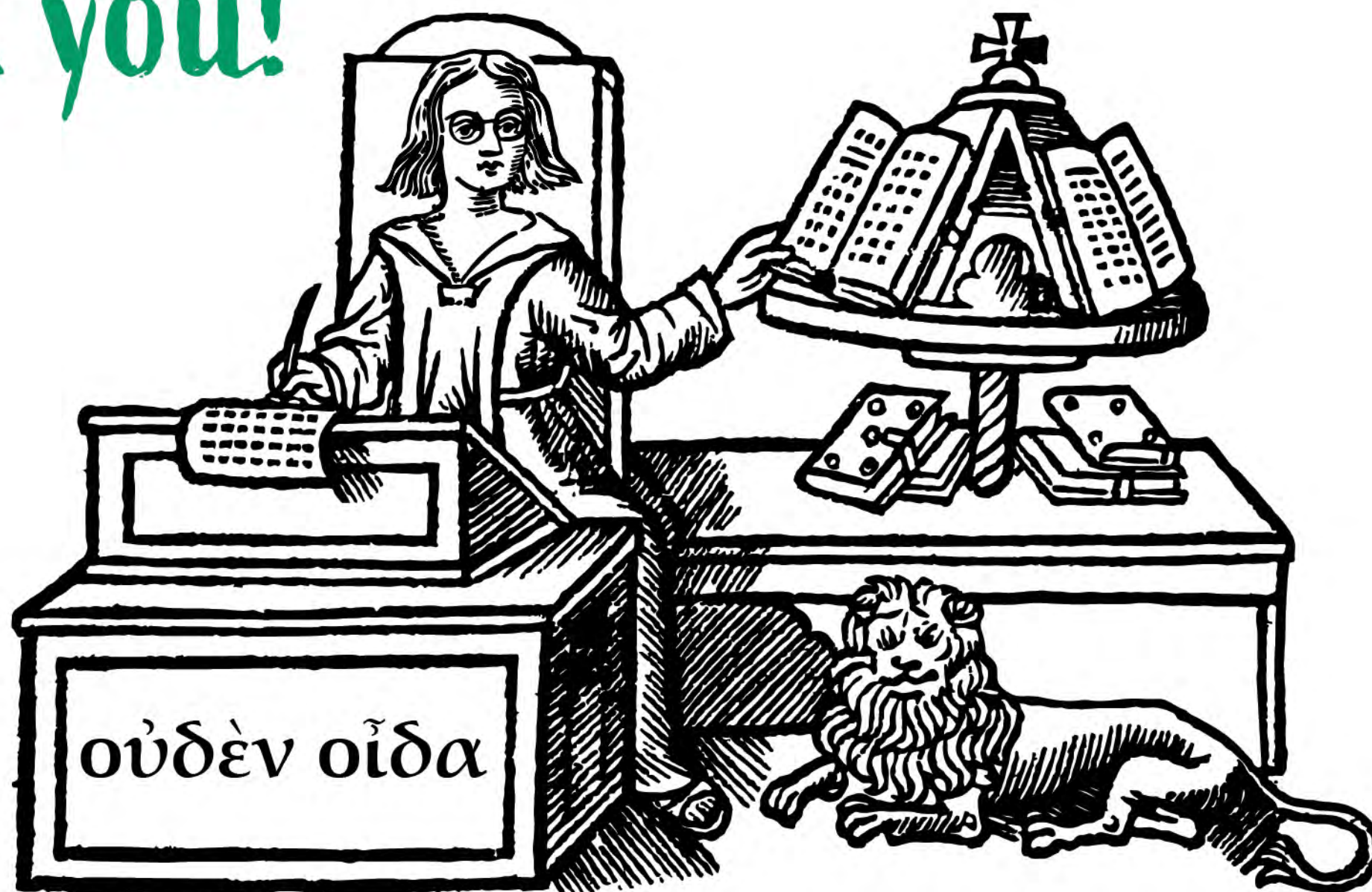


bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)

Thank you!



Bethan Tovey-Walsh



bethan@linguacelta.com



[@linguacelta](https://twitter.com/linguacelta)