IN CONVERSATION WITH JUAN OLARTE, AN ACCESSIBILITY ANALYST

Transcribed by: Adrienne Smith & David Widman - Humber College

[**VO:** Making Accessible Media: In Conversation with Juan Olarte, and Accessibility Analyst]

[**VO**: What is the AODA?]

JUAN: The AODA is legislation driven by the Ontario government to provide a more accessible Ontario for people with disabilities. [VO: AODA= Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act]

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities became law in 2005.

Depending on the size of your organization, the AODA mandates that you comply to specific versions, or specific standards to accessibility. So, if you're a small organization, you have from here until the year 2025 to comply with communications or, perhaps, with some building requirements. But if you have a big organization, you have to start complying on how to help your clients access your information, your websites, your buildings.

[**VO:** AODA compliance includes accessible communication both in print and digital as well as building requirements.]

But it goes beyond buildings. Simple things as providing an accessible menu for somebody who is blind, or somebody who wants to go to a website, or mobile up and be able to access that specific menu, or access any kind of information, they need to do it in an accessible way.

[**VO:** The goal of the AODA is to create equal access to information and services in Ontario.]

A barrier to accessibility is when somebody with a disability is still going to be able to have equal access to specific information. For instance, if somebody's watching a video while they're deaf, they're not going to be able to listen to the video.

When websites are not coded properly, many times, people who are blind or visually impaired, they rely on screen readers. If the website doesn't have the proper mark up, the screen reader is not going to be able to provide the information the person with a disability needs in order for them to comprehend the website.

[**VO:** The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) consists of 3 levels of compliance: A, AA, and AAA. Compliance deadlines and levels will be dependent on size and sector.]

When you start accessibility early on in the project, you're ensuring that your costs are not going to go through the roof. Because many times, when accessibility is added at the very end, you're going to have to go back to look into the design wasn't implemented properly, so, you're going to have to redesign a specific portion of the application, or development missed a specific functionality that could help people with different disabilities, so they have to redevelop something again. So, they're adding time, as well as money, to your project.

[**VO:** Inclusive design is considering accessibility through all the project stages.]

By the year 2025, companies and organizations should be fully accessible to everybody, and the way the Ontario government is doing it is implementing, developing and enforcing accessibility standards.

How do I feel about it? I mean, I think it's great just because, actually, it allows people with disabilities, like me, to provide or to contribute to society. I think that's the whole thing, making an accessible and inclusive Ontario for everybody, and wish for everybody to contribute and get the same information, or have the same rights.

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END OF VIDEO