2020 Kessler Foundation Grantee Symposium

Falling through the Cracks: Implications of AI on employments for individuals with disabilities.

*** Originally recorded on November 13, 2020.*** Listen to it here.

ELAINE KATZ: 00:00	**[SLIDE 1]**
	Welcome, everybody, to Falling through the Cracks: Implications of AI on employments for individuals with disabilities. First some housekeeping items. This webinar is being recorded. We'll post an archive of this webinar and transcript to the Kessler Foundation website. I thank to thank the University of New Hampshire and our partners in the production of national trends and disability employment and monthly job reports for providing our technical assistance for today's webinar. There are instructions on the screen to activate closed-captioning and adjust any sound changes. Our live sign language interpreter should appear on your screen. Please email us through the Q & A Box for any technical issues. Please also click on the Q & A Box to ask questions during the webinar. Questions may be answered during the webinar directly in the Q & A Box. Or maybe saved for a Q&A section after the end of the webinar. If you have questions following the webinar, please contact us at kfgrantprogram@kesslerfoundation.org.
	Again, welcome to our annual grantee symposium, our first virtual program. I'm Elaine Katz, Senior Vice President of grants and special initiatives at Kessler Foundation. Our grantee symposium is a yearly opportunity to bring together grantees and guests to hear from subject matter experts about key issues related to employment of individuals with disabilities. Now that the pandemic has given us a unique opportunity to bring this program online to a national audience, we hope it is the first of a series of thought provoking disability issues webinars.
	For those of you not familiar with Kessler Foundation, we changed the lives of people with disabilities through medical rehabilitation research, and funding employment initiatives for individuals with disabilities. Our rehabilitation research seeks to improve cognition and mobility for individuals with disabilities such as spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, and multiple sclerosis. We also look to improve daily functioning and promote independence by testing new interventions and gathering data that can be used in treatment.
	Our center for grantmaking has invested close to $49 million both in New Jersey and nationally. Our targeted grantmaking has supported new business venture, job development, job creation in various sectors across the United States. But most importantly, we're the leading funder of innovative approaches that can affect systematic changes by creating genuine economic opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

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Today's symposium is on the future of work and the influence of artificial intelligence on employment for individuals with disabilities.

Artificial intelligence or AI is not commonly a subject you hear discussed by professionals and mainstream disability organizations.

However, the use of automation continues to grow and influence employee recruitment and placement systems.

But all too often fails to reflect the rich cultural diversity and differences of our lives. Why is this topic so important to the Disability Community and its allies? Digital technology is increasingly central to employment training, placing, onboarding, and maintaining employment. This automation and digitization can create new technological and diversity disparities within our communities.

The COVID pandemic has simply accelerated the use of artificial intelligence and algorithm as the society fully embrace education and training and employment. We hope this symposium today will help you recognize what the future of work may look like, and the influence of AI on employment.

It will further lead you to better your understanding and preparation for the upcoming shifts in how we work, where we work, and the online systems facilitating these processes for employment.

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So we want to welcome our first speaker today who is going to be speaking on the future of work, setting the stage for employment and the evolution of corporate culture. Jonathan Kaufman is an innovative thought leader, business educator, and strategist who recognize the impact of personal development on organizational growth. Many may know him as an advocacy, advocate, rather, and a frequent contributor to Forbes.com online. Jonathan take it away.

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JONATHAN KAUFMAN : 05:03

Good afternoon, everyone. I'm glad to see you. Today, I want to sort of present a global look. And one of the most important things that sort of comes to mind is anyone who knows me is that I'm influenced by a ninth century philosopher by the name of Saya Gome. So anything you learned today or take from this seminar today is that I want you to ask questions.

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And so, that's where I will begin. And if we can have the next slide. So in the time that we have, I just want to focus on a few themes. And I'm going to sort of put my anthropologist hat on. And it's important to understand that the definition of a corporation has been changing drastically. And particularly in this time of COVID-19.

We're sort of going through a mail Strom and it seems to be a horrible time,yet, the nature of work has been changing at an accelerated rate. And we have an opening now for persons with disabilities to redefine themselves and redefine how they look within the world of work.

And no more is this sort of, I think, more applicable than in the area of remote work. And we have to see a place, and almost seize this moment to say we in the Disability Community can actually have a place and a moment, and have true value.

So it's really important in this time, and particularly for corporations themselves to say, okay, we understand and we have begun to understand the value proposition of employees with disabilities.

But now that we're sort of moving into this next phase where the nature of work is changing. Where we work, how we work, when we work is so important. And this provides a moment where persons with disabilities can have tremendous value, and almost create sort of a parody where this is a time when we can find our place in the world of work.

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So the questions that I have here, again, are so important. And when you go back to your organizations, you can certainly use these because it's important that you ask. So let's go to the next slide, because I think it's important that we discuss this.

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And so, as I begin to sort of talk about this, you know over the past decade, there's been a seismic shift. And it's important to put this into perspective.

So there was a study done by sort of Zion marketing research. And one of the things they talked about was that there is a true monumental change in the purchase, and particularly, the purchase and acquisition of adaptive technology. And whether we're talking about sort of low-tech to more high-tech, we just sort of become I think part of the process these days.

In 2015, the amount of money that was spent on adaptive tech reached about $14 billion. And right now, according to their studies, they say bye 2026, adaptive technology, the market itself will be anywhere between 26 and $31 billion. So if we understand the trajectory, the true trajectory of where adaptive tech is going, we only see it going upwards. And as we're seeing the world of COVID as being this accelerant, the technology has grown at a faster rate. And it's important that when companies think about their diversity and inclusion strategy, and they look at world of disability and employment of disabilities, understanding what do we need to think about? This is an area that I think will continue to grow and the value proposition of persons with disabilities will then continue to grow as well.

It sort of goes hand-in-hand. And it's important.

But I also want to step back for a moment and think about it, as I say, as a philosophical viewpoint. So you have two major organizations in the past, I'd say between 2018 and 2019. One here in the United States, which is the business Roundtable. As I write here in association of CEO's of America. But that is the landscape of economic forum. Between 2018 and 2019, they began to think

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about what is the purpose of a corporation? And how do we redefine a corporation? And each one of them, both the business Roundtable and the world of economic forum said we have to move beyond the idea of economist Milton Friedman's idea that company is truly about shareholder value. And expand it to understand that, no, companies are about their people. You know, I always think about my grandfather who was a business owner. And he used to say that the essence of business is about the people that work there. That makes the culture. So this business Roundtable and the world of economic forum, within the past, literally the past two years have redefined sort of the modern principles of what a corporation is. And

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here's a quote specifically from the business Roundtable which says "major employers are investing in their workers and communities because they know it is the way to be successful over the long-term. These modernized principles reflect the business communities unwavering commitment to push the economy that serves all Americans." The idea of highlighting sort of diversity and inclusion is fundamental. And when I sort of think about the Disability Community, one of the things I tell my clients, I tell my students, I tell anyone I can sort of at least will listen is that disability is the essence of diversity. It runs across race. Ethnicity. Gender. Social economics. Sexual orientation.

And it is the only minority group anyone can join at any time. It is the essence of diversity, and it is part truly, truly the human experience. So as we think about redefinition of a company, that is fundamental.

And I'll sort of even go another step. When we think about the definition of a corporation, we have to think about the disability narrative. Anybody who knows me and knows my work, I have been writing about this ad nauseam in the sense that for corporations to think about how they do business in the 21st century, it is essential that they understand that there is a new disability narrative that can help define management practice and essentially business practice for the 21st Century. They have to look at the disability experience and say, okay, how do we understand that disability offers a way for creative-thinking? New management practice. New ways to think about the world of work in general. I don't have enough time to sort of get into this sort of minutia of that, and I'm certainly happy to answer some of those questions.

But I think in terms of modernizing the principles of the 21st Century corporation, we have to look into the lived experience as a body of knowledge. Just as much as it is about the lived experience in terms of personhood and agency. And that's going to be really important when we sort of think about highlighting disability in the economy of the 21st Century.

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So COVID has been awful. We're sort of stuck in this mail Strom and we're all online here and many of us are stuck inside and we're heading into winter where there's going to be tremendous spikes and we're all seeing the numbers. But, but, what this silver lining of the COVID era has allowed us to witness is, it's sort of as Elaine talked about, it's been an accelerant. And it's been an accelerant for C-level executives, entrepreneurs, management, to say, okay, we're now forced to rethink the very nature of work and how we work.

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And at this point, we've seen that prior to COVID-19 and already begun to move away from centralized workspaces.

And now they're at a point where isn't wiggle room to say, we do this or we don't do this. We have to do this to survive. And it's really important, because this gives an opening for people with disabilities to be engaged in the process of work. As I've said before to be on par if they're given the tools. And it allows businesses to sort of say, oh, we can see disabilities, people with disabilities, rather, in all different types of roles if they're given the tools that allow them in.

So it's really important, too, when sort of when COVID is over here, but even in this moment to see what is the importance that remote work has provided for this community? And how do we understand this new relationship, as I've mentioned before, when we look at 21st Century understanding of a corporation, there has to be a fundamental change in terms of employee-employer relationship. And one of the models that I sort of go to is Reid Hoffman's idea. And he's a partner at Gray Lock partners and he wrote a Bach called "the alliance." And it's not a top-down relationship. It's actually a conversation. And one of the most important things we have to think about particularly now in the COVID era is the conversation between employees with disabilities as well as, well, that conversation with companies, and particularly, senior management within the company, C-level executives and say we need each other. And the relationship has to change. And I think it's important that we stress that relationship, because it changes tenor of the nature of work and the way we work and once we get past COVID, and we will get pass it because it's hard to think how long this will be. But we will have that moment where we cross that sort of Rubicon, and say we've passed this. And say, well, how has work changed? And what remains? What vestiges of the old model of work, this sort of current model work that we're utilizing during COVID? And what can we utilize in the work of the 21st Century in a decentralized environment. And we have to sort of look at this community as a way to be, in many ways, I think, can be a template, and can offer a template because change is such a key part. And having that agility is such a key part of the lived experience of disability, and this is so important. All right. If we can go to the next slide, that would be great.

[SLIDE 8]

Okay, so I asked this question. Where do we go from here? And again, COVID-19 has forced corporate culture to wrestle with new challenges. And I sort of explained some of those challenges, but, again, they're going to be challenges, and I think the big underlying one is sort of a decentralized, the idea of an office space has changed. The physical office space to a virtual office space. How are we going to wrestle with that? That's going to be really interesting.

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And second one is how employees with disabilities must redefine their perception and value?

Now, it isn't just about an understanding from sort of the corporate side, whether that's C-level executives, senior management on down. But it is incredibly important for employees with disabilities to take the reins. And one of the areas that I think that's vital in the process is Employee Resource Group. They have a moment now where they can take a leadership approach to how they envision themselves within the context of corporate life, as well as D&I professionals, diversity & inclusion professionals, and even talent management professionals. But I think it's important and that persons with disabilities, particularly persons with any disabilities in any company say how do we want to be seen? How do we want to be viewed? And also the value proposition that we can provide to the organization we work in.

And so these are questions that we'll sort of continue to be something that needs to be magnified, and clarified, and cultivated as going forward.

The third one here is corporate leadership can use this moment to see the importance of the lived experience of disability as a tool for culture and reinvention in this new digital economy.

I go back to the idea that the disability experience can be monumental in reshaping how corporate culture evolves. And, one, you have to see it as this experience offers a body of knowledge, whether it's how do you link it to an idea of creative-thinking?

How do you link it to an evolution of new products and services and marketplace? You can link it to the idea that now you have a whole new talent pool that needs to be considered.

And, again, I can go into this in more detail, but I'm just giving you the ten thousand foot view. It's important to understand that we are now at a true inflection point. Technology allows tremendous freedom. But, again, I go back to this idea that the access to the types of technologies, and this sort of adaptive technology, we understand it as I've mentioned before the marketplace. But now it's the application. Application, my doctoral thesis advisory used to say, application, application, application. So it's critical that we think about what are the next steps in terms of application of the disability experience within the corporate milieu and how do we do that? That, I think is going to be absolutely fundamental. I think we have another slide?

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[SLIDE 9]

KATZ: 23:43   No, that's the last slide.

KAUFMAN: 23:44   That is it.

KATZ: 23:44   Jonathan provides a perfect segue into Betsy's presentation. So Betsy, so we've set the stage for you in the future and what it may look like in this COVID pandemic. And Betsy is going to talk about are people with disabilities Falling through the Cracks. Betsy is the CEO of Benetech a non-profit that empowers communities and software for social goods in education, poverty alleviation, and human rights. Betsy focused on innovating around the immense potential of technology to drive inclusion, equity, and justice to positively impact marginalized communities across the globe. Betsy, welcome to our symposium.

[SLIDE 10]

BETSY BEAUMON: 24:32   Thanks so much, Elaine, and it's great to hear Jonathan talk about possibilities and Elaine's introduction of me, you can tell that's how I spend most of my focus. At the same time, I'm an engineer. We're technology people. And we're using AI and other technologies every day on the positive side. But I'm going to focus a bit today on how people with disabilities today are Falling through the Cracks because of some of these same really promising technologies. So if you go to the next slide.

[SLIDE 11]

So first message is AI is here now... and it's everywhere. So people think about AI as something in the future. And I'll say AI is artificial intelligence. I'm going to shorthand that a lot during this presentation.

This slide is something called the AI 100. It's one version of many groups who are saying by different businesses what are some of the up-and-coming leaders in AI software? The main point of it is that whether you're talking about agriculture, auto, government, media, legal, or human resources, AI is here. It's prevalent, and it's being used very regularly. If I were to start with a story, you know, you may think about where is it used and where do I see it? If you see any self-driving cars, if you use any home assistant that you talk to, which I can't even say out

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loud because it will answer me. And you see it in other ways that might be harder to realize. I use a lot of Microsoft Office products. And recently, my Microsoft to do had a new item in my to-do list that I didn't put in there. And my human assistant didn't put in there. I realized that it automatically put it in there based on the wording in one of the emails I received. It knew, and it was right, by the way, that I had an action on that email. And it was starting to be able to say, hey, we can actually be your assistant. And that's all because of artificial intelligence.

It's very good at making decisions with lots of data. And there are different elements that I'm not going to make this a technical discussion about machine learning and machine vision and stuff. But suffice it to say that AI is very good at recognizing patterns, in data, in pictures, and lots of different areas that it can crunch.

And that's where people talk about employment and some of the challenges where AI, is it coming for our jobs? Well, it is coming for some. Things like x-ray technicians or if you're interpreting MRI, actually machines can do that very well. If there's enough data about lots of MRIs, then it can compare those and say, ah, here's how this one fits. And it's not perfect by any means. But it will keep learning. That's what is really interesting and why it's sort of called artificial intelligence. It's because it actually learns as it goes. I'll talk about later how that can bring some problems, because if it keeps learning from data, is it learning the wrong lessons in some cases? So why don't we advance the slide.

[SLIDE 12]

So much of what I'll focus on today, given what much of you do is talk aboutreally how that manifests in human resources and recruiting kinds of areas for people with disabilities.

So first, how is AI showing up in the recruiting world? Really, everywhere again. So if you just look at sourcing, screening, and onboarding as three key areas, it is already being used in sourcing resumes. In looking at candidate profiles, you know, basically, again, sifting through large sets of data that exist. Applicant tracking system or other online databases. And basically, saying okay, you are looking for certain characteristics, how do those characteristics map to jobs?

The other area is screening. So, okay, we can crunch through bunch of the data. Now how do you pick candidates? So really looking at a set of evaluation criteria, and then evaluating the

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candidates, but then evaluating the actual candidates through things like video screening. And we're going to talk about that a bunch, because that's a huge issue for people with disabilities.

Again, great that you don't have to maybe go into an office and whole other set of interviews, but what is it that machine is looking for? And do your candidates have it is where we're going to come down on a lot of these questions.

And finally, onboarding. You know, there's some real benefits to human resources department if policies, documents, you know, having lots of resources for new employee to be able to, yeah, they're using a lot of chat bots. And if you have a question and we don't have time to shadow them so let's give them a place to ask these questions. Some of them, you can imagine in recruiting this is very helpful, because there's a lot of data volume to deal with and matching to deal with that's important. And on the slide, I'm showing a few examples. And this is just a few examples of tools. Things like eight fold.ai. Fetcher. You have number of tools in the screening area. And again, I'm showing a few like my interview. HireVue. And there's a whole bunch of screening tool and some on the onboarding area like my ally or keo. And this is a tiny snapshot of tools that exist. So advance the slide.

[SLIDE 13]

So I ended up as I was looking around out there saying, how have things advanced since I last dove into this area? One of the companies that came up a bunch, and it's not surprising because share big is McDonalds. So just as kind of an overview to give you an idea of how a large company is currently like deep in this area, McDonald is using or tried, writing or recruiting email with something calledtextio and they said we want to remove gender bias language in our actual job posting so that it's going to attract more women.

You can see again, there were some really good reasons that people have for trying to use these tools. They also do candidate screening. So they've actually pulled in a few different tools in that area, something called paradox that does natural language processing. So this means I can talk to a machine, and it canactually screen me and the machine would help crank through that. Something called talk push, which is kind of like a text messagey sort of thing. And they can also be voice, and you would actually have a conversation with a machine. It may be all ready, and it will certainly get to where you won't know you're having a conversation with a machine. You can actually think it's a human.

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Begin a job application by voice. So if you have an Alexa, Google Home, they want to make it really easy for somebody to just say, "Alexa, start my job application at McDonalds." So you can see a lot of advantages for job-seekers. This is where we see things get trickier so, if you actually say they're going to put employees through a video game like assessment, to see if they're suited to be an employee, that is going to work really well for some people and really not so well for others. And video interviews, McDonald's is again down the path with" my interview I where it would be like now, staring at a camera and am I engaged with the camera? How am I relating, again, we're going to get to thinking through what that looks like for somebody with a disability.

The part I'm not talking a lot about, but of course McDonald's is a group doing a lot of this is how can they use machines and artificial intelligence to essentially replace what some humans are doing now? Most companies will say, it is about augmenting, and I think often it is, right? You can actually get lots more cars through the drive-thru if you had machines doing part of it. McDonald's is looking at showing menus differently based on the weather, the time of day. So why bother showing the breakfast menu first if it's ten at night? Someone could get the breakfast menu, but maybe that's not the first thing they want to see.

Could the drive-thru or the whole store become 100% AI-driven? Maybe. It wouldn't be great human contact, but you can reduce the number of humans. So that's my prognosticating. Something they're not doing to my knowledge, but something to keep in mind that, again, these technologies are great and are real. So next slide.

[SLIDE 14]

So I've already kind of tipped my hat here a little bit where things can go wrong in that. And particularly, where they can go wrong is with anybody who's not in the kind of center norm of sort of curve of data.

So the key thing about artificial intelligence is data. I always say AI eats data for lunch. So you don't get an algorithm that does whiz banging things out the other side and it doesn't have data it's learning from.

So what and who is in that data is the big question. And I think what we know as a field globally today is people with disabilities are really poorly represented in datasets, definitely in the employment sector for reasons most of you know. And, really, across-the-board. So that

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means, again, the food that these machines are eating doesn't actually have that nutrient in it. So it's a bit of garbage in and garbage out. So companies think we have great dataset of past employees that have been successful at the company. And if none of them are people with disabilities, that's just missing. So that's a real issue. And what about the developers? Who's developing these algorithms? To a great degree, the machine is actually learning a lot on its own, but it's guided by who is on the development team and certainly who's on the testing team.

Are they even thinking about people with disabilities? What we find mostly when people talk about diversity & inclusion initiatives, like Jonathan mentioned, they're mostly talking about race and gender, and not so much disability. So, again, even when a company is being very progressive and doing a great job of having their D&I initiatives influence their technology development or on the other side, technology purchases, this whole area may be missing.

And then finally, it's back to that technology purchases. The customers. Soif I'm in human resource department, and I'm buying some of these tools, do Iactually know what they're doing? Do I actually know if they are including people with disabilities? If they're including women? Do I ask? If I ask, do I get an answer? And does the developer fully know? And that's what we have found to be a little disconcerting is that some of the developers will either say it's black box and we can't tell you. Or they will just sort of throw up their hands a bit and say, you know, it is what it is. Or I don't really know. So next slide.

[SLIDE 15]

So let's talk about, again, the recruiting piece specifically. So sourcing. Will your candidates' profile match the data of past employees? Maybe. But maybe not. If you're trying to get somebody in a company that doesn't have a strong past of employing of people in wheelchairs, or people who are blind, are they actually there?

And they're not, then those algorithms are not going to be looking for your clients. They're going to be looking for other people that kind of fit that norm center of who they've had before. At the top of the screen, this is actually aheadline, a news headline that this is from a few years ago. Amazon scrapped at the time of secret AI recruiting tool that showed bias against women. That got bighead lines, because basically, the software they were using ranked certain words, phrasing and certain activities higher or lower based on language. So what it turned out, a lot of this was looking at masculine language usage and women were getting pushed to the side. So you can imagine where that goes when talking about actual activities

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and things. If they're looking for sports or something like that, because their best salespeople have played water polo, that's an issue. And again, they may not even be doing it on purpose.

It may be this is great, it's eliminating bias because people are out of the equation. Well, they're not, because data is what's driving it. On the screening side, this has gotten the most attention in the Disability Community. If I'm here in front of a video camera, which I agree with Jonathan. I think people with disabilities will be getting more used to doing, but that still doesn't mean if I'm blind or if I'm on the autism spectrum that I am necessarily engaging with that camera in a way that the machine would believe is positive based on the dataset it's using.

And then there's also this speech recognition. I mentioned some of these tools are literally to have a conversation. And if someone's speech is harder to recognize, or again, doesn't match the way that system was trained to listen, that will be a problem. And this has been an issue already shown up with people with different accents. And, again, different speech patterns. So somebody who's Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing may have a really hard time getting past an interview if that's the step they have to go through.

And onboarding, I think there's more advantages in some of these areas than others. But at the same time, wow, if the on boarding is essentially like a video game, how does that work for everyone? And is that video game being essentially tested on people with disabilities, or some of the people in the development group saying wait a minute, if you have it work like this, it's going to be very inaccessible. And if it's a text chat bot or voice, again, there may be actual advantages for some people with disabilities, and there's going to be disadvantages for lots of others. So next slide.

[SLIDE 16]

What should we do about it? Well, and other headline is: Bias in AI, a problem recognized but still unresolved. So there's still a lot of work to be done. One is inclusive data. So I talked a lot about the data. So one area we're working on, and number of others are is how do we make sure people with disabilities are in the dataset? And I'm thinking this whole field needs to be thinking about this and saying, well, maybe some of the people listening to this webinar can actually help with that.

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Maybe there's a way to make sure datasets we have that show robust performance by people with disabilities in various kinds of jobs can find its way into some of the datasets used to train these systems?

Inclusive development teams I've mentioned number of times. People with disabilities need to be developers and testers. If that industry and group of industry should be representative of the world that we're trying to get into jobs. So, again, I think a lot of times, there's pains being taken now on diversity & inclusion and race and gender but not so much in disability. Many of you getting a seat at the table and working with employers to think hard about what platforms they're adopting and what the downside could be. All of that together, doing all of that will lead to inclusive algorithms. And OneNote on some of these algorithms, some of the companies I showed time metrics on there. They've actual m come out and said they have an Open Source algorithm auditing tool. So they're actually being more open and transparent. You can see if our algorithm is being discriminatory or not. And that kind of move is really, really important. There'ssome potential legal things around that. Europe has already taken big moves in algorithmic transparency but U.S. has not talked about it yet. First thing is recognizing AI is here and it's real and we have to deal with it and second thing is where along the line can we fix some things rather than just throw up our hands? And I think it is quite fixable. So together, we can get the benefits of AI well supporting the people with disabilities around the world who need these things to include them. So thank you! Be.

[SLIDE 17]

KATZ: 45:22

You can see Betsy's information on the screen if any of you have some follow-up questions. We're going to open it up for questions now. I'm going to ask Jonathan to turn back his video and audio.

[SLIDE 18]

We have questions in the chat box which first one may be for Jonathan, but you both can have a shot at it. "I'm worried that corporate leadership might take wrong lessons from COVID, as far as accommodating people with disabilities might be considered. And as a work from home accommodation measure which may not work for many people with disabilities. Please disburse me of this cynicism."

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KAUFMAN: 02:57   This is interesting perspective. And I would say the potential is there. However, I think it is important to show. And this is why I say the conversation is so necessary. That people with within the community, as well as ERG groups and people specifically in D&I to show the proposition. That is where the conversationhas to begin.

So as we come out of COVID, and I know we're not quite there yet. This conversation has to start happening now.

If it begins now, and I think if people within the community are vocal and say, here's what we can provide. Here's what this sort of decentralized moment has allowed us to do, and has allowed us to be more productive, and has allowed us to be engaged in the experience of working for an organization and increased productivity. That, I think, can temper some of the fears.

Now, again, I have to say this conversation has to happen now. And I am having this conversation literally with companies all over the place. So I think that is critical. I haven't seen cynicism yet but we'll try.

KATZ: 47:07   I think it's important to have this conversation both if you're helping people on the side of practitioners help people seek employers or one of those who may be working, or the employer side or demand to work with employers to keep diversity & inclusion in the discussion. So I want to try to get to the next question. This is Vidya Sundar. I heard that some large warehousing companies screen using automated phone calls, which may negatively impact people with hearing impairments. Do you know any solutions that can circumvent these calls?

BEAUMON: 48:34   I think this goes back to the stuff I said about people need to raise up and say that's not okay. Like we have to make sure there is that ability with hearing impairment to interact with the system. Certainly, there are the kinds of solutions that help somebody with a hearing impairment, communicate on a phone call. SoI think it's making sure that the employers, again, using these tools really understand that they're actually discriminating when they do that.

And that, yes, there are some technology solutions to make it easier for somebody with a hearing impairment on a phone call. But either, you have to go around that technology so that they're not required to use that particular screening tool. Which, again, could lead to concerns

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about discrimination itself. Or just say, like, these got to get out of the system until there's a full end-to-end ability for all people to use it. Umm-hmm.

KATZ: 49:43

I just want to follow-up on that question, because one of the questions I had, if you're a person with a disability representing a person with a disability. And you find you're facing this AI, how do you recommend? Or how do you recommend to deal with it to try to still get that job interview or get into that company?

BEAUMON: 04:50

Again, it is so tricky because it is so under recognized. There are number of organizations who are working on more inclusive AI and it kind of gets to one of the questions later. Most of these now are currently in the academic and non-profit world. There's a group Center for Group and Technology that look at examining what is being done by creators of the technology to at least say like you guys are un here's where you need help. There's a group out of UC Berkeley and inclusive AI, but their inclusion is almost entirely women and racial minorities at this point. So I think at the large end, it's a growing concern.

Groups like Microsoft actually are pushing really hard to fund more groups to get on top of this so there's a big movement.

As an actual individual and getting into a specific company, I think it's back to saying like this is discriminatory. I'm sorry to say that there probably needs to be some more lawsuits or legal action if employers continue to use these tools.

I think, again, I'll caution to say I don't actually think employers know they're discriminating. They're adopting tool they don't understand either. And so I think the first step is awareness, and to squawk about it, frankly, and then if they don't fix it, then there may have to be legal remedies. And that's, you know, not my area of expertise but there are some people who's area of expertise it is.

KATZ: 52:05

I know a lot of people who are listening to this who are not placing people incorporations or dealing with large companies so, I'm going to ask both of you this question. Jonathan, how do you look at the future work and some of the issues that have come up working virtual when you're dealing with a small business? It may be family-owned business, or smaller employer? What are your thoughts on this?

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KAUFMAN: 52:32   Well, one of the areas that is sort of ripe in terms of disability, and particularly in the future of work is entrepreneurship. And I think the development of small companies, and with the advent of these platforms that you can sell direct to consumers or other platforms, like Etsy for example. So the ability to sort of say, okay, we can take the reins into our own hand and guides are there. But I think as far as smaller companies, it's still slow in time. And there is the elephant in the room which is still there which is the "F" word. Fear. Those are the vestiges of the past. And that we sort of have to begin to get over and I go back to this idea that Reid Hoffman has and the idea of conversation. As I've said before, there is an element of human connection and how we think about connecting with each other and understanding one another. And while some people may think of that as sort of pop psychology, it's so true. And we need to be able to understand relevance. We need to understand value.

So I think that's where it begins. And as I've said before, indulge me. The question is often more important than the answer. And you have to begin with the question in order to find the best solution.

KATZ: 54:16   Betsy, you may have thoughts but I want to wrap in other questions too. When you're working with some of the small companies or the larger companies, how do you, there's a question about unconscious bias and how does that fit into the discussion about AI trying to, you know, take that out of the equation, and also somebody is asking for some examples of companies that have really done well with inclusive algorithms?

BEAUMON: 54:46   Yeah, there's some really good and hard questions in this one. I think quickly, the smaller companies, you're less likely to run into AI as much right now. Right? It's often been the larger companies because of the volume kind of questions. But it's coming. And some smaller companies are using these tools as well.

There's also the fact that they may just be using kind of tools that they see as run-of-the-mill tools that happen to have more AI in the back-end. So I think it's coming to smaller companies even if it's not as prevalent there today.

Unconscious bias, there was a thought, and there are still people who will say because these are machines, they don't have unconscious bias. But, again, all of the data and all of the unconscious bias of the developers is all in there. So it's true. It may not be my unconscious bias as a recruiter. But it's unconscious bias built over years. And unconscious builds up in some ways based on our life experience. So if the data represents the life experience of you know bunch of recruiters and bunch of companies that don't employee people with disabilities,

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it's still going to come out the same way. And the problem is with AI, and with most technologies, it then becomes harder to figure it out, because you can't just say, oh, Betsy shouldn't really be interviewing that person because of x. Or we should have 5 people interviewing because of unconscious bias. Now it's just locked in thing that people assume it's right. And I don't actually know of great examples that have fully addressed this.

I think what's been happening is there's been a lot of identification of the problem. That's good. In the last couple of years, people are starting to go, ooh, that's not so good. Where they've made great strides, I don't know of any great big examples of companies that have beat this down. And again, I think some of it has to do with the data simply aren't there. You know, one of the areas I worry about the most is people with disabilities have to have a voice. And that voice through this case is data.

KATZ: 57:08   I think we're going to end it with people with disabilities need to have a voice and it has to be through data. I want to thank everybody for participating in the webinar. I'm sorry we didn't get to all the questions. We're can try to answer few of them. But I think we covered a lot of the major issues that are there and hopefully this is the first for Kessler Foundation virtual symposium and we'll be able to offer number of ones on topics of interest as we go forward next year. So have a good day, everybody and thank you for joining us.