Accessible media is important for many reasons. First, it’s important because it means more people can experience the media you create. If captions are added to a video, people with hearing impairments can experience it. Captions also allow people who can hear to better understand the video, as making media accessible benefits everybody. As a media maker, I want what I create to be experienced by as many people as possible. Media is important to culture and society, and a person with disabilities should not be excluded from experiencing it. Making content accessible becomes second nature once you are aware of it. Now that I understand the importance of alt-text on images, all my social media posts include alt-text and image descriptions so a wider audience can experience my content, and so my friends who use screen-readers are not excluded. Adding accessibility features into media will not take away from the experience, it will only add to it by having more people able to experience it.

Representation of disability in media means making disabled characters, hiring disabled actors, having disabled producers and crew, and making the content accessible to disabled people. Disabled characters should not fall into the offensive stereotypes that disabled characters often fall under. When disabled people are involved in the production of media, there will be more accurate representations of disabilities within the disabled characters. When the representations are accurate, some of society’s attitudes towards disabilities will change.  No content should be made about disabilities without having a disabled person involved in the process.

Due to stereotypes in media, people with disabilities may experience attitudinal barriers from people whose only experience with disabled people comes from these stereotypes. People with disabilities may not be able to experience a viral video because it doesn’t have captions or described video, or they may not be able to attend a concert with their friends because the venue isn’t accessible with a wheelchair. By being aware of these barriers and knowing what to do to break them, these barriers can become less of a problem. By making accessibility the first step of production, it becomes ingrained in every part of the project. By asking yourself, “Is it accessible?” when creating media, accessibility is no longer an afterthought.

In conclusion, accessibility is an integral part of media. If what you create isn’t accessible yet, then it’s simply incomplete.