What does it take to integrate access at live events? A discussion of proactive approaches to access in this diverse setting

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ABSTRACT

Access issues have long been addressed reactively, with subtitling or audio description forming an additional layer to what many consider a *final/finished product*. As the need for access has become more widely recognised, discussions about access have begun earlier and the very idea that audiovisual products without access might be considered complete is being challenged. Filmmaking and live performance provide examples where access provision is integrated into the production process, yet the question of integrated access at events has not been discussed as fully within media accessibility. In this article, I explore what integrated access at events might look like and consider what a proactive approach involves as we step away from purely media access modalities into the need to embed that access into a more dynamic and participatory setting. After examining what we learn from integrated access in other areas, I focus on peculiarities of the event setting that must be accounted for. I draw on research into respeaking at events which acts as a signpost towards a more integrated approach, and explore guidelines on accessibility and advances in critical event studies to further expand the view. I conclude with a possible framework for supporting proactive access provision.

KEYWORDS

Accessibility, integrated access, proactive approaches, user-centred, respeaking, live events, inclusion, participatory engagement.

1. Introduction

The three shifts in accessibility studies that have become the centre of much recent debate (Greco 2018) have made us question the very way that we approach research into the provision of access. Who is access for? Where does expertise about access currently come from? Where should it come from? What access is needed and how should it be implemented? Finally, and, perhaps most importantly, does any single answer to any of these questions exist? From broadening the audience that we envisage access being for, to creating co-collaborations where knowledge is drawn from various sources of expertise, these shifts have allowed us to approach access in a very different way. It is now understood that the most effective access is likely to be used by different people (the shift from particularist to universalist), require input from different people (the shift from maker to user) and should, whenever possible, be embedded early in the process (the shift from reactive to proactive) (Greco 2018). It is this latter shift that I will focus on in this article.

I want to explore what proactive approaches to access mean in the live event sector in particular. What does it take to integrate or embed access at live events, which might range from cultural events such as Q&As at film festivals to talks and tours at museum galleries, or from large educational

conferences and lectures to far smaller business meetings? In this article, I will argue that there is no single approach to achieve this, but that many factors must be considered for it to happen. Just as live events may be unique, so, too, will be the access that is required to make each one more accessible. Some of the discussion that follows will draw on my own research into implementing respeaking at live events to make them more accessible (Moores 2022), but the scope of discussion is broader than that. I will begin by examining research into proactive access in television, filmmaking and live performance and consider and contrast traditional approaches to access with the flipped model of a proactive, often-integrated approach. In doing so, I will tease out what we can usefully learn from these areas, whilst highlighting the way that by its very nature, the live event setting requires something different. Reflecting on my own research events as well as guidelines for accessibility in different settings and recent work in critical event studies, I will explore what integrated access in the live event setting might look like. Finally, I will outline a possible framework for proactive access, which I call the participatory model of engagement. I present this as a tool which can be used to guide discussions around access to support organisations in taking the next steps on their journey towards a more proactive approach to access. For some, this might mean exploring ways to further embed the access that is already provided whilst for others, this may mean helping them to approach access in a different way, for example as an ongoing conversation, rather than a checklist of tasks to be completed.

2. Flipping the model: A proactive approach

What do the terms 'proactive' and 'integrated' refer to when we talk about access provision? For Greco (2018: 213), 'proactive' does not simply mean introducing accessibility concerns earlier on in the process; of vital importance is the (potential) impact that doing this will have on users. Rather than being left as an "afterthought [.... and] having to put up with whatever has been designed on their behalf" (Tylor, Caiafa and Brown 2002: 257), in this new mode, users move to the heart of the development and design process of products and services and become proactively involved in their design. When talking of accessible filmmaking, Romero-Fresco (2019) refers, in the subtitle to his work, to "integrating translation and accessibility into the filmmaking process" and when Fryer and Cavallo (2021: 82) write of integrated access (IA) at live performances, they explain this access as

> [occupying] the opposite end of a spectrum anchored by traditional access provision, which […] is commonly perceived to be "exclusive; neutral; non-*auteur*; third-party and *post hoc*" (Fryer 2018: 172). This is because traditional access practices are aimed at specific groups, aim for objectivity of style, have little or no involvement from the director or other members of the creative team and are added at the end of the artistic process once the performance is complete. As its converse, IA is inclusive (available to all), subjective, *auteur* (involving the director), and provided by the company from the start.

Rather than lending themselves to precise definitions, a 'proactive approach' and 'integrating access' seem to function in a synonymous way; both are ways of working that are full of possibility. They demand that access is considered early, they are collaborative, they involve and bring together different voices and, in doing so, they very likely result in all involved beginning to think about what access might mean and the consequent shape that access might take in a different way than may have previously been the case.

At the same time, both can be explained by what they do not do. In traditional access provision, access is a post-production step, whether this means subtitles or audio description being added to a television programme that has been signed off, or captions or audio description being added to a performance which has already had its first night (Fryer and Cavallo 2021: 45) or the addition of a different type of access (Figure 1).
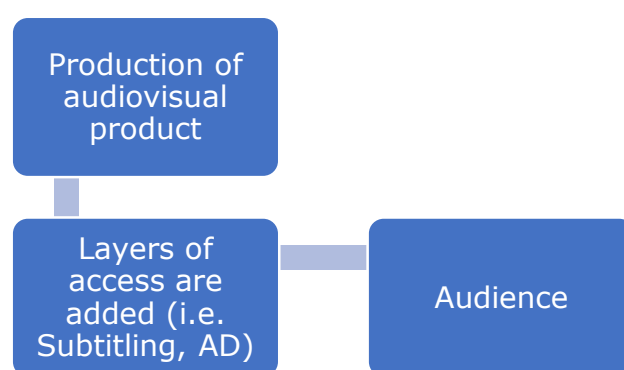
Production of audiovisual product

Layers of access are added (i.e. Subtitling, AD)

Audience

Figure 1. Traditional access provision.

The professionals offering this access may be very skilled, and the quality of the access high, but what is missing here is the discussion between the producers/directors and access professionals that integrated forms of access offer. There is still an important place for discussions between access professionals to improve or refine the provision that is offered, but they are unlikely to influence the nature of the product to which the access is being added, be it film, television or performance. Only in unusual circumstances will information be relayed back from the access professionals which changes the signed-off piece[1].

When integrated access does take place, different conversations can occur. There are likely to be a series of conversations between the producers/directors and access professionals at different stages in the process. Editorial changes may be made to the content of a film that allow improved access — be it allowing more time in certain scenes to capture the audio description that a scene requires, or a different camera position

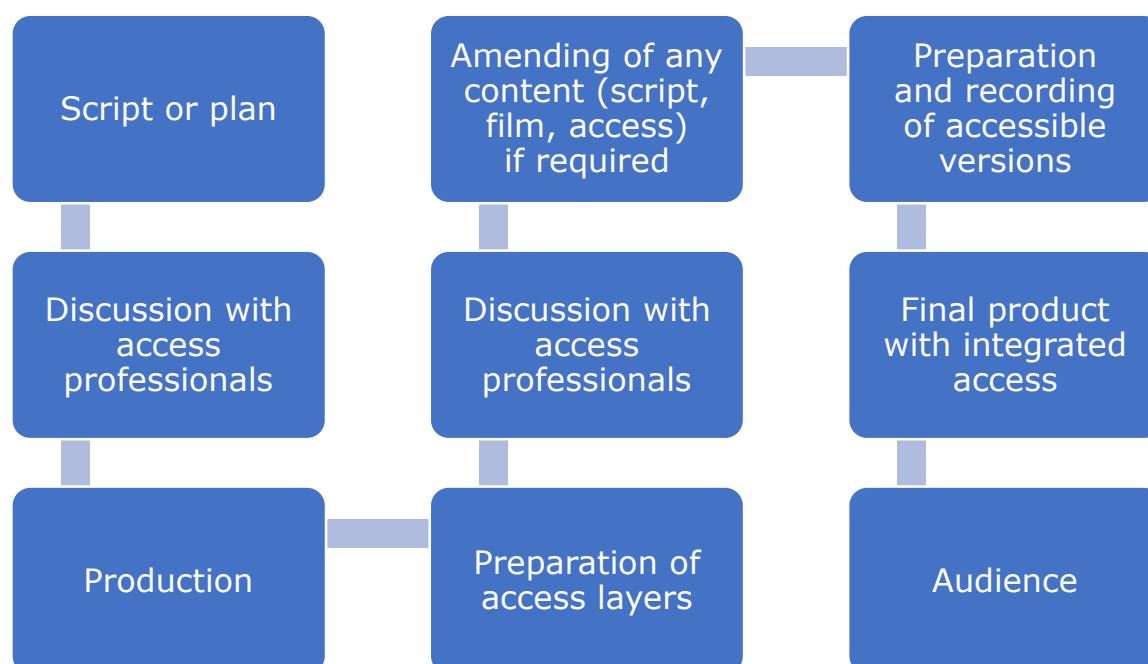that allows the subtitles to appear on screen more clearly without obscuring any key content (Figure 2).

Script or plan	Amending of any content (script, film, access) if required	Preparation and recording of accessible versions
Discussion with access professionals	Discussion with access professionals	Final product with integrated access
Production	Preparation of access layers	Audience

Figure 2. Integrated access[2].

The process looks more complicated, and certainly more conversations are required, but as a result, the choices made throughout this process should be in line with each other, and ultimately the producer/director is likely to be aware of the impact that these choices, made at different stages in the production, will have on the possible audience experience. In contrast, when the traditional access route is followed, access added in post-production quite literally stands out from the rest of the production process in that it is the one aspect over which the producer/director has no control, despite the fact that choices made within it may impact significantly on the way individual audience members experience the audiovisual content they have created. It is for this reason that the practice of referring to any audiovisual product which has not yet been made accessible as 'final' or 'finished' is strongly contested.

In reality, as Fryer and Cavallo (2021: 82) state, traditional and integrated access are at opposite ends of a spectrum; variations exist between them, with different degrees of conversation and influence being possible. Increasingly, there are instances where some exchange exists between the producers and access professionals and even if this is not fully integrated access, this is a very welcome development. For example, when I worked on the subtitling for *Notes on Blindness* (Middleton and Spinney 2016) with Kate Dangerfield, there had first been discussions between the directors and accessibility co-ordinators[3], which influenced the decisions we took as we worked. Having shared our subtitles with the directors, and received feedback from them, we were further able to adjust the content of certain

subtitles to better reflect the nuances that had been intended. Whilst these changes were still added in the post-production phase, they ensured that the subtitles were in keeping with the film as a whole. This already marks a great step forward towards a more fully integrated approach.

When it comes to the provision of access on live programmes on television, subtitles are once again added to programmes in the post-production phase. However, this paradigm has begun to shift in more recent years. The Ofcom study into the quality of live subtitles, which ran from 2013–2015 (reported in Romero-Fresco 2016), led to a better understanding of the need for increased collaboration between producers, broadcasters and subtitlers. As a result, earlier access to content, in the form of news scripts has become the norm; this has allowed live subtitlers to move from respeaking the majority of each programme through speech recognition software, to being able to prepare scripts and cue out larger sections of the news semi-live (Romero-Fresco 2011: 12). From a practical point of view, this means that respeakers can refine their preparation, and the wider in-house team can support their more effectively, something which has a positive impact on the way they work[4]. At the same time, this is of benefit for the audience. Many reception studies suggest a strong preference for the blocked semi-live subtitles to scrolling text (for example, Romero-Fresco 2015: 160).

While this is not an example of integrated access, it is nevertheless an example of access becoming more proactive and it mirrors the way that access through live subtitling might be added at live events. Respeakers, speech-to-text interpreters and (sign language) interpreters would all expect at least an outline, if not more concrete information, about the topics that would be covered in an event they would be providing access for (NUBSLI n.d.; Moores 2020b). As well as being a vital preparation aid, it is through this information that a professional can guarantee they are qualified to cover the content in question (for example, Institute of Translation and Interpreting 2013: 7). Attempting to (fully) integrate access does demand a more complex conversation, as the difference between Figures 1 and 2 above illustrates. Yet having an ongoing conversation about access means that different concerns can be raised, and a more holistic product may result. Whilst the process for doing this is necessarily different at live events, because of their very nature, similar results can nevertheless be seen when access is considered early on in the planning process.

3. The nature of live events

In order to be able to understand what proactive access at live events involves, this term must be considered more closely. When I use this term, I am referring to events where people attend synchronously, in real-time; it might be the case that everyone attends in person, or the event might be run online, or there may be some kind of hybrid attendance, where some, but not all participate onsite or remotely[5]. One key feature that

distinguishes live events from live performances is the nature of the content and communication that takes place within them. While a performance is likely to follow a script, or perhaps a set routine in the case of dance, live events are more spontaneous. The speech contained within them is likely to be unscripted or partially scripted. If we take, for example, a lecture or conference, although many details will have been prepared in advance, perhaps even with notes written, in the moment of the lecture being given, it does not matter if the presenter diverges from their notes. The general thrust of the content will still be the same. Similarly, on a museum tour, the guide may follow a similar route that they have followed before, but the exact details they share and words they use may vary on each occasion. In contrast, at the theatre, while some slight variations in the lines uttered are common, a substantial change of wording is likely to be more problematic; here, the script is central to the performance. At the other end of the scale, some live events may be entirely spontaneous, for example, a discussion following a film screening may not follow any script and may be guided entirely by the topics that arise. This unscripted or partially scripted nature means that live media access modalities, such as respeaking, will be required.

Another feature of live events is their participatory nature. In each of these situations, there is likely to be communication between those who attend. At public talks or conferences, participants may be clearly identified as (either) 'presenters' or 'audience members', but there will be opportunities for — spontaneous — exchanges between them, for example, when questions are asked. Other events may not be built around the presenter/audience model but may present a space where contributions come from all attendees; a business meeting would be one example. As well as adding to the unscripted nature of the event, this participation and interaction is a key element that must also be captured within the access offered, especially if we think of the integration of media accessibility into the setting. While the mechanics of respeaking will be the same on television and at live events, this interaction changes the way a respeaker might need to work (Figure 3).
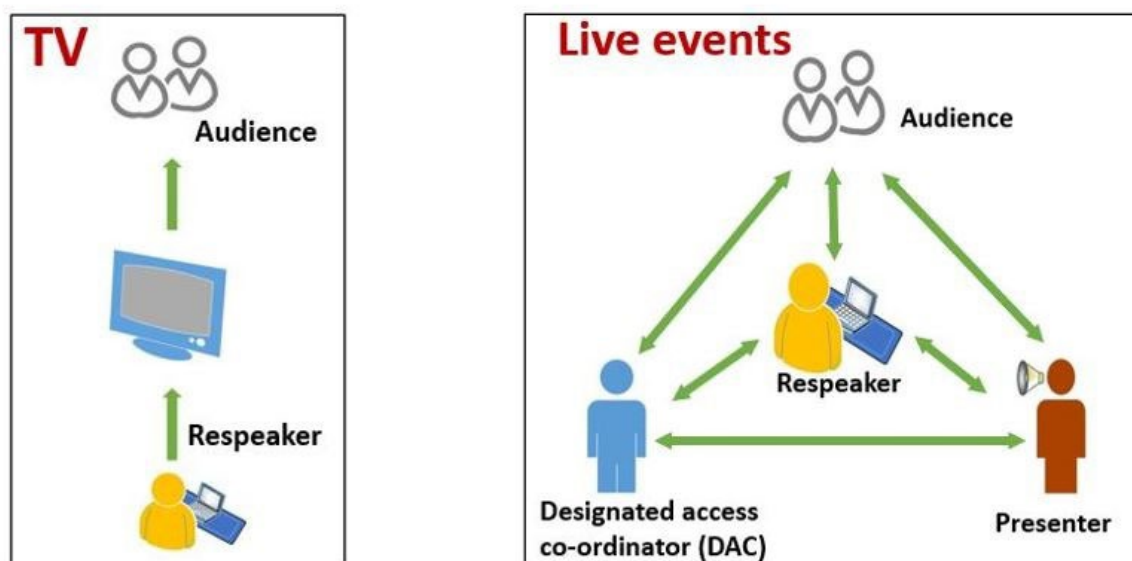
Figure 3. Interaction on TV and live events (Moores 2022: 366).

When respeaking on television, the respeaker is able to research the content beforehand, but once the programme begins, they must listen, respeak and essentially follow and respond to the content that unfolds before them. They are unable to communicate with anyone in the programme. At live events, everyone attending can interact with each other and with the respeaker, and these interactions may, at times, affect the decisions the respeaker takes and the content of the subtitles. A designated access co-ordinator (DAC) (Remael *et al.* 2019: 143) may often be appointed to monitor the subtitles and intervenes if an error appears or some content is missed, and the audience and presenters may also respond to the content they see (Moores *forthcoming*).

This potential interaction with the respeaker has a number of implications when it comes to the access that will be required at an event, and the discussions surrounding its proactive implementation. Firstly, the technical set-up needs to be handled with care, so that respeakers have access to the full audio to be able to respeak it; at the same time, presenters and hosts have a role to play in sharing details of the event to enable the respeakers to prepare, but also in understanding how they might interact with the subtitles on the day to make the access provision smoother. There may also be specific demands made of the respeaker at particular events. While on television there tends to be a 'one form of access fits all' approach, out of necessity, more variation may be seen at live events. It may be that access is being provided for a single person, and they may request that only some of the content is captured; for example, at a lecture, a respeaker may be asked to focus on the words of the lecturer and not on questions posed by those attending. Such a request might impact on how the respeaker prepares for the event and would almost certainly affect how the quality of access is assessed — in this scenario, content omitted by user request would not be penalised. While I am using respeaking as an example of access

here, such considerations may also apply to subtitles created through speech-to-text reporting, or to (sign language) interpretation.

However, for an event to be accessible, the access provision must extend beyond the linguistic/sensorial provision that media access modalities such as live subtitling and (sign language) interpreting may provide. Since people attend in real-time, whether in-person or remotely, this fuller experience in attending must also be considered. In order to understand what access is required, a shift in view is required, from focusing on what happens at the event, to thinking about all that is involved in planning and advertising the event. The audience experience, or more accurately experiences, throughout this process need to be considered, so that an unbroken chain of access runs throughout (Greco *et al.* 2012). Planning for this proactively is likely to result in access that is embedded within the event.

4. What would a proactive approach at live events look like?

While exploring how to embed respeaking at live events, I asked d/Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing participants to share experiences of events they had attended through an online survey (Moores 2022: 199–200). Their experiences were diverse, but some commonalities within the experiences stood out, of which two are particularly relevant when thinking about a proactive approach to access. The first, was the impact of access that is not co-ordinated:

> Lack of access everywhere [at the festival]. We had an interpreter booked to see an interview, but we were told to queue up like everyone else — but we could not go [into the tent] in the end as it was packed... There is so much that we can't access due to no subtitles and sometimes not enough interpreters. To cover all is not possible (*31-year-old woman, deaf since birth, has a hearing aid, OL29*).

While this woman had booked access, which was provided at the event, she was unable to make use of it because the wider logistics of prioritising the entry of those who had booked access had not been considered. The so-called chain of access was broken, so despite the provision that was in place, her experience was that the event was not accessible. In contrast to this, the second response captures the experience that proactive and well-co-ordinated access might lead to:

> (1) The live subtitling access made it possible for me to follow completely. It was a fairly dark exhibition hall and the beauty of the handheld units is that I could relax, look at the exhibits and read the text without worrying about trying to be close to the speaker to lipread/hear. (2) Live subtitles were projected on to the same screen as the slides. A difficult subject but brilliantly and accurately subtitled that led to a lively discussion after the event for several deaf people at the pub (*68-year-old man with a hearing aid, deaf from the age of 5, OL10).*

Here, with well-implemented access, the man was able to relax and enjoy the experience; following the second event, he was able to engage in the discussion in the pub. To me, this is what access represents; it gives

everyone who attends the opportunity to participate fully and engage in the event. Whether or not an event is enjoyable will depend on the tastes and preferences of the person in question; but providing access that enables every person to participate and find out whether they enjoy it is essential.

A proactive approach must look at an event holistically and see how the different strands of access that are required at every stage in the process fit together. There may be one person who oversees the provision of access at a venue, but in reality, many people will be involved in its provision on the day. There might be the designated access co-ordinator I referred to above who is monitoring the flow and content of the subtitles, but there may also be front of house staff with deaf or disability awareness training who are ready to welcome the audience. I would suggest that if access is truly to be integrated into the event, it must be something that everyone present is involved and engaged in. As the Equality and Access advisor at one venue relayed to me during my doctoral research (Moores 2022: 206–207), by adopting access as a core value, it became a baseline expectation in all that was done.

It is also very tempting, especially at the beginning, to approach access as a sort of checklist activity, thinking that if A, B and C are put in place, access is provided. The reality is likely to be that access is itself a process that continually needs to be implemented and updated. The exact access that is required at any event will depend on where the event is held, the content within it and who attends; once again, to determine this, communication with those taking part is necessary. For this reason, Lazard (2019: 10) refers to accessibility in the arts as "a promise:"

> Conversations about disability often rely on the idea of accessibility as a set of particular, preset interventions, but accessibility requires great flexibility. It demands a malleable infrastructure that shifts, in real time, with the needs of the community. We cannot account for every need that every person will ever have […] Accessibility is a promise, not a guarantee. It's a speculative practice.

While creating an event that is fully accessible for every person is unlikely, it is nevertheless a good ideal to aim for (Fryer and Cavallo 2021: 137) and one that is of fundamental importance. Finkel, Sharp and Sweeney (2019: 1) describe events as "microcosms of society:"

> Because they are temporary and usually bounded by geographic space, they can be considered reflections of or responses to societal norms at the time they take place. As critical events scholars, we can learn a lot about a society by the way people gather and celebrate. By investigating special events, we can learn who and what is important — and unimportant — and how this may manifest itself in everyday life.

As a tool for inclusion and for accessing wider human rights (Greco 2016), the presence of access within live events is essential, even though the diversity seen within live events, both in terms of who participates, and also in the range of events which exists, means that different approaches to

access will be required. This need for access is also of epistemic importance (Fricker 2007) in recognising the value of different groups within society, and also coming to a place of better understanding the different needs they may have (Moores 2022: 71–75). At the same time, it involves opening up access to everyone, yet also looking at individual experiences, which may differ from more universal approaches (Dangerfield 2022; Romero-Fresco and Dangerfield 2022). To what extent can both be accommodated at the same time?

These are all important questions to ask, yet, especially at the outset, not all of these questions or considerations will be immediately apparent. For this reason, different voices are required within the discussions that take place, so that these different experiences and expectations can gradually be understood. As well as the teams at venues and those involved in the event itself, and the access professionals who will go on to provide the access, this should also include users, who can share their own expertise, knowledge and experience to broaden the questions that are asked.

5. How do we get there from here? The participatory model of engagement as a possible framework for proactive access

Beginning to think about access in this way may feel overwhelming at first, with so many different considerations to take on board. Yet, as Lazard (2019) said, as well as being a promise, access is also a practice, that can take time to refine and develop and even taking a step on the journey towards more proactive practices is a good way to begin. With this in mind, I will outline one possible framework for proactive access, which I call the participatory model of engagement[6]. It is designed at once as a visualisation of how access occurs, and a framework or scaffold for the discussions about access that need to take place. It may be a particularly useful starting point for venues who are exploring access for the first time, or when planning begins on a new (type of) event, to spark different ideas. Venues or planners with established access provision may also find it helpful if it allows them to approach their current provision in a fresh way, and review what is currently in place, so that access remains an active and adaptable process.

The framework is simple and is illustrated in Figures 4 and 5 below. Figure 4 illustrates what the model looks like when respeakers are providing access at a live event, and Figure 5 expands it to the broader provision of access at events.
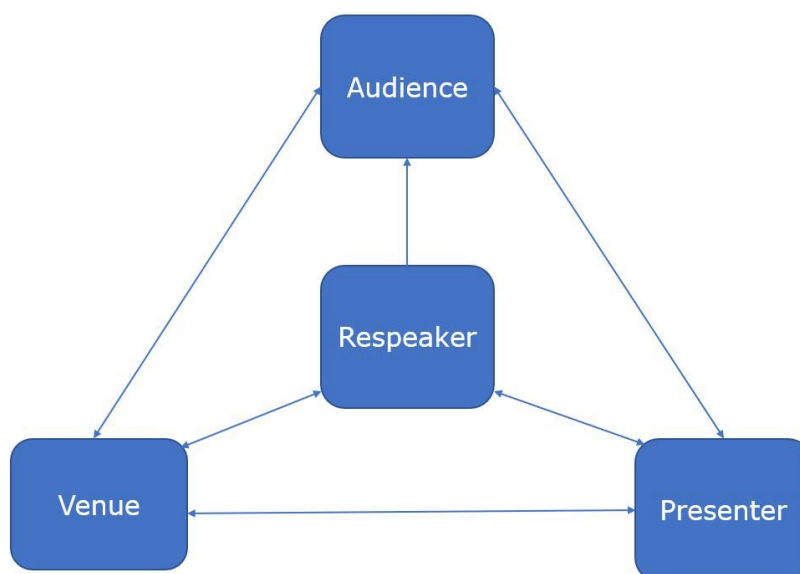
Figure 4. Model for participatory engagement, using respeaking at live events as an example (Moores 2022: 388).
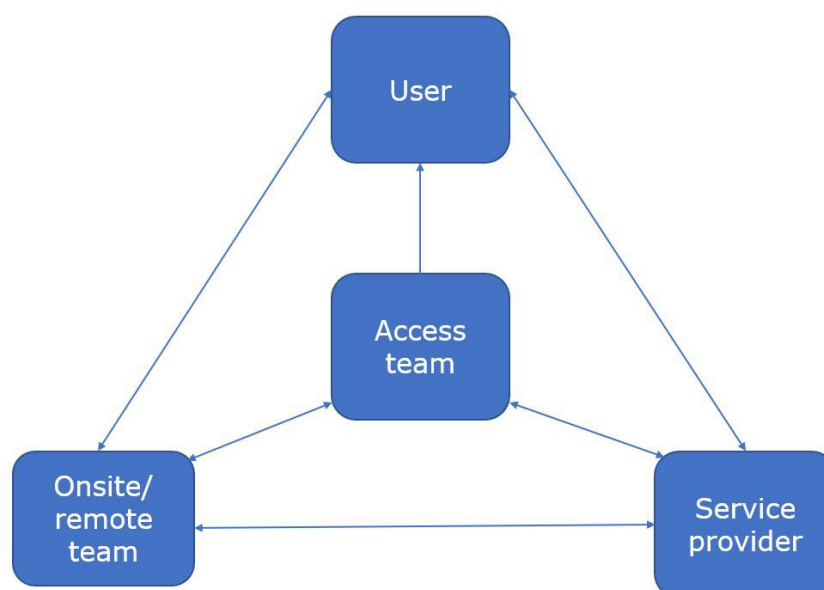

Figure 5. Broader application of the model for participatory engagement (Moores 2022: 389).

Mirroring the interaction that takes place at live events and built around the idea that in a proactive model of access, everyone needs to engage and take responsibility for the access that is provided, the access providers are placed at the centre of the frame, with the other parties involved in event

organisation and access planning located around them. This positioning, along with the bidirectional arrows that connect each party to the access providers, highlights the fact that the role that each party plays is different when the event is an accessible one, since communication must now include these access providers. While it might seem like each group functions independently, understanding the role of the other parties, and communicating with them, is essential and continuous. This applies to all the members of the team.

For example, when live subtitles or British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation are being provided, it may be especially important that audience members wait for the microphone or talk in turn; understanding why these procedures are important may encourage everyone to follow them and may make them easier for the event team to implement. Recalling the experience of the woman described in Section 4 who was unable to enter the tent where the interpreting had been booked, ensuring that the ticketing team outside individual event spaces are looking out for people who have booked access, or having a separate entry point for such people that is clearly marked might have avoided this issue. In both cases, being aware of the potential interruptions to smooth access will help avoid this happening. This tool would be applied to each stage of the planning process, including advertising and booking, information sent out in the lead up to the event and communication with people attending and participating in the event, preparing the venue, welcoming people, hosting the event, and following up and collecting feedback once the event is over.

In their edited collection on critical event studies, Finkel, Sharpe and Sweeney (2019) include examples which highlight the diversity of events and approaches required to make them more accessible and inclusive. One such example is of festivals and fairs. How might the participatory model for engagement be applied here and what kinds of questions might arise during the discussions about access? Advertising for this event may be similar to other indoor, seated events. Consideration will still need to be given to ensuring the website is accessible, to adding access to any adverts, and to incorporating different ways of booking tickets, for example online and over the phone. When it comes to the day of the event, there will need to be discussions about the venue. Is there physical access into the festival and around grounds? Are there places to sit? Are there accessible toilets? What parking is available and where is the nearest train or bus station? While an outdoor venue presents its own challenges, some considerations will be the same as for an indoor venue. Then, when it comes to communication and interaction, will there be a main stage? Here, live subtitling and/or BSL will likely be needed. But what about communication and interaction as people move through the fair? Will there be any spaces aside from the main stage where conversations may need to be made accessible? How will that be done? And for the casual conversations and interactions that take place around the venue, what can be done to facilitate those? Will all staff members have some deaf awareness training? Or will

access to a speech-to-text app, for example, be useful in some situations? There is no hard and fast answer to any of these questions, and much will depend on the people who attend and the access that they require. It is for this reason that asking about access needs before an event is so important so that they can be implemented smoothly. By doing this, the dots in access provision can be joined, and the access that is on offer can itself be accessed. Consideration can be given to the intersectional needs of those attending on the day, and, at least to an extent, a personalised approach can be created. At the same time, it is important to recall that access is a practice. Perfect access provision is difficult to attain, but sloppy provision is unlikely to be looked on favourably or with understanding. "Not being afraid to fail" (Fryer and Cavallo, 2021: 187) is an essential part of the process[7].

Initially, knowing what questions to ask and being open to hearing what is suggested will be more important than having all the answers. Fryer and Cavallo (2021: 177–178) explore what motivates discussions of access and this is also important to consider. This may reveal new aspects of access and inclusion which an organisation wishes to incorporate. Henderson (2019: 226) asks "What makes an event "care friendly"?", exploring experiences of "academics (not) managing caring responsibilities at conferences." For some organisers, this may be the motivation and direction that discussions of access and inclusion take. Similarly, these discussions, which often involve re-thinking how events are offered, may touch on wider social issues. Access comes in many forms, ranging from sensorial, linguistic, or cognitive to how the event space is used and managed. Relaxed performances or spaces within a larger event may be organised[8], flexibility over ticketing may be introduced, not only in terms of cost, which itself is an important issue, but also in how tickets are booked and used; flexibility-ticketed performances, or a portion of flexibly ticketed seats may enable someone who cannot attend a tour one day to transfer their attendance to another. For many, the need for socially distanced performances may continue for a while to come and, as awareness of the need for environmental sustainability grows, action towards this could also be built into this accessible approach[9]. While access considerations may begin within media accessibility, the chain of access takes us far beyond it. My hope is that by engaging with discussions of access proactively, regardless of the framework used, all involved will gain an increased understanding and awareness of what access is and why it is important, and that this will continue to grow and travel with them as they embark on future projects.

6. Conclusions and thoughts for the future

Integrated access in the live event sector is not an area that has been explored in detail in the field of media accessibility. Attention has been paid to integrated access in scripted scenarios, such as filmmaking and live performance and much can be learned from examples of integrated access

in these more bounded and scripted settings, especially as transient forms of performances and events exist. From pantomimes, which bring unscripted elements into a more scripted format, to settings like music concerts, where spoken and scripted elements may be present in equal measure, how integrated access is provided in these settings may draw on ideas from both performance and live events. Even within live events *per se*, many different scenarios will be encountered.

For some, the idea of integrated access, with its creative history, may seem out of place at certain live events. However, if we focus on the sense of proactivity within integrated access, the reasoning becomes clear. Yes, the nature of what integrated access looks like will vary according to the type of event being held, but the demand it brings that the entire process of hosting and organising the event be accessible, for both those who wish to attend the event and those who provide it, applies to any event. While proactivity is at the heart of ensuring this is implemented, so, too, is consideration of a user-centred approach, and the idea of a wider audience. Access for all is unlikely to be achieved; but exploring the diverse needs of all who participate is something that should and indeed must be done.

This attention to the process of hosting and organising the event will only come about through foresight and conversation, and everyone needs to know and understand what their role is and how it fits into the larger picture so that they are equipped to fulfil it. In this way, the idea of integration can be just as readily applied in cultural settings as in what might be seen as the more formal settings of meetings, conventions or exhibitions. Moreover, it may be through these briefer live encounters that the stealth approach to access outlined above can take hold. As every person involved begins to understand the need for access and the reasoning behind any changes made, the principles of establishing access become clear and may accompany them to the next event or project they work on. At the same time, what we learn from integrating access at live events, may feed back into discussions of access in other areas. At a cinema screening, for example, as well as a film being subtitled or audio described, the in-person visit should also be accessible. The spectrum of traditional to integrated access could be reimagined as comprising multiple axes, with many possible permutations.

Above all, it is important to recognise the fluidity of access. Whilst some form of access will be required in any situation to create an inclusive environment, that is the only factor that can be guaranteed. The shape that this access will take will vary greatly. For this reason, access is frequently referred to as a promise (Lazard 2019; Romero-Fresco and Dangerfield 2022, *forthcoming*), a way of thinking, a conversation or an intention that will mould and shape itself to the scenario in question, rather than an absolute guarantee or checklist of steps to take. This idea of a promise aligns itself well with the notion of proactive access as a force of change, encouraging people to look for new solutions, that are at once sustainable,

equitable and more inclusive. While it is essential that the chain of access within an event remains intact, that does not prevent it from continuing to extend in new directions.

Media access is central to the access provided at live events as a pathway for communication. However, if provided in isolation, it cannot come close to meeting the access requirements of many who attend. For this reason, researching integrated access at live events may provide a stepping stone from media accessibility into accessibility studies (Greco 2018), where a cross– or interdisciplinary approach is required. Access is already being integrated to a certain extent at many live events; tourism, critical event studies, and even the way that day-to-day activities are run at many of our own universities would benefit from extended and better implemented access provision. I see live event access as a fruitful area for further research, and for taking awareness of media access modalities into new areas. I hope that this article is the spark for many further discussions.

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Data availability statement

The responses to the online survey referred to in Section 3 can be found at: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Ie201KYubEvkUjdnjJSUsU3OUsD3lvqy?usp=sharing.

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Biography

Zoe Moores is a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Roehampton and Research Fellow at the University of Surrey. Her AHRC-TECHNE-funded doctoral research explored how respeaking could be introduced into the live event setting in the UK to broaden the access provided there. At Surrey, her work on the SMART project has focused on developing interlingual respeaking training for language professionals. Zoe is a member of the GALMA research group.

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Notes

[1] For example, an access professional might on occasion spot an error in a programme. When I was working as a subtitler, while researching the lyrics for a song, I realised the song in question had been named incorrectly within the programme. I was able to send this feedback to the producers, and the correct title appeared in the broadcast programme.

[2] This model is based on the processes for integrated access outlined in Romero-Fresco 2019: 217–219.

[3] Pablo Romero-Fresco and Louise Fryer were accessibility co-ordinators for this film.

[4] As related to me during my interviews with respeakers for my doctoral research.

[5] In previous publications (for example, Moores 2020a: 179; 2022: 105–106), I have used a more restricted definition of live events, where I specified that the audience attended in person, rather than watching the entirety of the event through a screen. This restricted definition was due to the range of events where I was testing respeaking in action. In the current article, I consider broader aspects of access across the full range of this setting, inclusively of in-person and remote events.

[6] The creation and naming of this model evolved at the same time as Di Giovanni's article on participatory accessibility (2018), and the label 'participatory' also appeared in earlier discussions of access and disability, for example, Kleege 2016, 2017; Kleege & Wallin 2015.

[7] The notion of embracing failure in relation to media accessibility also features prominently in Dangerfield 2022.

[8] For example, Depot in Lewes say their relaxed screenings offer a more relaxed experience for people who find ordinary cinema visits difficult; the sound is lower, the lighting is not as dark and people are free to come and go during the screening (Depot 2017). Further discussion can be found in (Fryer and Cavallo 2021: 24).

[9] During the pandemic, Attitude Is Everything (in CMU 2021) and #We Shall Not Be Removed *et al.* (2021) provided guidance on how to reopen venues in an inclusive way and work safely through Covid-19.