# Transcript for the ILOTA Things - Episode 1 - Who's Who in The Zoo Podcast

**Announcer:** Welcome to ILOTA Things, the ADCET podcast where we explore Inclusive Learning Opportunities through AI. In this series, we'll explore the exciting convergence of universal design for learning, UDL, artificial intelligence, AI, and accessibility, and examine ways in which we can utilise emerging technologies to enhance learning opportunities for educational designers, educators, and students. Now, here are your hosts, Darren, Elizabeth, and Joe.

**Darren:** Hello and welcome from whenever, wherever, and however you are joining us. And thank you for your time as we investigate ILOTA Things. That is Inclusive Learning Opportunities through AI. My name is Darren Britten and I'm the National Assistive Technology Officer with the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET). And joining me as we go down the many rabbit holes of universal design for learning, artificial intelligence, and accessibility and my co-host Elizabeth Hitches,

**Elizabeth:**Hi there.

**Darren:**and Joe Houghton,

**Joe:**Hi.

**Darren:** In this episode, the first in our series, we're going to give you a brief overview of what this series is about, the types of things we will be discussing and why we, as your hosts, are excited to go on this journey with you. Now, before I begin, I'd like to acknowledge Elevenlabs for our AI voice over announcer that you heard at the start, and Udio for the AI-generated musical background to this podcast. The reason that I bring up the fact that our podcast introduction is AI generated with, of course, some editing is as pretext to this series and the types of things that we'll be discussing.

Not that long ago, and by that I mean weeks and months, certainly not years, you'd be hard pressed to find the range of transformative tools that are currently available, and many of those are just a mouse click or keystroke away. These tools allow for the generation of ideas and expression, the creation, refinement, and analysis of content and media faster than ever before. And more importantly, they're providing new opportunities and ways of accessing and transforming information for educators and learners alike.

Oh, with that in mind, I'll throw over to you, Joe, as our resident AI go to, and can you provide a bit of background and help us put into context? What is that current AI landscape?

**Joe:** Yeah, thanks, Darren, and it's great to be with yourself and Elizabeth to kick off this new podcast series. I'm an educator based in Dublin, Ireland, so I direct and teach on a couple of Masters in project management at Ireland's top business school, the Smurfit school at UCD. But I also do a lot of training and education work with corporates and non-profits, and also, laterally now, with a lot of educational institutions, because I think we're all grappling with this new AI thing.

Linking into the other strands of our podcast, UDL and inclusivity, I've been into UDL and accessibility now for about four years. I kind of did some initial courses during COVID, and that's where I ran into Elizabeth and Darren, and we've kind of teamed up now to kind of take a deeper dive into this stuff, so I'm learning every day, you know, every day is a learning day, and I'm really looking forward to exploring those topics as we go forward.

AI is changing the way we access and present information, at almost faster than I think I've ever seen it happen before. There's a myriad of tools coming out and being updated every week. So we're going to explore some of these through the lenses of UDL and accessibility, to see how and if the emerging technology can help in making teaching and learning more equitable and inclusive. And I'm hoping that Elizabeth is going to be the voice of a reason to my tech ramblings, so Elizabeth, over to you.

**Elizabeth:** Oh, I really can't wait to get into these discussions, and I find that every single time that I meet up with Joe and Darren, I also learn something new. So it's really fantastic to join everyone here in thinking about how AI, UDL and accessibility might intersect and how we can use those to increase inclusion for all.

Now I'm joining you from a research and teaching background, so I research in inclusion and in inclusive education, and I teach inclusive education at university level, and that's pre-service teachers all the way from early childhood to high school, and I also enjoy supporting professional development opportunities in this space as well.

Now, when we think about that concept, universal design for learning, we're really thinking about how we can design learning opportunities that enable students to see them comprehend information, to express what they know and can do, and really engage in the learning experience, and do these all in an equitable way, an inclusive way, and right from the start.

Now, why AI might be exciting for this space is that if we use it in the right way and use it with an inclusive lens, it could actually work to strengthen and even speed up some of the processes that we take to make these inclusive experiences happen, or what I'm really excited about, even offer some new opportunities that we haven't considered or even had access to before.

**Darren:**Look it's so exciting to hear you both talk about the potential, I think, that we've now got in this space, potential we kind of haven't had before, and also to consider what's just on the horizon as well. A lot has changed in a short amount of time, and now most of this, of course, is being driven by genAI and related areas, so back to you I suppose Joe, can I ask you then when we speak about AI, what are we talking about? What sort of things are currently available, and what does that look like?

**Joe:** I guess, you know, rewinding about 18 months, so November the 30th, 2022, is when ChatGPT hit the headlines, 3.5 was released, so we've got this generative AI, this ability for computers now to generate text in a way that kind of almost appears to have been written by a person. So you can ask a question, and it will spit out a lesson plan, it will spit out an assignment brief, it will spit out a paper against a brief, you know, and write the assignment for you, and this is why so many educational institutions are kind of up in arms, you know, because it's the end of teaching, and the students are going to cheat for the rest of history, and all this kind of stuff, and the answer is not quite as bad as that, obviously.

The technology is rapidly evolving out of just text into visual, and not just stills, but now we're seeing the emergence of video as well, so you can type in a text prompt, and you can generate multimodal text, video, stills images, songs, audio, almost anything that, you know, can be generated, can now be generated by AI.

But how do we make those tools relevant in the classroom, and how do we teach our students to use them both ethically, and also well, because you know, there are guardrails that need to be put in place, there are some tools are set up for people to use, in a way that's perhaps not particularly inclusive, that's perhaps not particularly accessible, if you're going through a screen reader, or you're, you know, hard of hearing, or, you know, you've got ASD, or whatever. So these are the kind of things that we're going to try and start unpicking as we go through.

**Darren:** And make no mistake, this is a transformative change across multiple sectors, you know, from finance, health, entertainment, business, and even education, and it's happening faster than I've ever seen this happen before, and I think we're all a bit dazed, and in the process of this reimagining, all of these different sectors inlight of these new and emerging tools, the ability for rapid development and integration of these tools, it's coming at us faster than ever before, and for many sectors, I suppose particularly those that have traditionally been conservative and cautious when it comes to adopting new technologies, this is causing quite the upheaval.

Of course, one of these sectors is the education sector, and Elizabeth, you touched on this before, but how do you see the education sector as reacting to the emergence of these new technologies?

**Elizabeth:** For my perspective, for me personally, it happened really quickly, so I wasn't hearing any discussion around AI, and then suddenly one day it was you know in front of us on the table, we were hearing about chatGPT, and really learning as quickly as we could, but also recognising that this is evolving very, very quickly.

And I think what we're seeing, there are a lot of concerns about academic integrity and thinking, what does this mean in terms of assessment of learning or assessment for learning? And one of the challenges at this point is really developing that baseline understanding of what even is AI? How should we be using it? How and when should students be using it? What's our role as educators in preparing students to use it? And what is it that students are actually going to be interacting with?

Now, one of the things we also need to think through is what's actually being fed into those AI systems, so anything that gets fed in is that data safe. And I've even heard examples of colleagues or students saying that, you know, they've fed in articles and then said, oh, it can summarise this really quickly, how fantastic, but then of course, realising some of these are copyrighted material and there are issues and ethical challenges around that that not everyone's aware of.

So I think the biggest challenge is developing that knowledge base. What's possible with AI? What are the ethical constraints? What do we need to be aware of as educators on what our students will be interacting with? And also how are we going to be using that technology as well?

But in saying that, I think it's really important that we don't simply remove the possibilities that AI might have for things like UDL and accessibility. So just as a really brief example, I think we're going to come to this in a future podcast as well, thinking about image description. We might typically do this by hand, and I might take a lot of time and thought, but there's the possibility now that AI can do this, but we know we're still going to have to have that educator lens on it and have that understanding of the context, but perhaps there's some time saving abilities there.

So with all the concerns and the constraints, I think there is a lot that we need to be considering and exploring in this accessibility and UDL space. And so I think at this stage, we're cautious, but we're curious.

**Darren:** Look, I think that's a perfect way to put it. Elizabeth, we're cautious, but curious. I'm certainly in the excited camp. I think for some of these tools, in the context in which students and particularly those with disability will be able to transform their digital learning environments. The ability and the potential for these tools to work alongside students as real assistive technology is going to be a game changer. The ability and opportunities for some of these technologies to work with the student, I think are not so much doing it for them, where traditionally that work was available only through the intervention of another person or service. And that's something I'm really looking forward to exploring in this series, the potential of this technology to be a game changer.

Of course, we need to be cautious with this new evolution of tools. It's certainly not without its pitfalls and controversy. And we'll be discussing those as we go throughout this series I'm sure. Our plan is to provide you with practical insights into some of the tools, what they can do, and how they can be used to support the universal design for learning approach and provide you with ILOTA ideas that you can take and use in your teaching practice.

**Elizabeth:**  I'm hoping we'll also find it'll be aLOTA fun as well. So with each episode, we're going to look at one topic and how you can use these tools to create inclusive learning opportunities for you and your students. And we'll make sure that any resources or tools that we're using will provide you with links to those and we'll also be providing the examples that we discuss as well. So anything we're talking about or testing out in this podcast, you can also try the same thing yourself. Now you'll be able to find these on the ADCET website at [www.adcet.edu.au/ilotathings](http://www.adcet.edu.au/ilotathings)

**Joe:** Yeah, we want this to be a podcast kinda that's an ongoing conversation between the three of us, but also you. So we would love to hear from you. So if you've got a question or a comment about AI, about UDL, about accessibility, anything we're discussing, whether that's an example of how you're using it or whether it's perhaps, you know, a question you've got, a challenge that you're facing that you think some of this stuff we talk about might help address. Let us know. You can contact us via old school email feedback@ilotathings.com and all the links that we mentioned to different tools and stuff will also be in the show notes on the webpage.

**Darren:** Well, that's our time for this episode and I hope we have given you an insight into some of the inclusive learning opportunities through AI that we'll be investigating during this series. So thank you all for listening and we hope that you can join us for our next episode as we continue to explore ILOTA Things. Till then take care and keep on learning.

**Joe:** Bye.

**Elizabeth:**Bye.

**Announcer:** Thank you for listening to this podcast brought to you by the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training. For further information on universal design for learning and supporting students through inclusive practices, please visit the ADCET website. ADCET is committed to the self-determination of First Nations people and acknowledge the Palawa and Pakana peoples of Lutruwita upon whose lands ADCET is hosted. We also acknowledge the traditional custodians of all the lands across Australia and globally from wherever you may be listening to this podcast and pay our deep respect to Elders past, present and emerging and recognize that education and the sharing of knowledge has taken place on traditional lands for thousands of years.