MADDIE: Hi, I'm Maddie Bright,

a high school senior

here to talk about internet accessibility.

Internet accessibility is important

because it makes the internet usable

to people with disabilities, like me.

I need to enlarge the text of a website

to accommodate my low vision.

But recently, the online

class I took used a website

that distorted when I

enlarged the content,

which made it difficult to

complete the assignment.

Maddie points to the website on her screen.

And you can't read that entire box.

Internet accessibility means more

than just submitting assignments, though.

An accessible internet

helps us do things like

talk with friends, apply

for jobs or to college,

or order stuff from Amazon Prime.

Maddie pulls the large yellow book *Hamilton* from an Amazon Prime cardboard box.

According to the Web

Accessibility Initiative,

or WAI, an accessible

website is four things:

Perceivable, operable,

understandable, and robust.

"A website has to work on its own

or with assistive technology

so that an individual with a disability

can see the content they want to see."

This includes adding things

like clearly labeled links

and writing the code so that the website

can be navigated by keyboard.

Most screen readers use the

keyboard to navigate the screen,

and things like labeled links

and certain tags in the code

can help it know what needs to be read,

and help the user know what

content they're looking at,

or going to look at.

Since accessible technology

works differently

on all devices and operating systems,

I use a lot of different tools.

An accessible website will work for me

if I'm using TalkBack on my phone -

Maddie listens as the TalkBack app speaks aloud from her phone.

- or ZoomText on my computer.

Maddie navigates a website using ZoomText on her laptop, enlarging certain parts of the screen as needed.

If you're thinking, "Well,

accessibility isn't that profitable

because not that many

people have a disability,"

you'd be wrong.

Around 43 million Americans with

disabilities use the internet,

so that's a lot of

people you're leaving out

by not making your site accessible.

At the moment, there

aren't official guidelines

for internet accessibility in the U.S.

beyond government websites.

But over the past several years,

there's been an increasing push

for greater accessibility

for the internet.

The WAI has continually

updated content guidelines

that will tell you how

to meet A, AA,

and AAA accessibility standards.

A-level accessibility is the most basic,

and AAA is the holy grail,

aiming for maximum usability.

If you come across accessibility

issues on certain websites,

advise these webmasters about

the accessibility problem

you're having with their sites.

Since there aren't internet

accessibility standards

in the U.S. for most sites,

they may not even be aware

that there's an issue.

If they don't know there's an issue,

try sending them this video!

To find out more about how

you can make your website accessible,

visit RootedinRights.org/internetaccess.

So don't wait, take a stand

for web accessibility today!

Maddie raises her fist.

To support the Storytellers series,

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Twitter, and Instagram.

Written and directed by Maddie Bright

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Mrs. Leigh Ann Chow,

Sage McGuire, and Mrs. Rosenbary.

Maddie and a woman in a classroom. They wave to camera.

Auf Wiedersehen!

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