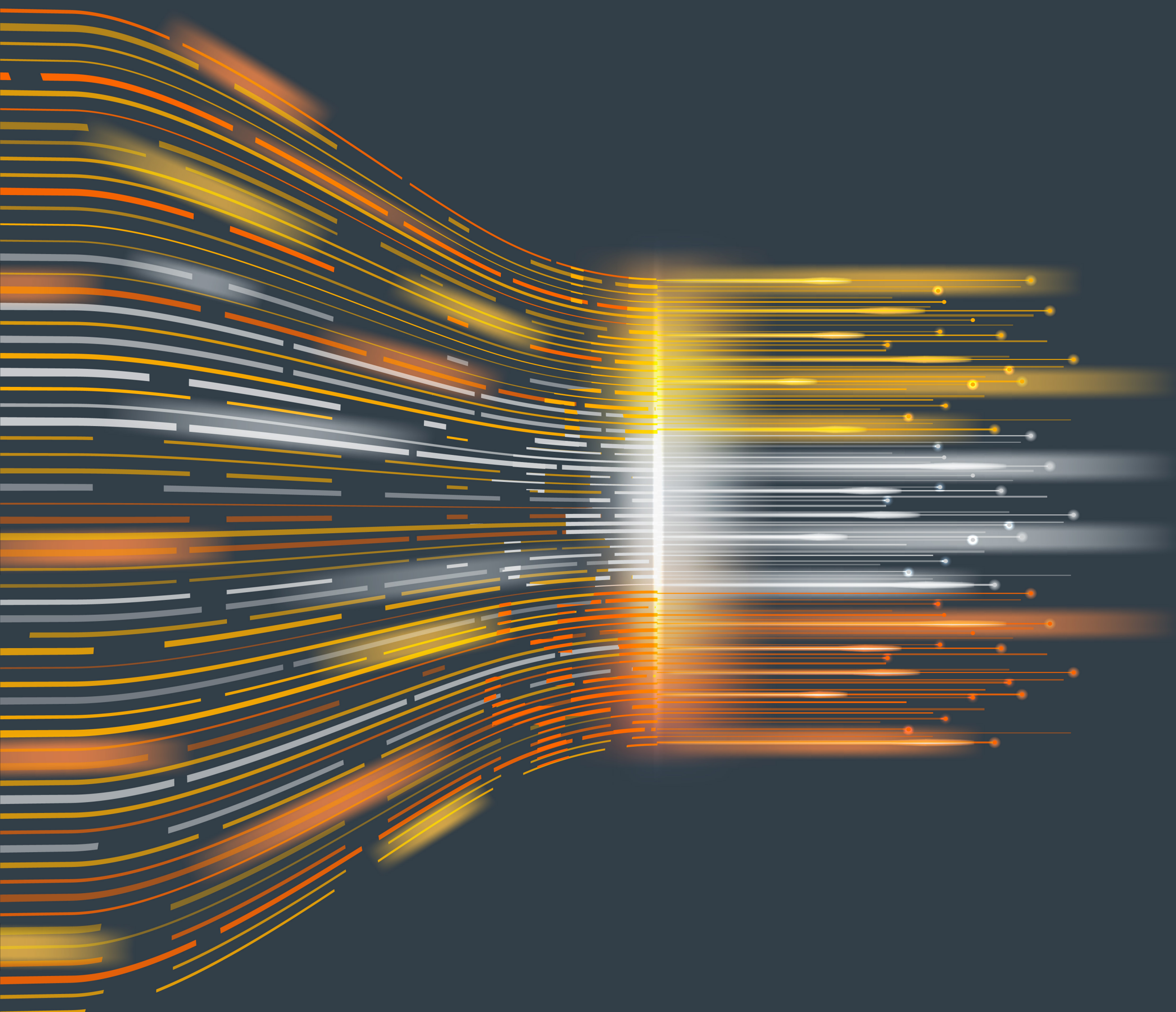


Our approach to inclusive design

Inspiring learning for all





Inclusive design is not just about ticking a box or meeting criteria; it is about creating the best possible learning experience for all learners.



Sabine De Kamps
Learning Experience Designer Team Leader
at Virtual College



Inclusive design is something that we're passionate about at Virtual College. We go the extra mile to make sure it's integral to our courses' designs, working on it tirelessly to make sure our content is learner-focused and human-centred.

Here we explain our process – what we do, how we do it and why it matters – giving you a clear picture of why inclusive design is something that shouldn't be ignored when it comes to your training solutions.

What is inclusive design?

Inclusive design is tightly intertwined with accessibility, an area in which many businesses are striving to improve. Overall, it acknowledges that all learners are individuals and have different needs, and it strives to meet them, one by one. It can't be a one-size-fits-all deal, it has to take everyone into account.

It is not just about one element of the content creation, it's about all the elements. Is the design suitable for those with vision impairments, or do we need to change the font size or colour? Is the language simple enough for learners with English as a second language? How will assistive technology interact with it? And so on. We consider everything.





It's all about the learner

We believe that the success of any piece of learning depends on a strong understanding of the learner. Which is exactly what we aim for when approaching inclusive design.

We sketch out 'learner personas': types of learners and their typical needs. By considering areas such as those listed below, we bring the learners to life, helping us to understand their typical requirements and how best we can support them.

- **Snapshot** – what is their life like? How old are they? What technology do they use?
- **Ability, aptitude and attitude** – how long have they had their disability? What are they capable of right now? What is their attitude towards technological support?
- **Assistive technology/aids** – what is available to help them?
- **How we can support?** – what can we do with our content in order to support them?

There are many ways in which our inclusive design embraces accessibility needs. Here are just a few examples to illustrate how we go about it.

Language

We pay particular attention to our language use, especially for learners with dyslexia or low literacy levels, or those with English as a second language. We make sure it is simplified when necessary and we consider the reading level, which may result in shorter sentences or a reduced amount of text on the page. We also allow for learners to work at their own pace and repeat any aspects of learning as needed.

Design

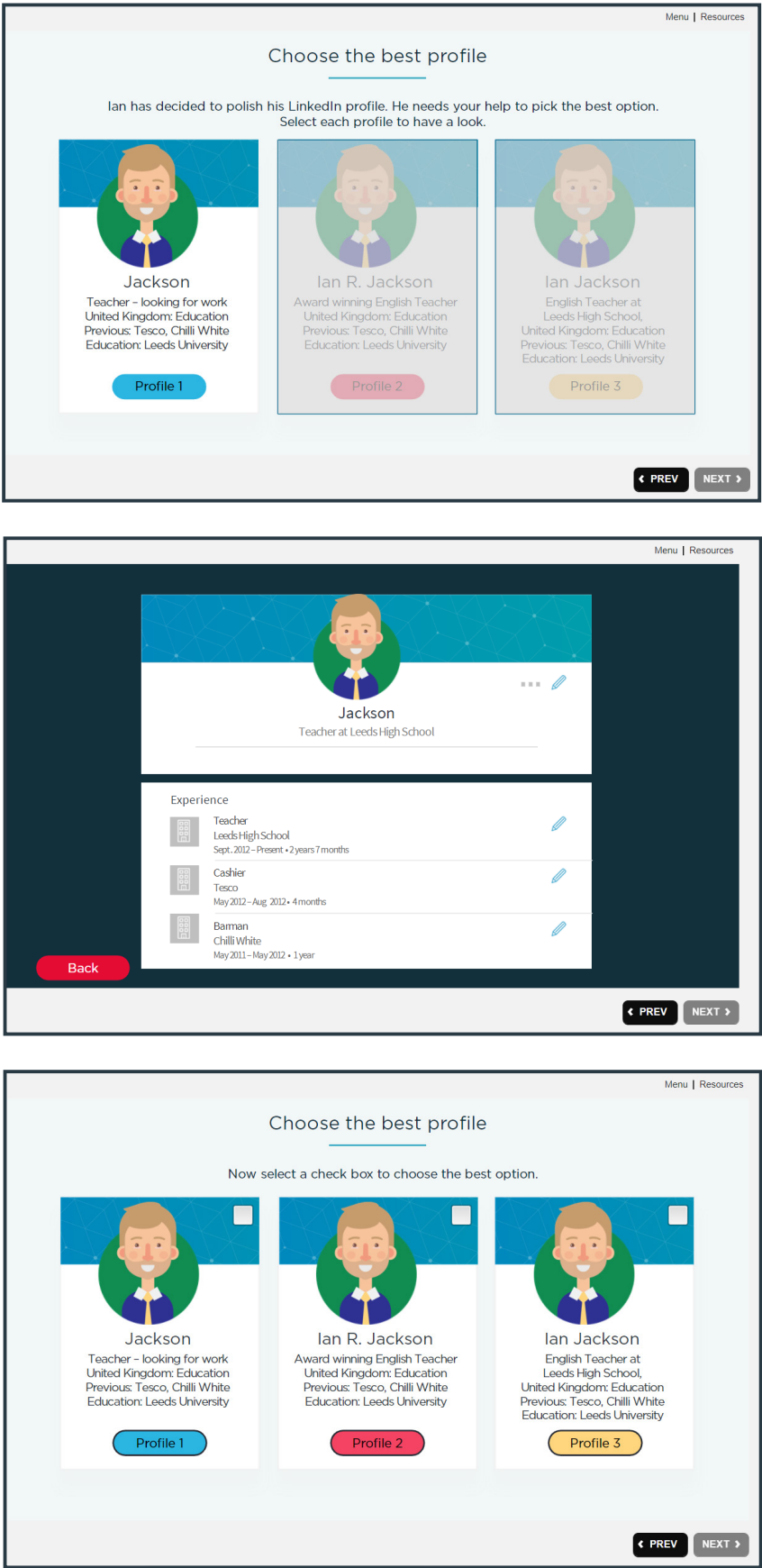
Depending on the learner, the design will be attended to in different ways, but our main considerations are layout, font type, size, colour and assistive technologies. Design is obviously also a big factor when supporting learners who are colour blind – we test the colours in a colour blindness simulator and never rely solely on colour to provide information.

Accessibility challenges

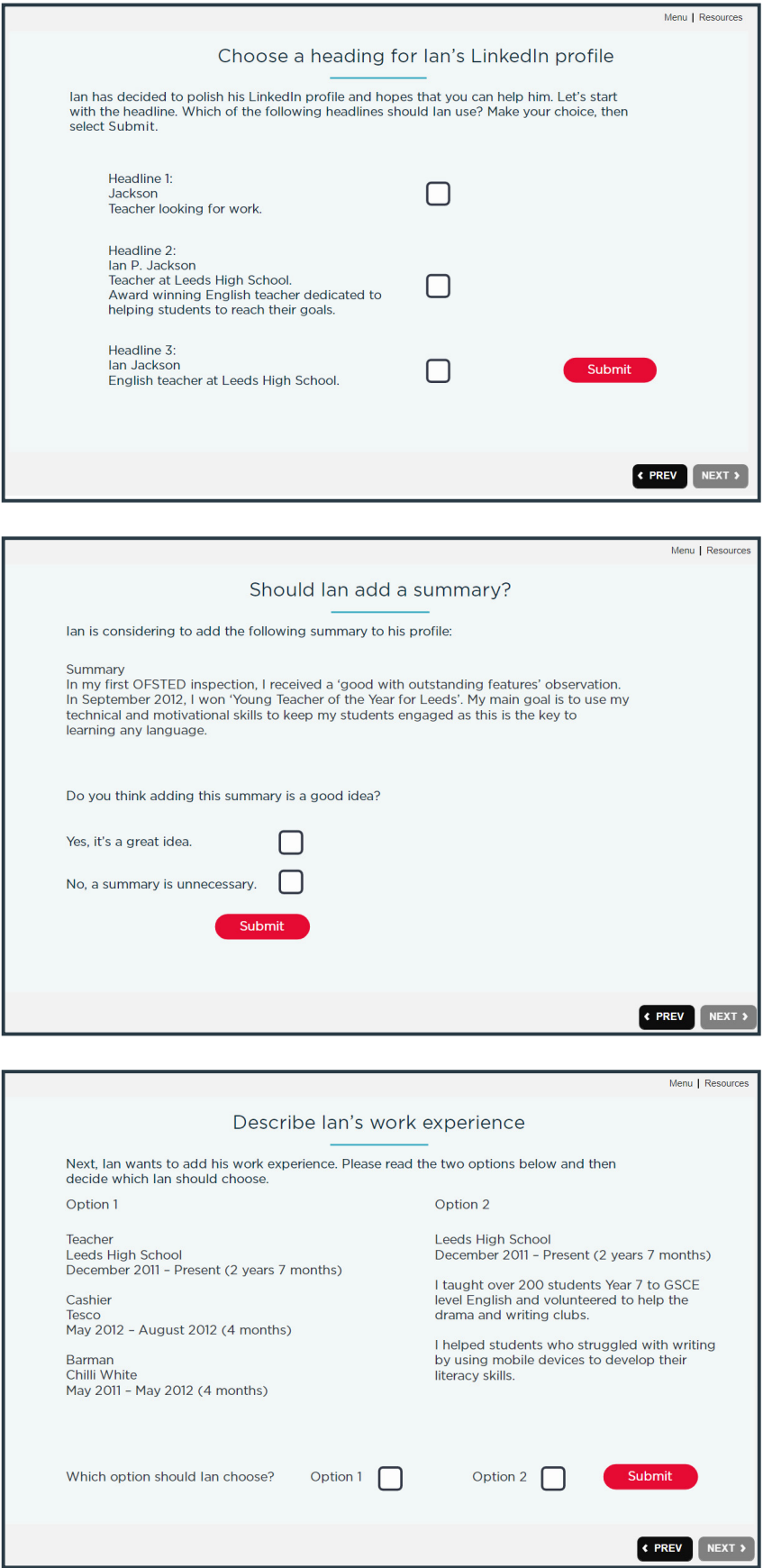
We strive to do our best for all learners. Certain authoring tools, such as Storyline, provide many fully accessible activity types, which we use widely. But, if these activities don't meet the learning outcomes for all users, then we will always provide an accessible alternative.

Here is an example taken from our Managing Your Digital Profile course:

Challenges for a sighted learner



Challenges for a vision-impaired learner



Here, sighted learners do an activity in which they have to compare and judge three different LinkedIn profiles. To support vision-impaired learners, we focus on different aspects of the profile, one at a time, ensuring that they can achieve the same learning outcome.

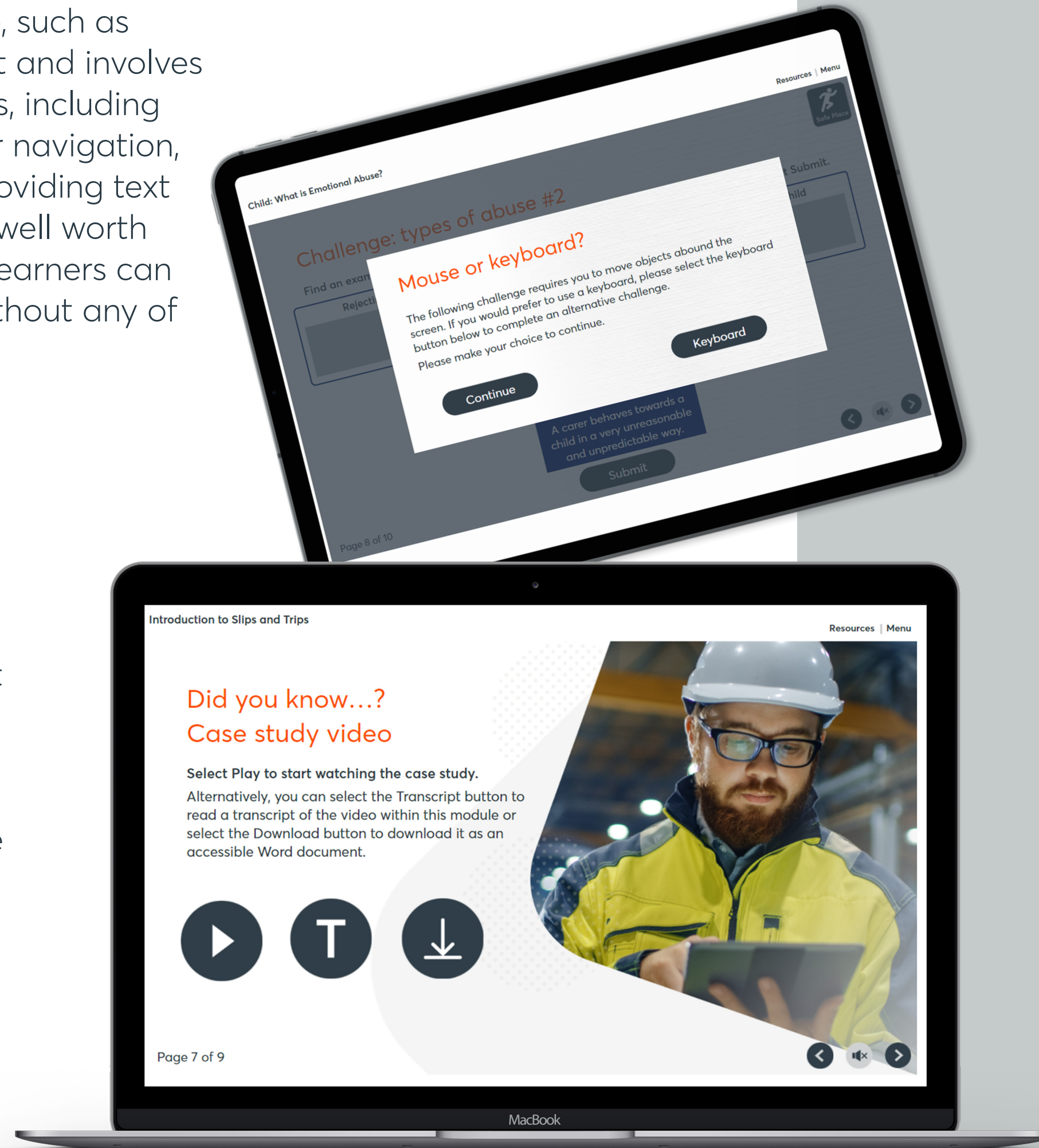
Setting up for assistive software

We need to make sure our modules are compatible with assistive software, such as screen readers. This is no easy feat and involves considering a huge range of things, including alt text requirements, tab order for navigation, how hyperlinks are written, and providing text and transcripts for videos. But it's well worth the effort, because it means that learners can easily interact with the training without any of the usual barriers.

Providing choice for the learner

We provide choice for the learner. The beauty of this is that it benefits all learners. They are able to choose what is best for them at the time, whether that is having the option to switch the narration off, or the ability to read subtitles in a noisy environment. The choice is in their hands.

For us, inclusive design is not just a box-ticking exercise, it's about all the learners.



Why you should care


We don't just do this because we want to make sure the learner is provided for, we do it for you as well. By making sure that your digital training solutions are accessible, we are helping you in a number of ways.

It helps you meet **legal requirements**. You can put your mind at ease, knowing that your products adhere to UK legislation.

It'll save you **time, money and hassle**, as you won't have to find alternative solutions for employees who can't participate in training due a disability.

It provides you with **one solution that works for everyone**. As inclusive design increases the flexibility of a product, the learner will engage with it more, knowing that there won't be barriers they need to overcome. They will no longer worry whether it can be read successfully by a screen reader, or if they can navigate it with a keyboard if they want to. If they are on a busy train, they won't worry about listening to videos, as they will have subtitles. Instead, they can simply begin the training and gain the knowledge they need.

It is good for your **reputation**. It shows your employees that you care and have taken all their needs into account. As a result, they will embrace the training wholeheartedly. It will also look great for any prospective employees, as it is a strong illustration of just how invested in your organisation you are.



At Virtual College, our purpose is simple: to change the shape of workplace training. As a result, all our training resources are built with one objective – to put your learners first. This not only means designing engaging and interactive courses, it also means providing the highest quality information at all times.

Bespoke training solutions

Using our vast learning and development experience, we work with a variety of organisations to design, build and deploy training solutions to meet their individual learning needs.

Ready-to-go training course catalogue

We create ready-to-go training courses to meet common workplace learning needs. With a catalogue of over 600 digital learning materials, our accredited and certified online training courses are designed to scale and perfect for organisations of any size.

Further information is available at **virtual-college.co.uk**

Quality yet cost effective.

Simple but results driven.

Learner-centric digital training.

Virtual College

Marsel House
Stephensons Way
Ilkley
West Yorkshire
LS29 8DD

+44 (0)1943 885 085
salesteam@virtual-college.co.uk
virtual-college.co.uk

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