

# Parisa: The parallels of accessibility and security

My name is Parisa and I'm a vice president of engineering and lead the Chrome Team. So as General manager of the Chrome Team, I lead a team of engineers and product managers and designers around the world who actually build Chrome and keep all of our users safe. I think accessibility is important to all aspects of technology, and when we think about its relevance for cybersecurity, you know, we ultimately want to keep everybody safe. I think of accessibility as making information, activities, or even environments meaningful, sensible, usable to as many people as possible. And when we're talking about this in a technology standpoint, it's usually about making information or services available to people with disabilities. Decisions we make based on our own abilities to enhance security can actually be ineffective. For example, you'll sometimes see the color red used for indication of a warning. Well, for somebody who's colorblind, like that is going to be ineffective. And so really thinking about accessibility when we're trying to keep people safe is super important for them to be effective. I've worked in the space of security for a really long time. And I do see some parallels between the spaces. I've really been able to see innovation driven when you're trying to solve a very specific security problem or a specific accessibility problem. Closed Captioning was originally designed and built to help people with hearing impairments, but it ends up helping everybody. For people who are new to the field of cybersecurity, it's just really important to remember that there's a range of abilities that you are wanting to serve. It's so important to get user research and feedback and a range of abilities in terms of testing the effectiveness of your security mitigations. I know it was scary for me early on. I didn't look like everybody else. I really struggled with whether I belonged. Finding people who could be mentors, having the courage to ask questions and recognize that you're rarely the only person with that question. And just sort of persevering through, sometimes hard moments can lead to breakthroughs and also just growing confidence. And one of the things I've learned is me having a different background than other people in this space was my own superpower. Instead of focusing on the delta between what I was and what the norm was in the room, I should feel a lot of pride in what made me unique and what unique skills and perspective I brought to the table.

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