

Knowbility Announces 2019 Accessibility Internet Rally Winners and Honors Accessibility Pioneer Jim Thatcher

On January 16, 2020, Knowbility will announce the winners of its Accessibility Internet Rally (AIR) and pay tribute to accessibility pioneer Jim Thatcher.

AUSTIN, TX, UNITED STATES, January 10, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Knowbility, Inc. will announce the winners of its [Accessibility Internet Rally](#) (AIR) on January 16, 2020 at a special event honoring participants and also paying tribute to accessibility pioneer [Jim Thatcher](#). The event will take place at the Holiday Inn Austin, 20 North Interstate Highway 35, Austin, Texas.

“Putting access in the context of a hackathon-like competition engages developers in the issue of digital inclusion in a creative, proactive way,” says Knowbility Executive Director Sharron Rush. “Being able to point to practical accessibility skills is also an effective way for web professionals to get hired and retained by top employers.”



Winners of the Accessibility Internet Rally (AIR) will be presented with their awards on Thursday, January 16, 2020.

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The dinner and networking event will also feature a short keynote by disability rights advocate and an author Lainey Feingold. Tickets are free for AIR 2019 participants and open to guests and the general public for a small donation to Knowbility. [Event tickets are available on Eventbrite.](#)

About AIR

The Accessibility Internet Rally (AIR) is a global web accessibility awareness program. Started by Knowbility in

1998 as a local hackathon in Austin, Texas, the program has evolved into a pioneering teaching and learning competition that puts accessibility and digital inclusion front and center.

In 2019, over 150 people volunteered in the AIR program: teams of web designers and developers building accessible websites for nonprofits and artists; accessibility expert mentors to guide the teams, and judges for the finalized websites, adding up to more than 4000 hours of donated time. Supported by: The City of Austin’s Cultural Arts Division, Verizon Media, Adobe, The Big History Project, LinkedIn, SXSW, Facebook, IAAP, Monkee-Boy, TechMap and HP.

Why Accessibility

1 in 4 adult Americans have a disability - about 61 million people. If the website they are visiting has not been designed to be accessible to everyone, many of those people are left out: they may be blind and using a special tool to navigate the web, they may be unable to hold down two keys at once on a menu choice, or they may rely on captioning or transcriptions to be able to access information in a video or podcast. Through AIR, Knowbility not only trains web designers and developers on accessible design, but also helps create more advocates for digital inclusion.



Accessibility pioneer, Jim Thatcher

About Jim Thatcher

Jim Thatcher was an early supporter of and advisor to the Accessibility Internet Rally. He won numerous awards for his pioneering work at IBM in the creation of the first text to speech engines that came to be known as screen readers. In addition, in 2008, Jim was recognized with the Martha Arbuckle Award for Lifetime Achievement from the City of Austin, Mayor's Committee for People With Disabilities. In 2008 he received two awards from the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) - the Making a Difference Award from the Special Interest Group on Computers and Society and a lifetime achievement award from the Special Interest Group on Accessible Computing. Dr. Thatcher passed away December 7 in Austin.

About Knowbility

Knowbility, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the mission to create a more inclusive digital world for people of all abilities. The organization developed from a community collaboration - the Accessibility Internet Rally - to raise awareness of the need for access to technology for people with disabilities. AIR Austin proved to be an effective model for engaging the information technology sector and the social services community in disability issues and in 1999 Knowbility incorporated to develop additional programs and services. Today, Knowbility's team of experts is internationally recognized for its role in creating the worldwide standard for web accessibility implementation and training.

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