

# Celebrating a decade of UniD

In 2014, The UniDescription Project was just an idea about how to make the world a more-accessible place through academic research.

Now 10 years later, our UniD team has a long list of accolades and accomplishments to its credit, including creating the leading production software for descriptions of static media (such as photographs and maps) in the world. We have made that software Open Access and Open Source, so everyone can use it. And the descriptions always are free to hear.

We have collaborated with about 200 U.S. National Park Service sites and other public attractions over the past decade to make media more accessible for their visitors using Audio Description. And we have trained hundreds of employees at those places about AD and media accessibility in general.

For those efforts, our work has been supported by grants from the NPS, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Google, among others. And our team members have been recognized with national and international awards from the American Council of the Blind, Helen Keller Services, the American Alliance of Museums, and with the MUSE Research & Innovation Award.

**DESCRIBING:** A vertical color photograph.

**DESCRIPTION:** Inside a Pearl Harbor National Memorial exhibit space, from left to right, volunteer Anthony Akamine touches a tactile display of a World War II airplane bomber while UniD Research Assistant Haruka Hopper plays Audio Description about the bronze object. In the background, on a wall-sized illustration, the same type of Japanese airplane can be seen dropping a torpedo into Pearl Harbor. Hopper has a Go Pro camera strapped to her body, with the camera facing forward and capturing Akamine's reactions to the media he's being provided at this location. Hopper also holds her smartphone in her right hand, about chest level on Akamine, just a few inches away from him, so he clearly can hear the description. Akamine is holding his white cane in his left hand and is touching the model airplane with his right hand, looking down toward the model.



## Highlights from July 2023 to June 2024, including D10

- **D10, aka Descriptathon 10, featured teams from 16 public places:** UniD's latest international workshop, in February 2024, welcomed and helped to make more-accessible: Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park (Kentucky), Acadia National Park (Maine), Aquariums and Zoos of America (Multiple Sites, U.S.), Big Hole National Battlefield (Montana), Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana), Joshua Tree National Park (California), Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park (Washington), Natchez Trace Parkway (Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee), Nicodemus National Historic Site (Kansas), Pinnacles National Park (California), Rock Creek Park (District of Columbia), Rocky Mountain National Park (Colorado), Saint Croix Island International Historic Site (Maine), Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway (Wisconsin, Minnesota), Scotts Bluff National Monument (Nebraska), and Sands Point Preserve Conservancy (New York).
- **Conducting New Research:** Dr. Brett Oppegaard, UniD Research Assistant Sajja Koirala, and other UniD research collaborators conducted field research at Pearl Harbor National Memorial in Hawaii, Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park in California, Pullman National Historical Park in Illinois, Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Ohio, and Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C., this past year. Results of those studies will be published soon.