

Accessibility:

What is it, and why is it a law?

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Why we are here today...

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This session will focus on what is accessibility and the multiple areas that it covers. We discuss what are current laws and requirements along with new and upcoming changes for 2018. We will discuss who is responsible for accessibility, what they are responsible for, and how to best meet those responsibilities. We will discuss what are the best plans for action for schools and districts that are faced with accessibility issues.



What is Accessibility?

Accessibility means access. It refers to the ability for everyone, regardless of disability or special needs, to access, use and benefit from everything within their environment. It is the “degree to which a product, device, service, or environment is available to as many people as possible.”



What is ICT Accessibility?

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Information
Communication
Technology



Formal Definition of ICT

- Information technology and other equipment, systems, technologies, or processes, for which the principal function is the creation, manipulation, storage, display, receipt, or transmission of electronic data and information, as well as any technology-based equipment. Information and Communication Technologies include but are not limited to: academic and administrative software applications; websites and web-based or mobile applications; interactive online services: web conferencing, live-streaming, live chat and discussion board functions; search engines and databases; electronic communications and electronic content: email, electronic documents, electronic books and electronic reading systems, course content, class assignments; library and course-related reference materials; multimedia (audio and video); personal response systems (“clickers”); telecommunications; audio and video technologies; and self-contained closed systems: ATMs, printers and copiers.



Why is Accessibility Important?

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- 10 – 20% of Americans have or will have a disability
- Accessibility and usability go hand-in-hand
- No one wants an OCR complaint
- It's the law
- It's the right thing to do



The History of Accessibility...

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- Rehabilitation Act Section 508 update, 1998 and 2017
- Americans with Disability Act, 1990 and 2008
- Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015



The History of Accessibility...

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Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act

- Provided the first-ever US federal accessibility standard for the internet.
- While Section 508 does not explicitly invoke federally funded programs like K-12 school systems, schools usually need to comply anyway. Since K-12 schools also receive state funding, the state will usually require Section 508 compliance because the Assistive Technology Act will not provide funding to states unless they guarantee that all their programs – including K-12 schools – will comply with Section 508.
- Recently Section 508 of The Rehabilitation Act has been updated including new guidelines and a definition, also they have included updated guidelines that reference Web Content Accessibility Guideline 2.0 AA compliance.



The History of Accessibility...

Americans with Disability Act (ADA), 1990

- The ADA has five Title parts, for reasons of accessibility we are interested in Title II and Title III.
- Title II, prohibits disability discrimination by all public entities at the local levels. Most importantly it states that communications with persons with disabilities must be “as effective as communications with others”
- Title III, which deals with public accommodation of people with disabilities
- **Most OCR complaints site ADA**



The History of Accessibility...

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- ESSA keeps it very light in regards to accessibility and ICT.

ESSA talks about accessibility by requiring upon request based off of the Americans with Disability Act, that “materials need to be provided in an alternative formats. “



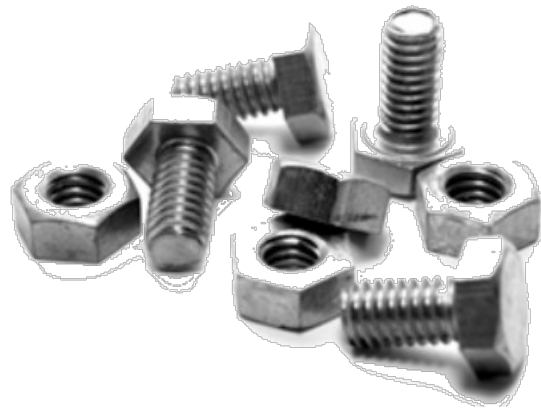
Current Requirements

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We have gone over the history of accessibility laws, but what are the nuts and bolts?





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Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0



WCAG 2.0

WCAG is broken up into three compliance levels

- A
- AA
- AAA

Note: the latest law updates require that all Information Communication Technology be a minimum of level AA compliant



Now what? You still haven't told us who is responsible...



Responsibility

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When it comes to responsibility, school districts are responsible for making sure that all Information Communication Technology that is published, posted and procured meet the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act Section 508.



How do we know if our ICT is Section 508 Compliant?

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- You can ask if they are WCAG 2.0 AA Compliant?
 - You can ask the companies where you bought the product from
 - You can ask your IT department
 - You can ask professional accessibility experts
 - You can research products by voluntary product accessibility templates (VPAT)
- You can ask to have your ICT audited for compliance
- You can find free resources



Free resources like IATP

IATP can offer assistance in several ways

- IATP can offer free three page audits of web sites
- IATP can offer free training on how to make accessible documents
- IATP can offer free assistance with questions about accessibility and procurement
- IATP can offer free assistance with general questions about accessibility



General Resources

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- IATP's ICT Accessibility – www.iltech.org
- WebAim – www.webaim.org
- W3C Web Accessibility Initiative –
www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag
- Illinois Information Technology Accessibility Act –
www.dhs.state.il.us/iitaa
- Twitter search #A11Y



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