DISABILITY AWARENESS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE ASPECTS OF ACCESSIBILITY

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Who among you are Content Creators?

- Websites
- Digital Documents
- Print Media
- E-mail
- Listservs
- Blogs
- Forums
- RSS

(Note: If you are involved in creating any of the above applications, you are a Content Creator.)

Who is this information intended for?

Digital content is often created for use by:

- Employees
- The Public
- Customers
- Contractors
- Human Resources
- Legal Professionals
- Government (Federal, State, Local)
- Job Applicants

What about people with disabilities?

Digital content, when developed, needs to take into account the needs of people with the following types of disabilities:

- Hearing
- Sensory
- Motor
- Cognitive

Accessibility is the Law

The following laws may apply:

- California Government Code 11135
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794d)
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (Title I)
- California Unruh Civil Rights Act

Do these laws apply to us?

Let's see…

Do these laws apply to us?

California Government Code 11135

❑ Yes… If your entity's program or activity is conducted, operated, or administered by the state or by any state agency, or funded directly by the state, or receive any financial assistance from the state.

Do these laws apply to us?

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794d)

❑ Yes… if your entity is a California State Government agency or department, or if you receive State Funds, or contract with the State of California.

Do these laws apply to us?

Americans with Disabilities Act (Title I – regarding Employment)

- ❑ Yes… if you are a private employer, state and local government, employment agencies or labor union.

Do these laws apply to us?

California Unruh Civil Rights Act

❑ Yes… applies to all businesses, including but not limited to hotels and motel, restaurants, theaters, hospitals, barber and beauty shops, housing accommodations, public agencies, and retail establishments

Issues to be concerned about

Adobe PDF files, Microsoft Power Point presentations and Microsoft Word documents are the most common formats for digital documents.

- To be accessible, they must be <u>perceivable</u>, <u>operable</u>, <u>understandable</u> and <u>robust</u>.

Ah-Hah!

As content creators…

- We <u>all</u> play an important part in complying with the law and ensuring that our customers and employees have access to our programs and services.

4 Principles to Consider

Perceivable

- Your digital documents must be perceivable. That is, visible to any person's one or more senses, even if she is a blind user, or one with low vision.

4 Principles to Consider

Operable

- Digital content must be operable. That is, any user should be able to perform the necessary interactions with it. This most often involves interactive forms and navigation.

4 Principles to Consider

Understandable

- Information presented must be understandable by those attempting to use the information. That is why it is important to anticipate user-interaction. Targeted users should include people with learning disabilities and people with cognitive limitations.

4 Principles to Consider

Robust

- Digital documents should be designed for presentation to people with disabilities using different, current and future assistive technologies.

Best Practices for PDF, Word, and PPT

PDF (Portable Document Format)

- Tagged Reading Order
- OCR all Scanned content
- Identify document language

Best Practices for PDF, Word, and PPT

Word

- Stop using "BOLD" and Instant Font and Font Size
- Instead… create Style Sheets
- Identify Table Headings using styles
- Label image content

Best Practices for PDF, Word, and PPT

PowerPoint

- Create a text or HTML equivalent
- Label image content

What else can we do?

It is important, as a start, to:

- Train all content creators
- Create accessibility policy with top-level buy-in.
- Do not procrastinate!

What's in it for us?

Visitors with disabilities generate revenue.

- Content providers vastly underestimate this market.

- Online shopping and services are very important to people with disabilities, who often can't drive or face other difficulties shopping in a brick-and-mortar environment.

- Companies that fail to reach this market are losing out on a powerful source of revenue and a key demographic of loyal repeat-customers.

What's in it for us?

Reach a larger audience.

- Approximately one in five Americans (20%) has some type of disability, and as the country ages that percentage is expected to increase.

- People with disabilities span ethnic, economic and geographic boundaries.

- Failing to provide access to this diverse and numerous segment of the American population is contrary to the interests of anyone providing online content or services.

What's in it for us?

It's the law.

- Failure to take reasonable steps to provide access to web content for visitors with disabilities is a violation of the ADA and Section 508.

- Content providers who do not comply with these laws may be subject to costly lawsuits that invariably lead to the revision of the web content, loss of government funding, or termination of government contracts.

What's in it for us?

It's not as difficult as you might think.

- Many web content providers don't provide access for the people with disabilities because they believe that the cost of updating their site to bring it "up to code" is prohibitive, or that their web site's visual appeal will suffer adversely from the changes.

- This is simply untrue.

- Compared with potential revenues generated by visitors with disabilities, the cost of revamping web content to meet accessibility standards is insignificant and need not interfere with the site's appearance at all.

Contact Us

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