



Section 508 Acquisition Tools: *The Buy Accessible Wizard*

Special Presentation to
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Terry Weaver, GSA (CITA)
Skip Crane (The Accessibility Forum Staff)



Just for Background



- "Section 508" legislation
 - Any acquisition of Electronic and Information Technology (E&IT) must meet applicable technical standards for "accessibility"
 - Goal: People with disabilities have access to and use of electronic information that is comparable to people without disabilities
- Part of the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR)



Responsibilities Under the Final FAR Rule For Implementing Section 508




Federal Register / Vol. 40, No. 69 / Wednesday, April 20, 2005 / Rules and Regulations 26895

Requirements Development, Market Research, and Solicitation


The requiring official is not limited to which standards apply to the procurement, using the Access Board's EIT Accessibility Standards at 36 CFR part 1194. Thus, the requiring official and product-market research to determine the availability of compliant products and services under various FAR sections. The requiring official must determine which standards, if any, apply to the procurement because of the contract award liability FAR 201.10 is added to FAR 201.10. Technical specifications and agency needs will be developed based on the product, research, and agency needs. This information would be relevant to the product, if any. The information would then be used, as a tool, to address order or other FAR 201.10. The information, if any, would be used to address the needs of the user for an example.

"The requiring official must identify which standards apply to the procurement, using the Access Board's EIT Accessibility Standards at 36 CFR part 1194."

"Then the requiring official must perform market research to determine the availability of compliant products and services; vendor websites and the Section 508 website would be helpful here."

GSA Access Board's EIT Accessibility Standards (36 CFR part 1194) 


- **Subpart A – General**
 - 1194.1 Purpose
 - 1194.2 Application
 - 1194.3 General exceptions
 - 1194.4 Definitions
 - 1194.5 Equivalent facilitation
- **Subpart B – Technical Standards**
 - 1194.21 Software applications and operating systems
 - 1194.22 Web-based intranet and internet information and applications
 - 1194.23 Telecommunications products
 - 1194.24 Video and multimedia products
 - 1194.25 Self contained, closed products
 - 1194.26 Desktop and portable computers
- **Subpart C – Functional Performance Criteria**
 - 1194.31 Functional performance criteria
- **Subpart D – Information, Documentation, and Support**
 - 1194.41 Information, documentation, and support

GSA Subpart B -- Technical Standards 

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Provisions (a) thru (k) ... and (k) has 4 parts!

“(j) Products that transmit or conduct information or communication, shall pass through cross-manufacturer, non-proprietary, industry-standard codes, translation protocols, formats or other information necessary to provide the information or communication in a usable format. Technologies which use encoding, signal compression, format transformation, or similar techniques shall not remove information needed for access or shall restore it upon delivery.”

GSA Question 

How can people with requiring responsibility ...

- Identify which specific standards apply
- Perform market research to determine availability of compliant products and services
- Demonstrate “due diligence” (document an audit trail for Section 508 compliance)
- ... and do so effectively, efficiently, and consistently?



Tools



- Quick Reference Guide
 - Available from www.buyaccessible.gov (select "Click here for the Section 508 Web Site")
 - Result of the technical activities of the Accessibility Forum
 - Intent was to make the set of Resource Documents published in Jan '03 easier to use
 - Full of useful information ...



But The Quick Reference Guide is STILL a very difficult document to use as a Tool ...



Agency Responsibilities for Complying with Section 508



"The requiring official must identify which standards apply to the procurement, using the Access Board's EIT Accessibility Standards at 36 CFR part 1194."⁴

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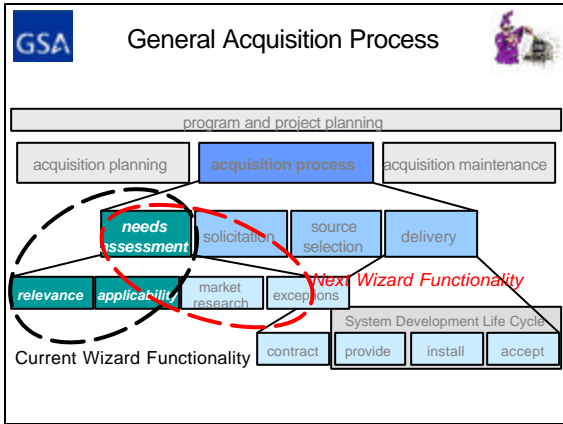
Lacks context, usability, and ability to deliver information on a timely basis



GSA Sponsored Developing The Buy Accessible Wizard



- A web-based application that:
 - Guides users through a process of gathering data and providing information about electronic and information technology (E&IT) and Section 508 compliance
 - Compiles a running summary documenting the process and its results
- The Buy Accessible Wizard makes compliance with the requirements of Section 508 as easy and thorough as possible



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- Wizard Release History and Plan**
- Wizard Release 1 (superseded by R1.5)
 - Supporting Section 508 Relevance and Applicability
 - Wizard Release 1.5 (current)
 - Supporting Section 508 Market Research for micro-purchases
 - Interaction with Buy Accessible Market Research Data Center
 - Independent, central repository for E&IT accessibility information
 - Evolution of the GSA legacy Buy Accessible portal
 - Wizard Release 2.0 (available end September)
 - Supporting other identified user scenarios
 - COTS “macro-purchases”
 - Custom E&IT acquisitions
 - Bundled E&IT contracts
 - Supporting vendor interaction with Market Research Data Center
 - Maintain vendor E&IT product / service accessibility information





Benefits



- Easy and Efficient
- Effective and Correct
- Consistent and Complete
- Information is Reusable
- Extensive Beta Deployment Testing
 - A user at GSA redid a manual analysis using the Wizard
 - The manual process took over a week; the Wizard took less than 20 minutes ... and the Wizard identified other applicable provisions from the standard the use missed with the manual process
 - "The Buy Accessible Wizard is easy to use. All I have to do is be able to provide my system requirements, and the Buy Accessible Wizard will provide a report of the 508 requirements that need to be considered when purchasing new E&IT."



Wizard Release History and Plan



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Wizard Deployment Options



- Wizard for deployment to any federal agency as an Intranet application
- Includes agency hosted Wizard user data store
 - Supports users save / pause / resume / review functionality
 - Allows for agency Section 508 acquisition management reporting
 - Maintained via the Wizard Product Support Website
 - Includes C&A letter available to all agencies
- Wizard for use by any federal agency via GSA hosted Internet application
- No local user data storage functionality
 - Local data save via browser *file save as* function
 - No agency data management capability



These Are Our Plans



- What are your opinions?
- How well or not does this approach "fit" with procedures you already have in place?
- How will procedures have to be modified?



Thank You!



www.buyaccessible.gov

For more information contact

Terry Weaver / GSA
(terry.weaver@gsa.gov)

Helen Chamberlain / GSA
(helen.chamberlain@gsa.gov)

Skip Crane / Accessibility Forum
(cranes@aticorp.org)
