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UW-Madison
World Wide Web Accessibility Policy

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Policy

1. All new or revised Web pages and other Web resources published, hosted or otherwise provided by the University must be in compliance with the World Wide Web standards defined in the Federal Rehabilitation Act Section 508, specifically subsections 1194.22 and subsection 1194.31.

    A. Reasonable effort must be taken to ensure that legacy Web pages and resources are in compliance with these subsections of Federal Rehabilitation Act Section 508 no later than November 1, 2003. That effort must be documented. Legacy Web pages and resources will be considered those that are published prior to November 1, 2001.

    B. Upon specific request, information on legacy Web pages and resources is to be made available to any individual needing access to such content, by revision or otherwise. The unit responsible for the creation of the information on the Web is responsible for providing that access.

    C. Upon specific request, information on Web pages and resources in archive status (e.g. no longer in use but subject to records retention plans) containing core administrative or academic information, official records, and similar information) is to be made available/accessible to any individual needing access to such content, by revision or otherwise.

    D. What constitutes a Web page or other Web resource is to be interpreted broadly, and for example, does not depend upon the type of client or host device, the type of software on the client or host devices, or the technical means by which the client and host communicate over the Web.

2. Web pages or resources specifically requested to be made accessible as part of a formal accommodation request shall be made accessible as soon as possible, or an equally effective alternative shall be provided. Equally effective means that it communicates the same information and provides the equivalent functions in as timely a fashion as does the Web page or resource.

3. For items 1 and 2 above, undue administrative or financial burdens may contribute to a determination that alternative formats be used to provide the information to individuals requiring use of the information. If compliance in specific instances appears to be impossible or an undue burden, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) may grant exceptions.

4. Each Web site must contain an accessible link or a person to contact if users have trouble accessing content within the site. This would usually be the Web developer or publisher. The addition of a link or contact person is not sufficient, in and of itself, to comply with the World Wide Web Accessibility Policy.

Background

The World Wide Web is a major, if not a primary, source of information for many people. Acknowledging that the University of Wisconsin–Madison (hereafter referred to as the "University") is engaged in Web development and publishing for all its constituencies, this policy establishes minimum standards for Web accessibility.

The University, along with UW–System, endorses the Guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) as the standard for World Wide Web accessibility and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. W3C is composed of over 400 member organizations world-wide (public and private) developing common protocols to promote the evolution of the World Wide Web and ensure its inter-operability. As part of its work, the W3C has developed accessibility guidelines for the World Wide Web. The standards of the Federal Rehabilitation Act (Section 508) are consistent with the W3C Guidelines and provide achievable, well documented guidelines for implementation.

Authority

Issued by the UW-Madison Vice Provost for Information Technology.

Enforcement

If necessary, at the discretion of the university leadership or their designees, some or all non-compliant portions of Web pages and resources may be brought into compliance by designated staff or contractors and the expense of that work may be charged to the UW-Madison unit that is responsible for assuring the accessibility of that information on the Web.

Related Documents

The associated *Implementation Procedures*, and the *IT Policy Glossary* are extensions of the policy.

Current *Implementation Procedures* – Attached.

Original *Memorandum* about this policy – Attached.

IT Policy Glossary – https://kb.wisc.edu/itpolicy/glossary

Contact

Please direct questions about this policy to accessibility@cio.wisc.edu.

World Wide Web Accessibility Implementation Procedures

for the UW-Madison World Wide Web Accessibility Policy

These procedures implement the UW-Madison World Wide Web Accessibility Policy. The rationale is discussed in the background section of the policy.

A. Priority of Implementation

Priority should be given to creating accessible Web pages and resources for core institutional information such as course work, registration, advising, admission, catalogs, and student services information. Units with large Web sites and resources containing core institutional information should establish priorities for ensuring access to these according to the pages and resources being used or requested most often. For setting priorities to make Web pages and resources accessible, the following guidance is suggested:

1. All new and revised web pages should be made accessible at the time of creation or revision.

2. The top 20% of existing Web pages and resources most frequently used (e.g. that get the largest number of hits) should be placed in the first priority for review, and made accessible as indicated. Pages and resources required for participation, funding, disability-related services and other key information or functions needed by people with disabilities, not already in the top 20%, should also be placed in the first priority. Each department or University entity is responsible for determining the top 20% used and other first priority Web pages and resources.

3. Any remaining pages and resources providing core institutional information or functions should be reviewed, and made accessible as indicated.

4. All other Web pages and resources should be reviewed, and made accessible as indicated.

B. Recommended Assessment Procedures

It is recommended that a variety of evaluation methods be used to test the accessibility of Web pages and resources, including automated testing, client and/or device testing, expert evaluation, and user testing.

C. Exception Procedure

Narrowly tailored exceptions to this policy may be granted by the UW–Madison Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) in specific instances where compliance is not possible or would constitute an undue administrative or financial burden. To request an exception send an e-mail to accessibility@cio.wisc.edu.

D. Resources

Information about training, consulting, and technological tools can be found at http://www.doit.wisc.edu/accessibility as well as definitions and resources related to the Federal Rehabilitation Act Section 508 and W3C.

Memorandum

To: Deans and Directors

From: Melany S. Newby Vice Chancellor for Legal and Executive Affairs, ADA Coordinator; Annie Stunden, Chief Information Officer (CIO), Director, Division of Information Technology

Re: World Wide Web Accessibility Policy

Date: October 22, 2001

In December 2000, UW–Madison developed and adopted a policy concerning World Wide Web Accessibility that demonstrated the University's commitment to making information and communications technologies accessible to individuals with disabilities. The policy was based on the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) guidelines as the standard for World Wide Web accessibility. UW–Madison continues to strive to achieve the goals of the World Wide Web Consortium.

In June 2001, the Federal Rehabilitation Act's Section 508 standards were established as the level of compliance required for institutions receiving federal funding. These standards, consistent with W3C's, provide achievable, well documented guidelines for implementation. The attached, updated UW–Madison World Wide Web Accessibility Policy therefore endorses compliance with the Federal Rehabilitation Act's Section 508 standards, specifically subsections 1194.1 through 1194.22 and 1194.31. Web sites may still be developed and presented using the W3C guidelines; the Section 508 standards establish the threshold or minimum for compliance. The updated policy also sets forth a method for identifying portions of current Web sites to be brought into compliance as a priority, based on number of "hits" or specific requests for access.

Compliance with the Federal Rehabilitation Act's Section 508 standards should help the University achieve the goal of ensuring that individuals with disabilities have access to the increasing amount of Web-based material originating on our campus. There is a strong linkage between the required standards and the development of current technologies that support compliance with these standards.

The updated policy supports the University's effective use of emerging technologies in instruction; revised time-lines help make accessible the information residing on legacy pages. Our success requires a continual coordination of programmatic needs, technology, and services. The policy will therefore be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness in an environment of rapidly changing technology.

Information about training, consulting, and technological tools can be found at http://www.doit.wisc.edu/accessibility/ (Web Accessibility Resources) as well as definitions and resources related to the Federal Rehabilitation Act–Section 508 and W3C.

Where compliance is not possible or may require extraordinary measures, exceptions to this policy may be granted by the Office of the Chief Information Officer. Your inquiries and requests for assistance are welcomed.