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State of Maine

Standing Accessibility Committee

2002 Annual Report

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to give an overview of why accessible technology is important to the State of Maine, as well as to report on accomplishments of the Accessibility Committee during this past year and initiatives planned for the upcoming year.

Also in this document are some frequently asked questions that highlight current resources available within state government in the area of accessibility. These FAQ's highlight the information the Committee has pulled together to date in order to provide "one stop shopping" for individuals and agencies who need information or assistance in this area.

This year the Committee is putting a significant focus on training, in both the skills and awareness areas. As we further develop the technical skills required in this area and broaden the overall awareness of the impact of deploying technology that is not accessible, we will better prepare the State to meet the overall objective of incorporating universal accessible design into our everyday business processes. It will no longer be an extra step we must take to provide "special accommodations."

Should you have any questions and/or comments on this report, please communicate them to Mary Silva in the Office of the CIO. (mary.silva@maine.gov or 624-7574)



*There are no boundaries
to what we can accomplish
with technology,
when there are no barriers
to block our access.*

The Committee wishes to thank those who have served as full time members and are now moving into advisory capacities.

Joyce Kennedy, Jericho Consulting

Scott McNeill, Department of Labor

We thank you for all the time and effort during the years you participated on the Committee and we look forward to the opportunity to continue to benefit from your expertise in the area of accessible technology.

We would also like to express our sincere appreciation for the ongoing support and leadership of Commissioner Janet E. Waldron for her commitment to ensuring equal access of information through technology. Her vision and stewardship has allowed Maine to be one of the leaders in the nation in providing our citizens technology without barriers.

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What is Information Technology Accessibility?

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 defines accessible information technology in the following manner:

Information Technology Accessibility is ensuring that technology is such that individuals with disabilities have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access and use by those who are not individuals with disabilities.

Why is Information Technology Accessibility Important?

In 2001 it was estimated that with the aging population in the United States, 35% of our population may have some type of impairment and/or disability that would require some type of accommodation. State of Maine 2000 Census figures show that almost 30% of Maine's population was 55 or older, and this does not take into account those individuals who are dealing with physical and mental challenges.

Statistics show that a third of individuals with disabilities are underemployed and require assistance due to their unemployment or non-independent living. Costs of support (estimated to be in excess of \$200 **billion** dollars nationwide) can not be solely based on cost of their assistance, as we must also factor in the loss of these individuals' productivity (such as loss of tax revenues, contributions to society and creation of wealth).

President George W. Bush signing the New Freedom Initiative stated that this initiative would help Americans with disabilities by increasing access to assistive technologies, expanding educational opportunities, increasing the ability of Americans with disabilities to integrate into the workforce, and promoting their increased access into daily community life.

This additional/improved access to technology and related information is critical to Maine, especially with our aging population. Accessible e-government services for our citizens means that those requiring assistance in traveling can obtain services from the State without relying upon outside intervention. Additionally, through Maine's portal, they can obtain information that may improve the quality of their lives in many areas, such as ordering large print library books through the mail, receiving air quality notices, updates on legislative issues and current events within their

community, eligibility for services and medical information, again, all without having to leave their homes.

Obviously, the same pertains to those with physical or mental challenges who may not be a part of our aging population. Accessible technology can allow a blind student to obtain the same data on the internet that his peers can; provide a mentally challenged individual the ability to receive information in a format that he/she can more easily filter; and provide someone with limited mobility technology that will allow them to perform the same job as fully mobile counterparts.

“Access to electronic and information technology for employees and members of the public will increase productivity, and, for people with disabilities, access is required by state and federal regulation. Each State worker is responsible for removing discriminatory practices. When we send a document attached to an email, design a web page or site, post a document on the web, or arrange the purchase of electronic equipment or software, we have a responsibility to understand and implement standards of accessibility to ensure the materials are readable by people with sensory, cognitive, and mobility impairments. Because electronic and information technologies are the common medium for communication today, alternative format materials and programs should be provided to allow people with disabilities to read them. Each Department's ADA Coordinator can help staff identify ways to remove barriers and ensure access to information.”

Eric Dibner, ADA Coordinator for the State of Maine



The Standing Accessibility Committee

Committee History

The Information Services Policy Board recognized the State's commitment to meeting the needs of its employees and citizens with disabilities and adopted a resolution in January 1998 that fully supported the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regarding reasonable accommodations in the workplace. The Policy Board authorized the establishment of a standing accessibility committee to evaluate and advise the Board regarding technological developments and products to ensure compliance with the ADA and other relevant laws. The subcommittee's charge was broadened in November 1999 and their charter outlined as follows:

I need training on making my web site accessible; where would I begin to look for resources?

You can begin by going to the accessibility website training link at:

<http://www.maine.gov/cio/accessibility/training.html>

ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE CHARTER

- PROPOSE AND MAINTAIN STANDARDS FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ACCESSIBILITY
- EXPAND AND MAINTAIN AN EVALUATION METHODOLOGY FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ENDEAVORS
- PREPARE PERIODIC UPDATES ON TECHNOLOGY, ADA COMPLIANCE, AND OTHER LEGAL REQUIREMENTS
- COMPLETE AN ANNUAL REPORT ON PREVIOUS YEAR'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROPOSED FUTURE WORK PLAN
- WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR ON IDENTIFYING ISSUES AND PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SOLUTIONS

Function of the Committee

The Committee provides oversight to chartered sub-committees and project teams that work in specific areas related to accessibility, while the Chair and Staff perform the administrative tasks related to managing the workflow of the Committee.

The Committee may establish project related work groups to address specific issues identified by the ISPB or the Committee.

The Committee is responsible for designing an ongoing process for membership recruitment, selection and decision making criteria that meet the ISPB policy mandate. The process shall include the review and approval of the ISPB.

This year the Committee has chartered four sub-committees. They are the Membership Sub-committee, who were tasked with reviewing current membership and policies for recruiting new members; the Policy Review Sub-Committee who are in the process of reviewing current IT accessibility policies to see if they should be updated given technology changes since they were put in place; the Procurement Sub-Committee charged with improving contract language related to accessible technology and, most recently, the Accessible Web Design Sub-committee who will be working with agencies to bring web pages into compliance with current policies.

Additionally the Committee has provided oversight and support for multiple projects which are highlighted throughout this report.

“Accessibility is not expensive. Accessibility can be as simple as a touchpad mouse, headset or voice recognition. Accessibility can provide an individual with the ability to be a productive employee adding value to an organization while improving the quality of their own lives.”

Laurie Wills, Back to Work Coordinator, Maine Bureau of Human Resources



Committee responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Evaluate current and future technology and workarounds using the testing lab and independent verification and validation.
- Facilitate accessibility demonstrations of products being considered for purchase or development by Maine State Government.
- Evaluate national consensus standards to include but not be limited to: software applications and operating systems; web-based Intranet and Internet information and applications; telecommunications products; video and multimedia products; desktop and portable computers; information, documentation and support.
- Review and stay current with standards being developed by nationally and internationally recognized public and private groups, to ensure they meet Maine's needs and provide recommendations to the ISPB.
- Maintain and monitor procurement proposal for evaluation criteria in RFPs and vendor contracts.
- Develop a process for monitoring progress toward information accessibility statewide.
- Manage, expand and update the accessibility site and links.
- Provide ongoing information on new products, techniques and other changes related to accessibility in a variety of formats, such as articles in the Maine IS Technology newsletter.
- Review and stay current with federal and other states' legislation, policies, rules and regulations.
- Review and provide ongoing lists of accessibility tools and resources.
- Arrange for and provide information technology accessibility training for State employees, vendors, developers and buyers.
- Provide technical assistance for Departments as requested.

Committee Membership

The Accessibility Committee membership shall include expertise in all of the major disability, accessibility and information technology specialty areas. Major core areas represented on the Committee should include deaf and hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired, mobility and speech impaired and cognitive considerations. Members must have a vested interest in accessibility and represent a broad spectrum of skills and knowledge including legal, policy, national perspective, human resources, purchasing and various technologies.

If I have a question about accessible technology but am not sure who can assist me, who should I call?

If you're not sure of who can provide you with the resources you require, start by contacting Mary K. Silva (mary.silva@maine.gov or 624-7574) in The Office of the Chief Information Officer. As staff for the Accessibility Committee, she can provide you with the assistance you need.

Roles as defined by Membership Sub-Committee*

<i><u>State and Community</u></i>	<i><u>Disability Seats</u></i>	<i><u>Technology Seats</u></i>
<i>CIO, Staff Support</i>	<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>Assistive Technology</i>
<i>ISMG Representative</i>	<i>Hearing</i>	<i>Application Development</i>
<i>University System</i>	<i>Mobility</i>	<i>Webmaster/Designer</i>
<i>BIS (Central IT)</i>	<i>Visual</i>	<i>Telecommunications (phone, fax)</i>
<i>Community</i>		<i>Hardware</i>
<i>Vocational Rehabilitation</i>		
<i>Division of Purchases</i>		

****It's understood that one member may fill more than one role on the committee.***

Committee Members

Committee contact: Mary K. Silva 624-7574 or mary.silva@maine.gov

Valton Wood, Bureau of Information Services, DAFS, Committee Chair

Mary K. Silva, Office of the CIO, DAFS - Accessible Information Technology Coordinator for the State of Maine, Staff to the Accessibility Committee

Jean Arbour, Division of Purchases, DAFS

Carolyn Bebee, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, DOL

Barbara Buck, Bureau of Information Services, DAFS

Pauline Lamontagne Esq., Department of Education

Kathleen Powers, Statewide Assistive Tech Project, MaineCITE Coordinating Center, University College, University of Maine System

Richard Thompson, Division of Purchases, DAFS

Floyd White, Bureau of Information Services, DAFS

Gilbert Whitmore, ISMG member, Department of Education

Laurie Wills, Back to Work Coordinator, Employment Services, DAFS

Jan DeVinney, Rehabilitation Services, DOL—New member joining team in October

"It is a paradox that technology is sometimes the "savior" that solves one person's access issues, while creating new access issues for someone else. The GUI opened the world of computing for people with cognitive disabilities, and created a world of trouble for people who are blind. Beware lest you open the door for one person and let it shut in the next person's face."

Joyce Kennedy, Jericho Consulting



Focus Areas

The Committee this year documented five focus areas that allow the group to meet their charter, and then identified initiatives that would support each area. That list is as follows:

Visibility and Awareness

State of Maine accessibility website

- Review website content with team twice a year
- Meet monthly to add and/or update content
- Market our website
- Create FAQ for Accessibility Website

Annual report on accessibility to Cabinet

Awareness Conferences/Seminars sponsored by Committee

Participation in private sector IT functions to expand awareness of accessibility

MIST (Regular articles addressing accessibility)

Award/Recognition process for those leading the way for accessible technology

CIO's monthly report to Governor includes accessibility section

Identify where accessibility could be improved and make recommendations

Accountability

Ongoing monitoring and follow up when accessibility policies are breached

Compliance testing of state websites

Improved procurement language (contract administration)

New bid review process which will include accessibility representation

State of Maine self audit process for all websites, including review of accessibility

Hardware testing for accessibility compliance

Updating web accessibility standards

Software testing (Internal and Vendor)

Initiate waiver process with ISPB

When does the Accessibility Committee meet, and can anyone review their minutes?

They meet the 3rd Monday of every month and all notes are posted on the website:

<http://www.state.me.us/cio/accessibility>

Resource & Support

Identify testing resources (software and hardware)

Build an accessibility sharing library

Publish best practices on website and in MIST

Create list of expertise in accessibility to assist as needed

National Policy

Communication of national efforts

Research and link where appropriate Maine to national efforts

Sharing status of current private and public sector litigation

Training

Targeted product training on accessibility

- PDF
- Dreamweaver
- Home Page Reader
- Bobby

Software development training in universal design

Accessibility awareness incorporated into new employee orientation

Accessibility awareness in mandatory management training

Accessible web design

How do I find out the schedule of training sponsored by the accessibility committee?

There are multiple ways to get this information:

1. The accessibility website
<http://www.maine.gov/cio/accessibility/>
2. Contacting Mary K. Silva in The Office of the Chief Information Officer (624-7574, mary.silva@maine.gov) who serves as staff for the Committee.
3. Check with your Agency Technology Officer as all training notices are sent to the ISMG.

Accomplishments of 2001—2002, Identified by Focus Area

Visibility and Awareness

Promoted accessibility presence at private sector IT conferences

Launched new state accessibility website

Participated in National/State conferences highlighting accessibility efforts

- Maine's participated in Washington web cast on procuring accessible technology
- Maine's Office of the CIO and Division of Purchases were selected to contribute to a national survey of states and accessibility
- Maine's Director of Purchases requested NASPO (National Association of State Procurement Officers) add accessibility to their conference agenda.
- Maine demonstrated the accessibility features of MSTAMS (Maine's time and attendance system) to New York State at their annual IT Conference

Accountability

Coordinated vendor compliance status discussions

Chartered Policy and Standard Review Sub-Committee

Chartered Contract Language Review Sub-Committee

Resource & Support

Started resource library (software and documentation) for state access

Purchased appropriate software for individuals willing to test applications

Chartered Accessible Web Design Team

Launched new state accessibility website

Recruited additional resources for the Committee

Resources include:

- Web design personnel specializing in accessibility
- Members and identified resources for deaf community
- State Accessibility Coordinator
- Software design accessibility specialists

National Policy

Maine is represented on accessible information technology issues to the Northeast Regional ADA Technical Assistance Center, Boston MA.

Maine is also represented on a national work group of the Information Technology and Training Technical Assistance Center (ITTATC) that identifies issues and develops resources related to accessible electronic and information technology for states and the federal government.

What is the best resource to help me understand the requirements of Section 508?

While there are numerous resources to on this topic, the Department of Justice website provides an excellent overview.

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/508/508home.html>

Training

Delivered initial on site state training for Dreamweaver (web design product with improved accessibility features.)

Incorporated Dreamweaver training into standard BHR training curriculum

Held web accessibility testing workshops

Scheduled TTY training

Administrative

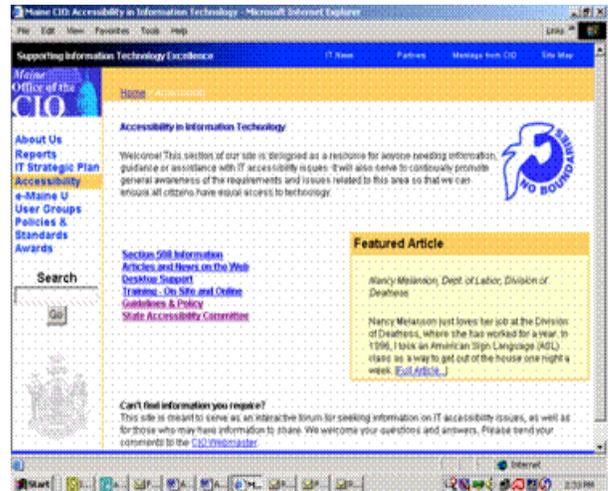
Refined Committee structure (addition of chair and staff)

Chartered Membership Sub-Committee for ongoing review of membership

Overview of Accomplishments

Accessibility Website

The launch of the new state accessibility website is the beginning of “one stop shopping” for those looking for IT accessibility information. The site includes State of Maine and Federal accessibility policies and guidelines; promotes work that has been done in the state relative to the area of accessibility; provides timely accessibility news articles; training resources; and highlights those who have contributed significantly to this most important area.



What if I know of efforts in the area of accessibility that should be recognized?

Success stories are posted as featured articles each month on the accessibility website. Simply send mail to the webmaster and she will see that it is posted.

Judy.A.Beloff@Maine.gov

Web Accessibility Training Initiatives

In addition to launching the new website, the Committee put a great deal of effort in assisting agencies with bringing their websites into compliance with the State’s web policy. Multiple accessibility training sessions were held on site; at little to no cost to agencies. Additionally, Leesa Lavigne from the Bureau of Information Services, who has been a champion of accessible web design, held workshops for those responsible for websites to review issues specific to their own sites, allowing them the opportunity to correct those issues while she was there to assist

Finally, the Committee recently chartered the Web Design Sub-Committee, co-chaired by Leesa Lavigne and Lisa Leahy-VanDeBossch, to provide

monthly accessibility training opportunities through workshops and seminars to the State's web designers.

This focus on accessible web sites is critical given the rapidly expanding e-gov services and information available on the web. Over 70% of Maine homes have computers and are connected to the Internet so we can not understate the criticality of providing our citizens with information that is accessible to all.

TTY Training



“TTY training is my favorite job responsibility. A TTY is a telecommunication device for the deaf and hard of hearing. I train state employees in its use, and show them how simple it is to use. I also inform state employees about deafness and deaf culture.”

Nancy Melanson, Assistant to the Director

It was recognized that because of the limited number of calls utilizing TTY devices many agencies were not providing regular training for staff where appropriate. The Committee organized a TTY workshop through the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services so multiple agencies could receive this training from Nancy Melanson, the Assistant to the Director of the Division of Deafness.

Nancy not only provided those who were interested in the training the basics of the TTY devices, but she reviewed some basic deaf culture issues with them and demonstrated American Sign Language (ASL).

Nancy has offered her services to the Committee in the upcoming year to do mini-seminars as part of our awareness efforts. During these seminars Nancy will go into more depth of issues facing the deaf community and share more as to the culture; review basic accommodations that may be needed to effectively share information; and again teach some basic ASL.

MLTI (Maine Learning Technology Initiative)

Committee members currently are working with staff from the Department of Education, private sector consultants, staff from local school districts and Apple personnel to support and coordinate accessibility technical assistance for students and teachers with iBooks. Members are also

monitoring progress in developing accommodations for those who use screen readers.

Thin Client Graphical Interface

Thin client technology (Citrix, Hummingbird, etc.) is not accessible to voice recognition or screen reader software at the present time. Sheldon Bird from the Department Of Labor and membership from the Committee have lead a considerable effort to open a dialogue with Citrix and Microsoft about the possibility of changing that. The problem rests with not only thin client vendors, but also with the ActiveX Microsoft Windows platform as well. Citrix has verbally committed to making their product fully accessible by mid year 2003 while Microsoft has not yet directly addressed the issue.

Currently we have a policy which includes an accommodation for these graphical interface products that we recognize is not the long term solution that the state requires. And, it has proven difficult to ensure that agencies comply with the policy give the proliferation of this technology throughout the state. The Committee will continue to address instances where agencies may be out of compliance with current policies, but more importantly, we will actively work with vendors to make them aware that we to do business with the State of Maine they must bring their products into compliance.

Contract Language

The Committee tasked a sub-committee with reviewing contract language to see how the State could increase the accountability of vendors, as well as assist those responsible for managing contacts to make sure products and services are in compliance with accessibility standards and policies. Richard Thompson, the Director of the Division of Purchases, and Pauline Lamontagne from the Department of Education headed the effort and recommended that we develop a list of vendors that can provide quality third party testing for accessibility, and then make such testing the responsibility of anyone awarded a contract. Additionally, their recommendation included the chartering of a group to review current policies and standards to see how we might develop a base line to better measure compliance at this time. (This group is chaired by Floyd White, a member of the Standing Committee, and they plan on completing their work by 2/03)

Outreach

The diversity of the membership of the Committee in itself provides outreach throughout the State. Beyond that we have made many gains this year in creating working partnerships that allow us to best utilize resources while continually moving forward with the promotion of accessible technology.

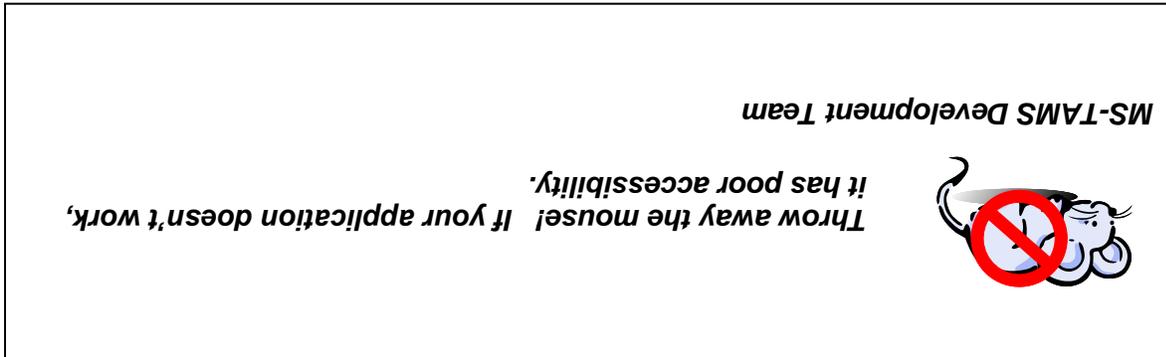
Kathleen Powers, a member of the standing accessibility committee who coordinates the statewide assistive technology project for MaineCITE and also partners with the Department of Education, has been invaluable in this past year as we have worked with other states on accessibility issues.

Examples of the previous year's national activities, as well as some current ones are:

- The State's participation in the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitative Research (NIDRR) web cast on procuring accessible technology

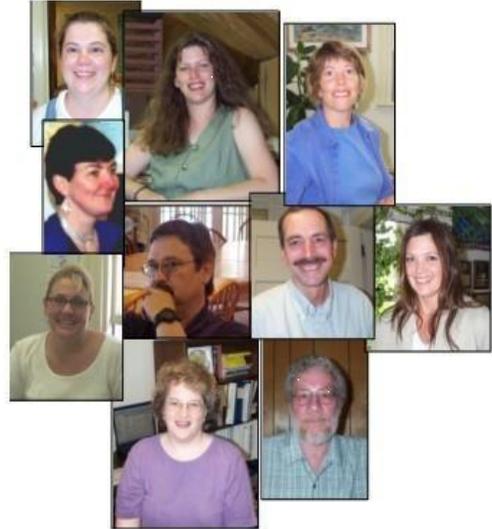
- The Bureau of Information Services demonstration of MS-TAMS in a New York state IT conference

- Maine's participation in a national NIDRR study related to accessibility issues



The committee also reaches out into agencies and organizations throughout the state to increase the message of accessibility throughout state government. Some examples of those outreach efforts are:

- Lisa Leahy-VanDeBosche who is a member of the ISMG, the Webmasters' Group and also is co-chairing the Accessible Web Design Sub-committee, brings accessibility to multiple venues. She headed a process action team to redesign the State Planning website and kept accessibility in the forefront of her work. The team was recognized for their accomplishments at the Governor's annual awards ceremony held earlier this year in Augusta.



- Eric Dibner, the new state accessibility coordinator in the Department of Labor, coordinates with the committee to ensure that we do not duplicate efforts but rather build a consistent message on accessibility in all areas throughout the State of Maine.

Clearly outreach is important to the Committee as we continue to strive to expand our resources to meet our objective of no barriers to information available through the use of technology.

MS-TAMS



The Committee tests and provides input to groups as to the accessibility of a product they are considering deploying. This year Floyd White worked with the State's MS-TAMS development team to assist in the testing of the time and attendance application as it was being developed. The efforts of the team resulted in a quality product that was showcased by New York State at one of their technical conferences because of its accessibility. The strong leadership of Jim King on this project set an example for others to follow demonstrating how accessibility should be built *into* a system, and not *onto* it at a future date.

OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN OUTLINE FOR 2002-2003

1. Incorporate awareness training into all mandatory BHR programs
 - New Employee Orientation
 - Supervisor Training
 - Manager Training
 - Maine Management System.
2. Deliver additional accessibility skills training
 - Accessible web design
 - Universal design training for application developers
 - Creating accessible PDF's
 - TTY
 - Contract writing/review for accessibility compliance
3. Start "mini-seminar" program to increase accessibility awareness
4. Plan and hold state accessibility awareness conference
5. Review accessibility policies and standards and make recommendations if needed
6. Develop Maine telecommunications accessibility policy
7. Review and bolster contract language to improve accessibility compliance
8. Continue work with thin client vendors to ensure full accessibility compliance
9. Validate 50% of state's web page compliant with standards by 12/2003
10. Participate in national accessibility efforts

Operational Work Plan Details

The Committee has drafted an aggressive plan for the upcoming year. As the outline demonstrates, a great deal of effort will be put into awareness and technical skills training. This investment will allow us to move forward with our goal of institutionalizing accessibility requirements in Maine State Government.

Technical training will be in the development and design of applications as well as web sites. While Section 508 has brought a good deal of attention to the needs of accessible web sites, application development has been more of a gray area with many thinking if accessibility becomes an issue, it's simply a matter of the procurement of the correct assistive technology. While assistive technology can provide a solution, often without the proper initial design implementation can prove difficult and the result not as efficient for the end user as when the application is designed to support such technology. "Usability" must be as important as accessibility.

Awareness training programs will provide state employees with a better understanding of what accessible technology means, and the impact of deploying technology that somehow creates barriers to information for individuals. This year we are creating programs that will provide the opportunity for individuals to experience first hand how difficult it can be for users with physical or mental challenges to access information with technology that does provide full accessibility.

Several of these training programs are already in the development states and the committee will be partnering with the Bureau of Human Resources to deploy the complete program in the upcoming year.

Our next priority focuses on ensuring compliance in all areas of accessibility. We are in the process of beginning this effort with our review of current polices and standards. We then will develop additional standards in the area of telecommunications that are not yet in place.

Most importantly in this area, we will refine processes that will assist in the monitoring of compliance with those policies and standards. These audit processes will allow us to identify issues and work with agencies to correct them before they become a problem for an end user. To date we often are addressing problems after the fact so with improved processes in place we will have the capability to address potential issues before technology is actually deployed.

Finally, we will continue to dedicate resources to both state and national accessibility efforts. Our work with these entities allows us to ensure consistency of such policies nationwide which provides technology vendors with clear direction as to what is required in this most important area, while we maximize our resources by not re-inventing the wheel.

We feel our plans for the upcoming year, while aggressive for a team who all have other responsibilities, will provide Maine State Government with an increased infrastructure of accessibility awareness that will allow us all to better serve the citizens.

Good modern library service includes a commitment to providing material in the widest possible variety of formats. We are all differently-abled: video, audio, print, electronic, graphics, text-- the more ways we can share thoughts and ideas with one another, the better.

Melora Ranney, Outreach Services, Maine State Library



Summary

Clearly through the allocation of resources and the ongoing efforts related to the access to information through technology, Maine has shown its commitment to all citizens. But, how do we measure our success? Do we need ongoing oversight by Committees and staff dedicated to accessibility? Do we require the ongoing development of new policies and procedures to continually ensure we are in compliance?

No. We measure our success in this area by ***not having*** to allocate resources to accessibility. Our overarching objective is that through education and example, we will build our culture such that accessibility is no longer a mandate, but simply part of how Maine does business.

Maine: The Way Life Should Be

STATE OF MAINE STANDING ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE
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