# IT Accessibility Constituent Group

October 18, 2013

21 people in attendance

1. Activities over the last year
   1. Webinar with Blended Learning CG
   2. Accessibility question in Core Date Survey
   3. Planning a webinar for CIOs, to be delivered in November 2013
2. What types of things would you like to get out of this CG?
   1. Centralized repository of information for procurement
   2. Information for beginners:
      1. Where's a good place to start?
      2. What's a good useful first step?
      3. The 80/20 rule
      4. High-level discussion on the list may be too overwhelming.
   3. How to develop a strategic plan
   4. How to get real, effective institutional support
      * 1. Policy Development Example (University of California system)
      1. Started working 10 years ago on a policy for the UC system
      2. Worked the soil for a very long time
      3. Started with administrators/lawyers, went nowhere
      4. Then went underground - people working quietly at a grass-roots level
      5. Eventually brought forward to the CIO's; grateful to get anything standardized
      6. Ultimately signed by UC President Mark Yudof on his last day before retirement; wanted it to be his legacy
      7. Policy requires WCAG 2.0 AA conformance - passed in August
   5. How to check for accessibility
      1. Need info about free tools, costs of commercial solutions are prohibitive
      2. Need info about low-tech methods, usable by non-technical people
      3. Examples:
         1. Try using product with a keyboard (no mouse)
         2. Invite users with disabilities to demonstrate sites/products
            1. Realize that not all AT users are power users
            2. Do usability testing with AT users
   6. Example language for RFPs and contracts
   7. Collaborative coding?
      1. If there's no accessible product available that performs a needed function, we build one ourselves
      2. Multiple attendees said they were doing this
      3. The ITACCESS group could bring these people together to collaborate on developing accessible solutions
3. Procurement - This topic dominated the discussion, and seemed to be the most prevalent concern on the minds of attendees.
   1. Overview of problem
      1. VPATs are not always accurate
      2. Some institutions don't have the expertise to evaluate accessibility of products
      3. Instead of relying on a VPAT, we need a better way to make informed decision.
      4. NFB certifies products for accessibility, but many question the credibility of these certifications. Also, NFB is focused on blindness; certifications may not sufficiently address accessibility for other disabilities
      5. Need more efficiency. Should be sharing test results or collaborating, not reinventing the wheel
      6. With our large collective purchasing power, there has to be a way to make this process better.
      7. Bad publicity has been demonstrated to be a good motivator for some companies to take action. Therefore an active, highly visible public resource may help to motivate vendors
   2. Possible problems:
      1. Liability
      2. Methodology; no standard for evaluation
      3. Versioning: Products are constantly changing, and test environment can have a huge effect on accessibility:
      4. what version of the product? what steps? what browser? what OS? what AT?
   3. Vendors should be partners
      1. A moderated discussion about product accessibility, with vendors at the table
      2. Vendors can learn from and comment on test results
      3. Vendors can inform us when problems are fixed
   4. Comparisons with Other Services (e.g., Yelp)
      1. Users share their reviews
      2. Yelp apparently has figured out liability issues
      3. Some reviews are more helpful and more accurate than others
      4. Users are expected to be able to sift through the reviews and make intelligent decisions about which sources to trust
      5. Having information, even with the above problems, is better than none at all
      6. RateMyProfessor.com is another example
   5. Past efforts:
      1. VPAT Database, created by CSU ATI but no longer operational: https://diva.sfsu.edu/help/vpat
      2. ATHEN Wiki - Few people contributed, insufficiently managed, no longer operational
      3. EDUCAUSE site (see next item)
   6. EDUCAUSE as possible host for repository
      1. EDUCAUSE has offered to serve in this role in the past.
      2. They created a site for this purpose: <http://educause.edu/library/accessibility> (in particular, see links to "Policies & Practices" and "Technology Accessibility Findings"
      3. Just yesterday (10/17/13) EDUCAUSE staff reaffirmed to Greg their willingness to provide this service
      4. They are willing to be the conduit for information, but want to remain neutral.
   7. But why should this be our responsibility?
      1. Vendors should be testing their own products and accurately informing us of their accessibility.
      2. But vendors lack the expertise
      3. And vendors haven't earned our trust (e.g., VPATs).
      4. If accessibility is required within our contracts, then trust is mandated
      5. Maybe we could develop an "Alternative VPAT" that better addresses our needs