

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

The Kansas Partnership for Accessible Technology

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CONTACT

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PREFACE

This report provides an overview of the efforts undertaken by the State of Kansas in calendar year 2009 to make the use of technology by government and its partners more accessible to employees, business, and citizens. It is the second annual report sponsored by the Kansas Partnership for Accessible Technology and is published and distributed under the authority of Governor's Executive Order 08-12. The report also includes an assessment of status of the accessibility of State of Kansas websites, as required by Information Technology Policy 1210, Revision 2. A copy of the annual reports issued by the KPAT, including this one, can be found online at: <http://da.ks.gov/kpat/reports/>.

ABOUT THE KANSAS PARTNERSHIP FOR ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY

Purpose

The Kansas Partnership for Accessible Technology was established by Executive Order 08-12 in December 2008 as an independent board composed of senior program and policy leaders to coordinate and oversee a renewed program to carry out the state's commitment to information technology (IT) accessibility. The Partnership is charged with the following responsibilities:

- Address web and IT accessibility issues
- Provide related policy, standards, guidelines, and procedural recommendations,
- Coordinate, review, and provide recommendations on programs for enterprise wide assessment and monitoring of accessibility compliance,
- Review annually and modify as required the State of Kansas Web Accessibility Requirements (Information Technology Policy 1210), and related documents,
- Develop and provide information, training, support, and resources on web and information technology accessibility,
- Work jointly to accomplish its mission with officials from other state agencies, organizations and county, municipal and tribal governments, as well as with businesses and organizations in the private sector whose products, services, or activities affect the accessibility of state services, programs, or systems.

Membership

Membership is drawn from a wide variety of state agencies, as well as from disability community advocacy organizations and county and local government. Appointments to the Partnership are as specified in Executive Order 08-12. A list of current members is provided in an appendix to this report.

Program

The Partnership operates within the state IT governance structure and functions as a standing advisory committee to the Information Technology Executive Council (ITEC), and other committees, boards and commissions as appropriate. It meets quarterly and commissions ad hoc working groups, generally consisting of personnel from the organizations represented in the Partnership who have interest and expertise concerning the subject at hand, to carry out individual initiatives. For administrative purposes, the Partnership is housed in the Division of Information Systems and Communications and it receives staff support from the Director of IT Accessibility.

A copy of Executive Order 08-12 is provided in an appendix to this document.

2009 GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Goals

The overarching goal of the state IT accessibility program is to provide the leadership, policy direction, and support necessary to make all State of Kansas content and services delivered through information and communications technologies accessible. We believe successful implementation involves several dimensions:

- **Governance:** Setting, promulgating, and maintaining policy and standards; understanding legal liability and responsibilities
- **Assistance:** Providing consulting, training, documentation, and support for implementers, both technical (e.g., for web developers) and relating to process (e.g., specifying requirements for third-party systems)
- **Communication:** Advocacy for affected constituent groups; raising and maintaining awareness of the issues, requirements, and solutions; promoting the initiative; listening to concerns; and championing successes
- **Assessment:** Monitoring compliance, establishing accountability, reporting progress to stakeholders and oversight groups.

Accomplishments

Governance

The Partnership actively worked to fulfill its responsibilities in the area of governance in 2009. Highlights include:

- The Partnership formed a committee to review and recommend updates to Information Technology Executive Council (ITEC) Policy 1210, the state's Web Accessibility Requirements. The revised policy (its second revision since 2001) was approved by ITEC on April 23, 2009.
- Worked with the state Chief Information Technology Architect to update the relevant domains of the Kansas Information Technology Architecture version 11.2 to include accessibility. This version of the KITA was approved by ITEC in July 2009.
- In cooperation with the Kansas Information Technology Office, worked to revise language to be included in all requests for procurement of technology over \$250,000 to require acquisitions to be compliant with ITEC Policy 1210, as well as make use of the Voluntary Product Accessibility Template to determine compliance during bid evaluation.
- Developed draft legislation that would establish the Partnership permanently in statute. The eventual bill, House Bill 2657, mirrors Executive Order 08-12 and was introduced in the Kansas House of Representatives in January 2010.
- At its October 2009 meeting, the Partnership re-elected Duncan Friend of the Division of Information Systems and Communications as its chairman, and Martha Gabehart, the Executive Director of the Kansas Commission on Disabilities as vice-chairman for the following year.
- In late 2009, the Governor's office nominated Representative Mike Burgess of Topeka as a member of the Partnership. In addition to his role as a legislator, where he has served as a member of the Joint Committee on Information Technology, Mike brings with him a wealth of web development experience. This addition brings the total membership of the group to twenty-five, representing twenty-three distinct organizations.

Assistance

The primary staff person supporting the Partnership is the Director of IT Accessibility, Cole Robison. Either directly, or with his guidance, various types of accessibility-related assistance were provided to state agencies and other organizations throughout 2009. Examples include development and publication of guidance for web developers on the implementation of the revisions to ITEC Policy 1210; performing accessibility assessments of state websites at the request of site owners, and answering inquiries for state agencies regarding a variety of topics, including basic accessibility, captioning, slideshows, and web conferencing tools.

Communication

In its second year, the Partnership continued to serve as a vehicle for communicating on accessibility-related topics with its members and the communities they represent. Specific examples of outreach include:

- Presentations at quarterly KPAT meetings included such topics as challenges facing disabled citizens in using inaccessible websites, demonstrations of screen reader usage, video remote interpreting, and video/audio captioning.
- Multiple presentations on Partnership activities and policies before the state's Information Technology Advisory Board, Information Technology Executive Council, and the Kansas Legislature's Joint Committee on Information Technology.
- The KPAT website, which continues to be an integral part of our efforts to deliver information about accessible technology to stakeholder organizations. In 2009, the website (<http://da.ks.gov/kpat/>) received over 3,000 page views from individuals seeking information about the state program and related resources.

One important goal from 2009 that is not yet complete is the development of a comprehensive communication plan for stakeholder outreach. However, in late 2009, we undertook a survey of Partnership members that included a solicitation of opportunities members saw in several areas to expand communication to their organizations and the communities they represent. As part of this process, a significant number of members offered to incorporate messaging about accessible information technology and the work of the Partnership into organization newsletters, meetings, planned seminars or workshops and agency training/orientation materials as one potential method to increase the 'reach' of our work. The *Planned Initiatives* section of this document addresses our intent to expand our communication efforts in the coming year.

Assessment

One of the keys to being effective in addressing the subject of information technology accessibility is the ability to assess compliance. From this capability comes the ability to establish an initial benchmark for compliance, to design training and communication that specifically targets identified deficiencies, to provide feedback to agencies about potential issues in need of remediation, and a method to identify best practices that can be shared across the enterprise. Because of the size and complexity of the state's installed base of technology, performing a manual assessment, as well as ongoing monitoring, is very challenging from both a time and human resource perspective. It is in this vein that the Partnership seeks the means to procure an automated evaluation of the accessibility of state websites.

Our assessment efforts in 2009 were two-pronged:

- **Exploratory/Pilot Assessment.** In the fall, we began to make use of a tool that, while its functionality was limited, could identify some basic accessibility issues with state websites. The intent of this assessment was to validate the need for this investment, and to generally size the scope of the web accessibility issues before us. Our initial assessment was confined

to a subset of pages from cabinet agencies and we presented anonymized/aggregated results to the Joint Committee on Information Technology at their December 2009 meeting, as well as the KPAT in January 2010. The results of this assessment are discussed under *Accessibility Status of State of Kansas Websites* below.

- **Grant Request to fund Automated Assessment.** The Partnership currently receives no direct funding, so, after convening a committee of ten representatives from impacted organizations to investigate potential vendors and pricing, the decision was made to pursue grant funding for access to an automated accessibility assessment tool. A grant proposal for full funding of the purchase of access to such a tool was submitted to the Information Network of Kansas in November 2009 (Note: The proposal was subsequently funded in February 2010).

It is the expectation of the Partnership that we will begin working with state agencies to initiate the self-assessment process making use of an automated tool in 2010.

ACCESSIBILITY STATUS OF STATE OF KANSAS WEBSITES

As noted in past reports, the state has not yet performed a comprehensive assessment of the accessibility of its websites and this continues to be a point of need. However, in the fall of 2009, the State's Director of IT Accessibility performed a limited-scope assessment of compliance as part of building the case for procuring an automated tool that could be used to perform a comprehensive assessment. The tool used for this limited-scope assessment was designed primarily for single-page reviews and had several limitations that would make it difficult to use with the large collections of pages encountered in most state agencies. Nevertheless, the results provided insight into the level of compliance at the state.

The assessment was performed across sixteen state websites using, in most cases, a subset of 250 pages from each site. The total number of pages scanned overall was 3,229. The assessment did not include non-HTML content or applications. Finally, again due to limitations of the tool used, the criteria applied were limited to the Section 508 standards (i.e., they did not include the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, which are also part of the ITEC Policy 1210 requirements).

While the approach was less than optimal, the findings strongly support the need for further attention to the compliance of state websites. Taken as a whole, literally thousands of errors were found, either Section 508 or HTML-related errors that hold the possibility of impairing the accessibility of the content. Across the small, non-scientific sample of errors researched, one positive note is that they were found to be grouped around only several issues: Lack of a text equivalent for non-text elements; lack of identification of row and column headers in tables, problems with use of frames, and lack of labeling on form controls.

Given the amount of time that has transpired since the initial rollout of the state guidelines in 2000-2001, it could be expected that turnover, changes in technology, and ongoing expansion of web content paired with a lack of resources devoted to ongoing awareness building and training in this area could result in a degradation of the overall accessibility of state websites. While this

anecdotal assessment does provide cause for concern, it also supports the need to undertake a broader and more thorough assessment using a tool specifically designed for such a purpose. In the coming year, we plan to begin an automated assessment using this approach and will report results and status in the next annual report.

OUTLINE OF 2010 PLANNED INITIATIVES

While progress was made on a number of initiatives in 2009, significant work lies ahead. The following sections outline the Partnership's planned areas of focus for the coming year.

Governance

The Partnership will continue to promote standards and participate in the Kansas Information Technology Architecture update process. As part of the ongoing federal effort to update their Section 508 technology accessibility standards, we plan to investigate and comment on draft revisions as released, and explore areas where new standards may be helpful. We will also continue to focus on improving the integration of accessibility evaluation into the technology procurement process.

Assistance

Besides offering basic assistance to developers in addressing accessibility issues, the KPAT can play a key role in research and information sharing about the accessibility impacts of emerging uses of technology in state government. As part of a grant proposal to the Information Network of Kansas (since funded), we have outlined a pilot project for the coming year with the Kansas Legislature to prototype live captioning of committee meetings and requested resources to conduct small scale pilots with state agencies and investigate low-cost captioning software. Our goal in this effort is to begin to develop a better understanding of available methods and challenges in making audio and video resources more accessible to users, as well as the direction of technological improvements in this area.

Communication

Although some basic groundwork was laid in 2009 via meetings with various IT leadership groups, polling of our membership to identify channels for information dissemination, and improvement of the KPAT website, we have not yet begun a concentrated effort to engage state agencies and other stakeholder groups not represented on the Partnership about the subject of accessibility. Thus, one important goal in the coming year will be to complete the process of developing a communication plan that formally identifies affected stakeholders, inventories available communication methods, and provides a roadmap for use in both obtaining input and sharing information as the Partnership moves forward in accomplishing its mission.

Another related initiative in 2010 will be to expand awareness of ITEC Policy 1210 and continue to develop and make available central resources to aid in compliance. To further than end, we will work with state agencies and other governmental partners to develop a list of webmasters and begin communications with them to disseminate information about our initiatives, obtain feedback on the need for training and other issues as appropriate, as well as attempt to foster a

sense of community around the subject of web accessibility. We will also work with that community to improve the effectiveness of the KPAT website as a resource to web developers,

Assessment

As outlined in the summary of 2009 accomplishments in this area that has been presented above, we intend to make use of grant funding to launch an effort to perform a statewide assessment of the compliance of websites and applications with ITEC Policy 1210, the state's Web Accessibility Requirements. By working closely with state agencies to implement an automated tool, we hope to make use of the results of the assessment to assist them in identifying strategies for compliance, developing plans for remediation where required, and to identify opportunities for training and best practice sharing that will increase the accessibility of the information and services delivered electronically by the state.

APPENDIX

Kansas Partnership for Accessible Technology Membership Listing

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APPENDIX

Executive Order 08-12

EXECUTIVE ORDER 08-12

WHEREAS, the State of Kansas is committed to ensuring that all of its citizens have the opportunity to lead full lives of independence, productivity, and self-determination, without regard to their disabilities; and

WHEREAS, in order to do so, it is important that the state's electronic and information technology systems are accessible to persons with disabilities, so that all Kansans can fully participate in and enjoy the benefits of state services, programs, employment, and opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Information Technology Policy 1210 established in 2000 accessibility requirements for all web-based services, applications, and information available on state internet/intranet/extranet servers, including services that are developed internally, developed via contract, provided by third parties on behalf of state organizations, or purchased products; and

WHEREAS, the removal of all barriers to equal opportunity for all Kansans requires the leadership and the concentrated and continued attention of the state administration to build upon this important foundation; and

WHEREAS, Kansas state government is a complex combination of organizations and functions providing a wide variety of services to citizens and other customers; and

WHEREAS, Article 1, § 4 of the Constitution of the State of Kansas vests in the Governor the power to require information from the officers of the executive department upon any subject related to their duties.

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Kansas, I hereby establish the Kansas Partnership for Accessible Technology ("Partnership") with the following purposes and charges:

1. The Partnership shall address web and information technology accessibility issues and provide policy, standards, guidelines, or procedural recommendations to the Information Technology Executive Council.
2. The Partnership shall coordinate, review, and provide recommendations on programs for enterprise wide assessment and monitoring of accessibility compliance.
3. The Partnership shall review annually and modify as required the State of Kansas Web Accessibility Requirements (Information Technology Policy 1210), and related documents (e.g., the State of Kansas Web Content Accessibility Guidelines), in response to any pertinent advances in technology and/or changes in federal accessibility standards.
4. The Partnership shall develop and provide information, training, support, and resources on web and information technology accessibility to agency web and information technology implementers and other stakeholders.
5. The Partnership shall aim to establish a leadership role for Kansas in the national effort to improve access to and use of information and services by individuals with disabilities.
6. The Partnership shall be a standing advisory committee to the Information Technology Executive Council, and other committees, boards and commissions as appropriate, and shall provide a copy of its annual report to the Council, as well as to the Governor and Legislature.

7. The Partnership membership shall consist of up to thirty (30) members as follows:
 - a. The Director of Statewide Web/IT Accessibility;
 - b. The State ADA Coordinator;
 - c. The Executive Director of the Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns;
 - d. The Director of the Department of Administration Division of Purchases;
 - e. The Chief Information Technology Architect;
 - f. The Executive Branch Chief Information Technology Officer, or designee;
 - g. The Legislative Branch Chief Information Technology Officer, or designee;
 - h. The Judicial Branch Chief Information Technology Officer, or designee;
 - i. The Executive Director of the Information Network of Kansas;
 - j. The State Archivist, or designee;
 - k. The State Geographic Information Systems Director;
 - l. A representative from the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services;
 - m. A representative from the Kansas Department on Aging;
 - n. A representative from the Division of Information Systems and Communications;
 - o. A representative from the Kansas State Department of Education;
 - p. A representative from the Regents Information Technology Council of the Kansas Board of Regents;
 - q. A representative from Kan-ed;
 - r. A representative from the Kansas Health Policy Authority;
 - s. A representative from the Kansas Division of Emergency Management;
 - t. A representative from Kansas Relay Services, Inc.;
 - u. Up to ten (10) appointments by the Governor from among the following categories. These members shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.
 - i. County government;
 - ii. Local government;
 - iii. The Kansas State School for the Blind;
 - iv. The Kansas School for the Deaf;
 - v. Disability advocates from the private sector;
 - vi. At-large.
8. The Governor shall select a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson from among the members who shall serve for one year and thereafter be elected by the Partnership. The Partnership may elect other officers among its members and may establish any committees deemed necessary to discharge its duties.
9. Members of the Partnership, including officers and employees who are appointed to the Partnership, may receive subsistence allowances, mileage and expenses as permitted by law.
10. For administrative purposes, the Partnership shall be housed in the Division of Information Systems and Communications. The Partnership shall receive staff support from the Director of Statewide Web/IT Accessibility.
11. The Partnership shall work jointly with officials from other state agencies, organizations and county, municipal and tribal governments, as well as with businesses and organizations in the private sector whose products, services, or activities affect the accessibility of state services, programs, or systems.

This document shall be filed with the Secretary of State as Executive Order No. 08-12 and shall become effective immediately.