

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

The Kansas Partnership for Accessible Technology

April 15, 2009



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As we embark on an important new stage in the institutional pursuit of equal access to technology resources for all Kansans, we would like to thank those whose service helped build the foundation for the future of this program. We wish to thank all those who have served on the Information Technology Advisory Board Web Accessibility Subcommittee, whose volunteer efforts for the last several years supported our state's accessibility efforts and provided the strategic planning upon which we continue to depend. We are grateful to the members of the Partnership for their willingness to serve this cause by supporting accessibility efforts in their own organizations and communities. And we wish to recognize all in the advocacy community who have been involved throughout as team members and partners, supporting and driving progress while continuing to work tirelessly on behalf of people with disabilities. Finally, we would also like to thank Governor Kathleen Sebelius for issuing Executive Order 08-12, founding the current information technology accessibility program and supporting the goal of enabling persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life.

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PREFACE

This report is intended to provide an overview of the efforts undertaken by the State of Kansas in calendar year 2008 to make the use of technology by government and its partners more accessible to employees, business, and citizens. It is the first 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 1. The first annual report issued under Information Technology Policy 1210 was prepared in 2007 by the State ADA Coordinator, and is available online at http://da.ks.gov/kpat/reports/2007/itec_report_2007.pdf.

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 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 attached.

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 Statewide Web/IT Accessibility.

2008 GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Goals

The 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.

Initiatives and Accomplishments

The emphasis this past year has been the overall renewal of the initiative and putting the governance structure into place, which included the founding of the Partnership.

Environmental Assessment

Prior to the formation of the Partnership, an initial coalition-building and outreach effort was undertaken, involving conversations with more than thirty key stakeholders throughout state government, including the Governor's office. The intention was to provide information and

engender support for the renewed IT accessibility initiative, and to gather feedback on needs, interest, and possibilities for structuring the approach and direction of the program. Commonly expressed areas of concern included:

- An increased need for accessible technology as the population ages
- A persistent lack of resources available to evaluate, implement and monitor compliance
- Ongoing assessment of the accessibility of state web sites, applications, and products in use is not occurring (seen as critical)
- Some form of enforcement of existing accessibility standards is needed
- There is a broad need for training in accessibility standards and their application
- Ongoing turnover of personnel, resulting in lack of awareness and adequate training
- Increasing reliance on commercial off-the-shelf software
- The need for more emphasis on the evaluation of accessibility compliance in the procurement process
- Application of accessibility standards to uses of technology beyond just websites and web applications
- A need for ongoing engagement of stakeholders (also deemed crucial to success)

A key point reinforced by these engagements was the understanding that accessibility is a business issue, not just an IT issue. However, a significant portion of our outreach efforts were also directed toward the IT community, including presentations made to meetings of the Information Technology Executive Council, the Information Technology Advisory Board, the Electronic Records Subcommittee, the Regents Information Technology Council, and the Cabinet Agency Chief Information Officers.

Governance

The issuance of Governor's Executive Order 08-12, establishing the duties and membership of the Partnership, was a significant milestone in the governance of the information technology accessibility effort. The Partnership held its first meeting January 29, 2009.

Through member representation and direct outreach, the Partnership serves as a conduit for IT accessibility direction and information to a number of stakeholder communities throughout state government.

Communication and Assistance

In addition to the communication efforts undertaken as part of the establishment of the Partnership,

- Accessibility information on the web was updated (with further revamping in early 2009) to include a Partnership website, at <http://da.ks.gov/kpat/>, providing introductory text, meeting information and materials archive, member listing, policy links, and contact information. We hope that this will eventually be but a small part of a much more comprehensive repository of IT accessibility information, including technical implementation guidance resources for developers.
- Preliminary, manual evaluation of a few key state websites was performed, and the results conveyed to site maintainers.
- Accessibility requirements conformance of components of the statewide human resources and payroll system was reviewed and discussed with representatives of the software vendor, Oracle Corporation.
- Input was provided to legislative services staff on accessibility aspects of plans for electronic message boards and way finding system kiosks to be included in the Statehouse Restoration Project.

ACCESSIBILITY STATUS OF STATE OF KANSAS WEBSITES

As was noted in the 2007 report of the State ADA Coordinator to ITEC (see: http://da.ks.gov/kpat/reports/2007/itec_report_2007.pdf) our ability to accurately characterize the level of conformance to accessibility requirements of state websites is limited, and continues to be a point of need.

It can be reported that during the past year, the State ADA Coordinator has had issues with three websites brought to his attention, one of which has been addressed, one for which remediation is currently underway, and the last of which was raised just recently and is under review. He has received no requests for undue burden exemptions from compliance with the State of Kansas Web Accessibility Requirements during this year.

The *State and Federal Electronic Government in the United States* report by Darrell M. West of the Brookings Institution (formerly of Brown University), has, as cited in the 2007 report of the State ADA Coordinator to ITEC, a “Disability Access” component, which, if isolated, would rank Kansas 10th among all states for 2008, same as last year. It should be noted that this is a ranking relative to other states, based on an assessment done via a small sample of selected web pages evaluated against a set of criteria devised for these surveys.

OUTLINE OF 2009 PLANNED INITIATIVES

The Executive Order establishing the Partnership calls for the state 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. To be successful in that mission, our efforts must first focus on strengthening the foundation of accessible technology in Kansas government. To do so, our plan for 2009 will involve determining the strengths and weaknesses of our current environment, making investments in raising awareness and support for developers, and focusing on the acquisition process for new technology to ensure we are incorporating accessibility standards into its evaluation and implementation. Areas of focus for the coming year and beyond are anticipated to include:

Governance

The Partnership will continue to meet quarterly and act as a vehicle for communicating with the communities represented. Presentations on various aspects of technology and accessibility will be made to educate and engage members as new technologies and accessible applications of technology are explored, with an emphasis on discovery and communication of best practices.

Web Accessibility Assessment

As noted above, the ability to monitor the status and implementation effectiveness of IT resource accessibility is critically needed, and is one of our biggest challenges due to the size and complexity of the state's installed technology base. During the coming year, we intend to pursue an automated evaluation of the accessibility of state websites that would provide the necessary benchmark. A firm understanding of our accessibility status will not only provide feedback to state agencies on potential issues in need of remediation, but also help identify training needs, and raise awareness of the state's accessibility standards and efforts

Communication

Building and maintaining awareness among stakeholders, and soliciting their feedback to shape and improve our work, is key to work of this nature. In 2009, we will work with stakeholders in the effort to create and implement a comprehensive, ongoing outreach plan.

Training and Other Assistance

Setting requirements and monitoring for conformance to them is incomplete without equipping implementers with the ability to meet those requirements. To that end, we plan to devise and offer a diverse set of resources for developers to empower them to produce accessible content. This is to include training, documentation, and promotion of best practices and known solutions to common problems.

Standards

- With the increased move to purchase of off-the-shelf software packages, or contracts with third party vendors for software-as-a-service, it will be increasingly important to focus on the effectiveness of accessibility evaluation in the technology procurement process, including agreements with vendors for services, During the coming year, we intend to work with

stakeholders in the state procurement and vendor communities to review and update procurement standards to include accessibility requirements for IT products, and IT components of products, as well as IT service contracts that involve the provision or development of technology on the state's behalf in as robust a way as possible. In addition, we will seek to find ways to raise the visibility of accessibility requirements in the procurement process, especially in early stages, and educate the state's business partners on the relevance of these requirements to doing business with the state.

- We will examine the Kansas Information Technology Architecture for opportunities to embed accessibility guidance and work with the state Chief Information Technology Architect to incorporate relevant changes and additions in the next release.
- Review and modification of the State of Kansas Web Accessibility Requirements (Information Technology Policy 1210) is already underway. A working group commissioned for this task in early 2009 has produced a recommendation for revision that would update the policy in light of the publication of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 by the World Wide Web Consortium. This proposed recommendation is scheduled to be brought up for approval contemporaneously with the submission of this report.

APPENDIX

Kansas Partnership for Accessible Technology Membership Listing

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