

ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (SECTION 508)

Accessible Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is also known as electronic and information technology (EITA). Accessible ICT is technology that can be used by people with a wide range of abilities and disabilities. It incorporates the principles of universal design. Each user is able to interact with the technology in ways that work best for him or her. Accessible technology is either directly accessible—in other words, it is usable without assistive technology—or it is compatible with standard assistive technology. Just as buildings that have ramps and elevators are accessible to wheelchair users, products that adhere to accessible design principles are usable by people with a wide range of abilities and disabilities.

Examples of accessible electronic and information technology: Accessible software applications; Accessible multimedia products i.e. videotapes, CDs, DVDs, or the World Wide Web should include synchronized text captions for spoken information and other audio content as well as synchronized audio descriptions for visual content; Accessible websites are designed to be usable by individuals with a broad range of abilities and disabilities. Accessible web sites provide a text equivalent (typically a description) for all non-text elements, such as audio, video, graphics, animation, graphical buttons, and image maps; Accessible copy machines can be operated in more than one way using keypads, touch screens, or voice recognition. Height and position can be adjusted so that controls are within easy reach and the display can be viewed easily.

FEDERAL LAW: Federal Section 508 is part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, requiring electronic and information technology developed, procured, maintained, or used by the Federal government to be accessible to people with disabilities. On August 7, 1998, President Clinton signed into law the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, which includes the Rehabilitation Act of 1998. The 1998 amendments significantly expanded and strengthen the technology access requirements in Section 508. The U.S. Access Board, an independent Federal agency devoted to accessibility for people with disabilities, issued new standards for electronic and information technology effective as of June 21, 2001. Federal departments and agencies must comply with Section 508. It does not regulate the private sector and does not apply directly to recipients of

Federal funds. The law required the Access Board to develop access standards that are part of the Federal government's procurement's regulations. The 508 Standards provide criteria specific to various types of technologies, including: software applications and operating systems; web-based information or applications; telecommunication products; video and multimedia products; self contained, closed products; and desktop and portable computers. The 508 standards and the Telecommunications Act Accessibility Guidelines are in the process of revised together.

Federal Section 508 Technical Assistance:

Access Board
1331 F St., NW, Ste 1000
Washington, DC 20004-1111
(202) 272-5434 OR (202) 272-5449 (TDD)
(800) 872-2253 OR (800) 993-2822 (TDD)
FAX: (202) 272-5447
www.access-board.gov

OKLAHOMA LAW: Oklahoma's electronic and information technology accessibility law (2004) models Federal Section 508 and applies to state agencies, postsecondary institutions, and Career Tech. Agencies should refer to Oklahoma's standards and rules documents (Oklahoma Administrative Code Titles 260 and 580). Oversight for Oklahoma's EITA law is provided by the Office of Management and Enterprise Services. Oklahoma EITA law includes an administrative complaint process (OAC 260:15-1-6).

Oklahoma Technical Assistance:

Oklahoma ABLE Tech
1514 W Hall of Fame
Stillwater, OK 74078
(405) 744-9748 (TTY)
(800) 257-1705
www.accessibility.ok.gov

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, or Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are all general anti-discrimination laws that require program and architectural accessibility, which could include the provision of accessible information technology as a reasonable accommodation or as a service necessary for equal access.