About Section 508

What is Section 508?

Section 508 is an amendment to the United States Workforce Rehabilitation Act that requires federal departments and agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. Under Section 508, agencies must give disabled employees and members of the public access to information that is comparable to the access available to others.

Why do I need to know about Section 508?

It is important for you know about Section 508 because it is a law. However, besides being a law, every one of us has a vested interest in implementing it. If you or your family, friends, colleagues, clients, or students have a disability, you want them to have access to technology without an undue burden.

Who does Section 508 cover?

Section 508 ensures that technology is accessible to people with disabilities. This includes those who are blind, deaf, and hearing, motor, speech, or visually impaired.

What types of technology should comply with Section 508?

The following types of technology should comply with Section 508:

- software applications and operating systems
- Web-based information or applications
- telecommunication products
- video and multimedia products
- self-contained, closed products (e.g., information kiosks, calculators, and fax machines)
- desktop and portable computers
Do my e-learning materials need to be Section 508 compliant?

While there is not a Section 508 category that specifically applies to e-learning, it is still a critical area for both Section 508 compliance awareness and planning accessibility. When e-learning is made accessible and Section 508 compliant, it enables employees and students with disabilities to receive equivalent access to learning materials used by their peers.

As an instructor or learning professional, how do I apply Section 508 to the design of my learning materials?

Here are a few tips for making your technology-based learning materials Section 508 compliant.

1. You should tag all images used in e-learning materials should be tagged with descriptive text labels (i.e., ALT text) for learners who are visually impaired and must access content with the help of screen reading software.

2. You should provide captioning for all videos and audio clips used in e-learning materials including voiceovers for learners who are deaf or hearing-impaired. In addition, you should provide transcripts of all audible content.
3. You should provide keyboard equivalents (e.g., tab keys, arrow keys, etc.) for mouse clicks, toolbars, menus, and dialog boxes for mobility impaired learners.


You can also visit the Section 508 Web site at http://section508.gov.