

What is VPAT 2.0[®]

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Overview

1. What is a VPAT[®] 2.0 and how does it differ from VPAT[®] 1.0
2. What is the purpose of a VPAT[®] and how they should be created
3. Do's and Don'ts for using information in a VPAT[®] to vet accessibility conformance claims

What is a VPAT®

VPAT® 1.0 vs. 2.0



VPAT[®]

- VPAT[®] = Voluntary Product Accessibility Template
- A Document
- Created in 2001 by a collaboration between the Information Technology Industry Council (ITI) and the US Federal Government General Services Administration (GSA)
- Current version: VPAT[®] 2.2

VPAT[®] is a registered service mark of the ITI



History of the VPAT®

- Version 1.0 (2001)
 - Adopted by the federal government to help with procurement
 - Aligns with the different parts of Section 508
 - Gradual adoption by the larger technology industry
- Version 2.0+ (October 2017)
 - Wide spread usage beyond the US federal government
 - Aligns to multiple standards: Refreshed Section 508, WCAG 2.0 & EN 301 549



Section 508 (Cira 2000)

- Amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Addressed Electronic & Information Technology Accessibility
- Included Technical Standards for:
 - Software applications and operating systems
 - Web-based intranet and internet information and applications
 - Video and multimedia Products
 - More...
- Functional Performance Criteria



Refreshed Section 508 (March 2017)

- Updated original standards to keep up with changing technology
- Specifically requires “Access to Functionality” (E203)
- Aligned with the following accessibility standards
 - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Levels A & AA
 - Section 255 of the Communications Act
- Started to address accessibility of non-web documents



VPAT[®] Format

- Word document divided into multiple tables
 - Each table contains accessibility information about a specific set of guidelines
 - Provides the support status of each criteria
 - Supports, Supports with Exceptions, Does Not Support, Not Applicable or Not Evaluated
 - Provides an opportunity to include Remarks and Explanations for the indicated level of support



VPAT[®] 1.0 Format

- Includes a summary table
- Tables for each section of the Section 508 standards:
 - 1194.21 Software Applications and Operating Systems
 - 1194.22 Web-based Internet Information and Applications
 - 1194.23 Telecommunications Products
 - 1194.24 Video and Multi-media Products
 - 1194.25 Self-Contained, Closed Products
 - 1194.26 Desktop and Portable Computers
 - 1194.31 Functional Performance Criteria
 - 1194.41 Information, Documentation and Support



VPAT[®] 2.0+ Format

- Includes multiple standards and separate versions for each standard
- Includes more summary information making the document easier to understand
 - Notes: Any details or further explanation about the product or the report. This section may be left blank.
 - Evaluation Methods Used: Include a description of what evaluation methods were used to complete the VPAT for the product under test.
 - Applicable Standards/Guidelines: A clear indication of which Standards/Guidelines this Conformance Report covers.
 - Terms: Conformance level terms description section
- Version 2.2 changed ‘Supports with Exceptions’ to ‘Partially Supports’

What is the purpose of a VPAT®

And how they should be created



Original Purpose

- Address the general issue of matching ICT product features to Section 508 accessibility requirements with a checklist
- Help Federal agency contracting officials and government buyers to assess ICT for accessibility when doing market research and evaluating proposals



Changing Purpose

- Over time with wider commercial industry adoption, more groups required or solicited VPAT[®]
- Became unofficial document for accessibility
- High level of usage in higher education
- With high adoption and usage came higher scrutiny



Current Purpose (IMO)

- Accurately represent the current level of accessibility of a product
- Help all ‘consumers’ make procurement decisions
- Only one part of the required accessibility information for a product



Creation Process

- Timeline
- Author(s)
- Recommended information



When to create a VPAT[®]

- Should be the last step in the accessibility process for a given version
- Proceeded by multiple accessibility reviews of product
 - Initial review
 - QA and verification reviews
- Immediately before or following release of product version when other documentation is being finalized



Who should create a VPAT®

- Staff member with accessibility knowledge and responsibility (certification)
 - Accessibility Specialist, Lead Developer, Project Manager, etc.
- Be sure to involve product developers in the creation process
- Pass it through legal counsel



How to create a VPAT[®]

- Provide accurate summary information
- Note any changes or revisions to the report
- Provide detailed and accurate accessibility information for each criteria
 - May include different support status and remarks for hybrid products
 - Base details on final accessibility review results
 - If full support has not been provided for a criteria, indicate:
 - General issues users make encounter
 - if possible, include specifics
- Complete all information, do not leave blanks
- Provide updated VPAT[®] documents once a year or at major project releases
- Ensure the final document meets document format accessibility requirements
- Solicit outside help, if necessary



Accessibility Review Process

- Follow [W3C Website Accessibility Conformance Evaluation Methodology \(WCAG-EM\)](#)
 - Define the scope of the evaluation
 - Explore the website
 - Select a representative sample
 - Evaluate the selected sample
 - Report the evaluation findings

- Conformance claim requires
 - Indication of what level has been met: A, AA, AAA
 - Compliance on full pages – cannot claim conformance on part of a page
 - Complete processes or workflows
 - Testing is done on a representative sample and includes random page testing

Using a VPAT®

Do's & Don't for vetting accessibility conformance claims



How to use a VPAT[®]

- Make it part of the accessibility information
 - Accessibility questionnaire (based off security)
 - Accessibility reviews (internal and 3rd party)
 - Accessibility webpage
- Verify the information
- Know the limitations and ‘Warning Signs’
- Make it a conversation



Limitations of VPAT[®] Documents

- Represents a “snapshot” of accessibility
- ‘V’ is for Voluntary
- Author’s accessibility knowledge cannot always be verified
- Conformance to standards does not guarantee accessibility
 - Pay attention to Functional Performance Criteria section



Warning Signs

- Current VPAT[®] is in 1.0 format
- Completion date is more than 2 years old
- Summary section incomplete
- Blank table rows
- Most remarks and explanations are vague or incomplete



Vetting VPAT Validity

- Do not waste your time if any ‘Warning Signs’
- Solicit feedback from outside organizations (other institutions, professional organizations)
- Incorporate other accessibility documentation in vetting process
- Vetting should be done by person with accessibility knowledge
- Ensure you are reviewing the product version listed in document
- Use accessibility tools before manual checks to save time
- Focus on critical criteria first (WCAG level A SC)
 - Keyboard/touch access (WCAG 2.1.1, 2.1.2)
 - Element labels [form controls] (WCAG 3.3.2, 4.1.2)
 - Custom UI controls (WCAG 4.1.2)
- Involve users, if available



Incomplete or inaccurate VPAT®

- Reach out to company for explanation
- Ask for a revised version or documentation
- Compare with other accessibility information
- If necessary, disqualify product

Questions





Interactive
Accessibility™
The Accessibility Experts™



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Resources/References

- [Original VPAT® 1.0](#) (for reference only DO NOT USE)
- [ITI VPAT® website](#)
- [Revised Section 508 text](#)
- [Social Security Administration VPAT Guide](#)
- [Section 508.gov VPAT webpage](#)
(Good overall website for purchasing accessible products)