

Gaining Ground  
with HECVAT 3.x  
for IT Purchasing

*Evaluating Third-party Application  
Accessibility Risk*

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A photograph of the Space Shuttle Atlantis during launch, ascending vertically against a clear blue sky. The orbiter is mounted on the External Tank and Solid Rocket Boosters. The name "Atlantis" and the NASA logo are visible on the side of the orbiter. The orbiter is white with black and blue markings. The External Tank is orange and the Boosters are white. The orbiter is pointing upwards, and the Boosters are firing, creating a large plume of white smoke and fire at the base.

# Agenda

- Overview of the HECVAT
- Procurement
- A11y additions to the HECVAT
- How schools can use it
- Where to find help
- Resources
- Q&A

# HECVAT Overview



# HECVAT Stands for:

H - Higher

E - Education

C - Community

V - Vendor

A - Assessment

T - Tool



# WHAT IS THE HECVAT

*“The HECVAT is a questionnaire framework specifically designed for higher education to measure vendor risk.”*

# Who creates the HECVAT

- Vendors
- Question types
  - Yes/no
  - Qualitative
  - Additional details
- Goal: Standardize information

# HECVAT Toolkit

- HECVAT Full
  - accessibility questions added
- HECVAT Lite
  - accessibility questions added
- Triage
- On Premise
- Community Broker Index (list of completed HECVATs)
- User Groups
- [Website for more information](#)

# Who Uses the HECVAT?

- 150+ Universities (current list)
- 50+ Solution Providers (current list)
- Ohio University (not on the list!)
- Miami University
- Up to now, only IT security teams



# Why Use the HECVAT?

- For universities:
  - Designed for higher education
  - Confirm that information, data, and cybersecurity policies are in place
  - Useful information to use for assessments
- For vendors
  - One form to fill out
  - Streamlines the purchasing process

# Challenges Addressed

- Skills and capacity vary
- Everyone is navigating laws and risks
- Awareness of accessibility risk is still low
- Processes vary for many reasons

A high-resolution image of the Earth as seen from space, showing the curvature of the planet and the intricate patterns of clouds over the blue oceans and brownish-green landmasses. The background is a deep black space filled with numerous small, distant stars. The word "Procurement" is centered over the middle of the Earth in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

Procurement

# Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT)

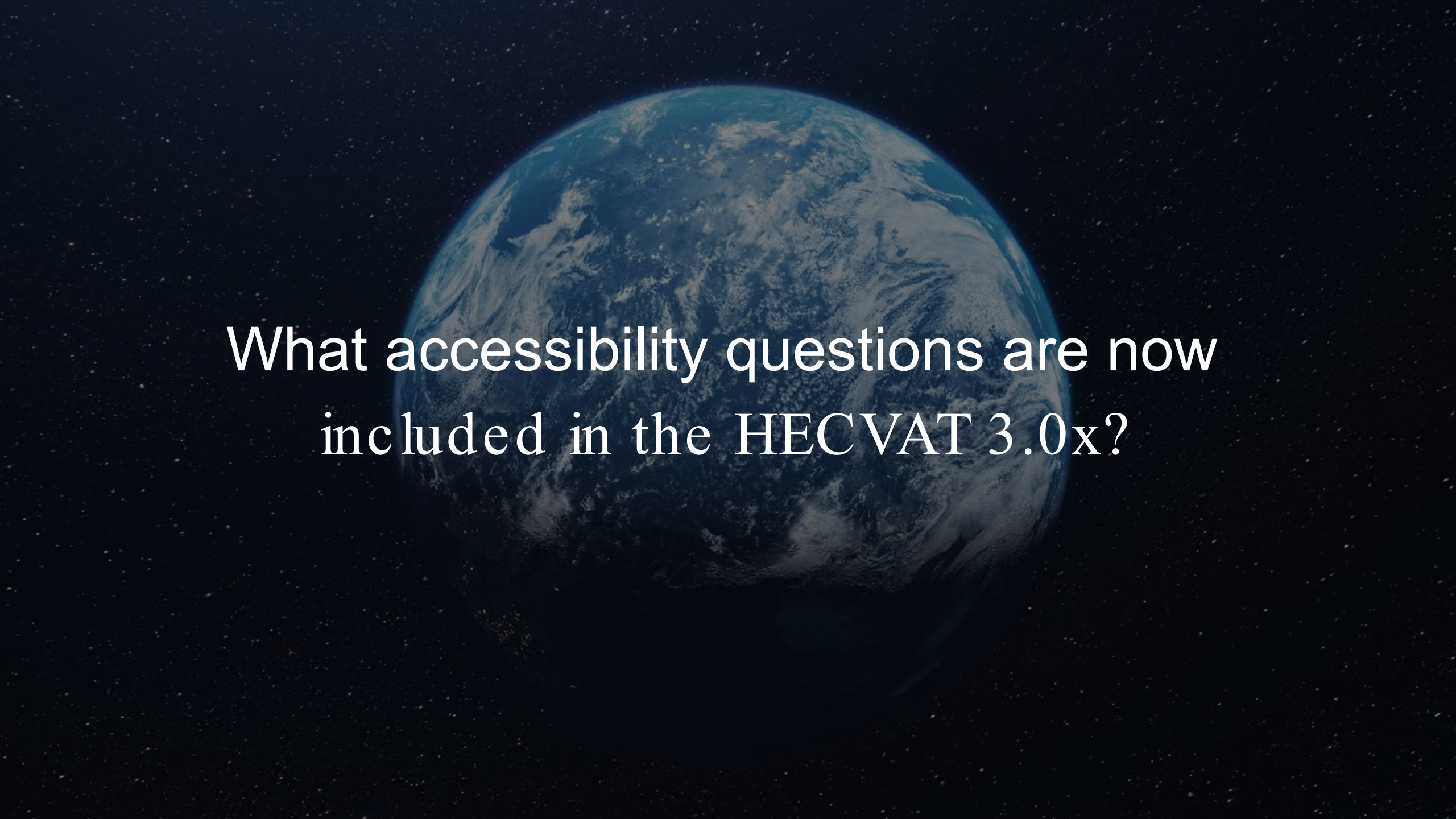
- Accessibility Conformance Report for a specific product
- Four versions/standards:
  - Rev 508: Revised Section 508 standards – the U.S. Federal accessibility standard
  - Rev EU: EN 301 549 – the European Union’s requirements “for public procurement of ICT products and services in Europe”
  - Rev WCAG: WCAG 2.1 or ISO/IEC 40500 (equivalent to WCAG 2.0)
  - INT: Incorporates all three of the above standards

# Aligning Efforts

- Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) is a start
- Accessibility questions asked by colleges are similar across institutions
- HECVAT successfully elevates the importance and visibility of security in Higher Education

# Benefit of A11Y in HECVAT

- Including accessibility will help raise awareness/value of a11y
- Security professionals can independently assess accessibility risk or work with accessibility staff
- Good starting point for accessibility professionals



What accessibility questions are now included in the HECVAT 3.0x?

# Section 1: Dedicated Accessibility Contact

- GENL 11-13
  - Asks for name, title, contact info for accessibility
  - Saves time for universities trying to find this contact information
  - If none exists, it tells us a lot



# Section 2: General Product Conformance Part 1

- DOCU-12: Has a VPAT or ACR been created or updated for the product and version under consideration within the past year?
- ITAC-01: Has a third-party accessibility expert conducted an accessibility audit of the most recent version of your product?
- ITAC-02: Do you have a documented and implemented process for verifying accessibility conformance?

# Section 2: General Product Conformance Part 2

- ITAC-03: Have you adopted a technical or legal accessibility standard of conformance for the product in question?
- ITAC-04: Can you provide a current, detailed accessibility roadmap with delivery timelines

# Section 3: Organizational Maturity

- ITAC-05: Do you expect your staff to maintain a current skill set in IT accessibility?
- ITAC-06: Do you have a documented and implemented process for reporting and tracking accessibility issues?
- ITAC-07: Do you have documented processes and procedures for implementing accessibility into your development lifecycle?

# Section 4: Usability and Support

- ITAC-08: Can all functions of the application or service be performed using only the keyboard?
- ITAC-09: Does your product rely on activating a special "accessibility mode," a "lite version," or accessing an alternate interface for accessibility purposes?
- DOCU-13: Do you have documentation to support the accessibility features of your product?

# Example: Reason for the question

- Has a third-party expert conducted an accessibility audit of the most recent version of your product?
  - Many vendors rely on their internal product knowledge and history to complete accessibility self-assessments of their own product rather than utilizing up-to-date, validated testing. Use of an expert, external specialist provides a more robust assessment of the product.

# Example: Follow-up Inquiry

- Has a third-party expert conducted an accessibility audit of the most recent version of your product?
  - One of the most common outcomes of such an audit includes VPAT/ACR referenced in DOCU-12. If a vendor is unfamiliar with the [VPAT](#) they may learn more on [the Section 508 website](#).



How can we use the accessibility  
section?

# Use and Scoring

- Each question has weighted scores
- Analysts (schools reviewing) can change weighted scores
- Or not (just use the responses)

Share practices!





# Procurement Processes

# Integrating into procurement processes

- Risk-assessment
- Supplement conformance claims and confirmation testing
- Yours?

A futuristic, dark-colored car is shown from a front-three-quarter perspective, floating in space. The car's interior is visible through the windshield, showing a driver and a passenger. The background is a large, curved view of the Earth from space, with blue oceans and white clouds. The text "Where Can I Find Help" is overlaid on the left side of the image in a white, serif font.

Where Can I Find  
Help

# Within the HECVAT spreadsheet

- Additional information
  - Reason for A11y question (Full)
  - Follow-up inquiries (Coming Soon)
- Provide feedback to Educause if things don't make sense
  - Educause engages in annual reviews & revisions of HECVAT incorporating higher ed & vendor feedback.

# HECVAT

- [HECVAT at Educause](#)

# Accessibility resources

- [VPAT Training Module](#)
- [W3C Quick Reference WCAG](#)
- [WebAIM Resources](#)
- [Educause article about adding accessibility to the HECVAT](#)

# Credits

- Kyle Shachmut (Harvard University, IT Accessibility CG Co-Chair)
- Michael Cyr (University of Maine System, IT Accessibility CG Co-Chair)
- Mary Albert (Princeton University)
- Jill Bateman (Ohio University)
- Gwen A. Bostic (Western Michigan University)
- Jiatyan Chen (Stanford University)
- Glenn Dausch (Stony Brook University)
- Laura Fathauer (Miami University [OH])
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- Carmen Schafer (University of Missouri)
- Eudora Struble (Wake Forest University)
- Kate Tipton (California State University at Northridge)
- Todd Weissenberger (University of Iowa)

# Questions and Discussion