
SiteExecutive

Version 3.3

SiteExecutive and Section 508 Compliance White Paper

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Contents

Introduction	3
Frequently Asked Questions	4
What is Section 508?	4
Who needs to be compliant?	4
What are the differences between Section 508 and W3C's priority checkpoints?	4
Does SiteExecutive support Section 508 Compliance?	4
How can I create Section 508 compliant Web site?	4
How can I test for compliance?	5
How can I find out more about Section 508 and accessibility?	5
Accessibility Features	6
Appendix I Glossary	8

Introduction

Effective June 21, 2001, all federal government agencies were mandated to provide equal access to electronic and information technology by people with disabilities as set forth in the Section 508 guidelines of the Rehabilitation Act. These guidelines are based on Priority 1 access guidelines developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and cover a wide range of technologies, including web-based applications.

Enforcement of these guidelines has greatly raised industry-wide awareness of accessibility. Many state and county agencies are also making Section 508 compliance a requirement.

Systems Alliance is committed to pursuing technological advances that promote universal accessibility to web content by all users, including those with disabilities. This commitment is manifested by our thorough understanding of government regulations, as well as our continuous research on industry initiatives and assistive technologies. We are also engaged in active partnerships with leading accessibility entities.

Beginning with version 3.0, **SiteExecutive** incorporates many Section 508 support features as well as advanced W3C Priority 2 and 3 requirements (See Appendix I). For example, auto-generated links are embedded into pages to aid the blind in navigating content intensive sites using a screen reader. The page editor is greatly enhanced to allow for the creation of both basic and sophisticated accessible HTML tables. Default text can be defined for Web forms, which is auto-filled to prompt for type of data expected.

While Section 508 prescribes the guidelines, universal accessibility is the ultimate goal. There are numerous features within **SiteExecutive** that enable accessible and compliant web content, such as ALT tags for images and dynamic web objects. By taking advantage of these features and using proper design techniques, content authors can now develop websites that meet government regulations and make access to the web easier for all. In addition, professional services are available to clients who need to gain expertise in web content accessibility.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Section 508?

In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act to require that Federal agencies make electronic and information technology (EIT) accessible to people with disabilities. Section 508 provides the guidelines to promote accessibility with 1194.22 specifically defining guidelines for web-based Intranet and Internet applications. These guidelines are based on access guidelines developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

Who needs to be compliant?

Although Section 508 primarily targets federal agencies and contractors, many state and county agencies are making it a requirement.

What are the differences between Section 508 and W3C's priority checkpoints?

W3C standards are from the World Wide Web Consortium, a not-for-profit organization that develops inter-operable technologies to lead the web to its full potential. Section 508 is based on Priority 1 checkpoints outlined in W3C's "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0" specifications.

Does SiteExecutive support Section 508 Compliance?

Yes. The current release provides capabilities of creating Section 508 compliant web sites. It also supports certain W3C Priority 2 and 3 requirements beyond the 508 guidelines. Please refer to the Accessibility Features section for a detailed listing of accessibility support features.

How can I create a Section 508-compliant website?

Creating compliant websites is a shared responsibility between the SiteExecutive authoring tool and the content designer. By utilizing the accessibility support features and applying proper design techniques, content designers can develop websites that meet Section 508 requirements. SiteExecutive also offers training seminars that deal specifically with compliance issues.

How can I test for compliance?

There are two aspects of compliance testing: automated testing and manual validation. Automated testing is conducted by utilizing a tool that checks against 508 guidelines. Manual validation requires a person manually evaluating a broad range of accessibility issues with or without assistive technologies.

How can I find out more about Section 508 and accessibility?

There are many resources available on the web. Here are a few key websites:

- ?? 508 Site: <http://www.section508.gov>
- ?? Access Board: <http://www.access-board.gov>
- ?? W3C: <http://www.w3c.org>
- ?? Free online testing portal: bobby.watchfire.com

Accessibility Features

Below is a detailed listing of accessibility features available in Site**Executive**:

Feature	SiteExecutive	Note
Ability to enter ALT text description for images used on pages	Yes	
Ability to enter text description for Flash objects	Yes	
Auto-generate ALT text for images used by different modules	Yes	
Auto-generate hidden link to skip to main contents in pages	Yes	
Basic HTML table accessibility authoring: ?? Identifying table headers ?? Association between table headers and table cells	Yes	Site Executive offers multiple association options
Advanced HTML table accessibility ?? Table caption ?? Table summary	Yes	
Auto-generate form field labels and label-field association	Yes	Form fields are properly identified and labeled to be easily interpreted by a screen reader.
Ability to specify tab order in custom form to enable mouse-free navigation	Yes	
Default text configuration for individual custom form	Yes	In Site Executive , default text can be defined for web forms, which is auto-filled to prompt for type of data expected.
Default text in search field	No	
Use of descriptive link names for site maps	Yes	

Ability to customize design to meet different accessibility needs with the template driven feature	Yes	
Ability to fine tune accessibility design with style selector and color configuration	Yes	
Site-wide accessibility configuration	No	Under development

Appendix I Glossary

Access Board: the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, an independent Federal agency whose primary mission is to promote accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

Accessibility: making your software usable and accessible to a wide range of users including those with disabilities.

Assistive Technology: software and hardware that has been specifically designed to assist people with disabilities in carrying out daily activities, e.g. screen readers, screen magnifiers, speech synthesizers, voice input.

Bobby/CAST: CAST is a not-for-profit organization that uses technology to expand opportunities for all people, including those with disabilities. Bobby or Bobby World Wide is an accessibility-testing tool including support for Section 508 compliance.

Braille: uses raised dots in different patterns to represent letters and numbers to be read by people who are blind.

Compliance: adherence to Section 508 guidelines.

Screen Reader: software program that reads computer screen contents aloud to a user.

User Agent: software to access web content, e.g. browsers, mobile phones, browsers with assistive technology.

W3C: World Wide Web Consortium created in October 1994 to lead the World Wide Web to its full potential by developing common protocols that promote its evolution and ensure its interoperability. The "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0" is a W3C specification providing guidance on accessibility of Web sites for people with disabilities with checkpoints. Most countries, including the European Union, have adopted standards based on the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) of the World Wide Web Consortium. Section 508 is based on W3C priority 1 checkpoints.

Priority 1

A Web content developer must satisfy this checkpoint. Otherwise, one or more groups will find it impossible to access information in the document. Satisfying this checkpoint is a basic requirement for some groups to be able to use Web documents.

Priority 2

A Web content developer should satisfy this checkpoint. Otherwise, one or more groups will find it difficult to access information in the document. Satisfying this checkpoint will remove significant barriers to accessing Web documents.

Priority 3

A Web content developer may address this checkpoint. Otherwise, one or more groups will find it somewhat difficult to access information in the document. Satisfying this checkpoint will improve access to Web documents.

Conformance Level "A": all Priority 1 checkpoints are satisfied;

Conformance Level "AA": all Priority 1 and 2 checkpoints are satisfied;

Conformance Level "AAA": all Priority 1, 2, and 3 checkpoints are satisfied.