



ACHIEVE!

The newsletter
for the
STC Special
Needs SIG

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Achieve! is Our Name... Teamwork is Our Game

*By Dan Voss, Orlando Chapter
Special Needs SIG Manager*



*Dan Voss,
Special
Needs SIG
Manager*

Welcome to Volume I, No. 1 of *Achieve!*—the online newsletter of STC's newest SIG.

I'd like to offer my appreciation and congratulations to Mike Murray, editor-in-chief and one of the most accomplished punsters in the Western Hemisphere (go ahead...challenge him; I dare you); to our eagle-eyed copy editors, Helen Marty and Kim McConnell; and to all the contributors whose collective efforts have produced this outstanding inaugural edition.

Just approved by the STC Board at its May meeting, the Special Needs SIG is off to a rip-roaring start. From a core membership of 20 on the forerunning Special Needs Committee, the new SIG's membership has grown more than eight-fold.

Under the capable hand of Web diva Cynthia Lockley and her assistant, Leslie Reed, our already robust Web site (<http://www.stcsig.org/sn/index.shtml>) has grown by numerous topic areas and several hundred new links. Cynthia also set up our new listserv (stc-special-needs@lists.stc.org), and the redoubtable Mountebank of Montreal, Fabien Vais (fabien.vais@videotron.ca), has taken the reins as listserv administrator. I encourage you to participate. Based on the early threads, I believe this is going to be a wonderful forum for a candid exchange of information, ideas, feelings, and inspiration.

The twofold mission of the Special Needs SIG is to assist technical communicators with disabilities and to guide *all* technical communicators in making the products we create more accessible to end users with disabilities. Our detailed mission statement is available at (<http://www.stcsig.org/sn/aboutsig.shtml>).



SOCIETY FOR
TECHNICAL
COMMUNICATION

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Key to meeting both objectives is increasing *awareness* of special needs. That is the spirit of our new column, “Walk in My Shoes” (see Page 7), which grew out of a recent thread on our listserv. It will also be the main thrust behind a major academic research and publishing initiative designed to keep us on the cutting edge of assistive technologies that will continue to make the world—including the world of technical communication—a friendlier place for those with special needs.

Lori Allen, at Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, has volunteered to spearhead this research and publishing initiative, assisted by Dr. Gloria Reece, at Mercer University College of Education in Atlanta; Dr. Gail Lippincott, at North Texas State University; and Fabien Vais, at Concordia University and the Place Cartier Adult Center in Montreal. If you are interested in joining this effort, contact Lori at lori.a.allen@worldnet.att.net. Our congratulations, by the way, to the newly frocked Dr. Reece, who successfully defended her dissertation and earned her Ed.D. earlier this month.

Under the guidance of our Usability Manager, Carolyn Watt, we plan to work closely with our colleagues in the Usability SIG to ensure that *accessibility* gets

the attention it merits as a primary usability issue. Our successful progression at the 49th annual conference in Nashville, presented within the Usability stem at the suggestion of and with the support of stem manager Whitney Quesenbery, was an auspicious first step on this journey. Thank you, Whitney! And thanks also to the seven presenters who made this progression a success: Lori Allen, fibromyalgia; Lori Gillen, hearing impairment; Andy Malcolm, teaching writing to the disadvantaged; Helen Marty, telecommuting; Gloria Reece, Web accessibility for the visually impaired; Fabien Vais, mobility restrictions; and, last but not least, Dan Voss (way to go, kid!), ethics (and session moderator). You can find material from this session at <http://www.stc-orlando.org/prodev/49notes/SNC.asp>.

And a hearty thank you also to George Hoerter, who kept an eye on the clock and thereby helped me to keep the session on schedule!

Our alliance with the Usability SIG (U-SIG) has picked up steam this fall with much appreciated support from U-SIG president Karen Bachmann and newsletter editor David Dick, in addition to continued support from Whitney Quesenbery, our “guardian angel.” We are presently laying exciting plans to publish

a joint newsletter this April, focusing on both accessibility and usability, and previewing both SIGs’ sessions on those topics at the 50th annual conference in Dallas the following month. To get the ball rolling on that subject, we are republishing an article on Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act that recently appeared in the *Usability Interface*, with the gracious permission of its author, Kathy Bine, and the editor (see Page 5).

Wait...what was that gong sound? I’ve reached my word limit for this column? Aw come on, Mike—give me just a few more.

Thanks.

Seriously, I would like to close by calling your attention to another column: “The Starfish Chamber.” The story behind this unusually named feature is provided in the first installment (see Page 3).

I’ll let that column speak for itself. But I can find no better way to wrap up my first column as SIG manager.

Achieve! is, indeed, the right name for our newsletter.

What we *have* achieved, what we *can* achieve, what we *will* achieve working together *does* make a difference.

In fact, it makes *all* the difference. ☺

Wow, it’s finally here!

We’ve been so anxious, it seems like we’ve been waiting forever for the first issue of *Achieve!*, yet here it is. *Achieve!* is just one of the tangible signs that the new Special Needs Special Interest Group (SNSIG) of the Society of Technical Communication (STC) has, indeed, arrived. (Two “Specials,” is that a double-positive?) There are many others.

Part of Every Audience

Perhaps “arrived” is too mild of a word in this case. It seems that the evolution of the SNSIG (formerly, the STC Special Needs Committee) has tapped a strong international interest among technical communicators. And why not? As good, effective technical communicators, one of the very first things we are taught is to identify our audience. While that profile rarely includes the description “people with special needs,” they are, by default, most definitely a part of each and every audience profile. Technical communicators the world over are recognizing this fact and are consciously including this group in their planning processes.

In This Edition

In this inaugural edition, we introduce you to the SNSIG, some of the folks who make up its heart and soul, and a little of what we’re about and what we hope to achieve in the years to come. We welcome your comments, particularly your encouragement or your constructive criticism. We will never become complacent, never rest on any laurels that may come our way, always strive to be better for the sake of “special” people everywhere.

We’d love to have you join us as part of the Special Needs SIG. It’s truly a labor of love whose time has come. ☺



The Starfish Chamber... Let's Make a Difference!

By Dan Voss, Orlando Chapter
Special Needs SIG Manager

This column is named after the famous movie "The Star Chamber," where an elite cadre of hugely wealthy and influential individuals controls the future of the planet.

Except in this case we are moving to the opposite end of the spectrum. We are dealing with people who are not only not fortunate enough to be hugely wealthy and influential, but who have, by the luck of the draw, not even been fortunate enough to have been blessed with the full set of physical abilities that most of us blithely take for granted.

The mission of the Special Needs SIG is to do our best to assist such individuals—be they fellow technical communicators with special needs or end users whose disabilities make it more difficult for them to access the communication products we create.

My predecessor as manager of the Special Needs Committee, Judy Skinner, warned me how draining this office could be. In honesty, I really didn't

understand her until I walked in her shoes.

Try as we might, we cannot possibly provide solutions for all the challenges faced by millions of people with disabilities. We can't even do that within our own profession.

But we sure as hell can try.

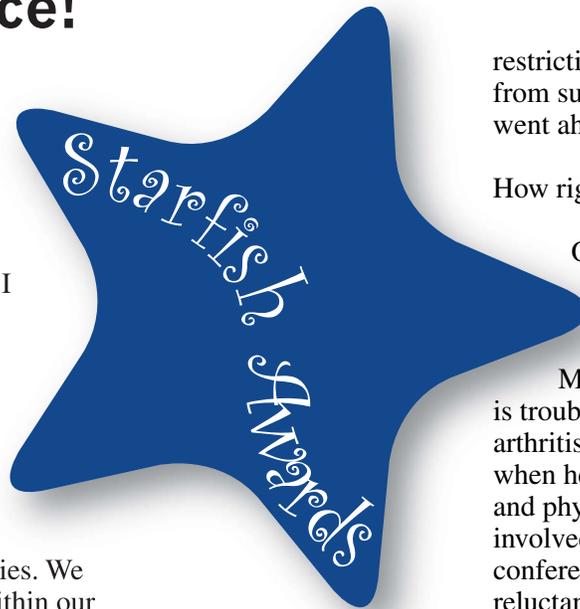
And that's what "The Starfish Chamber" is about. The starfish metaphor is based on a story that Judy used to conclude her landmark article, "My Brain Works, My Legs Don't: Let's Take the 'Dis' Out of Disabilities," published in the *Proceedings* to the 47th STC Conference (<http://www.stcsig.org/sn/PDF/skinnerpaper.pdf>):

"I'm reminded of the story about the beach strewn with starfish and the little girl picking them up and throwing them back in the ocean.

'Little girl,' a passer-by said, 'what are you doing?'

'I'm saving starfish,' she replied.

'But there are so many! Your efforts can't possibly make a difference.'



As she picked up another starfish, the little girl said, 'It makes a difference to that one.'"

We ask you to help us make a difference."

I would like to kick off this column by presenting the Special Needs SIG's first "Starfish Award." It goes to my esteemed colleague Fabien Vais, for persevering against all challenges and publishing the *Guidelines for People with Special Needs* for the 49th annual conference in Nashville, as well as an *Addendum* to that document produced onsite the day before the conference to ensure current information on accessibility and accommodations (see [Page 6](#)).

Undaunted by the fact that only a few people had checked the box marked "Special Needs" on previous conferences, Fabien held firm to his conviction that many more people who actually had

restrictions would benefit from such information if we went ahead and published it.

How right he was.

One such individual, in fact, was the editor of this newsletter, Mike Murray. Mike is troubled with crippling arthritis in his knees, and when he saw the complexity and physical distances involved with the Nashville conference facilities, he had reluctantly concluded that discretion was the better part of valor on this one. He wasn't going to attend.

That was until Fabien published the *Guidelines* on the STC Conference Web site (thank you, Bill Stolgitis!). Encouraged by the wealth of information on assistive technologies and equipment, Mike went ahead and arranged for an electric scooter and attended the conference.

He also joined the Special Needs SIG and volunteered to edit this newsletter.

This time Fabien was the little girl in Judy's story and Mike was the starfish.

In his new role on the SNSIG, however, Mike will save many more starfish.

Which is why this column is going to be so special. Send me your stories (daniel.w.voss@lmco.com).

And let's make a difference! 



Rhode Island Conference Probes Accessibility: “Web Design that Works for Everyone”

By Lori Gillen, Boston Chapter
SNSIG Membership Co-Manager

The Rhode Island School of Design auditorium in Providence served as a meeting place for the first annual “Web Design that Works for Everyone” accessibility conference October 18 and 19, 2002. The event was co-hosted by Adaptive Environments of Boston, Massachusetts, and the Rhode Island School of Design.

The 200 participants crossed industry and academe, including students from Rhode Island School of Design, Web designers from industry, and others whose vision has helped pave the way to create Web sites that can be used by *all* people regardless of their disabilities.

The focus for the first day of this two-day international conference—which people came from as far away as The Netherlands to attend—was (1) to assess how far industry and researchers have come in terms of raising Web-accessibility awareness, (2) to show real-world examples from companies that are actively designing products with accessibility in mind, and (3) to foster discussion on where accessibility needs

to go and grow from here. The focus for the second day was to offer practical training for getting from the theoretical stage to the implementation stage.

Topics on the first day included an introduction by Judy Brewer, director of the World Wide Web Accessibility Initiative (<http://www.w3.org/WAI>). Brewer described some of the barriers that have hitherto excluded people with disabilities from using the Web and suggested guidelines her group has developed to enable them to use this powerful medium.

Also included on this first day were topics involving design theory. John Rheinfrank and Shelley Evenson from SeeSpace discussed universal design, sharing seven principles for implementing that concept:

- **Let me do** (as I move through the experience of using your site, make me feel as if you designed it for me personally)
- **Orient me** (give me a journey or a road map that I can take to help me visualize what I want to accomplish and plan what I want to do next)



Jacko van Dijk, of Drempeles Weg, the Netherlands, fields questions from Bill Seaman, director of the RISD Digital Media Program, and Marcelo Guimarães, designer, Columbia, following his presentation at the Web Accessibility Conference in Providence.

- **Let me win** (reward me every time I accomplish something)
- **Push me** (help me to reveal my potential; don't let me just get by)
- **Sense and respond** (let me customize while you dynamically personalize for me)
- **Connect me** (help me make connections with the subject matter)
- **Immerse me** (plunge me into the experience in a way that makes me less aware of the place or setting that I've come from)

Larry Goldberg and Kim Ducharme from WGBH Television demonstrated examples of descriptive video, closed captioning, and screen readers from the WGBH Web site, and then explained how they have implemented audio navigation for DVD technology.

Other speakers included Bob Regan, from

Macromedia; Greg Pisocky, from Adobe Systems; Terry Swack and Ric Grefe, from the American Institute of Graphic Arts; Eric Velleman, David Saris, and Jacko Van Dijk, from Drempeles Weg, The Netherlands; Krzysztof Lenk, from Rhode Island School of Design; and Sarah Horton, from the Web Access Group at Dartmouth College.

The “Web Design that Works for Everyone” conference demonstrated that advocates have come a long way in promoting Web accessibility for all, but it also showed that they still have a long way to go to accomplish their mission. The presence of participants and speakers from all over the world, from well-respected companies and from leading academic institutions, bore witness to the fact that many people are taking this issue very seriously. 



Intranet Accessibility and Section 508

By Kathy Bine, Washington, D.C., Chapter, Usability SIG

Republished from the July 2002 Usability Interface, with permission of the author and the editor, David J. Dick.

A compelling reason to make your Intranet accessible to people with disabilities is because it's the law. Section 508 of the United States' Rehabilitation Act of 1972 requires that Federal agencies' electronic and information technology (EIT) be accessible to people with disabilities (vision, hearing, mobility) if the EIT is procured on or after June 21, 2001. It establishes penalties for Federal departments and agencies that fail to make their EIT accessible. EIT includes the following:

- Software applications and operating systems
- Web-based information or applications
- Telecommunications functions
- Video or multi-media products
- Self-contained, closed products such as information kiosks and transaction machines
- Computers

If you develop hardware, software, Internet, or Intranet solutions for the U.S. Government, either as an employee of the U.S. Government or as a service or product provider, the procurement date is a critical factor in determining functional requirements of your Intranet.

If you work for a government other than the U.S. Government, keep reading, and bear in mind that nations including Germany and Canada are considering standards similar to Section 508.

The content you create for that Intranet should be readable by the software and hardware that a person with disabilities uses to access your site. Your Intranet doesn't have to provide the hardware and software to people with disabilities—just provide it in an accessible format. Accessible formats include ASCII text and HTML. Some technologies, such as videoconferencing, Macromedia Flash, JavaScript, and Java applets, are not accessible formats. If you choose to use these formats, read up on the issues and see what accommodation you can make for people with vision or hearing disabilities.

If you work for a nonprofit or a for-profit business, things get trickier. Your corporate Intranet serves a captive audience, not the U.S. taxpayer. Your manager may say, "We don't have anyone on staff who has disabilities." Your response? "That could change tomorrow." A car accident can change your life in seconds. Glaucoma, macular degeneration, diabetes, and even benign tumors slowly steal sight or hearing, and may result in blindness or deafness. Your company may hire someone who has a disability.

The Intranet is a great place to build qualifications to do accessibility work. Once your developers implement your accessible Intranet, they will have the knowledge to make your public Web site accessible. E-commerce business managers should support changes to assist the regular Web shopper, such as a person with disabilities who may not have the option to go out shopping.

Ensure that evaluations for usability also evaluate accessibility. The objectives of Section 508 are similar to those for the Americans with Disabilities Act: by making your Intranet accessible for some, you make it more usable for everyone. What else can you do to get people to make your Intranet accessible?

- Conduct a demonstration of assistive technologies.
- Ask a developer to build a Web site or database about Section 508 to combine a task they love with a new subject area, and new functional requirements.
- Delegate the technical knowledge tasks whenever possible. It's OK to own the objective but not all of the knowledge to achieve it.
- Pick one technical area in which you can be the Section 508 expert, such as Adobe Acrobat or cascading style sheets, and share your knowledge. If you establish some credentials, the developers are more likely to respect your knowledge about accessibility because you've had to implement it.

Kathy Bine designs online help systems and manages projects for ICF Consulting in Fairfax, Virginia. She has facilitated numerous usability studies and co-leads ICF's Section 508 task force. 

References

U.S. Government Services Administration's Center for IT Accommodation (CITA) Web site at www.Section508.gov.

Voluntary Product Accessibility Template at www.itic.org/policy/vpat.html#softwaredetails.

World Wide Web Coalition's Web Accessibility Initiative Web site at www.w3c.org/WAI/, which provides accessibility guidelines and checklists specifically for a Web-based solution.

U.S. Department of Justice Section 508 enforcement Web site at www.usdoj.gov/crt/508/508home.html.

The Making of the *Nashville Conference Guide for People with Special Needs*

By Fabien Vais, Montreal Chapter
SNSIG E-mail List Administrator

The first *Conference Guide for People with Special Needs* was modest, yet everyone agreed that it was a success.

Fortunately for me, many people were available to help me at various production stages. First, I want to thank **Dan Voss** for always encouraging me to pursue this project. I would probably have abandoned many times without him. The project, originally referred to as “Guidelines,” soon took the appearance of a booklet.

The person who helped me the most with the actual contents was no doubt **Bill Smith**, vice president of the Middle Tennessee Chapter. Bill was my eyes around the Nashville conference site, way before I even got there. He visited the hotel at least twice, and took generous notes as he toured the site. He then relayed his findings to me. Thank you, Bill!

After writing the first draft of the Guide, I sent it to the **core group of the original Special Needs Committee** and to other STC leaders for review. Everyone generously commented and suggested ways to improve the Guide. I must thank two people in particular—**George Hoerter** and **Bill Stogitis**—for their extremely helpful insights and suggestions.

To my great delight, **Carolyn Watt** volunteered to take care of the final edit and printing. She did a super job, although she was on the West Coast on business while she gave explicit instructions to others back home. Carolyn made sure the Guide was printed properly, and 200 copies were delivered to me the day before I left for Nashville.

In Nashville, I must thank **Dan Voss** again for touring the site with me, in order to publish an *Addendum* to the *Conference Guide*. Dan said he learned a great deal from this full-day experience with mobility restriction, and he was a big help in creating the contents of the *Addendum* (see [Page 7](#)).

Because the *Conference Guide* itself had been written entirely “sight unseen,” I thought it was important to tour the site myself **before** the beginning of the conference and then print an *Addendum* to the Guide containing last-minute findings. I arrived at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel Friday evening, so that I could tour the place. Dan Voss joined me Saturday morning. After we had a fantastic reunion breakfast at Christie’s Cookies, Dan and I spent Saturday following maps and trying to



Presenters Fabien Vais, Montreal Chapter, and Lori Gillen, Boston Chapter, share ideas for the Special Needs progression in Nashville. Fabien and Lori were two of the seven table hosts at the well-attended and highly successful progression.

find our way around the hotel. We checked wheelchair access and distances. We also checked the usability of signs around the hotel, and we found many cases where the signs were either confusing, inadequate, misplaced, or absent altogether. We found many discrepancies between **accessibility** and **usability**. Ask Dan to tell you the story of that never-ending corridor leading to a dead-end with seven steps! We had passed an elevator that would have avoided the cul-de-sac 150 feet earlier, but there was no sign directing individuals in wheelchairs to take that route. That was a perfect example of the importance of proper signage.

Armed with my notes, I spent some time at Kinko’s to finalize the *Addendum*. While there, I took the opportunity to make new signs to assist people using a wheelchair in taking the best routes to get around the site. I later placed those signs in places where people would see them. The Opryland Hotel was extremely supportive of our efforts. They provided easels for our temporary signs. Even more importantly, they sent a top-level official to meet with the Special Needs Committee at a working lunch, and they are following up with us to improve the usability of their maps and signage for better accessibility for visitors with special needs.

Although the Nashville Guide was modestly successful, I am already working hard to prepare the Dallas Guide. I am happy to report that members of the Lone Star Chapter have enthusiastically stepped forth to help meet this challenge. This new Guide will include sections for various types of special needs, such as mobility, sight impairment, hearing impairment, chronic fatigue, and even dietary needs. The format and layout will change for a more convenient size, and the cover will be much more noticeable. Finally, the Dallas Guide will be made available much sooner than last year, at least in its electronic format. 



Walk in My Shoes...

By Dan Voss, Orlando Chapter
SNSIG Manager

If you have been blessed with your health and full abilities, how can you possibly appreciate the unique and daunting challenges faced by somebody with a disability?

The answer is simple.

You can't.

Twice in the past four months, I have been privileged with opportunities to learn this lesson firsthand. The first came at the magnificent Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee, when I joined my Special Needs Committee colleague and friend, Fabien Vais, a day before the 49th annual conference, to conduct an onsite accessibility inspection that would produce an addendum to the *Conference Guidelines for People with Special Needs* (see Page 6).

For several hours I accompanied Fabien in his wheelchair as we attempted to navigate the intricate pathways that traverse the verdant gardens of the vast atrium of this splendid hotel. The deal was simple: if Fabien couldn't proceed, neither could I.

Wow!

What a lesson that was. Do you have any idea how frustrating it is to be literally 20 feet from a restaurant where you want to have dinner and have to go to West Hell and back to get there?

Or to struggle to push a wheelchair over carpet down a 200-foot-long hallway toward seven steps that must surely have an elevator right next to them—only to learn that you passed the last elevator 200 feet back and had reached the end of the line?

Try it some time. It will give you an instant education in accessibility.

My education took another step forward after I returned home from the conference



and underwent surgery to correct a stubborn foot infection. For the fifth time in my life—the other four were caused by sports injuries—I joined the ranks of the temporarily disabled. But this time, thanks to my affiliation with the Special Needs Committee and my recent experience in Nashville, I was much more attuned to the challenges that accompany loss, whether temporary or permanent, of a physical function most of us take for granted.

In this case it was mobility.

The best lesson came when I tried to go shopping at a local Wal-Mart about a week after surgery. I was still on crutches at that point, so I naively checked out one of the little scooters the store provides for customers with mobility restrictions. No problem, right? Just tool around in this cool little scooter and shop as I always did.

Let me tell you something, folks...if you want to really know what it feels like to be mobility-restricted, slap an Ace bandage on your foot and try to conduct your next grocery shopping expedition from a scooter. See what happens when you need canned mushrooms and they're on the top shelf. (Remember...you can't just stand up...that's cheating!) While you're at it, be sure to experience the deflating defeat of working your way at one mile-per-hour from produce to dairy only to discover you forgot the fresh asparagus (no fair running back to get them... one MPH, that's the deal). Know the thrill of dodging non-malicious but totally oblivious fellow

shoppers as they whip around corners with their shopping carts—challenging your limited evasive maneuver capability in your scooter. You will rapidly learn why there are so many dents in those little carts.

I'm back on my feet now, with a cane—so shopping is much easier. Soon, I will once again be fully abled.

But I will not forget.

If you have your vision, try putting on a blindfold (no cheating!) and work with software for the visually impaired. If you have your hearing, try buying a pair of really good earplugs, putting them in for a day, and seeing what that does for you in the workplace or at home.

I'm serious. The awareness can be life-changing.

Oh, and one more thing. Share it with us by contacting our newsletter editor, Mike Murray at mike.murray@lmco.com.

That's what this column is going to be about. 



You Could Be Seeing with New Eyes

By Suzanna Laurent, Senior Member, Oklahoma Chapter

“Blindness has happened.
Deal with it.”

Everyone is blind in some way. Although we may have the ability to look with our eyes, it does not guarantee our ability to see—to assess ourselves honestly, to realize our potential, and to become the person we were created to be.

Jim Stovall is blind. In 1996 after he published his first book, *You Don't Have to be Blind to See*, I heard him speak at our Oklahoma chapter meeting in Tulsa. His timeless message of hope inspired me to become more and do more. It was because of that message to us that I subsequently hired him as the keynote speaker for the 2002 Region 5 Conference. As the conference manager, I wanted this outstanding Oklahoman to share his message with technical communicators from ten states as they gathered to learn and network at our conference. Stovall proved to be just what we needed to set the tone for our conference, “Geared for Success on Route 66.”

A day before the conference started, a request arrived via the Special Needs SIG listserv for someone attending the Region 5 Conference to interview the keynote speaker, Jim Stovall, and write an article for *Achieve!*. I must admit—I was reluctant to volunteer. My reason was simple. Even though I wear hearing aids to compensate for my hearing loss, I still don't hear quite as well as many people. I knew that an “interviewer” must clearly understand responses to questions, so I wasn't sure I was the best person for this job. Then I thought about the title of his keynote talk, “Yes, You Can!” I soon overcame that reluctance when I realized how Stovall so willingly shares his message—even though he can't see the people to whom he is speaking.

“I may have lost my sight, but in the aftermath, I gained a greater vision than I had ever had before.”

Stovall began losing his eyesight to a degenerative eye disease when he was seven. At 30, all the hopes and dreams he had as a sighted person were dashed when the little vision he had left disappeared completely. Stovall says, “I may have lost my sight, but in the aftermath, I gained



Jim Stovall
with the
Emmy that
NTN won
in 1990.

a greater vision than I had ever had before.” That greater vision enabled him to graduate from college with honors, become a successful stockbroker, and start the Narrative Television Network (NTN).

NTN is an Emmy-award winning network that was the first to bring television to the more than 13 million blind and visually impaired people in the United States. It has now grown to include over 1,200 cable systems and broadcast stations, reaching over 35 million homes in the United States. NTN is shown in 11 foreign countries. NTN programming is also presented via the Internet at NarrativeTV.com, serving millions of people around the world.

Stovall joined the ranks of Walt Disney and four United States presidents when he was selected as one of the “Ten Outstanding Young Americans” by the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce. He has appeared on “Good Morning America” and CNN, and has been featured in *Reader's Digest*, *TV Guide* and *Time* magazine. He is the author of *You Don't Have To Be Blind To See*, as well as *Success Secrets of Super Achievers*, *The Way I See The World*, and *The Ultimate Gift*. The President's Committee on Equal Opportunity selected him as the 1997 Entrepreneur of the Year, and he was selected the 2000 International Humanitarian of the Year, joining Jimmy Carter, Nancy Reagan, and Mother Teresa as recipients of this honor.

I'd like to share Stovall's message not only to people who must strive so hard to overcome physical limitations or other obstacles, but anyone who wants to be more successful. In his inspiring message, he gave us these tips for seeing clearly from within the possibilities for unlimited growth and fulfillment, regardless of our situation or physical limitations.

Discover Your Dream

When Stovall learned that he would eventually be blind, the foremost question in his life was not a positive one.





“Seek
and find
the person
who can
light
a fire
in you.”

- What would my life be like if money were no object?
- How will my life change if I continue to do exactly what I am doing right now?
- What am I likely to regret not doing or trying in my life?

There is great power in making a decision. Once you have focused on the thing that you really want to be or attain, shut the door on everything prior to that decision. From then on, it is just you and your new decision.

Find People Around You Who Believe in Your Success

You may think you are the only person in the world who truly believes that you can become a success or that you can achieve the personal destiny you have envisioned, but look around you to see who is there. Somebody believes in your success as much as you do.

Stovall told us he had never met a person who was pursuing a life dream—a sense of personal destiny or purpose—who had failed to encounter such a person. That person is there for you, just waiting for you to take the appropriate steps to put yourself into that person’s sphere of influence and activity. Seek and find the person who can light a fire in you. As you respond to his or her challenges, you will become determined to prove that person is right about your potential and ability.

Stovall told us about the person who was the biggest influence on his life. He said that shortly after he returned to college for the second time, he began to do volunteer work at a school for blind children in Tulsa. He was immediately assigned to Christopher.

Christopher was four years old, and they wanted him to work with Christopher one-on-one. Stovall said that he was told “Christopher had a cerebral hemorrhage, and he isn’t able to learn very much, so we aren’t expecting you to be a teacher. He has a balance and coordination problem. There are only two things we ask of you. Keep his shoes tied so he won’t trip on his shoelaces, and keep him away from the stairs so he won’t fall down them. Other than that, we ask only that you play with him to keep him quiet and to keep him from disturbing the other children as they learn.”

“You
can
change
your
life by
changing
your
mind.”

He mostly wondered about the things he would not be able to do. But shortly after receiving the diagnosis, a large positive-thinking rally was scheduled in Tulsa. The speakers at that time had grouped themselves together and had gone on tour, renting large arenas. One of the sites they chose was close to Stovall’s home. The speakers included Zig Ziglar, Dr. Robert Schuller, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, and Dr. Denis Waitley, as well as others. Stovall had been given a free ticket to the event, and he decided at the last minute to attend. He told us “what I heard amazed me and awakened me. The speakers were fun and interesting. After that rally, I began listening to inspirational and motivational tape recordings of seminars and books.” This was to be a turning point in his life, because he had discovered the courage to dream and that he could become anything he really wanted to be, even without his sight.

Change Your Life by Changing Your Mind

Stovall contends that you can change your life by changing your mind. Changing your mind may mean changing your priorities, goals, focus, or methods. That change can result in visible physical and mental changes. We all know that you can’t change your entire life in an instant, but you can start changing your entire life in only a moment by simply changing your thinking. Stovall recommends this tip that will help you change your thinking.

Think about the best things that have ever happened to you. Think specifically about the things that are better in your life today than they were five years ago. Then think about how the changes occurred. The great likelihood is that you made a quality decision some place along the line that things were going to be different in your life and they were going to be better. Now, it is time to move beyond your comfort zone.

Regardless of what your comfort zone is—it differs from person to person—you must realize that your basic tendency is to stay within your comfort zone. However, success demands that you get out of your comfort zone and take a risk. It’s one of the laws related to success. You can’t remain comfortable and hold the status quo for your life, and move forward and upward at the same time. You are going to have to fight comfort virtually every day of your life if you want to experience your full destiny.

Stovall told us about one technique that seems to help people move beyond their comfort zones. It is asking yourself some “what if” questions. Asking these questions causes the imagination to soar.

Continued on Page 10



“The first step into your future is likely to be the most difficult one. Take it anyway!”

Continued from Page 9

Stovall told Christopher the first day he met him, “Young man, before I leave here you’ll be able to tie both of your shoelaces, and you’ll be able to climb those stairs without falling.” Christopher responded, “No, I won’t” and Stovall said, “Yes, you can!” They argued back and forth for a day and a half before they finally began to work together.

After they had worked together for several months, Stovall realized that his own problems trying to succeed in college were becoming insurmountable—he was finally convinced that he just couldn’t make it and would have to quit college.

When Stovall told Christopher about his decision to leave college, Christopher “turned the tables” on him and became his most ardent supporter by telling him “Yes, you can make it!” Once again, they argued back and forth until Stovall realized that he would have to “prove to this kid with your own life that a person can overcome obstacles and make it through tough times.” Three years later, Stovall graduated from the university summa cum laude with a degree in psychology and sociology.

Christopher had a “graduation day” of sorts shortly thereafter too. Stovall could still see well enough at that time to watch him tie both shoes and climb three flights of stairs to stand proudly on the top step with a “Yes, I can” look in his eyes. Later that same summer, Christopher had another cerebral hemorrhage and died. Stovall credits Christopher with being the person who had the biggest influence on his life at a time when he needed it the most.

Take the First Step into Your Future

Stovall told me “The first step into your future is likely to be the most difficult one. Take it anyway!”

A quality decision changes the very nature of your life—it is the true beginning of any positive change in your life. It causes you to move in a direction that you haven’t gone before to experience greater quality in who you are as a person, what you do, and what you have.

With the darkness of his complete blindness came fear, but the immediate panic he felt gave way to more rational thinking. Stovall immediately took solace in a bedroom he had prepared for this eventuality. He had an easy chair, a bed, a telephone, a radio, and a tape deck. That room became his fortress, and he didn’t leave it for weeks. As far as he was concerned, that was going to be his “universe” from that time forward, because he felt safe there.

Finally, he came to the realization that this wasn’t living—it was only existing. He made a quality decision that changed his life by saying to himself, “If I continue to sit here, I’m going to lose my life. Blindness has happened. Deal with it.” Then he faced reality.

Every truly successful person has faced reality and must continue to face it squarely. Stovall told us, “If you aren’t succeeding in your work, aren’t growing as a person, aren’t moving forward in your life—face the fact. If your life is without direction or purpose, face the fact. Facing the fact is hard, but it’s vital. Once you have accepted reality, it is easier to take that first step into the future.” His own personal decision was that it would probably be better to die trying to do something than to die from rotting in a chair.

There is so much more advice that Stovall gave us during his talk, but I think you get the idea that he is truly an exceptional man. For more information, you can visit his Web site at www.jimstovall.com. I can personally guarantee that his books are worth the purchase price.

If you started “seeing with new eyes” could you begin to achieve your goals and dreams, regardless of obstacles that get in your way? You may never know unless you start to see with new eyes! 

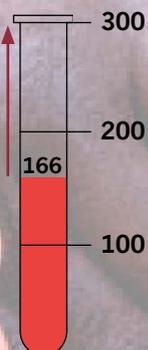
Each One Reach One!

A reminder to all Special Needs SIG members: It is vitally important that we check the box next to our SIG when we renew our STC memberships.

It is equally important that each one of us recruit at least one new member to our SIG, and ask that person to be sure to sign up on the membership renewal form. If someone has already renewed, he/she can sign up directly for the SNSIG by accessing http://www.stc.org/PDF_Files/sigform.pdf.

If we all do our part, we will achieve our membership goals and restore essential funding for our SIG initiatives, including our support to the Dallas conference next spring.

SIG Membership





Writing About People with Disabilities

By Kim McConnell, Central Ohio Chapter
Special Needs Chairperson

Which term is the

preferred term: *disability*,

handicap, or *challenge*?

Most people would answer

challenge although that

is incorrect. Generally,

disability is the preferred

term by people who have

disabilities — when the

term is used properly. The

following are some other

guidelines for writing about

people with disabilities.

disability

Put people first. List the person first; not the disability. Emphasis should be placed on the person and not their “label.” For example:

Correct: The *person with a disability* was happy to receive the achievement award for her work with the government to improve accessibility.

Incorrect: The *disabled person* was happy to receive the achievement award for her work with the government to improve accessibility.

Correct: Last month’s article highlighted information about a *woman diagnosed with epilepsy*.

Incorrect: Last month’s article highlighted information about an *epileptic woman*.

Avoid dated and words with a negative connotation. Avoid words that are no longer used or are demeaning, such as *crippled*, *handicapped*, *deformed*, *suffers from*, *infirm*, *victim of*, *wheelchair bound*, *confined to a wheelchair*, *mentally ill*, and so on.

Avoid generic labels, such as “the mentally retarded” or “the disabled.”

Know the difference between handicap and disability.

Handicap describes a condition or barrier imposed by society, the environment, or by one’s own self. In other words, it describes when something is not accessible; a disadvantage that is the result of a disability. A *disability* is a measurable impairment or limitation that interferes

with a person’s ability to perform physical, sensory, or mental tasks. *Handicap* and *disability* are not synonymous and should not be used interchangeably.

When using the word *handicap*, most people prefer the use of the word *inaccessible* or *not accessible* instead of *handicap*. For example, use *the parking space was wheelchair accessible* rather than *the parking space was handicap accessible*. This places the emphasis on the specific fact — the wheelchair and not the general “handicap.”

Properly refer to people without a disability. Use *person without a disability* instead of *normal*, *able-bodied*, *non-disabled*, or *healthy*.

Keep the focus on abilities. When writing about people with disabilities, focus on their abilities rather than their disabilities, unless it is crucial to get a point across. In fact, unless it is necessary to mention the disability, it should not be mentioned at all. 

For more tips and information about writing about people with disabilities, visit these Web sites:

Communicating With and About People with Disabilities (U.S. Department of Labor)
<http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/comucate.htm>

Guidelines for Reporting and Writing About People with Disabilities (The Arc)
<http://www.thearc.org/misc/writingguides.htm>

Speaking and Writing About People with Disabilities (Edmond J. Sass, Ed.D)
<http://www.cloudnet.com/~edrbsass/edpeoplefirst.htm>

Suggestions for Communicating, Working With and Writing About People with Disabilities (Iowa Arts Council)
<http://www.culturalaffairs.org/iac/info/info18.htm>

handicap challenge

What Makes a Web Site Accessible?

By Kim McConnell, Central Ohio Chapter
Web Content Developer

tools, though, many people have limited access to adaptive technology. Web sites that are developed without accessibility accommodations interfere with the ability of these individuals to obtain and use information quickly and easily.

Web content developers and the general public are beginning to recognize and take action about the issue of Web site accessibility. For example, changes in federal law (Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act) require federal departments and agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to government employees and the public using government services. This law includes federal government Web sites. State governments are not far behind and private industry is already taking steps toward ensuring accessibility. Because of this steady trend toward accessibility, technical communicators, in particular Web content developers, need to pay closer attention to accessibility when developing and maintaining Web sites (see Page 5).

Tools for Ensuring an Accessible Web Site

There are several tools available to help a Web content developer ensure that his or her site is accessible. Many Web sites display the “Bobby Approved” logo for a claim of Web site accessibility. Bobby, created in 1984 through the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), is a free Web-based tool that analyzes Web pages for their accessibility to people with disabilities (www.cast.org/bobby/). It is important to remember, though, that Bobby, as well as all other accessibility “checkers,” is only one step in the process. Developers should also pursue the World Wide Web Consortium’s guidelines for further accessibility development.



The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), founded in 1994, is an international industry consortium jointly run by the MIT Laboratory for Computer Science (MIT LCS) in the United States, the National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Control (INRIA) in France, and the Keio University in Japan (www.w3c.org). The W3C has published *Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 (WCAG 1.0)*, which was also used when the federal government standards of Section 508 were created. The document can be found on the W3C Web site at www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT-TECHS/.



Introduction

Use of the Internet by people who have disabilities is rapidly increasing. According to a survey conducted by the National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research, 59 percent of the disabled individuals that responded reported they had a computer at home, and 48 percent reported having Internet access (NCDDR 2001a). In addition, the top reason for using the Internet by this population was for searching for information and performing research. Overall, only 23% reported never getting information from the Internet, compared to 54% in 1997 (NCDDR 2001b). Clearly, the use of the Internet by people who have disabilities is on the rise.

The range of disabilities of Internet users who are physically and/or mentally challenged is just as wide and complex as the Web itself. Individuals may have impairments in their vision, hearing, neurological, motor, and/or cognitive abilities. There are a variety of tools that people with disabilities use to access the Internet, including screen readers, touch screens, Braille readers, screen magnifiers, special keyboards, switch interfaces, and voice input devices. Due to the high cost of these



The WCAG 1.0 document lists 14 guidelines. Each guideline contains between one and ten checkpoints. Cross-references are provided to help further explain the meaning of each checkpoint. All checkpoints must be met in order to meet the guideline.

visual, or mobility impairments to access information in a linear format.

Guideline Number	Guideline Description	Checkpoints within Guideline
1	Provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content.	5
2	Do not rely on color alone.	2
3	Use markup and style sheets and do so properly.	7
4	Clarify natural language usage.	3
5	Create tables that transform gracefully.	6
6	Ensure that pages featuring new technologies transform gracefully.	5
7	Ensure user control of time-sensitive content changes.	5
8	Ensure direct accessibility of embedded user interfaces.	1
9	Design for device-independence.	5
10	Use interim solutions.	5
11	Use W3C technologies and guidelines.	4
12	Provide context and orientation information.	4
13	Provide clear navigation mechanisms.	10
14	Ensure that documents are clear and simple.	3

- **Priority 3:** A Web content developer **may** address the checkpoint since it will improve access to Web documents.

Example: Checkpoint 13.7 requires that different levels of searches should be offered if a search feature is provided. This allows people with varying cognitive abilities to access information easily.

Two documents that are helpful when first starting into accessible Web site content development are *Getting Started: Making a Web Site Accessible* found at www.w3.org/WAI/gettingstarted/ and *Checklist of Checkpoints for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0* found at

Each checkpoint within the guideline has a priority level assigned, based on the checkpoint’s impact on accessibility. The priority levels are as follows:

www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/full-checklist.html. Both documents are written by the World Wide Web Consortium.

- **Priority 1:** A Web content developer **must** satisfy the checkpoint since it is a basic requirement for some people to access Web documents.

Accessible versus Usable

In addition to conforming to the W3C standards, usability also needs to be addressed, such as the effective use of navigation techniques and appropriate content development. Jakob Nielsen, author of many books and articles about Web design and usability, states in his on-line article *Beyond Accessibility: Treating Users with Disabilities as People*, “just because a design is theoretically accessible, doesn’t mean that it’s easy to use, simple to learn, or supports efficient job performance.” Accessibility should not just be about making it possible for someone to access a Web site. It should also ensure that someone can access that site easily and be able to find the information they need quickly (Nielsen 2001).

Example: Checkpoint 1.1 requires that a Web site offer text equivalent information for every non-text element. A possible scenario is when a Web site posts an important message on a page, but it is stated in a graphic, and no text description (ALT tag) is offered. A person with a vision impairment will not be able to “hear” the warning because their screen reader will not be able to read the graphic.

- **Priority 2:** A Web content developer **should** satisfy the checkpoint since it will remove significant barriers to accessing Web documents.

Keep in mind that just because a Web site is deemed accessible does not mean it has to be boring. With the proper techniques and attention to detail, a fully accessible Web site can be useful **and** attractive.

Example: Checkpoint 13.3 requires that information about the general layout of a site should be provided, such as with a site map or table of contents. Doing so gives users different options to navigate through the site, which can make it easier for persons with cognitive,



Design for All

The old saying, “What goes around, comes around” applies to Web site development. When the general public started using the Internet more than a decade ago, the Web sites were text-based and created mainly for the dissemination of information. Then the Web grew by leaps and bounds, along with the technology to support it. But the growth produced some results that were not anticipated; the growth in technology actually started to prohibit certain populations from being able to access the Internet. Instead of making information easier to access, the opposite happened, particularly to the disability community. Even people without disabilities have begun to avoid Web sites that are difficult to navigate or download. Additionally, the use of new technology for Internet access, such as mobile phones, palm-tops, Web TV, and information kiosks, demands the development of accessible Web sites since that technology cannot and is not expected to support graphics and certain multi-media. So, we have come back full-circle to the beginning: making Web sites simple and easy to access. This benefits all users, especially users with disabilities. Simply put: better accessibility means better usability - for all.

Kim manages a Web site administered by the Ohio Legal Rights Service called Ohio's Family Support Collaborative (www.state.oh.us/olrs/fsc/). The Web site is for Ohio families who have children with disabilities.

References

NCDDR (2001a). New emphasis on accessibility for the World Wide Web. *The Research Exchange*, Vol. 6, No. 3. www.ncddr.org/du/researchexchange/v06n03/emphasis.html

NCDDR. (2001b). NCDDR Survey 2000: Computer and Internet use. *The Research Exchange*, Vol. 6, No. 1. www.ncddr.org/du/researchexchange/v06n01/survey2000.html.

Nielsen (2001). Beyond accessibility: treating users with disabilities as people. *Jakob Nielsen's Alertbox*, November 11, 2001 www.useit.com/alertbox/

Suggested Reading

Designing Web Usability, New Riders Publishing (2000)
Web Accessibility for People with Disabilities, CMP Media, Inc. (2000) 

Suggested Resource Links		
The ADA Information Center for the Mid-Atlantic Region	www.adainfo.org	Training, information, and technical assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) - Bobby Approval service	www.cast.org/bobby/	Accessibility testing tool for Web content developers.
The Information Technology Technical Assistance and Training Center (ITTATC)	www.ittatc.org	Organization that promotes the development of accessible electronic and information technology.
International Webmasters Association	www.iwaguild.com	International organization that offers on-line Web development classes on Web design, including accessible Web design.
Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North American (RESNA) - Technical Assistance Project	www.resna.org/taproject/	Comprehensive information about Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act.
Section 508: The Road to Accessibility	www.section508.gov	Government site about Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act.
Society for Technical Communication's Special Needs Special Interest Group	www.stcsig.org/sn/index.shtml	Information for technical communicators with special needs, including a section on Internet accessibility.
Trace Research & Development Center	www.trace.wisc.edu/world/web/index.html	Comprehensive listing of links to information, such as guidelines, tools, projects, and forums.
Web Accessibility Initiative	www.w3.org/WAI/	Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium
WebAIM	www.webaim.org	Information and support, including a screen reader simulation.



Latest Web Resources

This column features the latest Web resources in various areas of special needs. If you know of any links that would be especially helpful, please send them to the editor at mike.murray@lmco.com. For the latest in Web resource information, see the Special Needs Web site at: <http://www.stcsig.org/sn/index.shtml>.

Assistive Technology

ABLEDATA <http://www.abledata.com>
Assistivetech.net <http://www.assistivetech.net>
National Rehabilitation Information Center <http://www.naric.com>
TAASC – The Adaptive Adventure Sports Coalition <http://www.taasc.org>
The Alliance for Technology Access <http://www.ataccess.org>
WheelchairNet <http://www.wheelchairnet.org>

Americans with Disabilities Act

Department of Justice <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>
Great Lakes ADA Center <http://www.gldbtac.org>
ADA Document Center <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/links/adalinks.htm>

Adaptive Housing

ABLEDATA http://www.abledata.com/site_2/accessib.htm
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development <http://www.hud.gov/groups/disabilities.cfm>

General Disability Information

Administration on Developmental Disabilities <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/add/>

Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities <http://www.c-c-d.org>
Disability Resources on the Internet <http://www.disablityresources.org>
National Council on Disability <http://www.ncd.gov>
National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/NIDRR/>
National Organization on Disability <http://www.nod.org>
QualityMall.org <http://www.qualitymall.org>
The George Washington University Heath Resource Center <http://www.heath.gwu.edu>

Visual Impairments

American Council for the Blind <http://www.acb.org>
American Foundation for the Blind <http://www.afb.org>
National Eye Institute <http://www.nei.nih.gov>
National Federation of the Blind <http://www.nfb.org>
National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped <http://www.loc.gov/nls/>

Accessibility

Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) [\[www.access-board.gov\]\(http://www.access-board.gov\)
Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access <http://design6.ap.buffalo.edu/~idea/index.html>
The Center for Universal Design <http://www.design.ncsu.edu:8120/cud/>](http://www.access-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Medical and Health Care

Agency for Health Care and Quality Research <http://www.ahrq.gov>
CenterWatch: Clinical Trials Listing Service <http://www.centerwatch.com>
Department of Health and Human Services <http://www.hhs.gov>
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services <http://www.cms.hhs.gov>
InteliHealth <http://www.intelihealth.com>
Lycos Health with MedMD <http://webmd.lycos.com>
Medline Plus <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>
National Organization for Rare Disorders <http://www.rarediseases.org>
Needy Meds <http://www.needy meds.com>
Office of Rare Diseases <http://rarediseases.info.nih.gov>
PatientTravel.org <http://www.patienttravel.org>
RxList: The Internet Drug Index <http://www.rxlist.com>

The Medicine Program <http://www.themedicineprogram.com>

Mental Health

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law <http://www.bazelon.org>
Center for Mental Health Services <http://www.mentalhealth.org>
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) <http://www.nami.org>
National Institute of Mental Health <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

Brain Injury

Brain Injury Association <http://www.biausa.org>

Neurological

Epilepsy Foundation of America <http://www.efa.org>
Epilepsy.com <http://www.epilepsy.com>
National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke <http://www.ninds.nih.gov>
United Cerebral Palsy Association <http://www.ucpa.org>



New Freedom Initiative

Fulfilling America's Promise to Americans with Disabilities <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/freedominitiative/freedominitiative.html>
 President Bush and the New Freedom Initiative <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/usbudget/blueprint/>

budtoc.html
 Preliminary Report of Federal Agencies' Actions to Eliminate Barriers and Promote Community Integration <http://www.hhs.gov/newfreedom>
 Department of Health and Human Services <http://www.hhs.gov/newfreedom/final/>

Federal Agency Progress Reports <http://www.hhs.gov/newfreedom/prelim/fullrpt.html>

Advocacy

National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems <http://www.protectonandadvocacy.com>
 Office for Civil Rights <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/>

Office of Disability Employment Policy <http://www.dol.gov/odep/welcome.html>
 TASH: Disability Advocacy Worldwide <http://www.tash.org>

Hearing Impaired

National Association of the Deaf <http://www.nad.org>

Web Accessibility Resources

Check out our comprehensive Web site!

<http://www.stcsig.org/sn/index.shtml>

Books		
Constructing Accessible Web Sites	Jim Thatcher, Paul Bohman, Michael Burks, Shawn Lawton Henry, Bob Regan, Sarah Swierenga, Mark D. Urban, Cynthia D. Waddell glasshous (2002) ISBN 1-904151-00-0	Excellent resource. Most comprehensive book available. Different experts write for chapters that pertain to their area of expertise, ranging from basic accessibility information, to legal issues, to development techniques and more.
Designing Web Usability	Jakob Nielsen New Riders Publishing (2000) ISBN 1-56205-810-X	One chapter of the book is devoted to accessibility design techniques.
Web Accessibility for People with Disabilities	Michael G. Paciello CMP Media, Inc. (2000) ISBN 1-929629-08-7	Good introductory resource. Offers basic information about disabilities and Web accessibility issues and regulations.
General Accessibility Information		
Analysis of WCAG and Section 508 by Disability Type (editorial)	http://www.icdri.org/Kynn/disability-comp.html	Comparison of how different types of disabilities are addressed.
The International Center for Disability Resources on the Internet	http://www.icdri.org	Comprehensive resource for general accessibility information and Web accessibility resources.
WebABLE	http://www.webable.com	Accessible design help topics, such as information about Flash and Adobe Acrobat. A Section 508 tutorial is also available.
WebAIM	http://www.webaim.org	Information and support, including a screen reader simulation.
Private Industry Initiatives		
Adobe	http://access.adobe.com	Information about Adobe downloads, accessibility news, and links to additional tools.
Adobe: Advanced Techniques for Creating Accessible Adobe PDF Files	http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/pdfs/CreateAccessibleAdvanced.pdf	Discussion about techniques used for creating PDF documents with accessibility in mind.
Apple	http://www.apple.com/disability/	Product solutions according to specific disabilities.
Hewlett Packard	http://www.hp.com/hpinfo/community/accessibility/	Product information, general disability information, and links to additional tools.
IBM	http://www-3.ibm.com/able/	Product solutions for specific types of disabilities. Information for specific audiences, too, such as employers, schools and developers.
Macromedia	http://www.macromedia.com/macromedia/accessibility/	On-line training, comprehensive information about accessibility and how it pertains to Macromedia products.
MicroSoft	http://www.microsoft.com/enable/	Tutorials, product solutions, and general accessibility and disability information.
Sun Microsystems Accessibility Program	http://www.sun.com/access/	Downloads, information for developers, and general accessibility information.



Section 508 and ADA		
The ADA Information Center for the Mid-Atlantic Region	http://www.adainfo.org	Training, information, and technical assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North American (RESNA) – Technical Assistance Project	http://www.resna.org/taproject	Comprehensive information about Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act.
Section 508: The Road to Accessibility	http://www.section508.gov	Government site about Section 508.
Section 508 Summary Table	http://www.icdri.org/Section508/section_508_summary_table.htm	Created by the International Center for Disability Resources on the Internet (ICDRI).
Section 508 Web Standards and WCAG Priority 1 Checkpoints: A Side-by-Side Comparison	http://jimthatcher.com/sidebyside.htm	Comparison chart of differences between WCAG 1.0 and Section 508.
U.S. Department of Justice	http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/508/508home.html	Section 508 enforcement site.
Society for Technical Communication		
Special Needs SIG	http://www.stcsig.org/sn/index.shtml	Information for technical communicators with special needs and resources for creating accessible products for users with disabilities.
Usability SIG	http://www.stcsig.org/usability/	Several articles available about accessibility issues.
Tools		
A-Prompt	http://aprompt.snow.utoronto.ca	Free accessibility testing tool for Web content developers.
Bobby	http://bobby.watchfire.com/bobby/html/en/index.jsp	Accessibility testing tool. Can test single pages on-line. A downloadable version is available for purchase.
Dreamweaver's Accessibility Kit	http://www.macromedia.com/macromedia/accessibility/tools/accessibility_kit.html	Free accessibility extension available as a download.
Home Page Reader	http://www-3.ibm.com/able/hprtrial3.html	30-day trial version of this fairly inexpensive voice browser
Lynx Viewer	http://www.delorie.com/web/lynxview.html	On-line tool for that displays a text-only version of a url.
National Center for Accessible Media	http://ncam.wgbh.org	Accessibility information and products for multi-media.
Newman Color Blind Design Evaluation	http://newmanservices.com/colorblind/default.asp	Free, on-line tool that evaluates pages for use with people who are color blind.
Tablin	http://www.w3.org/WAI/References/Tablin/	On-line or downloadable filter program developed by the WAI that can linearize HTML tables.
Wave	http://www.temple.edu/instituteondisabilities/piat/wave/	Free on-line testing tool from Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT).
Training		
Illinois Center for Instructional Technology Accessibility (CITA)	http://cita.rehab.uiuc.edu	Comprehensive information and on-line classes about accessibility.
International Webmasters Association	http://www.iwaguild.com	Organization that offers on-line Web development classes on Web design, including accessible Web design.
The Information Technology Technical Assistance and Training Center (ITTATC)	http://www.ittatc.org	Organization that promotes the development of accessible electronic and information technology. Comprehensive list of resources, including on-line training programs.
W3Schools.com	http://www.w3schools.com	Free Web building tutorials, including tutorials about the W3C.
World Wide Web Consortium (http://www.w3.org)		
Checklist of Checkpoints for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0	http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/full-checklist.html	Summary checklist of the priority checkpoints from the WCAG 1.0 document.
Core Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0	http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10-CORE-TECHS/	Accessibility recommendations and general techniques for implementing WCAG 1.0.
CSS Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0	http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10-CSS-TECHS/	Examples and strategies to help develop CSS as a part of accessible content development.
Evaluation, Repair, and Transformation Tools for Web Content Accessibility	http://www.w3.org/WAI/ER/existingtools.html	Listing of evaluation, repair, and transformation tools recommended by the WAI.
HTML Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0	http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10-HTML-TECHS/	Examples and strategies for creating accessible HTML content.
Web Accessibility Initiative	http://www.w3.org/WAI/	Working group of the World Wide Web Consortium.
Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 1.0	http://www.w3.org/TR/1999/WAI-WEBCONTENT-19990505/	Recommended accessibility guidelines for Web sites from the WAI.



Thank You!

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We truly appreciate this, Sue!

I read joke books, watch funny movies and laugh. It works as a pain reliever and also helps to lift my depression. Laughter gives one a positive self-image so important when your self esteem is so low through constant sickness.

*- Pat Lacey, patient with
Chronic Fatigue Immune
Deficiency Syndrome*

Join Our Energetic E-Lifeline!

The SNSIG listserv has blossomed into an almost always informative, sometimes entertaining, and occasionally volatile forum that has been a delight to participate in. For those whose e-mail boxes are already overflowing, a digest form is available. If you are interested in joining this dynamic, real-time, online exchange of ideas, information, and inspiration on special needs and accessibility as they pertain to technical communication (and in general), contact our listserv administrator, Fabien Vais (fabien.vais@videotr.on.ca), and he will activate your subscription.

 See you online!

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