April Accessibility Program Managers Meeting Captioned Text

April 7, 2020

The April 7, 2020 Accessibility Program Manager Meeting was hosted by the General Services Administration, Office of Government-wide Policy virtually throughout the Washington, DC.

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Please standby for real time captions.

Okay, good morning, everyone and thank you for being patient as we test, we are in a new environment and testing this all out. We are much appreciated and it is springtime. We are moving forward and we wanted to see since it's spring, what is growing outside? We are looking at training beyond boundaries with Health and Human Services CMS team and then following that we will go to break, look at website testing, have a website testing overview which all of us should be concerned about and Mike and Andrew are going to give us some tips for effective testing and remediation. So with that said we are going to go right into our first presentation. Before I say that, John, do you have anything more to say?

I am glad everyone is here with us, hoping this works out and I am monitoring people in the room so if people are trying to get in, someone bring that to my attention, I am trying to monitor that screen. I think we have a good event today.

Thank you, very much. Without further ado we will spring forward a little and we are going to go visit Health and Human Services and we have Antoinette and she is the program manager for the Center for Medicare and Medicaid services. And director of the vision of I.T. oversight and governments. Let's welcome AJ, off to you.

Thank you, thank you for having me here with you today. Virtually. So before I start my presentation I want to share something with you all. Every Monday I email my team, something called a Monday motivation. Both sickly -- basically it is a way to help the team including myself kickstart the week in a positive way. It is a quote that I share usually from someone famous but I also provide reflections around the quote to help the staff see things in a different way. So here is what I sent to my team yesterday. Good Monday morning to you, three full weeks in the books with our new normal. Wow, is this a dream? Also, I thought we were finally done with cold weather. But it seems like mother nature has other things on her mind. It should be nice today but I would say be resilient. A couple more weeks and we will be inconsistent 70 degree weather soon enough. On the other hand spring season is definitely here. This quote is throwing down a challenge to each of you including myself. The quote is as follows. What we fear of doing most is usually what we most need to do. That quote was by Ralph Waldo Emerson. This is fairly explanatory, it took only five minutes to really reflect on this for me and it certainly pointed to a few issues I need to address and improve myself. To remain achievable and pragmatic, keep this quote in the realm of work-related issues. Take a moment this week to think of something that you know is something you should have done and did not do. Maybe consider working on a leadership trait you need to develop and work on it this week. Don't fear doing it because it is hard or you may have failed at it. You need to take the first few steps towards progress and success now. See how it works and as always, if you want, let me know how you did. So PS, don't forget to check in on our Tuesday or Thursday morning happy hour if you need us for anything. Even if it is just to say hello. I miss you guys. Have a great weekend please stay healthy. So now for you on the phone and on the line I want to give you a caveat. I know you heard me say or reference a happy hour with my deputy and allowing them to check in with us on an open line. Is happy hour process that we have is really an hour allowing our team to check in, we don't have alcoholic beverages, it is just coffee, teen, not wine or water. So I shared this Mondays quote with you all because I think it is appropriate as I talk about all of the things that I was initially fearful of doing myself when I joined the CMS section 50 18 and late 2017. So Mike, if you can forward the slide please? The first slide is giving you an highlight and over you of what we are going to discuss today. The first thing we are going to talk about his program ground, I will talk about the background of the program for CMS and the second thing we will talk about is the current state of affairs in the program and the third thing we will talk about is how we structure our program. The fourth thing we will talk about is the education and awareness campaign that we offer via the program. The next thing we will talk about which will be the meat of the discussion is the annual training. And the next thing we will talk about is our future planning so we will give you some insight on some things we are planning on working on in the near future and the last thing we will offer is an opportunity to allow you all to answer any questions that you you may have. All rights, we have set the stage, Mike if you can go to the next slide? Like I said, let me give you a little bit of background on the program here. The Section 508 program was formerly established and I want to be really liked with the word program, it really wasn't a program back in 2008. We did a lot of activities around Section 508. We didn't have CMS testing, we had policy that was initiated, there was some remediation services that we offered the agency but and we did some reviews but they were very light activities around the 508 program back in 2008. Back in 2012, CMS released and tracked their LMS training system. We wanted to ensure that we had a training, we utilized the LMS system to ensure that we had the entire staff at that time aware and had the training accessible via LMS. We talked to our CMS CIO who was also our CMS 508 official and we worked on developing a relationship to ensure sponsorship from our senior executive level. Again, at that time back in 2012 and 2008 as I stated, there was very light activities going around Section 508 and the agency. We knew we had some things to do but we really didn't have the bandwidth at that time. Next slide? Current state of affairs, next slide. So, moving forward I came on board back in 2017 around the August timeframe and I did some assessing of the program. And we realized first and foremost that we really did not have a policy that our agency employees that was updated for us to follow. So the first thing that I wanted to ensure that we did and at the time I was a deputy under Roxanne. We pulled together the small team we had at the time which was probably about five people back then and we worked on revising and rereleasing our Section 508 policy for our agency. And took the time to identify the responsible parties, we referred back to the HHS policy and we also looked at the HHS playbook to understand what is out there and what we could do to ensure that we were following and offering 508 accessibility services to internal stakeholders as well as external stakeholders. Now, in that we recognized that we needed to ensure that there was consistent annual training offered across the agency. As I said on the previous slide, we met with our senior advisor executive service leadership, we met with all stakeholders internally and that included our sectional 504 and section 501 partners to talk about the need for annual training. We illustrated in the CMS revised policy which we shifted away from mandatory to required that all CMS employees needed to complete the Section 508 training annually. So again, the policy that we updated we ensured that in that policy we indicated that employees at CMS needed to do this and we got that by and from our senior leadership. Again, CMS commitment, we incorporated the by and not just verbally but we actually were able to include the requirement for this annual training to be in the senior executive performance plans. So again, though senior executives recognized that training is important to the agency, they understood what the Section 508 meant, they understood the risk do not having the services we offer and they understood that it is important to the inclusive across communities. We also have awareness and adhere to all of the Section 508 laws and policies. So we are very big on pushing that information out very systematically in addition to the annual training. We also appoint a CMS Section 508 clearance officer for each of our components and we have a Lenin -- 11 components within CMS and at least one clearings officer is assigned to each component. Some have many. And again, the goal is for all CMS employees to complete the Section 508 annual training each year. Next slide. How we structure our program. Next slide. So this is just a snippet in terms of our core team. I talked a few minutes ago about back in 2017 we had maybe five people on the team. We have a few more but as you can see myself as the program manager, I have a project manager, Deputy Director, agile program manager, she is sort of everything and that is and Turner. We also have an education and awareness team testing SMEs, adjournment and community of practice. This entire program that supports almost 7000 employees is made up of about 10 people. Now at the bottom of the slide you will see where I have officers and I talked about clearance officers to each component. We consider those clearance officers ancillary team members. They are not on my team, not in my component, they are out across the agency but they support Section 508 and they are our voice that basically sits out and we provide as much guidance to them and they implement Section 508 in their respective areas. Next slide. All rights, the next is our program structure. Know you all are getting a sneak peek into a recently developed program structure. I know I have referenced it as a program but quite honestly I don't think before 2019 we truly had a true program in the sense of a word of a program. We wanted to ensure that all of our internal and external stakeholders understood clearly what we are offering at CMS and it wasn't just about remediation. Or remediation of documents or testing. It is a whole host of things so as you can see we developed a formalized program structure very recently and it is still rolling out so you are getting a great sneak peek into that. This program structure includes policy and administration, procurement, testing, education and awareness, and community of practice. Next slide please. So I am going to talk a little bit about these five pillars we call them that make up the program. The first is policy and administration. Basically it is the part of the program that is the authorized representative for the CMS Section 508 official. We do all the work on behalf of that official. We also review and update the policy, usually biannually but sometimes every year depending on how policy changes come from HHS. We also execute the 508 policy and guidance oversight activities within the agency. We establish section 508 protocols under the program and policy administration and we also provide guidance on accessibility ICT standards, guidance and requirements in general across the agency. And finally we do a lot of collaborating both internally and externally. So we have internal partners, the acquisition staff, quality improvement staff, office of hearing staff as well as CDC, GSA are also partners. Next slide. So the next pillar is testing. We do have an I don't know, I know that not all agencies offer a test lab. I think CMS is a little bit unique in that we offer manual testing of all of our I.T. applications. Part of that requires us to execute and monitor and oversight all 508 testing activities within the test lab. We provide cursory validation of applications that go into the environment with most testing occurring on CMS vendor developed solutions.

We review and approve all the packs for voluntary testing. All of them that come in, we have a team on my team and we also have others that review those to ensure that the contractors are meeting the standards and we also review and approve remediation plans submitted for applications that pose 508 issues. So during that testing that happens in the test lab, we may have to launch the application but we will sit with that contractor and program team to come up with a plan of how they are going to address those issues over the next six months. We also provide guidance at our governance review boards as well as our technical review boards to support I.T. project teams. Something that is coming up soon, this has been sort of something I have been wanting to do over the last year or two is to have early adoption and include automated agile testing as part of our I.T. development lifecycle. So basically instead of having the manual testing at the end, we would really like to walk through the journey of development and include 508 testing as vendors and business owners and teams are developing applications. So we are working on that now. Next slide. So the next pillar is our procurement pillar. I touched on this a little bit, we do review the VPAT, we have guidelines and standards in solicitation. Obviously that we support. We are exploring GSA's art tool, kudos to GSA for coming to CMS and providing a couple demos and we are looking to really advance in that support tool. We also offer resources for the VPAT. We have spent some time assessing issues with completing at. We have a video that we developed for our contractors. We have another video that is more general that we developed for our program teams to really help support anyone either developing or reviewing a VPAT. A couple of additional things we are doing in the procurement pillar and it is coming soon, it develops a risk based approach to procurement. We recognize that all things will not be reviewed for accessibility depending on a set amount of criteria whether it is just documents we are looking at, we may need to use the HHS tactless and the VPAT may not be the choice of accessing and we also recognize there may be non-I.T. development things. Right now we are forcing all of our procurements to have VPAT's and we want to assess the intention of the use of the VPAT. The other thing we are doing under the procurement pillar is we recognize that as we review our VPAT, those documents that come to us for review tend to be large-scale packages. I mean usually it is a statement of work, anything the solicitation requires be submitted to the agency. So in order to streamline workflow we are working at exploring the SharePoint site as an option for reviewing VPAT. That is also coming in the future. This is an internal process we are looking to develop to help become more efficient in our work around procurement and 508. Next slide?

Can we take a pause please? I am sorry to interrupt. This is the interpreter. We are having difficulty switching and we are 10 minutes over this which time. If we could take a 2:00 menopause if we could see the old tenant interpreter, there is 100 people in here so we are having to scroll down to figure out where the other interpreter is and then the second interpreter so if we could take a moment please? To pause that. I want to give her instructions through the other interpreter. So Haley, can you see the pen at the top right of rondos, the three buttons? Unpin her and look for my name Mary Beth Morgan and pin. Can you see me now? Can you see me now? Beautiful. Thank you, appreciate it. We will message when we need to switch again.

No problem, thank you. All right, the next program pillar is the education and awareness pillar. We have my awesome team here, not everyone on the team is in this photo but there are seven people in the photo. We have a dedicated team that provides resources to help employees produce accessible electronic content. We try to identify and deliver a variety of resources and external training offerings. We reach out to vendors to have instructor led or web-based trainings that all focus on Section 508 conformant documents. And obviously this is part of the team that develops the annual accessibility training. Next slide.

The other thing we do in terms of education and awareness is we offer small group trainings. There are components within our organization that really may have about 10 to 15 people that are champions in 508 for the work that they do. And really need to have some specialized training for their work. We don't have the bandwidth but when we do, we will offer some small group trainings to help that team specifically for their work. We also participate and develop lunch and learns, at 12:00 bring your sandwich, we go to a media sent -- center, talk about 508. We will have some topics but we will keep it open for people who have questions. We have a tech topic day, it is our I.T. group. I think we do a quarterly where we will participate on that day and provide insight to contractors, the tech topic day is usually open to vendors on information that would be helpful to the vendor to understand what should be coming in in regards to Section 508. We also think the disability date is important. And disability month. So we try to focus on creating a lot of information around the disability month activities in October. When we are in the office we have digital signage so TVs across the agency where we will put some information, marketing on things that are upcoming, trainings, access to online trainings, upcoming events. We also develop hand made tabletop tents so threw out the an agency when we are there, you will notice those are across the cafeteria in different areas in the facility. On the screen there is also a snapshot of our SharePoint site. The SharePoint site has different specific areas where people can go to our clearance officers but it's open to anyone internally at CMS. We offer informational videos which I talked about earlier. Some additional training information resources and a toolkit. Next slide.

All right, the next slide is something that talks a little bit about our last program pillar. It is called community of practice. We see this as our way of tying in all of our pillars together and creating a very synergy collaborative way of pushing information out across the agency. So it is not just about 508 it's about what 508 is doing for the entire community as a whole. On the left on the side there is a snapshot of our newsletter. We have an intern on our staff that developed the newsletter. It is really -- it goes out every other month. We provide some insight and tips on what's going on in the community. I do a program manager notice at the top of the newsletter and we also have monthly clearance officer meetings so the folks that are ancillary members that I talked about early on, we have a meeting with those folks every month. We also provide them information that will help them be successful in their work going forward. As clearance officers and I didn't mention this earlier, specifically at CMS those CMS Section 508 clearance officers do Section 508 under an as assigned. They are not doing this as a full-time job in most cases. So what we try to do is because we recognize it is not there full-time job is to create as much information to help support them and their work. So we have a welcome packet that is being developed now. The welcome packet will be consisting of a lot of information to help a new Section 508 clearance officer in their role at CMS. That is coming soon. And the last thing is we recognize that and we'll talk more about the annual training but we also know that training needs to be a little bit more targeted. The annual training is very generic. It hits all the right bullet points but we also know that there is certain roles that require training to be a little bit more specific than the annual training so we are also in the process of developing Section 508 Road based training. Next slide please.

All right, if you can, one more slide. Graetz. I want to talk a little bit about where we were in terms of training and where we are going. As you can see on the slide there is three time frames. Back in 2018 like I mentioned, we revised our policy, it hadn't been revised in 10 years. So we made sure we did that. We did a CMS refresh of Section 508. I know there was an industry refresh but we took it another step further and did a refresh within CMS. We also unfortunately were sued several years before 2018. There was a litigation and out of that litigation CMS did not win. We had to settle and take accountability for some issues that we did not handle with respect to Section 508. Out of that litigation, there was a fine and we also had a settlement agreement. Settlement agreement had specific requirements that the plaintiff really wanted to ensure that CMS addressed. We focus on the litigation agreement items back in 2018 and I think we did a good job without. We also developed our own training internally. The team that you saw on the screen did what they could to create and develop internal training. We had about an 80 page slide and decided to push that out to the agency and it went well. As we keep building in 2019, we decided to expand the program as we talked about. All of the caps for the litigation agreement were completed. And we started to explore different tools and partnering with folks a little bit more and as I mentioned before, the partnership with GSA and the art tool will become an integral part of how we support our procurements. In 2020, we will be revising our policy again. The program pillars as I mentioned are developed and out. But for training we are doing something a little bit different. The training used to be only 50 a training. So it was very specific to 508. We had maybe one slide that we referenced 504 when we talk about braille and different support services. But we really did not partner with the folks thatDo Section 508 which is in a different area. Nor did we partner with the folks that offered reasonable accommodations. The way the organization is structured, we are different entities. So, I reached out to those folks and we are going to this year, launch an accessibility training so it will not just be targeted to 508 it will be more rounded to include section 504 and 501. The other thing we will ensure as we push our goal-based training.

Here is the annual training and this is the meat of what we wanted to talk about. The annual training, there is a process. And like I said we have a small team that works on pulling together the annual training. And there are three components to getting the annual training done. The first is content creation, the second is engaging stakeholders and the third is implementing and reporting out. In content creation, we want to make sure and it was always our intention of ensuring that the content in the annual training is as comprehensive as possible. But on the other hand we want to make sure that there is a usability aspect where there is interfacing, there is questions, answers and a few tests but nothing that is going to make folks feel like they can't pass the test but we wanted to make it interactive. So we took the time to survey folks to find out what they liked and did not like about the training in the past. And that is where we are going to with updating our training going forward. The next thing I want to share is engaging stakeholders. We really did not want to support or develop the training in a vacuum. So we wanted to engage anyone involved early on. So before we launched the training, we worked with the CMS test lab to ensure that everyone can access the training, we put it through 508 manual testing. Because he wouldn't believe even though it was a 508 training in the past, it wasn't by Boyd accessible. We also wanted to collaborate with our disability partners to make sure it made sense, that it passed the test in terms of getting the information out concisely and we also wanted to tie it into disability awareness month. Prior to 2019, the annual training was launched back in September. Since then we decided to partner and ensure that we got it out during the disability awareness month and that was in October. The next is implement a reports. We launch in October, October 1st each year, the training by the entire employees of CMS needs to be done no later than December 31st of that year. The next step is the team runs an exceptions report. That report in essence is a report to identify who has not taken the training. The report is run at the end of October and another at the end of November. In December we run it weekly and I believe the last week of December is more frequently. Every exception report we received the list of people that did not take the training, we reach out to each components executive office and have that list shared and basically we send a note to say we want to give a gentle nudge to remind people to take the training. We have had some technical difficulties in the past, each year they have gotten a lot better because we basically realized what we needed to tweak. So from a technical difficulty perspective the training has been pretty accessible this past year. For new employees we have a way that we try to deal with those coming in around the time that the training is launched. But again, we report out to the Section 508 official who has taken the training and who has not. Next slide please.

All right, we talked about the training but part of being successful with the training means we have to have program champions. The CMS CIO through releasing a signed broadcast actually signs his name on the email that goes out to the entire agency that says this training is available to take. That does not come from my staff, it comes from him. And that email broadcast coming from someone at the SES level is also an indication of the seriousness end of the support we are getting. The next thing we do is we have early engagement. We think that our new employee orientation is a good opportunity to have people that aren't even aware that this training exists. They are walking in the door. We incorporate the importance of Section 508 at that engagement and we also push them to take the training within a few months of them starting onboarding in CMS. We also engage our component leadership. We see them as champions, as well. We feel like they are the key and getting compliance on the reports completed. As I will let you know coming up, the goal for the SES is to have 90% of the agency complete this training every year. The other thing we do is we leverage our other champions which are clearance officer community. We see them as the ambassadors to communicate the training and encourage completion. Who participates? The data tells us that we have an enterprise by in and persuasive partnerships with the agencies stakeholders. We consistently meet the completion threshold and in the last three years I want to basically honor to say we have had above 95% completion. And like I said the goal is 90%. And who benefits? All of our partners. I want to give a kudos to GSA because back in 2019, we did have a technical issue with our platform. We leveraged GSA and partnered with GSA to use their training and that training we had a 98% completion rate. So we see GSA as one of our champions. Next slide please.

All rights, it is very hard to read this slide for those of you who can see it. It is a snapshot of our project timeline. Doing the annual training isn't just about throwing together the slides and sticking it in LMS and doing the exceptions report. You have to walk through the steps and milestones to really allow the team for themselves to understand what is next. What deliverables need to happen, when does testing need to be scheduled? We do have a project timeline and we identify those milestones and deliverables very structured. The project timeline runs typically between February and July. You may ask why we stop in July? And we launch in October. I have been here for three years and we have had some issues really late in the game. I'm a little OCD and that I don't like surprises so what I try to have my staff do is launch as soon as possible. And have it ready and pending so that when October comes we have no glitches. Next slide please.

Quick slide here, talking about our results since 2017. Again, we have over six that is in employees out at CMS. You can see the numbers and in 27, 97%, 28 teen 96% and 2019 98%. Next like please.

Future planning, we talked about a little bit but I will recap your. We will be collaborating with our section 504 and 501 partners to introduce a combined accessibility training for the agency. We think doing this approach will reduce confusion in the past, the email that goes out with the links, some people thought they took both 508 and 504 trainings because 504 had their own training. We feel that it would be easier for folks to just click one link and they have this accessibility training. We also realize it will streamline the process and reduce the burden of completing multiple trainings. And then overall employees will understand the concepts and offerings around disability. Next slide.

Thank you so much, we are going to switch the interpreters and make sure Haley can see the new interpreter.

Excellent Segway. We are going into questions.

Thank you so much, give me just one second. Haley, can you see Rhonda? Perfect. Thank you so much, we just switched.

Yankee. AJ --

Just for Mary breath and Haley, if you hide the nonvideo participants, there is only 22 people on video and you don't have to go searching. Everyone is still there in the gallery view. All you did is go into one of the windows for a nonparticipant, right-click and you will see an option to hide nonvideo participants. And it leaves the screen much more manageable. Maybe that will help.

Thank you so much, that is a new tip. I appreciate that.

AJ as you are doing questions Avis has some questions from the chat. I don't know how you wanted to start. You might want to start with the check questions and then maybe open it up for a few minutes for questions. We have five minutes for questions.

Do I need to scroll through and find the questions?

Avis has them ready to go.

She will read them to me?

Yes. Avis?

I am here, good morning. It is only a few. From the top. I just got one to come in from the access board. His question is I have a question about the pre-2018 settlement. That's the only question I have pertaining to the slides. And I have two more and I will state that after Antoinette answers this question.

So what is the question specifically?

He just said I have a question about the treat -- pre-2018 --

I can't hear you, you said 2018?

Settlement.

All rights, Tim, can you ask your question, clarify your question?

No problem, I see it. Tim?

Let me just in general talk a little bit about that. I don't know if I am at liberty to give details about who the litigants are. But I will say that it could be out there in case law. It was CMS not having appropriate accessible information on our website. And someone externally not being able to get to information and I believe they were using a screen reader. That is a high level of what the issue was. If you would like to contact me, we can talk a little bit more if you have specific questions but that is just a high-level summary of what that was about. Next question?

Thank you.

Can you hear me now?

Yes, I can.

The next question is from John Sullivan. He you mentioned that you all approved all VPAT, please describe your approval process.

Sure, we have, I have someone on my team that as, we have an acquisitions process that occurs where all solicitation and requirements within that state and I don't know if you can hear me, folks may need to mute their phone. Once the proposals come in from any vendor that is bidding on a contract, a need we have at CMS, internally that proposal comes in and there is an acquisitions process. As part of the process, we have someone who looks at the statement of work and reviews the VPAT to ensure that based on what we are buying, that vendor identifies which clauses, standards they intend to meet when building the I.T. application system. Depending upon the technical panels review process and criteria, the response may be it's not acceptable or acceptable. It may be meets or not meets. We work closely with the acquisitions team in order to provide them the requirements in terms of how to move forward with the VPAT. For the most part sometimes folks don't necessarily complete the VPAT. We want to ensure it is at least completed sufficiently but again we do have someone that is reading through the documentation and proposal documentation and reviewing the VPAT and shoring it meets 508 accessibility standards.

Thanks, AJ. I think you have one more.

I have two more.

AJ, Tim wanted you to clarify whether the lawsuit was brought as a 50 it only or as a 504 only or a combination?

It was 504 only. There was some elements that you could state could have gone on 508 but as an accessibility partner at CMS we wanted to ensure that we partnered with the 504 team and help support them in achieving all of the items in the settlement agreement. I want to clarify it wasn't a 508 specific lawsuit but we looked at it from a global accessibility view and helped get those things done together.

We have two more questions. We are a little overtime so Avis will ask the two questions and we are going to go to our break and I will let you know how long the break is.

I will move fast. The next question is Adrian, how did you decide on which standard to follow when there are so many across government? Did you look at the GSA standard?

I'm assuming the person was asking in terms of the program itself. I am going to speak from that perspective. When you say standard in terms of the program, what I looked at, I looked at the checklist, the HHS checklist. And the playbook is what they call it. And that was sort of our roadmap to what we wanted to do. So it's very specific to the work that we do at CMS, the culture at CMS, we took all of that into consideration and quite frankly the bandwidth. We only have 10 people on our staff and we have over 6000 employees. So it is not necessarily an easy task. We decided to look at HHS's playbook to ensure that we were at least following some roadmap to success. So hopefully that answers the question.

The next question is a very good question, I like this one. This is from Brooke. You have an impressive program. Did the program process because of the lawsuit comprehensive part of the settlement?

Not directly. Looking at the lawsuit with the section 504 team, we internally under 508 recognized that our internal stakeholders were customers of ours and we really started to just assess, we do a lot of strategic planning. Looking at what customer needs were, what our external customer needs were, we determined it would be good to have assistant program to help folks understand where to go to based on what 508 pillar they were in. I think putting the structure helps everyone and it's really to me breeds success when you have a framework. It wasn't necessarily the lawsuit that was part of I guess the holistic assessing that we did. It helped us make the decision to move to a program.

Often. Miss Adrian Peacock asked a standard question, will you be able to provide slides?

All slides will be provided on the website. That is it for our questions.

[ Captioners Transitioning ]

We will take care of the questions and make sure we get an answer.

Thank you. If anyone has any additional questions, please send them to the section 508 mailbox section and we will make sure that Antoinette gets the question and gets the response to you. Thank you everyone. We are going to take a 10 minute break. Everyone please return at 11:10 and we will start the second presentation. Thank you.

[The event is on a 10 10 minute break. Captioner standing by.]

Hello this is Mike. I don't know if you want to go ahead and get started or if you need to introduce anything.

I would like to introduce you and Andrew. Everyone, these are two of the best 508 gurus. Just one moment please.

Rhonda, is Haley back.

I do not see her on.

You should be able to type the name.

Some people actually left the meeting and I will have to readmit them. She was one of them. There she is.

She is back.

When speakers change, please say her name. That is a request that was coming in and we were not doing a good job on that.

Will do, John.

Especially in the Q and a.

We are making sure that Haley can see me. All right. Thank you very much for your patience.

I would like to introduce Michael Horton and Andrew Nelson two of the greatest 508 gurus and all of the federal government. Yes, I said that. Mike, and Andrew are on my team. I am speaking from experience.

Excellent. Thank you. Again, thank you everyone for the debut and figuring out zoom. Hopefully this is working out for all of you.

Mike, make sure that you introduce yourself.

Sorry. This is Mike. John just asked me to do that. I need to work on my accessibility. Mike Horton with GSA office of governmentwide policy joined by Andrew Nielsen. He just joined the group in the last month or so. His first day at work was a holiday and then COVID comes around. It's been an interesting start. Today we are going to do a little work on tips for effective accessibility testing I am covering up my screen here. Sorry I am trying to cast everything. I feel like I am missing a slide here. Sorry. I am missing my slide. We will talk a little bit about an overview of testing. This first section I will go over on identifying some integration for automated testing and identifying trends and problem areas. Andrew will demo a little bit of the tool that was created and maintained by the Social Security Administration. We will talk a little bit about a blog post that recently went out and we will have an opportunity for Q and a. Before I get started Andrew, did you want to say anything to the group?

Sure. This is Andrew. Just really quickly I just joined the GSA team but I came from supporting the department of homeland security so that's why they have asked me to go through and do a little bit of a demo on the toll that SSA developed in close coordination with DHS and the trusted tester team. So happy to be here and I will talk to you again in a few minutes.

I am super thrilled myself to have Andrew on events team with me. There are a couple of things I want to talk about again integrated automated testing into your agency. Certainly there's an opportunity to make you some results from automated testing tools but it is really a part of a hybrid test approach. As we all know automated tools can only evaluate about 30% or so of the standards that are out there. The other 70% or the other portion need to be done using manual evaluation methods. There is always going to be a combination of when you choose to use and integrate automated tools and sheer testing. The first recommendation on this is to evaluate what testing tools your organization already has or may already have. Keep in mind that this is not just about your accessibility program, but it is also about the tools that are being used throughout your agency. Not just in your office but another development units. Are they using automated tools? Are they using manual tools? What manual tools are they using and are they full scanning. To they scan multiple pages or are they single page automation tools like some of the toolbar based tools you can use or some of the web based tools people will put in as a single use URL. And who gets the results. How are they used? Those are important things that you want to do. One of the larger questions and something we are working on is how does that automated tool align with the testing baseline. For those that may not be familiar it is a framework for evaluating and validating automated tools conformance to the standards. In fact, this is the same baseline that the trusted tester manual process was based on. They were developed around the same time. You should note that we are currently and actively working with DHS to develop a framework for evaluating automated testing tools to the baseline and we will have more on that as we develop that particular issue. The next item to talk about is purchasing or acquiring your own automated testing tools if you don't have any. We say acquiring because while there are a lot of things you can purchase there are a lot of organizations that have strong automated testing tools and in some cases they will integrate results from annual inspections that complement the scans that go on and there are also a lot of open source tools that can be used. It may be an acquisition but it may not necessarily require procurement action to purchase it. There is support to install it and use it. So there are those there. One of the things to consider is and is open source environment there may be an opportunity certainly growing in the future to share that. As these programs are developed we want to align them with the baseline and once we do that and have a toolset we should be able to share toolsets across agency and have common inconsistent results in our inspections. The next item that we want to talk about is the manual side. We do encourage folks to have a trusted tester on board or if you want to develop your own trusted tester and take the time to do that that is fine but there is the DHS trusted tester training and certification. It's an excellent source and help folks understand how to evaluate and record nonconformance within a website. That training is offered at no cost to you the agency. Again remember that there is no single automated tool that can fully test. You have to have a manual process. Either you can invest time and energy into the developing one or leverage the trusted tester that is already there. The next item to talk about is combining these two into a particular standard for the hybrid test. Depending on the tool that you select the standards that it can test everyone will be a little bit different. Based on what they can test and what you feel confident in the types of results you are getting from those tests. Maybe one tends to be more false positives that you care for and you do not want to integrate into your hybrid testing you can take that out and replace that with a manual inspection. The combination is important. Depending on what tool you use identify what is good and complements that with your manual testing. This also goes to a little bit earlier about what we spoke about with CMS. You can integrate the automated tools. There are some that are toolbar based that developers can use as well as the other scanning tools that you can use during the development cycle. Postproduction to verify that accessibility was done. Remember that a lot of these tools can be used before you release the product. You can build that into that agile and Dove ops programs and the procedures that you set up would complement what other gaps there are. So that is kind of the start here as far as integrated automated testing. Those are the important things to do. Again, there are many free tools out there. I will just mention a couple. I'm not endorsing any but I will notice that one is tele. Which is in the GSA digital dashboard. We are currently only testing for three of the test IDs. We will be going through an effort with DHS and the access Board to ensure that the rules that we have within the accessibility module are aligned with ICT baseline just like we are asking every other agency to do and we will continue this year to increase the number of test IDs that the tool is capable of doing. Out of Tallie there are a number of ways that you can use it. I just learned this the other day. There's a product called Kawaller and this is a tool that somebody created that works on both Windows and Mac operating systems you can select whether you test for you can get some results on that single page of how to fix it. There are a lot of tools out there that are like this. There is wave which is a toolbar plug-in there's some stuff from DQ. These are some of the free things that are out there. Each one has their own approach and some of them are more complex than others to understand so maybe a developer would be more useful to troubleshoot the code. Some of them will provide exactly where in the code the issue is. The koala which I mentioned earlier is probably not something that a developer would use. Perhaps somebody who is using a web publishing platform to make those changes. Again, each of these tools provide pros and cons depending on the role that you are looking for. So that is kind of the piece on automated testing. I want to move over to identifying some trends and problem areas when you are looking at your test results.

I am so sorry to interrupt. We will switch before this slide. We will switch interpreters. Haley, can you see me. We will switch to Rhonda. We will wait until we get a confirmation that she was able to switch. Thank you for your patience.

All set?

We are all set. Thank you

So on the next slide I want to talk about identifying problem areas. When I first came on board working for the accessibility program like many of you out there we were a very small team. [Indiscernible] [Indiscernible-static] the reason why the automated tools are limited is some of the standards this is effective and meaningful for the image. Evaluating the contracts within an image. What it will do very well is identify whether the alt tab exists at all for the image. If it's ornamental we wanted to be empty and we wanted to be will discredit -- well describes. It can do a great job in identifying [Indiscernible]. Looking at the programmatic issues that the computer for can find out. [Indiscernible-static] and we have the automated tools to do the same things. The forms and tables you can look at this and see if they are programmatically created properly. We look for the scope or I.T. Those are some of the things that we want to look at. The next item I want to talk about a little bit here is page templates. In addition to low hanging fruit from this perspective we can also combine that with page templates. Most of our websites are comprised of models. When you look at the general framework you have the header of the application. You may have navigation on the left side that changes based on the section of the site you are on. Then he will have the comment further which tends to have alternate links for navigation to some of the primary areas they have linked to their social media platforms for that particular agency. If there's a defect in the headers or footers you can imagine if you fix the template than all of those pages that have those issues have been fixed. You have greatly reduced issues on your website by looking at this. We can do this for public facing websites and internal websites such as SharePoint and others that you are using. The areas he can look at again have a navigation pattern, search results pages. Every time you get a surge get pages and pages. And then meaningful links. The automated tools can do a very good job. The next section I want to talk about is content management. This is an area where we have an opportunity to change behavior. We want to look at working with the content managers. A lot of the government websites right now that I think about 70% of the sites that are using Google analytics or using a. I think that we can get together with content managers and say can we change it so that one part someone publishes an image the tool requires them to answer and alt text and we can make a section that says this is an ornamental image and by publishing and will conform with 508 or some other very short intuitive label to that instruction. By default we want the behavior to force and ensure accessibility but they can make changes that are still in compliance based on that. And then, excuse me, and then lastly want to talk and work with content managers to identify methods of common problems. We certainly want to work with them to provide training to web content managers and those are all of those folks that are at centralized publishing groups. We want to make sure that as people are on boarded and given permissions to the systems have they received training. We also want to make sure that we tailor communications to be sure that they are correct and any templates that they use for newsletters and so forth are done very well. Also you want to work with them to be sure that they understand how to make meaningful captions for images, how to create accessible documents before they publish them. During this emergency it is even more important that we have that opportunity to ensure that information going out is accessible. So not only on the HTML publishing side we want to make sure is there something when they are publishing a document that an individual has to select to, say, for example, say I certify that this PDF has been evaluated for performance and has conformed with all applicable statements. You cannot publish without checking that box every single time. I think that is important. This also goes for audio only, video only, and multimedia presentations that are going around. Lastly, social media. A lot of what we are talking about today and links that we are providing are done through social media. Let's identify any trending problems with particular platforms. Do they or do they not allow alternative text. If they don't we can caption the image that we post to social media. Does the video that we link to require and need a video with audio descriptions while it's also linked to the audio described version as well or at least aware we point them to the primary video to where there is a link to the alternative video. These are some of the things we can look at as far as audio tools and some trends. Next up, Andrew will talk a little bit about Andy and provide a little demo for that. Let's jump ahead there. Andrew, do you want to go ahead?

Do we need to swap again?

We are doing good. We are swapping every 15 to 20 minutes but we are doing okay right now. Probably in the next couple of slides we will switch again.

If you can stop sharing your screen I will go ahead and interrupt the slides on mine so I can move to the demo as well.

Thank you for the intro. This is Andrew Nelson speaking as I mentioned I was not only the facilitator of the group that wrote the most recent baseline. Obviously we cannot take you through all the baseline a trusted tester today or even give you all of what Andy can do but we wanted to take you at least through some of those big tickets tests to walk you through some of the tests that you can do to identify some of those big problem areas that Mike talked about. We might not even get through all of what we even intended to present today but we will do the best we can to get through some of this. For those of you that know Andy -- ANDI. We might call this Andrew on ANDI. I did not ask for that name. It was just a happy happenstance. Nevertheless here I am giving a presentation on ANDI. The acronym stands for accessible name and description which refers to the W3C accessible name and description computation that ANDI strictly follows. ANDI does conduct some automated testing when you fire up the tool, but it does not spout a report like some of these other tools that Mike referenced. It does not give you a report that you can hand over to a developer and say fix this. Andy is intended as a developer tool primarily. So they have some usable code. It is entirely web. It's a usable code for the web. It is intended for a developer once they have usable code to walk through the page elements and identify whether or not they have accessibility issues. That does mean that the user, whether developer or tester probably needs to know something about accessibility, but you do not have to know everything. It is best if you use it in concert with trusted tester or something like that in order to be able to get the results that you are really looking for and really identify accessibility issues. It is also intended for testers to use that may not even know code. It certainly helps if you know HTML but you do not have to. You could go through the trusted tester training not knowing HTML, JavaScript, or CSS and you can still use it. I will take you through some of the functions and walked through some of those tests. Ticket to install ANDI -- I guess I should back up and say there really is no installation involved with adding ANDI to your favorite browser. It is really just a bookmark. It adds a little tiny line of code to your webpage that references a bunch of other code in order to give you the tool. You can get there. I have the full URL to get to the page but you can get there just going to SSA.gov/accessibility/Tran02 and that will get you the same page. Once you are there, let me take you there. Once you are there on the installation page for most if you are a mouse user it's as simple as taking the link under the installation instructions and just dragging it up to your bar. You can find more detailed extractions based on which browser you're using for chrome it is not very straightforward. It is still very possible. One of the things to note that ANDI as a tool is totally accessible. And successful if you're a keyboard only user, a screen reader user, many of the other tools are more accessible than they used to be but if you are familiar with trusted tester some of those did not provide usable information in an accessible way sometimes when I added information to the screen. So that is a big improvement over some of the tools that we used to use that are trusted tester. Once I have ANDI in the toolbar I can fire it up simply by pressing on the link in the bookmark and it adds an overlay to the top of the screen and that is the tool. ANDI has a number of modules . The primary or default is for elements that they indicate. It helps me evaluate or test on elements on the screen. It also has modules. There are a couple of the only display on that screen. We will use the focus of all elements for now. Let's say I select this module I can use the buttons to navigate so we have this output in this part of the [ screaming ] is the information about the elements. Some of it is the accessibility components and the thing that I am really focusing on is the ANDI output. In other words the accessible day. It is what the screen reader should say when the user is navigating the screen or another assistive technology user that would benefit from the same accessible name and description. It takes those components and gives you that output. Or I can tab through in the ANDI tool . I can tab through to the elements that have focused. They output in the pain. To the elements that I am currently focused on. Won't go through all of the particulars we will go through a couple more of those but that is kind of a broad overview of what ANDI can do. I will be using the mouse to go through all of these. We go through these tickets tests using ANDI. To identify some of those big problem areas that we referred to one of the biggest is keyboard access and focus. I'm going to talk about the keyboard access test first and show you how ANDI can help facilitate some of those tests. To tell you the truth for keyboard access in trusted tester we tell you not to. In order to identify features and functions on a page that should also be keyboard accessible I need to kind of identify. Sometimes I need to use my mouse for those things or understand a contact. Then I need to use my tab key to determine whether or not those features and functions can also be accessed and executed using the keyboard. Nevertheless, typically I am using just the keyboard for that. I am looking for the features and functions to make sure that they can be accessed and executed. Also to make sure that you are evaluating whether or not the webpage or content requires any timing of keystrokes whether the link that I press the key in order to execute functions. I am also looking to identify whether or not there are any traps. I am doing that primarily with the keyboard only but ANDI can still help. My preferred use is to enable ANDI . We can identify whether or not I have sufficient information about those features and functions in the accessible name and description. I will make the past three using ANDI. We did not quite get onto it but -- let me come back.

Before we switch the slides I wanted to switch interpreters if we could. I just want to take a moment and make sure that Haley can see me. Thank you all for your patience. Rhonda, if you will sign to her to tell her to switch please.

She is switching male. On

Thank you, everyone. For your patience. All right, everyone. Thank you very much. We have switched successfully.

Thank you. The next test is the visible indication of focus. While I am doing that and evaluating whether or not I have the focus I am paying attention to the order to make sure the order is correct, that is meaning that it preserves the meaning and operability of the webpage. Typically that means that the visual presentation of the page should match the focus Porter. I should encounter the elements using my keyboard typically in the same order which is visually. That is not always true. We will not get into all of those details. So again in trusted tester we ask you to disable ANDI while you are doing that. The reason being that it adds the pink outlining around elements that have focus as he moved to the page. So we disable it and then we can test to see if the webpage provides the focus. ANDI can still be helpful in determining tab order. Once I start ANDI under the focus eligible model there's a tab feature and when I activate that ANDI will add these markers with numbers to indicate the order , the tab order or what order I would again to them using the keyboard only. It will also help identify elements that are excluded from the tab order which are things that are keyboard focus of all but are excluded from the order. I did not mention it before but some of those alerts show up on the right side of the ANDI pain with some a late start me identify some of those. Even further, ANDI will send it back to the webpage or website to give some additional tips. We are running low on time so I will go to just one more tip real quick that is related to images. Using ANDI I will go to the image and graphics and the point here is that I want to make sure that I have an equivalent description for meaningful images. If the images of background or decorative image I should either have no accessible name or description or the background image hopefully is decorative or if it is providing useful information than it needs to be provided in another way other than just the background image. So ANDI can help me do that using the background images module once I have that enabled the tool will walk me through just those elements of ideas the previous and next buttons. I see here that for already on the GSA logo kind of an interesting thing here is that this image is a child element of a link so the interesting thing here is from the ANDI output I have a number of components that contribute to the accessible description. The title in inner text of the link. To be honest with you on our homepage this is probably not the best practice. It is better if I have just one output and there are techniques to do that which we will go over but this is one issue that ANDI has helped identify. I can also use background images that are conveying useful information. In this case or I can highlight them. I have this image of a briefcase that is a background image. Does that provide useful information? It probably does but in this case I also have text that gives me a link to the per diem look. So that background image is provided on text. Those are just a few of the tests. We also want a little bit of time to get through the rest of the time. Maybe if people want to wait we can spend some time on some questions.

Okay.

Sorry.

Let me get back over here. This will be quick and then we will jump into some Q and a. All I really wanted to mention before we step in the Q and a is our team as part of the current situation we are in we wanted to make sure that we stayed in our lane.

Hello everyone. This is the interpreter speaking. When you guys switch screens and stop scared sharing screens it means everybody around so then the interpreter gets lost again. If we can just get a moment I want to check in again.

Rhonda, can you interpret?

Yes you can see you.

I think she can only see you. Hold on.

She can see you.

Okay.

This will be really quick. I wanted to mention that we publish to section 508.gov/blog. That can help folks and agencies during emergencies create accessible content for the topics that we cover there are agency official communications as well as social media. You will have access to all of that information. With that, I want to spend what time we have left on Q and a. Are there any questions I came in through chat that Andrew or myself or others can answer.

We probably only have a minute for questions. So go ahead and ask.

Can I ask one of each or just one.

Good afternoon. One question coming to you the first question I think that question was what is the name of the tool again. We answered that one.

She cannot see me. The screen moved around so she cannot see me.

Has ANDI been tested and used with Dragon for speech recognition control in case anybody is wondering.

So this is Andrew. I apologize. I am not sure. The folks at SSA can certainly help with that. They can answer your question about whether it has been tested for voice control. What they assure is fully accessible you should be able to navigate bookmarks and hotkeys to access its primary functions I can't speak to whether or not he has been totally tested with Dragon.

Thank you. We are almost at shut off time so I wanted to ask quickly if any of you joined and you did not register please send your name and email address to section.508 at GSA.gov. Whatever questions we have in the chat we will have those answered and once we post the presentation we will also post the answer to your question. If you have any additional questions for Andrew and Mike please send them to Section.508@gsa.gov. I want to say thank you to everybody that attended and we can stay on as long as you like.

Okay I will hurry up. The next question I am wondering if I could put the ANDI information -- sorry. Is it possible we can have copies from the slides? Yes you can. I am just trying to catch up. I think that was pretty much it. We got the question from the ANDI.

You referenced one of the questions and there. There is a link that is referenced on section 508.gov/tests/web-software

Thank you. We will test the slides on the training section. There will be a link to training materials. That's where we posted previous presentations as well as videos. You can find that information there.

How about how well does it work in the [Indiscernible]

This is Andrew. How does ANDI work within and IDE like react? I apologize. The question might be a little bit confusing to me. I do not believe that it is an integrated development requirement but it might be used to create content as a platform and ANDI will get the output or you will still be able to evaluate the web content you might is to create. It can certainly test that just like if you are using some other code based platform or library of code snippets. For instance, if you are using -- my mind is spacing at the moment. Some other analogs. As to using it in an integrated environment it probably depends on it is not a command like interface tool that operates in your browser. It includes if you can use a browser in your environment then he can certainly use ANDI. Typically there are some caveats to that . The code is hosted on the website. If you are inside of a firewall and you cannot access content outside of the firewall it is entirely open source and you can copy the code and post on your own internal site and point your browser to your code and SSA also on the website provides instructions about how to do that so you can host ANDI internally without having to go outside to get the code or reference the code. Hopefully that answers your question if I did not understand it please feel free to clarify.

I will try to put another one in there. Andrew, my ANDI bookmarked has stopped working. Folks have not been able to solve the problem. Any ideas?

Sure. Because it is a bookmarklet there are some institutions that prohibit use of third-party the client bookmarks to avoid cross site scripting. There are some site-specific policies that also use it. In order to circumvent that it might be a group policy issue with how the browser is implemented. A workaround is to use Internet explorer because it is a less secure browser there is not -- Internet Explorer does not provide they ability to block those bookmarks like chrome and Firefox do. That is one workaround. The best is the way to address that to work with your I.T. department to modify the policy to allow them in general. For content security policies you would need to work with the code owner also to white list Andy -- ANDI where it is hosted. You can white list the site or you can hosted on the same site because you are not going to an external source and injecting code from the same source.

Thank you so much Andrew and Mike for answering those questions. Thank you everyone for attending. Again, very quickly, if you have additional questions please reach out to us. That is Section.508@gsa.gov . I am so sorry. This is Yvette Gibson talking. Section.508@gsa.gov. If you have questions for AJ or Mike or Andrew. We appreciate each and every one of you for attending. There is a planning meeting for the IAAF. Thank you, everyone. Shannon, I got your question. Yes, there is one. The next meeting is June 2. Much appreciated, goodbye everyone. Stay safe.

[event concluded]