

SECTION 508: UNDERSTANDING THE FUNDAMENTALS OF COMPLIANCE

What is Section 508? Who is required to be 508 compliant? How does this impact my organization? There are many questions and conversations buzzing around Section 508, but how many truly understand this concept and the impression it creates? Prodigio, in a project with the Veterans Affairs, embarked on a journey to become Section 508 compliant and implement the standards to enhance Prodigio's users experience. During this journey, Prodigio uncovered the complexities and intricacies of the processes.



IT STARTED IN THE 70'S

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires federal agencies and departments to make all electronic information accessible to individuals with disabilities. Under Section 508, agencies must provide disabled employees and members of the public access to information equivalent to the access available to others. Federal agencies are not the only organizations impacted by Section 508 – it can also affect organizations that are in business with these agencies.

It is essential to understand some frequently used terms when discussing standards for accessibility to all users:

- The **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0** is an ISO standard set of guidelines to follow when creating an accessible website. While the ADA has not yet formally specified technical standards, the WCAG 2.0 has become the internationally recognized benchmark for web accessibility and it is important to note that Section 508 standards are based on WCAG 2.0.
- The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** prohibits the discrimination of people with disabilities, more broadly, in all areas of life, including when accessing information through a website. This applies to all organizations in both the private and public sectors.
- **Section 501** is also a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and encompasses reasonable accommodation for federal job applicants or for those already employed with the federal government. Reasonable accommodations are defined as work environment changes or job performance modifications to enable equal benefits and employment opportunities

Specific to procurement, these standards ensure organizations are compliant to ADA by providing all users within an organization equal access to tools that allow them to execute their various job functions without disruption.



PRODIGO'S MARKETPLACE IS BECOMING 508 COMPLIANT

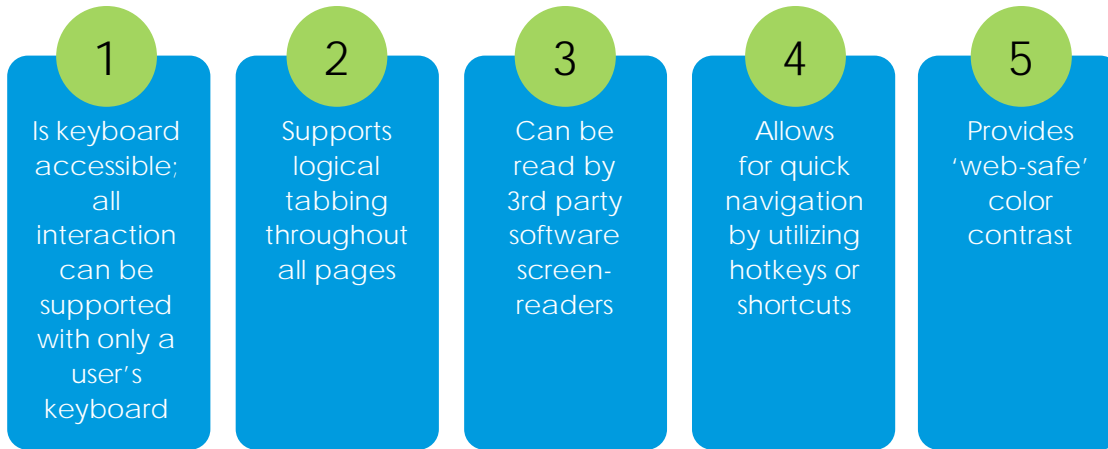
General standards and performance-based requirements have been formed around workplace equipment, like online training sessions, electronic documents and computers, as well as around technology type, like web-based information and applications. These guidelines can feel like a roadblock when digitally transforming an any organization, but progressive procedures can be implemented to help comply with Section 508 and ADA.

Updating Prodigo's Marketplace into a state of compliance included 2 phases; the first phase involved changing the framework to support the requirements as outlined above, while the second phase dealt with applying the standards to the User Interface (UI). This project was executed within a 30-day period, beginning with identifying requirements, assessing impact, and finally, the completion of a prototype. The work was completed in a way that would guarantee no impact to user experience for existing clients.

Ted Dagnal, Vice President of Government Strategy at Prodigo Solutions, "The Section 508 compliance we implemented as part of the VA Supply Chain Master Catalog Program will give our veterans with disabilities the opportunity to leverage the powerful capabilities of the Marketplace to help Veterans Affairs drive their supply chain goals and objectives. This a true milestone for our company and we are proud to support all veterans and look forward to continuing to enhance the solution so all veterans can benefit from the technology."



By being Section 508 compliant, Prodigo's Marketplace solution:



Prodigo's Vice President of Technology, Dermot Pope, "Prodigo's technology framework and architecture is constantly evolving to find a balance between software assurance, scale and accelerated capability for our community of healthcare users. Through our technology's extensibility, and in conjunction with the VA Supply Chain Master Catalog initiative, our organization was excited to incorporate the necessary functionality required to our solution suite in order for it to be more inclusive of our user community."

Enhancing the Marketplace has been an ongoing initiative of Prodigo, as the importance of a compliant supported solution grows. The benefits of a 508 compliant Marketplace can impact the journey to compliance for current and future clients, along with all users within these organizations. If compliance to Section 508 or ADA is an initiative of your organization, it is important to have experts who are knowledgeable in the requirements and Prodigo has the experience to support your organization's journey to accessibility for all users.

ABOUT PRODIGO SOLUTIONS

Counting more than half of the nation's most prestigious health systems as clients, Prodigo has amassed one of the largest repositories of supply and services market data in the U.S. Its solutions resolve long-standing data problems, enforce product and services standards, optimize contract utilization and enhance the requisitioning experience of clinicians. Typically deployed as a performance-extension to ERP, Prodigo is foundational to value-based, clinically integrated supply chains.

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