Important Dates

August 7, 1998
President Clinton signed the Workforce Investment Act, including the Rehabilitation Act Amendments with an expanded and strengthened Section 508.

March 31, 2000
The Access Board issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), setting forth the proposed standards.

December 21, 2000
Final Section 508 standards were published in the *Federal Register*.

January 22, 2001
The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) was proposed to be amended by adding the Section 508 standards to procurement regulations.

April 25, 2001
The FAR Final Rule was published in the *Federal Register*.

June 21, 2001
Enforcement of the Section 508 standards begins.

When an employee or member of the public files a complaint claiming an agency's procurement is not in compliance, the process for handling that complaint will follow already established procedures that exist under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

What Do the Numbers Say?

Section 508 implementation is critical in this era of reliance on information technology.

- By 1997 about 19 million Americans were using the Internet. That number tripled in one year, and then passed 100 million in 1999. In the first quarter of 2000, more than five million Americans joined the online world--roughly 55,000 new users each day.
- Every 24 hours, the Web increases by more than 3.2 million new pages and more than 715,000 images.
- The number of electronic mailboxes worldwide reached almost 570 million in 1999. In 1998 the U.S. Postal Service delivered 101 billion pieces of paper mail; estimated e-mails transmitted that year range as high as four trillion.
- About 54 million Americans have a disability.

Section 508 Technical Assistance

www.access-board.gov
www.section508.gov
www.ittatc.org

Section 508 Facts

Understanding Section 508 and the Access Board's Standards

The Access Board

a federal agency committed to accessible design

Purpose

Section 508 requires Federal departments and agencies that develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology to ensure that Federal employees and members of the public with disabilities have access to and use of information and data, comparable to that of employees and members of the public without disabilities--unless it is an undue burden to do so.

Who is Covered?

- Federal departments and agencies including the U.S. Postal Service
- Contractors providing services or products to Federal agencies must provide Section 508 compliant deliverables

Exceptions include some military functions, products owned by contractors incidental to a contract, and "back-office" equipment.

What is Covered?

- Electronic and information technology products procured, developed, maintained, or used by a Federal agency

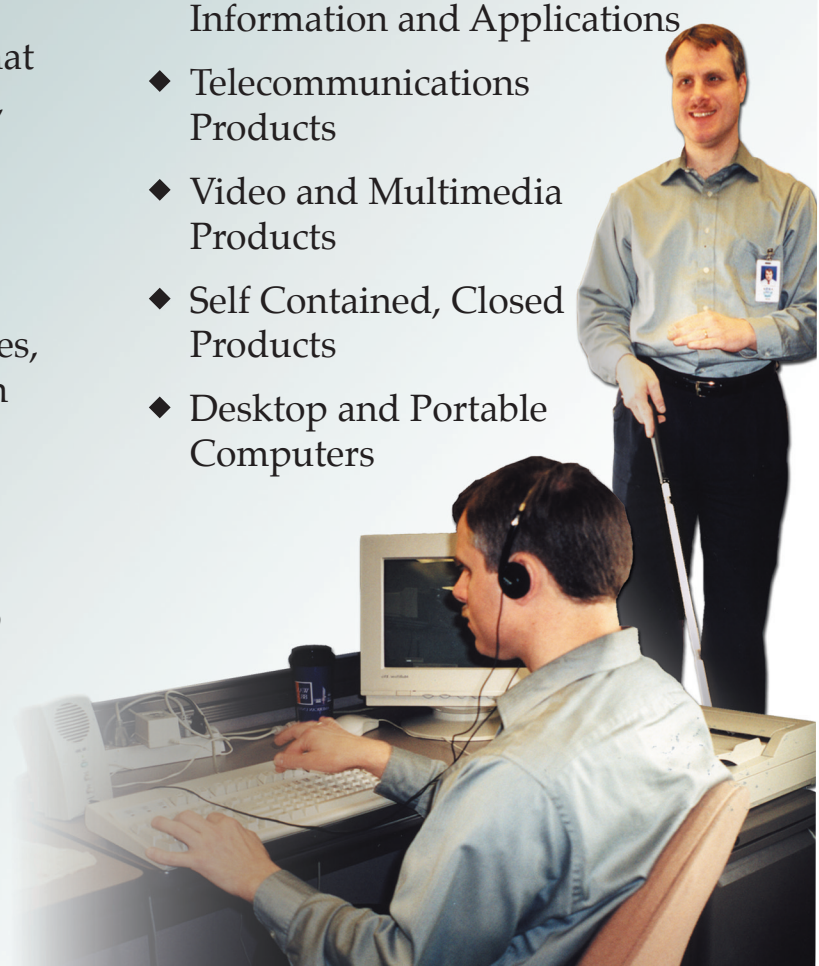
Complaints and lawsuits can only be filed against products that are procured.

- Electronic and information technology includes products that store, process, transmit, convert, duplicate, or receive electronic information
- Copiers, computers, fax machines, software, hardware, information kiosks, websites, and telecommunications products

Federal agencies are not required to "retrofit" existing technologies.

Section 508

What are the Technical Standards?

Section 508 standards are technical specifications and performance-based requirements which focus on the functional capabilities covered by technologies. The standards are organized into six sections:

- Software Applications and Operating Systems
- Web-based Intranet and Internet Information and Applications
- Telecommunications Products
- Video and Multimedia Products
- Self Contained, Closed Products
- Desktop and Portable Computers