

Project Proposal

ADA Compliance of Web ASSIST Displays

April 28, 2000

Purpose of the Project:

The purpose of this project is to enhance the Web ASSIST user interface to be more accessible to persons with disabilities.

Background:

Web ASSIST was first deployed in October 1997. During the initial development of Web ASSIST, there were no agreed upon standards for making web sites accessible to persons with disabilities. Since that time, the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) established their Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) developed a service called Bobby. Bobby is a web-based tool that analyzes web pages for their accessibility to people with disabilities against the W3C guidelines. CAST offers Bobby as a free public service in order to further its mission to expand opportunities for people with disabilities through the innovative uses of computer technology. Bobby has become a defacto standard tool that many institutions recognize to ensure accessibility of web sites. The ASSIST Technical Advisory Committee and the ASSIST Board of Directors have agreed that Bobby compliance is the desired level of accessibility compliance for Web ASSIST.

Additional information on Bobby is available at www.cast.org/bobby.

Customer/Project Needs to be Addressed:

Web ASSIST is the only product available to students, faculty, counselors and others that provides full access to the extensive database of articulation and transfer information contained in ASSIST. As California's official repository of transfer and articulation information, ASSIST is a key tool for use in academic planning and evaluation for California transfer students. The ASSIST Board of Directors, as the oversight body for ASSIST, wants to ensure that the information contained in ASSIST is accessible to persons with disabilities.

Proposed New/Modified Products:

This proposal calls for the enhancement of the current Web ASSIST user interface to become compliant according to the accessibility standards analyzed by Bobby.

Initial analysis by the Coordination Site has concluded that the current Web ASSIST prompting and report pages can be enhanced with certain features to become Bobby compliant. A separate set of prompting and report pages is not required.

Affected Customers and Benefits:

All current and future users of Web ASSIST will be affected to some degree by these changes. The enhancements will make Web ASSIST more usable by people with disabilities. This includes special indicators that can be read by “accessible” web browsers, text readers, and other tools to aid persons with disabilities. This also includes minor changes to the layout of some pages to make information more understandable. These enhancements are not expected to negatively impact users without disabilities. All of the current features in Web ASSIST will continue to function.

Costs:

This enhancement of the Web ASSIST software will be conducted by existing Coordination Site staff under their current duties and workload. No additional staffing, software or hardware resources are anticipated.

Schedule:

The Coordination Site is targeting September 2000 for deployment of the enhanced, Bobby compliant Web ASSIST software.