

2016 Best Practices Proposal Form



CACUBO
Central Association of College
& University Business Officers

Completed proposals are to be submitted to bestpractices@cacubo.org or by contacting Donna Rohlfer, Director, CACUBO Best Practices Awards, rohlfedm@miamioh.edu.
The deadline is April 30, 2016.

Best Practices Program Submission:

Title: University Services, Purchasing - Electronic Information Technology Accessibility Review Process Development

Primary* Contact Information:

The primary contact must be a CACUBO member institution of higher education.

Institution: Michigan State University

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Salutation: Ms.

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Professional Title: Director University Services

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*Additional team contacts may be listed at the bottom of this form.

Institution Information:

Institution: Research, Comprehensive/Doctorate

Year Founded: 1855

Geographical Location: Main Campus East Lansing Michigan, with multiple satellite locations around the world.

Number of Students: 50,000+

Website: <http://msu.edu>

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Statement of the Problem:

Provide a brief statement identifying the challenge your institution encountered that benefited from your best practice.

Since 2009, Michigan State University (MSU) had a Web Accessibility Policy setting forth standards for compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. However, there was no true owner of the policy and no defined processes for education or enforcement. In 2014, MSU's Accommodating Technology Café and the Office of General Counsel identified increased litigation surrounding web accessibility and its application by the Department of Justice in similar federally funded institutions. The Department of Justice was also applying Section 508 and WCAG 2.0 AA standards to all electronic information technology (EIT), not merely web sites. To address this expansion, a team was put in place within MSU Information Technology (MSU IT). Recognizing the vast scope of their project – understanding the level of accessibility of current EIT and new EIT products – they reached out to Purchasing for partnership. Together with the Office of General Counsel, based on a set of carefully crafted legal terms, a process was developed by which all existing solutions (upon renewal and/or identification of existence) and new solutions are reviewed complete with supporting documentation.

Identify the Solution (250-words maximum):

Describe how you identified and developed your best practice solution including those involved with the process, impact on the organization, finances and resources.

Initial efforts to review products for accessibility resulted in delays – sometimes by months – in the purchasing process impacting the university operations, educational initiatives, and research programs that were becoming increasingly more reliant on software solutions.

IT's partnership with Purchasing resulted in 1) establishing points at which review would occur, 2) establishing a framework for the review process and assessing legal risk, 3) MSU IT provided central funding for third party reviews for highest risk products, 4) a Digital Content and Accessibility Team was formed.

Purchasing quickly identified the need for efficient work flow preventing bottlenecks and lengthy circular discussions. The following process was proposed and implemented

- Upon renewal or purchase, Purchasing assesses each product's risk based on guidelines from general counsel
- Purchasing forwards high risk products to the Digital Content & Accessibility Team for internal or third party review
- Purchasing forwards recommendations of the review team to the appropriate department(s)

While the process was helpful a hindrance remained: how do we best proceed with products that are not fully compliant to standards? To address this, Purchasing created the EIT Accessibility Acknowledgement, a form signed by the end user department which confirms the policy, alerts them to the noncompliance, and requires that they create a plan and commit resources to accommodating

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individuals with disabilities who need to use the product. This was the final step in ensuring an effective procurement process and while considering university standards.

Implementation Timeline:

Provide a bulleted list of the steps and implementation timeline of your best practice solution.

1. June 2014 – MSU’s Accommodating Technology Café identifies the need for common procurement language and process.
2. November 2014 - Initial meetings between General Counsel, members of MSU IT, and Purchasing surrounding EIT Accessibility Terms.
3. May 2015 – Purchasing meets with members of MSU IT to propose defined work flow.
4. May 2015 – August 2015 – proposed workflow piloted and further refined.
5. August 2015 – MSU IT names a new Manager of Digital Content & Accessibility.
6. September 2015 – process formalized. Purchasing creates EIT Accessibility Acknowledgement to define responsibility for non-compliant purchases allowing them to move forward
7. November 2015 – MSU IT creates a new position, EIT Accessibility Coordinator; Purchasing forwards high- and medium-risk purchases and renewals to that Coordinator.
8. December 2015 – Accessibility Review Committee (ARC) formed, monthly review meetings begin

Benefits & Retrospect:

Provide a brief statement of the benefits achieved by implementing the best practice solution.

The work flow and associated documents that were developed are extremely important in adhering to the university’s core values related to inclusion, proactive management of the university’s legal risk, and education of the university’s staff. The process also allows for the efficient purchase of EIT solutions critical to the university’s operations and initiatives. The process identifies and informs the party responsible for each aspect of an EIT solution. It documents this responsibility in a way that expedites future purchases of products and ensures optimal implementation and use of products from an accessibility standpoint.

Additional Team Contact Information:

Additional Contact #1:

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Institution: Research Comprehensive/Doctorate Small Institutions Community College

Salutation: Prof. Dr. Mr. Mrs. Ms.

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