

Resolution on Accessibility for Library Websites

- Whereas, The American Library Association's (ALA) mission is to “provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all” (ALA Policy 1.1);
- Whereas, ALA Policy 40.1, “Core Values of Librarianship,” includes principles of: “Access,” “Intellectual Freedom,” “Social Responsibility,” “Service,” and “The Public Good” and ALA Policy 40.2. Code of Professional Ethics for Librarians, section 1 states the goal that libraries “provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources” and lists both “equitable service policies” and “equitable access” as ways to achieve said goal;
- Whereas, ALA Policy 50.15.1, "Principles for the Networked World," identifies ". . . policy areas intrinsic to libraries, technology, and the role that libraries play in connecting people to an increasingly networked world" and specifically notes the principals of "intellectual freedom, the right to access and express ideas," and "equitable access to information";
- Whereas, ALA seeks to "increase ALA's influence in promoting equity of access and fair use" (ALAhead Strategic Plan 2010, Goal Area III, Strategic Objectives);
- Whereas, ALA Policy 54.2.3, “Library Services for People with Disabilities,” states that "libraries should use strategies based upon the principles of universal design to ensure that library policy, resources and services meet the needs of all people" and "universal design" has a principle of equitable use where " design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities" (Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies, (ASCLA) Issues, Universal Design);
- Whereas, The World Wide Web Consortium (WC3) has endorsed widely accepted guidelines, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, which, the Guidelines state “will make content accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities, including blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, learning disabilities, cognitive limitations, limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity [and combinations thereof, and in addition] can make Web content more usable to users in general”;
- Whereas, The Federal Government has created regulations based on Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act that ensure that its technology is accessible to its employees and public (which happen to apply to most libraries);
- Whereas, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II Regulation, 28 C.F.R. § 35.160 "requires [public entities] to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others";

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- Whereas, A number of court cases and structured negotiation settlements have upheld the precedent that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to the content of web sites, such as the National Federation of the Blind, et. al., v. the Target Corporation, the Law School Admissions Council Inc., and the Connecticut Attorney General's Office (IRS Forms), and the American Council of the Blind in the Staples Accessible Web Site Agreement, Rite Aid Web Accessibility Agreement, and Accessible Credit Reports Agreement;
- Whereas, Many libraries receiving state funding must acknowledge the importance of web accessibility issues within state statutes, policies and/or guidelines, through Section 508 and/or WCAG (i.e. Illinois, California, New York, etc.);
- Whereas, ALA Council adopted the "Accessible Digitization Projects Resolution" (ALA Council Document 38, 2007), which resolves that ALA "strongly encourages all libraries engaging in digitization projects to create versions of all materials that are accessible to persons using screen-reader or other assistive technologies, based on Section 508";
- Whereas, ALA Council adopted the Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) Digitization Workgroup's values, through "Resolution on Principles for Digital Content," stating that "[e]quitable access to digital library materials is ensured through maximum accessibility, ubiquity, sustainability, and barrier-free access" (ALA Council Document 20.9, 2007); and
- Whereas, Library websites are a key factor in accessing digital library materials; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the American Library Association

1. Urges all libraries to comply with Section 508 regulations, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, or other criteria that become widely accepted as standards of accessibility evolve, so that people with disabilities can effectively use library websites to access information with ease; and
2. Urges the federal government and state and local governments to provide adequate funding to allow libraries to comply with accepted standards **and laws on** accessibility for people with disabilities.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
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