

EA R4: Cornell Commitment to Web Accessibility

Abstract: This resolution calls for the University to adopt a Web Content Accessibility Policy to be applied to for all new websites and to legacy websites upon major update.

Sponsored by: Jeramy Kruser, Research and Technology Transfer Representative, Employee Assembly

Reviewed by: Personnel Policy Committee, MM/DD/YYYY

Whereas, worldwide there are 285 million people with visual impairment, 275 million people with moderate-to-profound hearing impairment, and many more with physical, speech, cognitive, neurological disabilities or a limited understanding of English; and

Whereas, in 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in areas of public life, was passed; and

Whereas, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states, “No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States...shall...be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency...”;

Whereas, under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a federal law which provides action to the promise of the ADA, federal agencies are required to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities, and standards are provided; and

Whereas, the Cornell motto reflects our inclusive goal of “... any person ... any study”; and

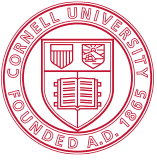
Whereas, The University’s Equal Education and Employment Opportunity Statement declares that Cornell is “committed to assisting those persons with disabilities who have special needs related to their educational pursuit or employment” and prohibits discrimination on this basis; and

Whereas, The Campus Master Plan states that, “Cornell’s campus shall contain a diversity of inviting, accessible and safe places, for social and culture interaction, recreation, athletics, and passive enjoyment by faculty, staff, students and visitors...”; and

Whereas, Cornell’s websites are one of our most visible communications tools, and any site on the Cornell.edu domain is a representation of the university, reflecting our competency, values, and standards; and

Whereas, in order to meet our stated institutional commitment to accessibility, our web administrators, content providers, and developers need institutional support and a set of published standards to work from when creating new web sites and remediating legacy sites; and

Whereas, an inaccessible website can exclude faculty, staff, prospective and existing students, and their families, due to their abilities or the method they use to access the web;



Cornell University Employee Assembly

44 **Be it therefore resolved**, the Divisions of University Relations, Cornell Information Technologies, and
45 Human Resources by August 1, 2017 will set, publish, and disseminate to all levels of University
46 personnel, an Accessibility Policy for all websites on the Cornell.edu domain which will:

- 47 1. set a baseline standard to meet either Section 508, or WCAG 2.0 AA Standards
- 48 2. require all newly created sites to meet these standards
- 49 3. require all legacy sites to be remediated for conformance upon any major update
- 50 4. Using the model for IT Security exemptions, provide a process for exemption of sites for which
51 conformance would impose an undue burden

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53 **Be it further resolved**, Cornell Administration, in consultation with the Department of Inclusion and
54 Workforce Diversity, the ADA Coordinator Team, the Divisions of University Relations, and Cornell
55 Information Technologies, will name and/or identify an office or person(s) as a point of contact on
56 campus to handle reporting, assist with procedures, and periodically assess the resources needed to ensure
57 successful implementation of the policy

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59 **Be it finally resolved**, the Divisions of University Relations and Cornell Information Technologies will:

- 60 1. Revise the Brand Book to include accessible templates for items including but not limited to
61 presentations, videos, posters, and digital media;
- 62 2. Provide and make readily available information on making digital information accessible and
63 using automated tools to check the accessibility of content.
- 64 3. Provide guidance, incentive, and encouragement to all University academic, administrative,
65 and business units, aiming for the highest level of conformance in all possible cases.
- 66 4. Provide tools to all University academic, administrative, and business units to perform
67 standardized self-evaluations of conformance.
- 68 5. Compile annual surveys from all University academic, administrative, and business units for
69 their level of conformance, making the survey results available to the Assemblies. The first
70 survey is to be completed before January 1, 2018.
- 71 6. Set a goal for domain-wide conformance exceeding 85% within 5 years.
- 72 7. After this goal is reached, refer any non-exempt sites falling below 75% conformance to the
73 administrator for remediation or exemption.
- 74 8. Re-evaluate exemptions at least once per year.

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76 **Adopted by Vote of the January 21, 2016,**

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78 **Respectfully Submitted,**

79 *Jeremy Kruser, Research and Information Technology Transfer Representative*