

[Home](#)[CEO Hotline](#)[Viewpoint](#)[Classified Ads](#)[Archives](#)[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

[Safety](#)[Pressroom](#) (web)[Ask the CEO](#)[CEO Forum](#)[Employee Recognition](#)[Employee Activities](#)[Metro Projects](#)[Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)[Archives](#)[Events Calendar](#)[Research Center/ Library](#)[Metro Classifieds](#)[Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

[30/10 Initiative](#)[Policies](#)[Training](#)[Help Desk](#)[Intranet Policy](#)

Need e-Help?

Call the Help Desk
at 2-4357

[Contact myMetro.net](#)

Metro's New Website Enhances ADA Component

- **New Easier-to-Use Web Tools Aid Disabled Users**

By Michael D. White
Staff Writer

The work that went into the launch of the new *metro.net* website was challenging in more ways than one.

In addition to the technical aspects of creating a new *metro.net*, the Metro web team had to make sure that the new site complied with the mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

The ADA has dramatically impacted how government agencies like Metro utilize the Internet to serve the public and clearly outlines the guidelines on how public agency websites must "increase the convenience and speed in obtaining information or services" for individuals with a broad range of physical disabilities.

More specifically, Section 508 establishes standards addressing a certain level of accessibility that electronic and information technology must meet for those with disabilities.

In addition, the team was tasked with meeting the requirements of the Priority 1 and 2 levels of the Worldwide Web Consortium's Accessibility Guidelines. While not law, the guidelines are universally followed as they are much more comprehensive and detailed on the wide myriad of content on today's internet.

Assistive technologies

The initial challenge for the Metro web team, says Metro Webmaster Joe Simpson, centered on "dealing with a complex site that had grown to more than 8,000 pages in size over so long a period of time."

Non-compliant websites create unnecessary barriers for people with disabilities because their designers haven't implemented "assistive technologies" into their web pages that can help someone who, for instance, cannot see a computer monitor or use a mouse, he says.

Such tools include screen readers which help the blind by "speaking" the

text that would normally appear on a monitor and voice recognition software which gives others who have difficulty using a computer mouse the ability to control their computers with verbal commands.

Such technologies, says Simpson, "give the trio of formats used on the *metro.net* site – Acrobat, InDesign and HTML – an additional layer of information so the bus timetables, "Riding Metro" information, Trip Planner and Customer Comment Form can be instantly and easily accessed by the disabled."

Above and beyond

Successful ADA compliance also called for coordinating input including testing and evaluation from several Metro departments including Creative, Operations and Communications and an outside consulting firm, he says.

Coordination efforts, he says, were channeled through Metro Chief Operations Officer Carolyn Flowers, Chief Communications Officer Matt Raymond and ADA Compliance Administrator Chip Hazen.

One source of critical input was Metro Scheduling Systems Project Leader Agustin Moreno, who was involved from the beginning of the project in the selection and testing of the technology used to make *metro.net* more accessible to those with visual limitations.

"What impressed me the most about the entire effort was that no one was satisfied with doing just enough to get by," says Moreno, who has been blind since the age of 16. "Everyone involved was committed to going above and beyond to make the site the best it can be for everybody. It was a fine example of the team's commitment to going above and beyond to help people with serious needs."