

Avoiding Common Pitfalls For Accessibility Including Section 508 Compliance



Avoiding Common Pitfalls

Contents

- 3 Introduction
- 3 Why Comply With Section 508?
- 4 Avoiding Common Pitfalls
- 5 508 Accessibility Professional Tip
- 6 Next Steps For Accessibility and 508 Compliance
- 6 Choosing A Vendor For Section 508 Compliance
- 7 Toppan Merrill: Your Partner for Section 508 Compliance

Introduction

New accessibility legislation has heightened the importance of how you present your information so all users can understand and navigate your documents.

Many organizations are adopting accessibility standards as part of their business strategy but still lack the practical experience or underestimate what it takes to implement an accessibility initiative. Partnering with Toppan Merrill can bridge this gap and support solutions built for good business practices.

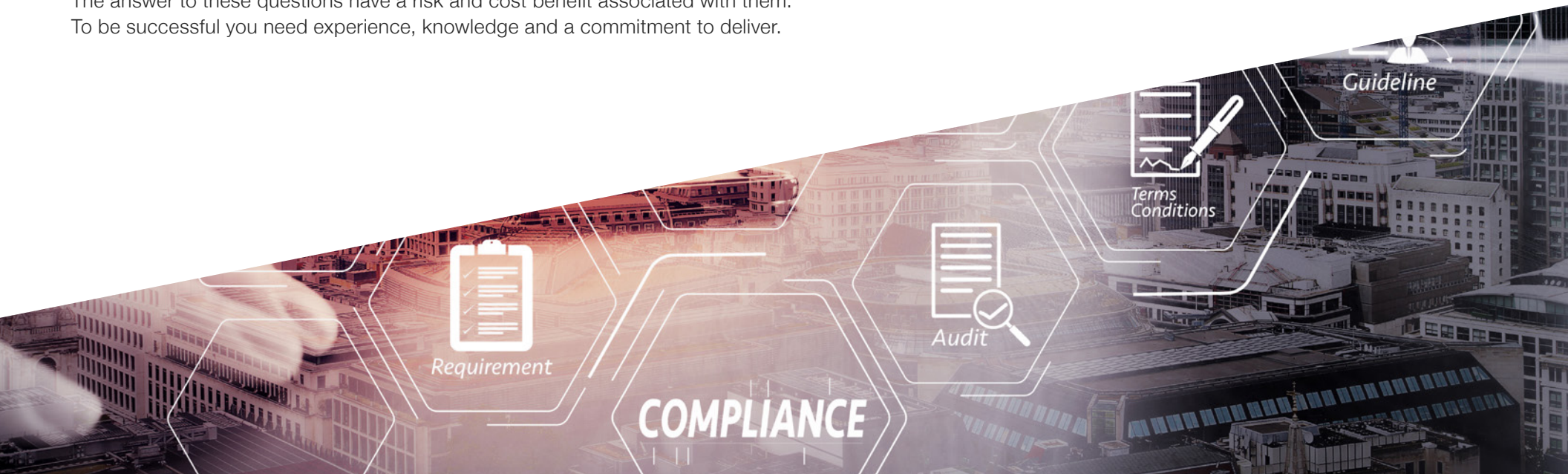
Why Comply With Section 508?

The American Disabilities Act tracks and provides estimates on the prevalence of disabilities in the US. About 19% or 55 million people have a disability that requires aid in daily living activities. That percentage increases to 42% by age 65.

While that statistic may seem surprising, think of this in terms of your customers or members and what you are doing to help them understand your compliance and marketing materials – especially in the Medicare and Medicaid markets.

- Do your corporate governance strategies and culture initiatives address accessibility?
- Are you in compliance with ADA Title III, Section 508 NPRM for Federally funded programs, or ACA 1557 for healthcare?
- Do your PDF documents that you post to your website align with accessibility requirements so that a user can navigate and understand your material without interacting with your call center?

The answer to these questions have a risk and cost benefit associated with them. To be successful you need experience, knowledge and a commitment to deliver.



A man with glasses and a woman in business attire are looking at a laptop screen. The man is pointing at the screen. The image is partially obscured by a large, stylized graphic of a person's head and shoulders in the foreground, which is semi-transparent and has a warm, orange-toned overlay.

Avoiding Common Pitfalls

Working within a compliance industry doesn't always make it easy for the customer to understand what is being presented – with or without accessibility needs. Your communication materials such as marketing, compliance, and fulfillment are structured for educational or informative purposes. Different document information requires the appropriate structure to navigate and present accurate accessible information.

Many health insurance plans believe that tagging their documents is sufficient to ensure the documents are compliant with Section 508. Although document tagging can bring simple documents such as letters into Section 508 compliance, it is only the first step in 508 compliance. For the majority of your other core documents, including Summary of Benefits, Annual Notice of Change, Evidence of Coverage, Plan Handbooks, Provider Directories, etc. both tagging and remediation are required to ensure full compliance with Section 508.

This means a user's software is effective when it knows what it is looking at, verses attempting to consume the content and analyze unstructured information.

A remediated PDF, unlike a standard PDF, can be interpreted correctly by assistive technology software to provide users with behind-the-scenes navigation capabilities designed for sequencing content, searching, linking content, and setting language indicators. For example, remediation provides navigation to information in a table, that links data to the correct column and row headers, or multiple columns on a page are easily understood because the text is read in a natural sequenced order etc.

The quality and organization of tags determine how accessible the document will be to members. If documents have wrong labels, or the content is sequenced out of order, the result scrambles the words and sentences together, making the oral read through of the documents very difficult for members to understand. [Click](#) to hear the differences between a remediated and non-remediated document when read aloud.

508 Accessibility Professional Tip for Manual Remediation

508 remediation is the practice of connecting the readability of the content tags with navigation to create a 508-compliant document. This process defines the metadata within the PDFs and makes them accessible to people with disabilities.

“Manual” means that a database-driven system did not create the tagged document in a template-controlled environment. So, to add the value for assistive technology, and provide equal access to information, you need a skilled person to remediate the document and make it “human readable”.

Most marketing and support documents used for reference or downloaded from your website, are created as PDFs. You may already have a solid foundation to add 508 accessibility.

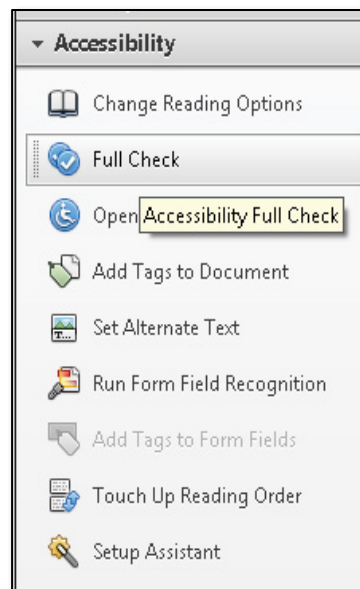
There are challenges in achieving 508 compliance:

- Fonts not embedded, content locked out, or images that are objects.
- Inconsistent or undefined bookmarks, internal and external links, head level usage, lists, tables and relationship of data.

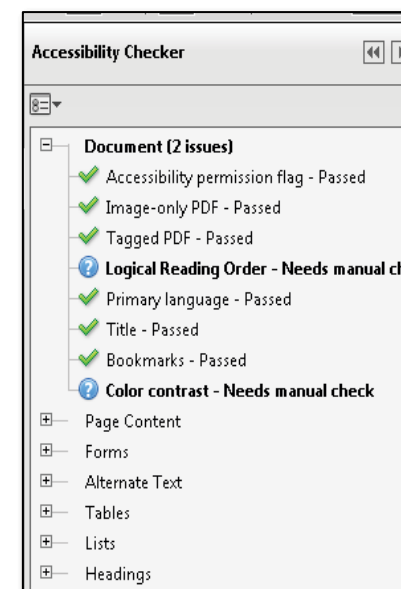
This is where you need a partner with the knowledge and skills to add value and accessibility. Toppan Merrill can support your requirement to provide reasonable accommodations and minimize self-disclosure of a disability.


For a quick test of your files, use Adobe Acrobat's Tools menu. Select Accessibility, then run the Accessibility Full Check. The resulting report will highlight in bold any compliance issues.

Selection in Adobe:



Successful Results:





Next Steps For Accessibility And 508 Compliance

The process of ensuring full Section 508 compliance, particularly for complex communications, is an undertaking that eclipses the resources of most organizations. In fact, a “do-it-yourself” approach is the primary pitfall for companies desiring to achieve Section 508 compliance. To attain compliance, most companies have found that partnering with a vendor with a proven track record of success in Section 508 compliance produces the results they need in a cost-effective manner.

Choosing A Vendor For Section 508 Compliance

As you survey the market, you'll find a wide range of capabilities from vendors who offer 508 compliance. Your best partners are differentiated by the credentials of their health insurance-focused support teams that can simplify the process while controlling costs. Accuracy is critical in ensuring your documents are compliant with Section 508. Therefore, you must ensure the vendor you select understands how your information is communicated in your member materials and how to apply that to accessibility requirements.

Most health insurance plan documents have established manual or automated workflows. For example, marketing materials, such as operating guides or newsletters that are produced in a single version, would utilize manual remediation as the best option for 508 compliance. However, leveraging remediation of content-specific attributes that are assembled into multiple versions, such as the ANOC or EOC, may provide an automated workflow opportunity to bring efficiencies to the process of 508 compliance.

Utilizing a team of trained healthcare experts that understand what it takes to connect accessibility to marketing, compliance and consumer needs and can direct and facilitate this process in a time-sensitive way is vital to the success of your Section 508 compliance process.

Toppan Merrill can support your requirement to provide reasonable accommodations and minimize self-disclosure of a disability.

Toppan Merrill: Your Partner For Section 508 Compliance

Toppan Merrill is a solutions innovator, has the technical skills to create compliant documents, and a comprehensive understanding of the accessibility laws that pertain to member communications. We can help manage workflow processes, time, costs and benefits to meet your strategic goals.

Toppan Merrill has helped a large number of companies in a range of industries, especially health insurance, to bring their documents into compliance with Section 508. Our documentation experts use both automated and manual methods to tag, remediate and validate member communications. We also have regulatory experts on staff who monitor and analyze new regulations as they are released and provide guidance to our support teams. Toppan Merrill is ready to partner with you to achieve 100 percent compliance for all your Section 508 member communications.

Expand possible: embrace accessibility to make a difference.

REFERENCES

2014 US Census

National Eye Institute (department of HHS)

The Vision Council (private vision advocacy, research and industry forum)

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (department of HHS)

Section 508 of the US General Services Administration Federal Government

Toppan Merrill secures solutions at every phase, so you can secure ongoing impact and growth.