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# Accessible Information and Communications (ICT) Procurement Principles

## At present, information and communications technology that is used in Australian government agencies is not required to incorporate universal design principles. This lack of an accessibility requirement creates barriers to electronic information and services and can lead to indirect discrimination against many people with disability; including those working in, or seeking employment in government agencies.

# Rationale

* The rationale for public procurement policies that incorporate ICT accessibility mandates is grounded in the principles of accessibility and non-discrimination. Accessibility and non-discrimination play a key role in ICT accessibility mandates for government procurement. In general, the principal of ICT accessibility requires the removal of barriers that prevent the enjoyment of rights by persons with disabilities. These barriers prevent access to print information, communications, technologies such as the internet, and economic and social life.

# Primary purpose

* The primary purpose of a public procurement policy for accessible ICT is to ensure full access to and use of government agencies’ ICT by all end users, including individuals with disability.

# User needs

* A public procurement policy for accessible ICT will require government agencies to ensure that when developing or procuring ICT, they take into account the needs of all end users – including people with disability. Doing so will enhance the ability of public service employees with disability to have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to that provided to others. Similarly, agency procurement of accessible ICT will enhance the ability of members of the public with disabilities who are seeking information or services from a government agency to have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to that provided to others.

# Planning

* It is widely understood that the accessible design of ICT is least expensive when addressed at the earliest stage of design, development, production and distribution. Given that ICT will continue to evolve and be impacted by convergence, it will be important for governments to plan for the procurement and development of accessible design solutions as they move forward to maintain their ICT architecture and replace legacy systems.

# Services

* Procurement of accessible ICT includes the procurement of services. For example when a government agency outsources information, programs or services, access to these must be accessible to all end users including those people with disability.

# Compatibility

* Publicly procured accessible ICT should be readily usable for the widest number of users without the need for modification. However, when required, accessible ICT should be compatible with assistive technology.
* Publicly procured self-contained closed products (i.e. copiers, printers, faxes or similar products designed so that users cannot attach assistive devices) must have the access features built into the product. These products, such as information kiosks, copiers, or other similar products that do not permit a user to install or connect assistive technology, must be designed so that an end user can operate the product, without having to modify it. Also, multimedia presentations that require captioning and Audio Description must have these features built into the product, as it is impractical to expect end users to add on their own captions or descriptions. However, for most products – such as software, web pages, and computers – achieving compatibility with assistive technology is required.

# Functionality

ICT products must be designed and tested for functionality against the following considerations:

* Consider access to all functionality of the product without the user using vision
* Consider access to all visual functionality of the product for users with visual acuity less than 6/21
* Consider access to all visual functionality of the product for users with colour vision impairments
* Consider access to all functionality of the product without the user using hearing
* Consider access to all audio functionality of the product for users with limited hearing
* Consider access to all functionality of the product without the user using speech
* Consider access to all functionality of the product for users with limited reach or strength, or that cannot perform simultaneous actions
* Consider access to all functionality of the product without the user being able to make physical contact with the product
* Consider access to all functionality of the product for users with cognitive, language or learning difficulties or who may not have had the opportunity to learn the required concepts needed to operate the product.

# References

<http://accan.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=495:government-ict-purchasing-what-differences-do-accessibility-criteria-make-for-people-with-disabilities&catid=98:access-for-all&Itemid=234><http://g3ict.com/resource_center/g3ict_book_-_the_accessibility_imperative>

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/101096>

<http://webaim.org/teitac/wiki/EWG~Draft_Jan_7#Application_for_Section_508>

<http://www.section508.gov/>