

# VPATs: What they are and how to use them

Presenter: John Toles

# Live Captions Provided

## Two Options:

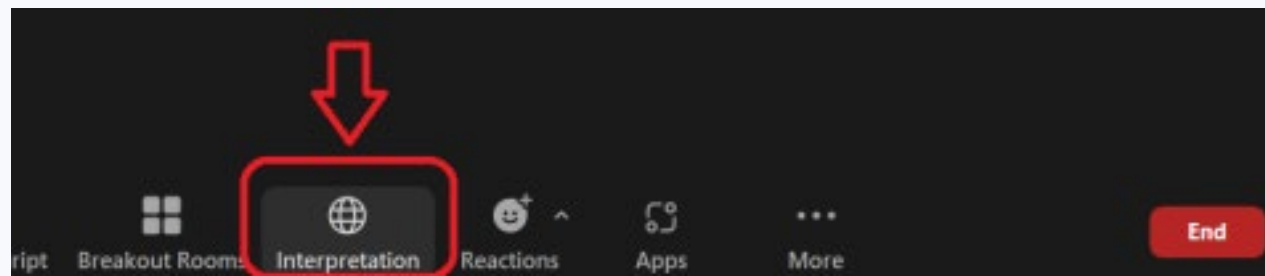
1. Access StreamText link available in the “Chat” (“Chat” control in Zoom toolbar).
2. Access the “Closed Captions” option (“Closed Captions” control with “CC” above it in Zoom toolbar).



# Sign Language Interpretation View

## Interpretation View for Participants

- Sign language interpreters are shown in dedicated video channels.
- Participants can resize or relocate the video window as needed.
- Interpretation option on the Zoom toolbar.



# AccessGA



AccessGA is a joint project of the [State ADA Coordinator's Office](#) – Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC), [Georgia Technology Authority \(GTA\)](#) and [Georgia Tech's Center for Inclusive Design & Innovation \(CIDI\)](#). AccessGA's purpose is to support State of Georgia agencies with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) accessibility, promoting equal and timely access for employees and customers with a wide range of disabilities.

# Products and Services

- **Braille Services:** produces customized projects from both print materials and electronic text including partial books and chapters or graphics only using cutting-edge technology.
- **E-Text Department:** provides high-quality e-text in many formats such as PDF, DOC, DAISY, and HTML.
- **Captioning and Audio Description Services:** makes classrooms, meetings, labs and other audio environments fully accessible for deaf or hard-of-hearing, including remote captioning and captioned media.

# Additional Products, Services & Research

- **Tools for Life (TFL), Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program:** Offers access to, and acquisition of, assistive technology for Georgians of all ages and disabilities in order to live, learn, work, and play independently in the communities of their choice.
- **Accessibility Compliance, Best Practice and User Experience:** We focus on accessibility and usability needs through evaluations, testing, training, technical assistance, and comprehensive website/application accessibility evaluations.
- **Research:** focuses on accessible environments for people with disabilities including students and aging individuals in the built and virtual environment.

# Today's Presenter

**John Toles**, ICT Accessibility Specialist with the Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (CIDI):

- Provides web accessibility evaluations, technical help and training about digital accessibility.
- Joined CIDI in 2016 providing customer support and data services for a First in the World research grant.
- Has worked with customer support team as an AT Support Specialist.
- Also served as the lead developer for CIDI's Student Accommodation Manager (SAM) software.



# Today's Agenda

1. Learn about the structure of a VPAT
2. Understand how to interpret the findings in a VPAT
3. Discover the different types of VPATs
4. Live demonstration of a VPAT
5. Answer the following questions about VPATs:
  - When do I need one?
  - Who should complete it?
  - How do I use it?
  - Where can I find a product's VPAT?





Poll #1: Have you used a  
VPAT before?

# What is a VPAT

## Volunteer Product Accessibility Template (VPAT®)

- Created by the [Information Technology Industry Council \(ITI\)](https://www.itic.org/) [https://www.itic.org/]
- Prepopulated with relevant guidelines to assess the accessibility of a product
- Separated into sections that can be completed for applicable products or omitted if they are not
- Qualifies the accessibility of a product based on how well it supports the included guidelines
- Used to create an Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR)



# ACR vs. VPAT

- The production of an Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR) is the goal of a VPAT.
- An ACR will include the findings laid out by the VPAT.
- An ACR can omit sections from the VPAT that aren't relevant to the product.
- VPAT is the more common term, but an ACR is the more appropriate document.
- A VPAT is what is used to create an ACR, though a VPAT doesn't have to be turned into an ACR.

[How to Create an Accessibility Conformance Report Using A Voluntary Product Accessibility Template](https://www.section508.gov/sell/how-to-create-acr-with-vpat/)  
[<https://www.section508.gov/sell/how-to-create-acr-with-vpat/>]

Poll #2: Does your  
organization rely on VPATs?

# The Four Types of VPATs

“The Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR) based on the ITI VPAT® is the leading global reporting format for assisting buyers and sellers in identifying information and communications technology (ICT) products and services with accessibility features.<sup>1</sup>”

- **508**
  - Targeted entities operating in the US who need to demonstrate the accessibility of a product for the US Federal and state governments procurement practices. Includes both WCAG conformance criteria and Section 508 functional performance criteria as well as hardware, software, and support documentation criteria.
- **WCAG**
  - Targeted toward corporations that require accessibility to be considered when procuring ICT products. It is the least detailed and only covers WCAG conformance criteria.
- **EU**
  - Targeted entities operating in the European Union who need to demonstrate the accessibility of a product for EU government procurement practices. Includes EN 301 549 functional performance criteria, WCAG criteria, and criteria for software, hardware, video, two-way voice communication, support documentation, and emergency service access.
- **INT**
  - Targeted to entities that operate globally and need to demonstrate the accessibility of a product for multiple governments' procurement practices. Includes all three of the other standards.

[1. VPAT - Information Technology Industry Council](https://www.itic.org/policy/accessibility/vpat) [https://www.itic.org/policy/accessibility/vpat]

# Sections of a VPAT 1 of 2

## 1. Front Matter

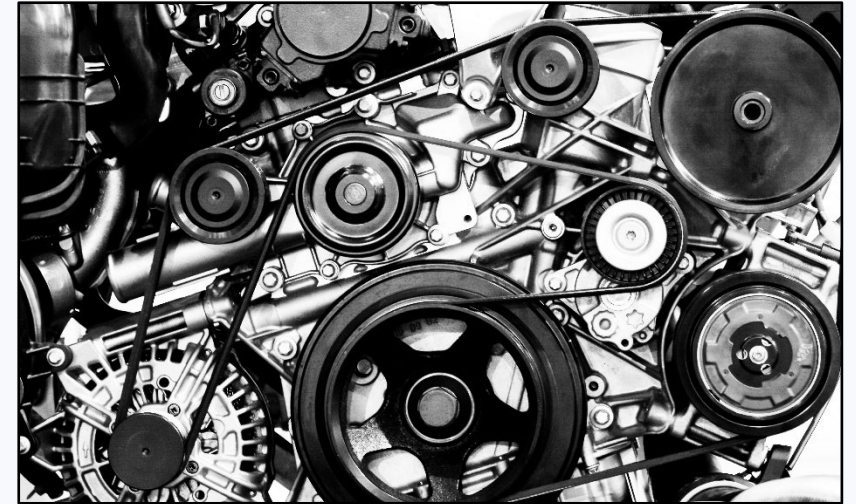
- Usually removed for an ACR
- Includes instructions for completing and reading the VPAT

## 2. Company and Product Information

- Info about the company and product covered by the ACR or VPAT
- Specifies the product version and other information pertinent to the report
- Details the evaluation methods and applicable standards for the report

## 3. WCAG 2.x Report

- Covers the WCAG success criteria
- Separated into different sections based on the conformance level (A, AA, AAA)
- Level AAA is usually ignored, but should include a note that specifies why it was omitted



# Sections of a VPAT 2 of 2

## 4. 508 Report

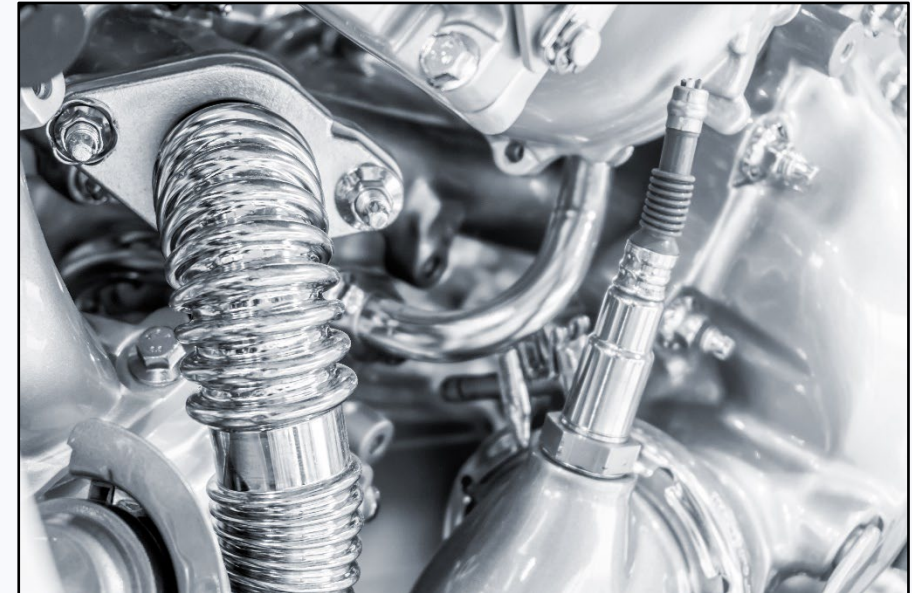
- Includes the functional performance criteria for Section 508, hardware, software, and support documentation.
- Important for anyone following US Federal and many US State procurement practices

## 5. EN 301 549 Report

- Includes the functional performance criteria for EN 301 549, closed systems, two-way voice communication, video, hardware, software, support documentation, and emergency services access
- Important for anyone following EU procurement practices

## 6. Legal Disclaimer

- A section where a company can add their legal disclaimer or other information they want someone reading the ACR or VPAT to know



# Conformance Levels

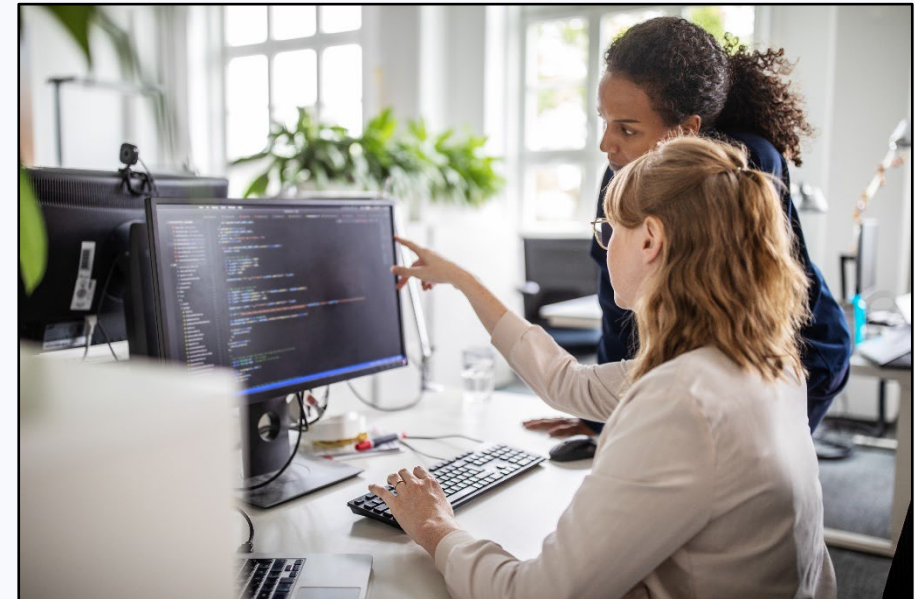
- **Supports:** The functionality of the product has at least one method that meets the criterion without known defects or meets with equivalent facilitation.
- **Partially Supports:** Some functionality of the product does not meet the criterion.
- **Does Not Support:** The majority of product functionality does not meet the criterion.
- **Not Applicable:** The criterion is not relevant to the product.
- **Not Evaluated:** The product has not been evaluated against the criterion.





# Remarks and Explanations

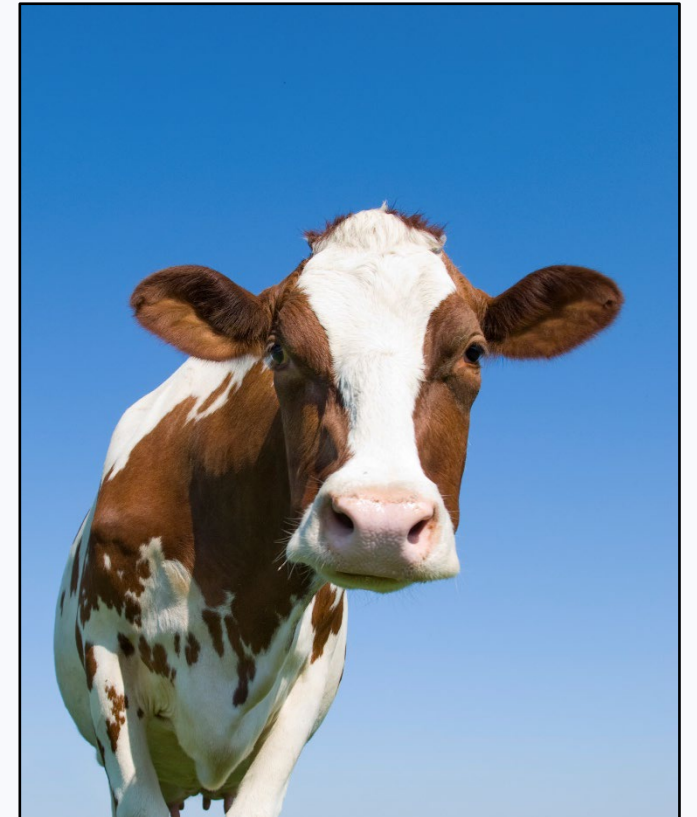
- should include a justification for the chosen conformance level
- should explain how the product fails to support a particular criteria
- should give details where the product only partially supports a criteria
- don't rely on the findings alone, do your own testing
- if an explanation is confusing, ask for clarification
- don't be afraid to ask if work is being done to fix the accessibility of a product



# VPAT Walkthrough

# When do I need a VPAT?

- Many government and corporate organizations require the accessibility of a product to be considered during procurement.
- A VPAT/ACR can be used as justification for acquiring a product that is accessible over one that is not.
- A VPAT/ACR can be a method of demonstrating the accessibility of a product for a user who uses assistive technology.
- A VPAT/ACR can guide an accessibility tester who is evaluating a product but does not replace the actual testing of the product with assistive technology.



# Who should complete a VPAT?

- VPATs are completed by the company that created the product and by third-party organizations that specialize in accessibility testing.
- The company that created the product is responsible for turning a VPAT into an ACR and justifying the claims made in the report.
- The quality of the VPAT/ACR will depend on the expertise of the organization. Large organizations with robust accessibility programs will be capable of completing their own reports but a small company may outsource the work to an organization focused on Accessibility.



# How do I use a VPAT?

- Read through the report sections that are relevant for your organization.
- Look at the evaluation methods used.
- Be wary when the evaluation methods used only include, “Product knowledge.” A quality VPAT/ACR will include manual testing using assistive technology (usually a screen reader).
- Look for areas where the conformance level does not or partially supports a criteria.
- If the report only includes conformance levels with no explanations, it will be difficult to justify the claims in the report if challenged on them.
- Don’t let the VPAT/ACR be the end of the process, do your own testing to check the claims.



# Where can I find a product's VPAT?

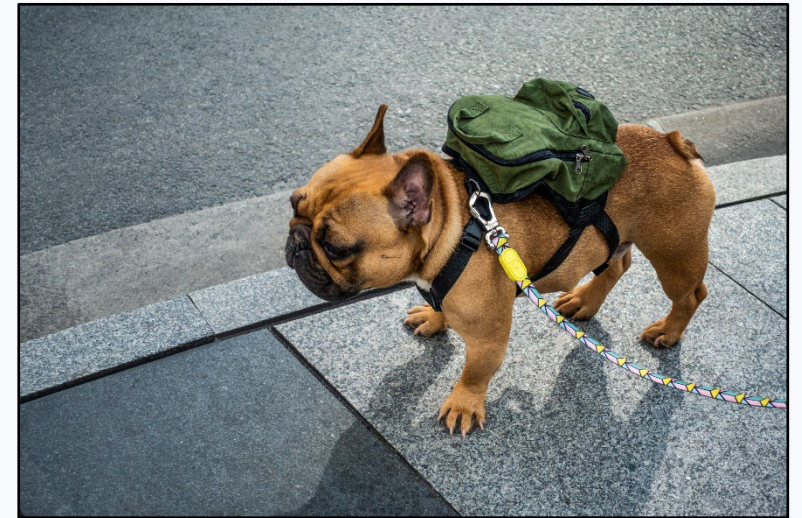
- A company's website should include an Accessibility Statement, which will often include links to product ACRs.
- Accessibility Statements are usually found in the footer of the company's website.
- For products that aren't web-based, an ACR will sometimes be included in the product documentation or on the product support website.
- Try Googling keywords like “[product name] VPAT” or “[company name] accessibility”.
- If all else fails, **ask the company**. Try the contact info in the company's accessibility statement or contacting their customer support.
- If the company doesn't have an ACR, you asking for it might spur them to complete one.



# Finding a VPAT/ACR Live Demonstration

# Key Takeaways

1. VPAT is the more common term, but ACR is the appropriate document.
2. There are four types of VPAT, each targeted to different standards and audiences.
3. The points made in a ACR are only claims and should be investigated through testing with assistive technology.
4. If you are having trouble locating a product's ACR, ask the company for it.





Poll #3: Do you plan on including VPAT/ACRs in the future?

# Resources

- [Technology Industry Council \(ITI\)](https://www.itic.org/) [https://www.itic.org/]
- [VPAT - Information Technology Industry Council](https://www.itic.org/policy/accessibility/vpat)  
[https://www.itic.org/policy/accessibility/vpat]
- [How to Create an Accessibility Conformance Report Using A Voluntary Product Accessibility Template](https://www.section508.gov/sell/how-to-create-acr-with-vpat/) [https://www.section508.gov/sell/how-to-create-acr-with-vpat/]
- [US Access Board Information Communication Technology Guidelines](https://www.access-board.gov/ict/)  
[https://www.access-board.gov/ict/]
- [EN 301 549 Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services](https://www.etsi.org/deliver/etsi_en/301500_301599/301549/03.02.01_60/en_301549v030201p.pdf)  
[https://www.etsi.org/deliver/etsi\_en/301500\_301599/301549/03.02.01\_60/en\_301549v030201p.pdf]

Questions?