

Comment from Clark, Christina

This is a Comment on the **Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (ATBCB) Proposed Rule: Information and Communication Technology Standards and Guidelines**

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Due May 28 2015, at 11:59 PM ET

Comment

Having worked in the Federal workforce and represented disabled Federal employees, it has been my experience that Federal Managers, Federal IT Professionals and Human Resources personnel are inadequately informed about Section 508 compliance and the Agency's obligations to make EIT and ICT available for "internal customers," i.e. disabled employees.

For example, I recently represented a disabled veteran employee who requested the use of EIT in the form of DragonSpeak voice recognition software. The software was incompatible with the systems used to perform his essential functions and he requested assistance. He was denied assistance, was fired, and filed an MSPB complaint against the Agency. During his trial, ELEVEN Agency witnesses, including the employee's first-line supervisor (Coach), second-line supervisor (Asst Service Center Mgr), third-line supervisor (Service Center Mgr), fourth-line supervisor (Asst Director), fifth-line supervisor (Director), three Information Technology professionals and three Human Resources professionals, including the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator, were questioned about Section 508 and NONE of them even knew what it was let alone what obligations it placed on the Agency to accommodate disabled employees.

If Section 508 rules/regulations are going to be updated, I would hope that there would also be a mandatory training requirement where Agencies are required to send their IT professionals and HR staff to an annual training on Section 508 compliance. It doesn't do much good to update the rules and requirements if the relevant Federal management staff don't know the first thing about it.

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