

2018-2019 CARLI Commercial Products Committee Annual Project: Creating a Repository of VPAT Information

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At the suggestion of CARLI Board member Cathy Mayer, the Commercial Products Committee took on the creation of a VPAT repository as their annual project.

Introduction

As stated on the CARLI web page for the VPAT repository, the issue of accessible technology continues to garner attention in all sectors, and the ability to ensure its provision in educational settings is a topic of keen interest among academics, library professionals, and administrators alike. To that end, the CARLI Commercial Products Committee has undertaken a project to collect and make public accessibility documentation from CARLI's electronic resource providers, specifically the vendors' **VPAT® information**, or Voluntary Product Assessment Template®.

The **Information Technology Industry Council (ITI)**, self-described as the global voice of the tech sector, is the creator of the VPAT®, which is the "recommended reporting format for enhancing industry-customer communications on ICT product and service conformance with relevant accessibility standards and guidelines." The VPAT® can be completed in four editions depending on the standards and/or guidelines under consideration: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0; Revised Section 508; EN 301 549; and International.

Because completion of the VPAT® is, as the name implies, voluntary, providers may choose not to complete a VPAT® or not to make it available publicly, or to complete it in such a way as to either modulate insufficiencies or detail them fully along with details about future corrections. A procurement official unfamiliar with the product being considered for purchase might not be able to discern from reviewing a VPAT® whether the product is acceptable from an accessibility standpoint. Due to the discretionary nature of the VPAT®, it can be a useful tool in evaluating a product's accessibility, but it should not be the sole determining factor in purchasing decisions.

Process

CARLI staff contacted all current vendors with whom CARLI has license agreements to let them know to anticipate contact from Commercial Products Committee members. Committee members then contacted all of the sales representatives requesting current VPAT information.

One of the challenges with this project was that VPAT information is completed at the product level. The full list of VPAT data is available on the CARLI web site at <https://www.carli.illinois.edu/vpat-repository>. Here is a list of the vendors for which VPAT information is available on the CARLI web site:

- AAAS (6 products)
- American Chemical Society (5 products)

- American Mathematical Society (2 products)
- ARTstor (1 product)
- Association for Computing Machinery (1 product)
- Chronicle of Higher Education (1 product)
- Credo (7 products)
- Duke University Press (3 products)
- EBSCO (161 products)
- eHRAF (2 products)
- Gale (17 products)
- Johns Hopkins University (5 products)
- JSTOR (37 products)
- Lexis Nexis (1 product)
- Oxford (42 products)
- Ovid (14 products)
- ProQuest (85 products)
- Sage (6 products)
- SpringerNature (63 products)
- Wiley (5 products)

The committee members will continue to work with vendors to keep the VPAT information updated.