

Glossary of Terms

(DRAFT document, created by RERC-AMI, see <http://rerc-ami.org>)

Ability

A basic trait of a person that the person brings to a new task.

Access Board

An independent Federal agency devoted to accessibility for people with disabilities. Created in 1973 to ensure access to federally funded facilities, the Board is now a leading source of information on accessible design. The Board develops and maintains design criteria for the built environment, transit vehicles, telecommunications equipment, and for electronic and information technology. It also provides technical assistance and training on these requirements and on accessible design and continues to enforce accessibility standards that cover federally funded facilities.

Accessibility (Winters)

Ability to access the intended use of a product or service for which there is a possibility of benefit.

Accessibility (ISO 9241-171, definition 3.2)

Usability of a product, service, environment or facility by people with the widest range of capabilities.

Accessibility, Degrees of

There are degrees of ability to access a product or service, potentially both at the level of the individual and the level of the total population. Proposed scales include degree of difficulty (up to impossible), and degree of handicap (up to fully handicapped). The former is commonly used in accessibility guidelines, the latter is used in the ISO-IEC 24756 draft standard dated 2005-09-05.

Accessibility Guidelines

Typically a sequence of stated guidelines and standards, each of which is followed by a list of checkpoints, with each checkpoint given a priority level (e.g., “must” because otherwise some users will find use impossible; “should” because some will find it difficult; “may” because some will find it somewhat difficult). In this context, these guidelines that are part of a formalized, consensus process coordinated by a standards body or an agency of the government.

Accessibility Metric

Measures or scores aimed at estimating the degree of accessibility of a product, typically as a collection of scores that represent accessibility for different general groups of activity limitation, impairment or disability. The metric typically takes into account both design features and anticipated task procedures.

Accessibility Features

Design features that enhance the accessibility of a product or service.

Accessible Design (legal, United States)

The design of entities that satisfy specific legal mandates, guidelines, or code requirements with the intent of providing accessibility to the entities for individuals with disabilities.

Accessible Design (general)

Accessible design strives to maximize accessibility and minimize barriers that prevent individuals from participating in the use of a product. There are two basic design strategies for enhancing access: *direct access* (direct adaptations to product designs that significantly improve their accessibility) and *assistive access* (product interfaces that enable an add-on assistive technology to provide the user with full access).

Accessible Product or Service

A product or service is accessible if the intended use or benefit can be reached as effectively by people with disabilities as by those without.

Activity (ICF)

Execution of a task or action by an individual.

Activity

The process of doing something, representing the functional result of human performance. Activities often can be broken down into smaller tasks.

Activity Limitations (ICF)

Difficulties an individual may have in executing activities.

Alternate formats (legal, United States). Alternate formats include, but are not limited to, Braille, large print, disks, audio formats and electronic formats

Alternate methods

Different means of providing information, including product documentation, to people with disabilities. Alternate methods may include, but are not limited to, voice, fax, relay service, TTY, Internet posting, captioning, text-to-speech synthesis, and audio description.

Assistive Technology (legal, United States)

Any item, piece of equipment, or system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is commonly used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Assistive Technology

An extrinsic enabler that is the basis by which human performance is improved in the presence of disability.

Assistive Technology

A means of reducing handicap.

Assistive Technology Service (legal, United States)

Any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition or use of an assistive technology device.

Auxiliary Aides and Services (Kailes)

These may include: Qualified interpreters, qualified readers, note takers, computer-aided transcription, 1:1 facilitators (for people with learning and understanding disabilities), telephone handset amplifiers, assistive listening systems, telephones compatible with hearing aids, open and closed captioning, e-mail or other electronic communications. Use of telecommunications devices [TTYs] for enrollees who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or have speech disabilities, video text displays, and other effective methods of making aurally delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments; audio recordings, Braille materials, large print materials, and other effective methods of making visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual disabilities.

Kailes

Body Functions (ICF)

Physiological functions of body systems (including psychological functions)

Body Structures (ICF)

Anatomical parts of the body such as organs, limbs and their components.

Cognitive walkthrough (usability.gov). An inspection method for evaluating the design of a user interface, with special attention to how well the interface supports “exploratory learning,” i.e., first-time use without formal training. The evaluation is done by having a group of evaluators go step-by-step through commonly used tasks. It can be performed by evaluators in the early stages of design, before performance testing is possible.

Communication Access. Providing content in methods that are understandable and usable by people with: reduced or no ability to speak, see, and/or hear and limitations in learning and understanding.

Cross-disability access. Access across disability groups.

Disability (older ICF). Restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in a manner considered normal, manifested in the performance of daily tasks; the functional consequences of impairments.

Disability. Reduced ability or lack of ability of an individual to perform an activity in daily life. A loss, absence or impairment of physical or mental fitness that can be seen or measured.

Electronic and Information Technology (E&IT, legal)

Includes information technology and any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment, that is used in the creation, conversion, or duplication of data or information. The term electronic and information technology includes, but is not limited to, telecommunications products (such as telephones), information kiosks and transaction machines, World Wide Web sites, multimedia, and office equipment such as copiers and fax machines. The term does not include any equipment that contains embedded information technology that is used as an integral part of the product, but the principal function of which is not the acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information. For example, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning)

equipment such as thermostats or temperature control devices, and medical equipment where information technology is integral to its operation, are not information technology.

Environmental factors (ICF)

The physical, social and attitudinal environment in which people live and conduct their lives

Ergonomics

The science of work. Ergonomics removes barriers to quality, productivity, and safe human performance by fitting products, tasks and environments to people.

Ergonomics (IEA)

Ergonomics (or human factors) is the scientific discipline concerned with the understanding of interactions among humans and other elements of a system, and the profession that applies theory, principles, data and methods to design in order to optimize human well-being and overall system performance.

Ergonomics (legal dictionary)

An engineering science concerned with the physical and psychological relationship between machines and people who use them.

Handicap (older definition)

A disadvantage resulting from an impairment or disability that limits or prevents fulfillment of a role that is normal for the affected individual.

Handicap (Kailes)

Barriers which people with disabilities encounter in environment. The gap between a person's capabilities and demands of environment. People are not handicapped by their disability all the time. Wheelchair users are not handicapped in an environment where there are accessible routes and pathways.

Handicap (ISO-IEC 24756 draft document, 2005)

Anything that may interfere with the accessibility of interactions between users and systems.

Heuristic evaluation (usability.gov)

An inspection method for finding certain types of usability problems in a user interface design. Heuristic evaluation involves having one or more usability specialists individually examine the interface and judge its compliance with recognized usability principles. These usability principles are the "heuristics" from which the method takes its name.

Human Factors

A multidisciplinary science that studies and applies information about human behavior, capabilities, limitations, and other characteristics to the design and evaluation of tools, machines, tasks, jobs, systems and environments for productive, effective and safe human use. This term is often viewed as synonymous with "ergonomics" - in comparison, ergonomics tends to have a stronger focus on biomechanics and human factors on cognitive performance.

Human Performance (Bailey)

The result of a pattern of actions carried out to satisfy an objective according to some standard.

IADL (Instrumental activities of daily living, www.cdc.gov)

Activities related to independent living and include preparing meals, managing money, shopping for groceries or personal items, performing light or heavy housework, and using a telephone.

Impairment (older ICF)

A loss or abnormality of structure or function at the organ level. We commonly speak of "functional impairments" or "dysfunction" of a part of (or system within) the body.

Impairment (ICF)

Problems in body function or structure such as a significant deviation or loss.

Information Technology (legal, United States)

Any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment, that is used in the automatic acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information. The term information technology includes computers, ancillary equipment, software, firmware and similar procedures, services (including support services), and related resources.

Multimodal

Support for transformations to alternative sensory interface modes for a channel (e.g., between text and speech), such that more than one modality is available to access content. Multimodal interfaces are often necessary for a product or service to be accessible.

Operable Controls

A component of a product that requires physical contact for normal operation. Operable controls include, but are not limited to, mechanically operated controls, input and output trays, card slots, keyboards, or keypads.

Participation

Involvement in a life situation.

Participation Restrictions (ICF)

Problems an individual may experience in involvement in life situations.

Pathology

The interruption of, or interference with, normal bodily processes or structures by a disease process.

Physical Access

To get to, enter, and use examination rooms, treatment areas, dressing rooms, rest rooms and other provider sites/services

Reasonable Accommodation

A modification or adjustment to a job, the work environment, or the way things usually are done that enables a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy an equal employment or access opportunity. Reasonable accommodation is a key nondiscrimination requirement of the ADA.

Self Contained, Closed Products (legal, United States)

Products that generally have embedded software and are commonly designed in such a fashion that a user cannot easily attach or install assistive technology. These products include, but are not limited to, information kiosks and information transaction machines, copiers, printers, calculators, fax machines, and other similar types of products.

Telecommunications

The transmission, between or among points specified by the user, of information of the user's choosing, without change in the form or content of the information as sent and received.

TTY

An abbreviation for teletypewriter, or text phone. Machinery or equipment that employs interactive text based communications through the transmission of coded signals across the telephone network. TTYs may include, for example, devices known as TDDs (telecommunication display devices or telecommunication devices for deaf persons) or computers with special modems. TTYs are also called text telephones.

Undue Burden (legal, United States)

Undue burden means significant difficulty or expense. In determining whether an action would result in an undue burden, an agency shall consider all agency resources available to the program or component for which the product is being developed, procured, maintained, or used.

Universal Access (Winters)

Ability of all persons to fully access the intended use of a product or service for which there is potential benefit. It is rarely fully achievable, and barriers include the dimensions of interface design, distance and cost.

Universal Design (Center for Universal Design)

The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design.

Universal Design (Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, 2001)

Universal design is a strategy, which aims to make the design and composition of different environments and products accessible and understandable to as well as usable by everyone, to the greatest extent in the most independent and natural manner possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design solutions.

Universal Design (Vanderheiden, 2000)

Process of designing products so that they are usable by the widest range of people – operating in the widest range of situations as is commercially practical.

Universal Design (short)

Barrier-free design. Inclusive design.

Universal Usability (Vanderheiden)

A focus on designing products so that they are usable by the widest range of people operating in the widest range of situations as is commercially practical.

Usability

The extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals in an effective and efficient manner, to the satisfaction of these users.

Usability (ISO 9241-11, definition 3.1)

Extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specified context of use.

Usability (short)

Ability to use.

Usability testing (usability.gov)

Usability testing includes a range of test and evaluation methods that include automated evaluations, inspection evaluations, operational evaluations and human performance testing. In a typical performance test, users perform a variety of tasks with a prototype (or an operational system) while observers note what each user does and says while performance data are recorded.

One of

the main purposes of usability testing is to identify issues that keep users from meeting the usability goals.

Use Error

Errors made during the use of a product or service.

Web Accessibility

A web page is 'accessible' when it can be as effectively used by a person with a disability as by a person without a disability.