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Fourth Annual Interagency Accessibility Forum

Opening Plenary

If everyone could please take your seats. We're going to get started in a couple of minutes. Could everyone please take a seat? Okay. Can somebody please close the outside door to the auditorium so we can cut down on the noise? Robert? Thank you. All right. I'm just really glad to see so many people that came out at 8:30 on a Friday morning. It didn't rain, Yay! So, we are just really glad to have I couldn't hear. My name is Helen Chamberlain and I work for GSA in the Office of Government-Wide Policy in the Office of Information Integrity And Access. I am currently the Section 508 Training and Outreach Director. I want to welcome you to the Fourth Annual Interagency Accessibility Forum. I just have one administrative note before I turn the microphone over to the welcoming speaker. Please either turn your cell phone off, or put it on vibrate. We appreciate that for the speakers. So now I would like to welcome Dominic Sale the Deputy Associate Administrator for the Office of Government-Wide Policy Office of Information Integrity And Access. He's going to be giving our opening speak then David Capozzi, the Executive Director of the U.S. Access Board will be giving the keynote speech, have a crowd sourcing experience overview from the Department of Labor. Dominic. I will be following up with admin remarks.

»» Thank you, Helen. Let's hear it for Helen. Great. (Applause) Hi everybody. Welcome to GSA on behalf of the General Services Administration and the Office of Government-Wide Policy, I would like to welcome you to the 2017 Interagency Accessibility Forum. Your dedication to ensuring access to everyone who works and who interacts with the federal government is not just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do. By opening the doors of government to people with disabilities, we tap into a talented pool of people with diverse perspectives and talents, and who might otherwise never benefit from as a government or a country. The bottom line, an accessible government is a government that serves everyone and knows that the best talent comes in all packages. Why would anyone ever choose otherwise? For those of you who don't know me I'm Dominic Sale I lead the Office of Government-wide Policies Office of Information integrity and access, we're the part of OGP that does IT policy. Our job is to help federal agencies with implement policy and best practices with a wealth of technical and policy expertise and a strong partnership with the White House and OMB, we use data, technical know how and collaboration to improve federal technology. Our job is to make your lives easier. We're committed to helping you, our customers improve the services you offer every day. No matter how big or small this transactions and interactions might be, here in OGP we do this through several lines of business. First, the IT management line of business improving the agencies manage technology as a portfolio of investments. Second information technology, helping agencies safeguard or valuable data and systems with an emphasis on identity management. IT infrastructure modernization, helping optimize our data centers and sell rating our move to the cloud accelerating our move to the the cloud. And finally digital improving and expanding the experience that employees and customers have with us as a government. As you know October is is disability awareness month. I'm very proud to get to highlight the federal government's Section 508 community and my and our GSA Section 508 team. As most of you are aye ware the final rule of Section 508 was issued by the Access Board on January 18, 2017, my birthday! (Laughter) Nice birthday gift. Revising accessibility requirements for information and communication technology that is developed, procured, maintained or used by the federal government. We're in the midst of a one-year transition to the revised standards which go into effect next January '18. GSA, the Access Board and the Accessibility Community of Practice have been working tirelessly to develop resources and training to assist federal agencies with the transition. You find all those resources today on section508.gov. The revised standards will affect the way both the federal government and industry procure and develop products and services. But if you think that's all our small team has been working the past year, guess again, as in the past this team has continued to provide hands on training to agencies across the government, led by Helen. Probably working with many of you the room to improve your accessibility programs. But they've also added new project, ones that you'll be benefiting from in the near future, they've been busy working on building an executive awareness campaign, leveraging industry best practices to ensure those in leadership positions not just the practitioners understand that accessibility is way more than just about compliance. And simply the right way to do business. They've also been leading the way of innovation by employing cutting edge technologies like machine learning natural long processing we're now able to read through thousands of contracts in seconds to ensure that accessibility language is properly baked in.

A process until recently was a manual spot-check of a handful of contracts, and a lot less accurate and a lot more expensive. We do this because we can no longer accept that accessibility's an afterthought in the contracting process. If a CO hasn't made sure that the right requirements are in there, they're definitely going to be hearing from us. We're not going to tell those COs that they're on their own, we're going to guide them through developing the right clauses using our buy accessible tool soon to be updated of the requirements of the revised standards. Putting this data together has been a labor of love. And in an attempt to recognize and probably mortally embarrass my team mate, I'll call out the work for the event today. The Interagency Planning Committee is comprised of representatives from many federal agencies our own GSA John Sullivan the Director of the Digital Government line of business, and you all know Helen, the 2017, one of the 2017 interagency co-chairs. And others on our team include Shelia Turner, Alessandra, Mark, Chuck all services in the supporting roles. From HHS, Deborah Kaplan and Genee and Gary Morland. From Access Board we have XXX Erline, ODEP Lindsey, and from DHS Cynthia Clinton Brown there are countless others I won't name. You know who you are, and thank you. Today's especially important because it provides us a rare opportunity to gather accessibility professionals from across government all under one roof, you'll have the opportunity to listen to, learn from, and participate in various workshops and visit our exhibit hall. But we can't do it alone, events like this present the opportunity for government to share and collaborate and I hope that conversations you have today are just the beginning of building better 508 solutions together. At this point I would like to introduce our keynote speaker, David Capozzi, the Executive Director of the U.S. Access Board. The Access Board is the only federal agency whose primary responsibility is for people with disabilities. He's responsible for a $8 million portfolio, and manages 28 professional support staff who develop accessibility guidelines for -- this is going to be a mouthful for the Americans with Disabilities Act, Architectural Barriers Act, communications act and accessibility standards for information and communication technology and medical diagnostic equipment under the Rehabilitation Act. He's also responsible for implementing the board's Architectural Barriers Act enforcement program, along with the board's training technical assistance and research programs. David was previously director of Project Action and Vice President of Advocacy for Easter Seals and was a National Advocacy Director for the Paralyzed Veterans of America. He graduated from Suny New York, my part of the state, western New York, School of Law. And was an honors graduate and Phi bee that Kappa with a undergrad degree in psychology. Please join me in giving David a warm well welcome.

»» Thank you, Good morning. Thanks for inviting me Dominic, for all the work that you and Helen and John do and helping to organize this conference, and for everything that you do for people with disabilities. So I'll start with a joke. (Laughter) Three men, two younger men from Silicon Valley start ups and one senior citizen were sitting naked in sauna suddenly will there was a beeping sound, the young man pressed the foreman and the beeping stopped. The others looked at him puzzled. That was a text, I have a microchip under my skin. A few minutes later the phone rang, the second young man lifted the palm of his hand to his face, he said, this that was my cell phone, I have a chip implanted in my hand. The older man felt very low tech at this point. Not to be out done, he decided he had to do something just as impressive. So he stepped out of the Sana and went to the bathroom, he returned with a piece of toilet paper hanging from his backside, the others raised their eyebrows and stared at him. The older man finally said, would you look at that I'm getting a fax. (Laughter) So I told that joke several years ago and although it was funny then, and I'm glad it was funny today, it seemed far fetched. But the future is here. A technology company in Wisconsin called 3 square market is one in the United States to offer RFID microchip implant to employees so they can make in-house purchase, open doors and unlock office equipment, another organization, SJ Rail a Swedish rail operator says that up to 100 of it's customers already have embedded microchip implants into their hands to pay for their trips. So the future is here. Technology has the potential to open up unlimited possibilities in our lives. But it also has the potential to frustrate accessibility for people with disabilities. Let me give you an example. With the -- this is going back in time, so for those of you who are a little younger, this might be some news, for those of you my age and older, this is a walk in the past.

With the adoption of the personal computer and DOS-based programs in the 1980s, screen reader technology developed and opened up a new world for blind people. An article at the time from a leading blindness organization said that blind people could be found operating DOS-based system to do jobs like order taking, customer service, accounting and more. Blind people saw a whole new world of access open to them. But a few short years later, in 1985, a new way of computer interaction became widely available. The graphical user interface, people used a mouse or other pointing devices and icon to navigate software programs. While an amazing advancement for sighted users, this new interface was totally inaccessible to people who were blind. Then in 1992, the first screen reader for graphical user interface operating system became available. But those 7 years between the innovation of a graphical user interface in 1985 and the creation of screen readers that could work with them in 1992 caused advocate to fear that blind computer users were going to be shut out of the workforce. Let me share another example of a technological disconnect. Martin Cooper invented the cell phone in 1973, opening up telecommunications for millions while leaving millions more behind since early cell phones weren't hearing aid compatible. And even more were left behind when touch screens were first introduced. Remember the first iPhone was completely inaccessible. Now, today's iPhones are largely preferred by blind users because of it's voiceover capabilities, and by people who use hearing aids because of hearing aid compatibility. Let me give you a related example of how it's important to have clear and enforceable standards. September 1969, another walk in the past saw America's first ATM at a bank in New York, the ATM was completely inaccessible. Today there's about 425,000 ATMs in the United States, and almost 3 million around the world. And most now are within reach, have synthetic speech, because of accessibility standards and advocacy efforts to compel accessibility. But we made mistakes along the way. In 1991, our agency issued the original ADA accessibility guidelines, and a provision that addressed ATM accessibility required that instructions and all information for use shall be made accessible to and independently usable by people with vision impairments. Well, what did that mean? The provision was so vague that it resulted in ATMs with large placards the side of the ATM itself of braille instructions but with no change to the ATM's operating system, the machines were unusable by people with disabilities. Blind advocates demanded that ATMs provide out audio output, the court upheld because our guidelines were so vague and nonspecific that audio output wasn't mandated and couldn't be required. So in 2004 we revised our guidelines to require that at least one of each type of ATM at each location be speech enabled, provide receipt information, have a specific keyboard location, meet new height and reach requirements and provide a standard headphone Jack. Today's modern ATM. And although the requirement became effective in March 2012, it was reported that by late 2012, there were already 100,000 ATMs in the U.S. that were speech enabled. I'd like to recognize Marsha Mazz from our staff who made that possible. Marsha's in the back. (Applause).

Before I go too much further let me remind everybody that Section 508 is over 30 years old. That might be a surprise. It was originally added to the Rehabilitation Act in 1986. It required that the secretary of education, and the administrator of GSA to develop voluntary guidelines for federal agencies for electronic and information technology accessibility. Federal agencies were directed to comply with the guidelines. However, there was no enforcement mechanism if they didn't. As a result, the law and the guidelines were largely ignored. Enter an advocate. In early 1997, the Department of Education was about to make a large database software purchase. But it was inaccessible for employees with visual disabilities. So one of the best advocates I know, Judy Heumann, who was then the assistant secretary of Special Education Rehabilitative Services and her assistant, Howard Moses learn that the 1986 version of Section 508 had no teeth and advocated for strengthening it. They also pressured the software company to make changes. So in 1998, the next year, Congress passed the Workforce Investment Act with President Clinton signing it into law. The updated law required our agency, the Access Board, to develop standards and keep them up to date, that's why we have a new set of standards. The standards were also required to be incorporated into the Federal Acquisition Regulations and an update to the FAR will be proposed soon to incorporate the new standards into the FAR and to make other changes. The 1998 law also required our agency and GSA to provide technical assistance, required a bi-annual report from the Department of Justice on recommendations regarding the state of federal compliance with the law including actions regarding individual complaints, and finally had enforcement provisions. The improvements to Section 508 1998 came about because Judy and others recognized that more needed to be done. We're here today focusing on the new Section 508 standards and how best to implement them, largely because of that one episode.

Although Section 508 only apply to the federal government, it's impact is felt far and wide. It's been felt in state governments, the private sector, and around the world. We were the first country to use public procurement of information and communication technology and civil rights laws to promote the acquisition of accessible information and communication technology. But the world has followed. The European Union now has a new set of ICT Accessibility Standards, modeled after our updated section Section 508 standards. Australia is using public procurement to drive accessible technology. And Canada is developing a new law that will address public procurement of ICT as well. The world is paying attention to what we do here. Let me talk briefly about the new standards we issued earlier this year in January. You'll hear more about them in the break-out sessions. But I wanted to highlight some of the important changes that you'll need to know about.

So first, the new standards incorporate by reference the World Wide Web Consortium web accessibility initiative's, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 or WCAG 2.0 and applies them not only to website, but also to offline documents and software to enhance accessibility in uniformity in the simplified conformance and assessment applying WCAG 2.0 will also promote international harmonization as it is referenced by numerous countries around the world. The new standards consistent with previous standards require a federal agency's public facing content to be accessible that which is on your federal website, including websites, documents and media and blog posts. And finally, they clarify the types of internal or non--public electronic content that must comply. In addition to public-facing content, compliance will be required for federal agencies electronic content that constitutes agency official business that falls within any one eight broad categories like notification, notices of benefits, program eligible, employment opportunities or personnel actions, and educational or training materials. So as you gear up to implement the new standards, they become effective next January, a team of federal employees, the 508 Transition Team from the GSA, Access Board, Homeland Security, HHS and other agencies are creating new tools to help you. A new page is now on the section508.gov website called the Revised 508 Standards Tool Kit I'm sure you'll be hearing more about that later. And that provides you some of the tools to succeed and implementing the new standards. Although they're not here, I'd like to thank Craig Regard Willy Smith the co-chairs of the CIO Accessibility Community of Practice for their leadership in making this new tool a priority. And special thanks also go to Robert Baker and other members of the 508 Transition Team who developed most of the material on this page and have really provided a lot of leadership. Thank you Robert and the rest of the team.

Some of these same individuals worked with Ken Slets in the information and technology industry council to develop the new Accessibility Conformance Report or VPAT 2.0, a reporting format that enables businesses to document product conformance with relevant accessibility standards. The new tool was just released last week. Remember too that the Access Board offers six webinars each year on technology issues. And this year's webinars will all be focused on the new standards. Thank to Debbie Kaplan, Tim Creagan, Bruce Bailey for their leadership on those webinars. They're all free, they're all archived. So please, go to our website and take part in those.

Since 1998, we've been using public procurement of information communication technology and civil right laws to promote the acquisition of accessible ICT. Last year, the U.S. government spent about $80 billion on ICT. When you can Harness progress is bound to happen. We have made substantial progress in making products such as copy machines more accessible, software and operating systems have accessibility features, federal websites are more accessible today than they were before. Eldest Huxley said "men do not learn very much from the lessons of history, is the most important of all the lessons history" I told you these stories earlier so we don't repeat the stories of the past. Today with an enhanced Section 508 a new set of accessibility standards, harmonized with private sector and international accessibility standards technological disconnects should hapless frequently. Despite all the process we've seen over the years challenges do still remain as we have seen in the past, the rush to advance technology has the potential to leave people behind. We're seeing that today with challenges to making electronic instructional materials and electronic content such as documents, E-look, email attachments accessible. Not to mention the growth of inaccessible touch screens. Just this week, I think it was on Tuesday, Shake Shack opened up a new restaurant in New York City featuring a kiosk only ordering cashless environment. The challenges remain. So what lessons have we learned over the years with the rush to develop innovative technology, people with disabilities can be left behind if we're not vigilant. And progress doesn't happen by itself. It takes advocates, legislators, government employees, and others to improve accessibility. And that's where you come in. So thank you and have a great workshop. (Applause).

HELEN CHAMBERLAIN: A tall person was here. Thank you David so much. David always is a wonderful speaker. Next we have I believe is Hope Adler are you in the audience? Hope is going to talk about what we're doing today and for a crowdsourcing type experience that the Department of Labor Disability Employment Policy Office has graciously offered to us. And she's going to explain what it is. They will be in the atrium at the information desk doing demos. But it is something that we hope will continue, the conversations that are started today. So hope?

»» Hope: Thank you, Helen. Hello. As someone mentioned my name is Hope Adler I'm here with my colleague, Katlyn, we're going to talk about the crowd sourcing event that will take place in coordination with the Inter Accessibility Forum we're From E-policy Works a initiative out of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. It's a collaborative approach to policy, federal policy making that leverages web-based technology, stakeholder involvement and real time information sharing. The Focus of E-policy Works is on empowering national experts and stakeholders to take part in policy development and other events around disability employment policy. So everything we work on touches on disability employment policy. Our goal is really to modernize government, tighten transparency, and to maximize efficiency. The way we accomplish this is through crowd sourcing. So we work with agencies and other hosts to put on crowd sourcing events. So what is crowdsourcing? Crowdsourcing is a way to solicit ideas and contribution to get people to have a conversation online. All of it takes place, it connects agencies to their stakeholder, it provides cost/benefit, it's a cheap way of doing that. It serves as an outreach tool. While you're doing crowdsourcing you're also promoting what you're doing as an agency to your stakeholders. In the past, ODEP had done listening sessions. So they traveled all over the country and met with constituents and discussed issues around disability employment policy. Unfortunately, those events were not accessible to everyone. You had to be able to get there, you had to live nearby. You had to have a opportunity to speak. So crowdsourcing allowed ODEP to do something very similar, except, to reach a much larger audience, to be less reliability on logistics. Anyone can participate at anytime. And again, it's much cheaper and it's accessible. And in the end, since you have more people participating, you have better data. So we're going to be using crowdsourcing for this event and Kaitlyn's going to talk a little bit about the specifics of the crowd sourcing event for the Interagency Accessibility Forum but in general the way the crowdsourcing works is we work with a agency. We come up with an idea, a question, a conversation that we would like to have, what we're looking for input on. We put this idea online. So we have an online tool it looks like a website. And it posts the question. You can come visit it at anytime online. And you can post your idea, comment on other people's ideas. You can see all the ideas. And you can vote. Instead of sending emails back and forth, you see the whole conversation. And here you can participate. What often happens is there's an idea that someone posts. And then there's a whole conversation under that and comments. We tried that. It didn't work. Or we did do that and we tried this, it worked better. That's kind of what we're hoping will happen here with with the Interagency Accessibility Forum online dialogue, there will be a whole discussion. As Helen said we can continue the conversation after the event.

We've done over 30 dialogues with hosts from a number of different agencies. Some examples of some of the dialogues we've done, we have done one on post secondary success of youth adults with accessibilities. We've done a dialogue on encouraging people with disabilities to pursue careers in stem as well as careers in the arts. We're right now holding a dialogue on driverless cars, self driving cars and the impact they can have for people with disabilities and employment. So if you're interested you have some good ideas around that you can find it at transportation innovation.Epolicyworks.gov. You can also find a link on our when site to all our past dialogues and all our ongoing dialogues. That's at Epolicyworks.organization. So Katelyn's going to join me, u she's going to talk a little bit specifically about the dialogue that's taking place for this forum.

»» Katlyn: Thank you, Hope. And thank you to our wonderful hosts for having us today. Thank you for everybody coming in today especially after A Rough Washington Nationals game. Policy works is a great way to collaborate and share ideas and best practices, why should this matter to you? Because beginning to day the Interagency Accessibility Forum is kicking off an online dialogue to take the ideas generated from today's session and open up the discussion to you. This is a great opportunity for you to share your expertise to help inform the future accessibility efforts, share emerging practices with your fellow participants and hopefully drive accessibility efforts even further center your own agency. So how can you participate? Well, as Hope mentioned you register online at Epolicyworks website. And the url for this event is feds.Epolicyworks.organization. The event information is also provided in a postcard you received in your packet this morning, we'll be sending around a email after this session with all the event registration information in there as well. The event runs through November 11th which will come up quickly. So log on today, start submitting your idea, voting on comments, and encouraging the dialogue. The dialogue is not only to only forum attendees today, but other federal employees as well and accessible professional, so please encourage your colleague to join. Because the more input we have, the more impactful this dialogue will be. After the dialogue is complete, we will review and analyze all of the submissions and launch another follow-up dialogue in May to further refine the ideas -- sorry, I lost my spot -- to further refine the ideas and finalize event topics for next year's forum. So if there's a particular interest that you had, or if you felt that there were resources that were lacking that you'd like to learn more about this, is a great way to submit those ideas so we can help inform next year's forum and keep the information relevant and fresh. So to wrap this up, we ask for your help to continue the conversation, to build on ideas from today's forum, share your pert tease around Section 508 compliance and help improve future accessibility efforts for next's forum. Thank you very much, for next year's forum. Thank you very much. Enjoy the rest of your session.

HELEN CHAMBERLAIN: All right. So I think this is going to be an exciting opportunity and we would really like everyone to consider participating in this, because as we all know, and all of I couldn't hear that are in the Section 508 community and those that are not f, if we don't do anything, say anything and give ideas nothing's going to happen. We need to be the drivers. We're the drivers from the bottom up. We need to make everyone aware of things that are going on and how things should change. I just have a few administrative notes before I let you guys go, a little bit early which is good. First I want to thank Dominic, David and ODEP, Katlyn and Hope for participating. I really appreciate you guys coming. We've also -- I talk about the cell phones this morning, now, the same goes for the workshops. It will be announced there. But please, put your phones on vibrate so that we don't interrupt the speakers. The overview of the day, a short overview T crowdsourcing information and a demo will be at the information desk in the atrium. There is extended registration set up in the atrium. So if there are people here who did not get a chance to pick their badges up, you will be able to do that when you go down to the atrium, which the hallway right behind the guard's desk out here in the lobby if you go straight down that lobby, follow the sign, I believe there will be people posted along the way, in that hallway also to direct you down to the conference area. There are bathrooms on wings 1 and wings 2. And again, the information table is going to be located down there. Any questions you have, any information you need, if you need assistance, if you need accommodation, please go to that information table. We do have dog walking assistance, if there is anyone here with a dog and you need to you know, the dog need to have a break, there is someone that will walk you over to an area that we have designated for dogs.

We do have Green berries set up in the atrium, they have graciously offered to provide coffee and pastries. They also are taking lunch orders. So he had requested that anyone in your packet -- in your packet you a lunch order form. You need to fill that out, make sure your name is on it, and get it to the Greenberries table by no later than 9:45 if you can. Because we need to make sure we have time for them the make your lunch so they can have it back here when we do our lunch break at noon. Also in your packet you have a list of other restaurants in the area. So all around here there's all kinds of restaurants that you can go to. There are some tables set up in the atrium for your convenience that you can eat lunch at. And an important thing, if you could, we obviously are recycling everything. So on your way out, there will be two tables set up where the registration is in the atrium, please throw your badges in there so we can recycle them. We have a survey that's going to be coming out for you to take. The email with the link will be sent to you at the end of the event, be looking for that in your email box. In your packet you should have a schedule of all the workshops with the rooms and everything. You should have a map of the exhibit hall. You should have a list of vendors. You should have bios. You should have a list of exhibitors with their table numbers and a map of the tables. And then of course, the lunch menu and the list of lunch places. And you also have a postcard about the crowd sourcing event. So with that, I'm going to let you go. You can Mosey on down to the conference area, that's where you will be sending the rest of the day. The area is well marked. We do have people stationed all over the place. If you need help, look for someone with a red shirt. Thank you. (Applause)