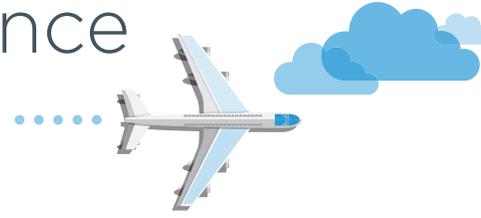


## Airline Accessibility Compliance



Understanding DOT implementation of the Air Carrier Access Act of 1986 and the implications for accessibility of web sites and automated kiosks at US Airports

Today, most people check airline fares and book their airline reservations online. Many passengers also use airport kiosks when arriving at the airport to finalize their travel preparations, whether scanning a passport to check in, printing a boarding pass, cancelling/rebooking a ticket, or printing baggage tags. However, individuals with disabilities often cannot use airlines' websites or kiosks. To help, the Department of Transportation (DOT) published a new rule in 2013 requiring airline websites and automated kiosks at U.S. airports to be accessible to passengers with disabilities.

The website accessibility requirements apply to U.S. and foreign air carriers that operate at least one aircraft having a seating capacity of more than 60 passengers, and own or control a primary Web site that markets air transportation to consumers in the United States.

This new rule also requires ticket agents that are not small businesses to disclose and offer Web-based discount fares to customers who are unable to use their websites due to a disability. The rule also requires a percentage of kiosks in U.S. airports with 10,000 or more annual enplanements to be accessible.

### What does this rule mean to airlines/airports?

#### Website Accessibility - Requirements and Compliance Deadlines

**Within two years (by 06/30/16)** airlines must ensure that the web pages providing core travel information and services meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA standard, a comprehensive internationally recognized website accessibility standard.

- The 7 core flows that must be optimized for disabled consumers are listed as follows.
  - Booking or changing a reservation
  - Checking-in for a flight
  - Accessing a personal travel itinerary
  - Accessing the status of a flight
  - Accessing a personal frequent flyer account
  - Accessing flight schedules
  - Accessing carrier contact information.

**Within three years (by 12/12/16)** airlines must ensure that all other Web pages meet this standard.

- Airlines must test their websites internally and **test with members of the 4 representative groups** (Visual, Auditory, Tactile and Cognitive) of the disabled community to ensure their accessibility and usability.
- Airlines must provide equivalent service to customers unable to use their accessible website.

**Within two years (by 06/30/16)** airlines must have an online accommodation request form available for passengers with disabilities to request services including, but not limited to, wheelchair assistance, seating accommodations, escort assistance for a visually impaired passenger, and onboard stowage of an assistive device.

#### Kiosk Accessibility - Requirements and Deadlines

**Within three years (by 12/12/16)** airlines and US airports must ensure that all automated kiosks installed that they own, lease, or control (at U.S. airports with 10,000 or more annual enplanements) meet accessibility design standards until at least 25 percent of each type of kiosk at each location in the airport meet these standards.

At least 25 percent of kiosks in each location at an airport must be accessible **ten years after** the effective date.

- Airlines/airports must ensure that accessible kiosks they own, lease or control are visually and tactilely identifiable and in working condition.
- Airlines must give priority access to accessible kiosks to passengers with disabilities.
- Airlines must provide equivalent service to passengers who cannot use accessible kiosks due to disability

### What does this rule mean to ticket agents?

- Unless a ticket agent is a small business, starting **six months after the effective date of the rule** (by mid 2016), ticket agents must disclose and offer Web-based discount fares to customers unable to use the ticket agent's Web site due to a disability.

## Usablenet Web Accessibility How We Can Help

Usablenet can support Airlines, airports and companies seeking to offer a web experience that is accessible and meets WCAG 2.0 AA standards with relevant products and consulting services.

### a. Usablenet Assistive

We can build an accessible view of your website that complies fully with WCAG 2.0 AA standard. Usablenet has over 15 years' experience in making sites accessible, and we currently provide this service to airlines such as Delta, Virgin America and many others. We also support other clients such as Amtrak, MTA, The Container Store, Express Scripts, Starwood Hotels and more.

#### The benefits of Usablenet Assistive include:

- **Expertise:** Over 15 years' experience in web accessibility
- **Speed to market:** Ability to deliver a conforming alternate view of the website within 12-16 weeks;
- **Limited IT:** Limited impact on IT resources and no need to recode or reformat the core website;
- **Fully functional experience:** The accessible view of the site is fully functional, always current and delivers an enhanced experience for all types of users with disabilities

### b. Usablenet Accessibility Audit and Review

We can conduct an audit of your website to check the current level of accessibility and the actions that should be taken for WCAG compliance. This service includes a full assessment of your website based on Web Accessibility Standards (WCAG 2.0 AA) by experienced developers, and is not just an automated online evaluation. It also includes a second, follow-up review after the site has been updated to be accessible, and we issue a statement of the work that has been completed. We also offer developer level helpdesk support.

### The benefits of Usablenet's Accessibility Audit and Review include:

- **Speed:** Site reviews can be completed quickly.
- **Expert Assessment:** Site audits are conducted by experienced accessibility developers, instead of automated online tools.
- **Detailed Findings:** Clients receive developer feedback and advice, not just a set of test results. Each non-compliant issue is fully explained, with comments on the severity of the issue and actions required to remedy.
- **Flexibility:** Assessments can be conducted at any stage of the client's journey toward WCAG 2.0 AA compliance.
- **Support:** Throughout the Assessment period, clients have access to developer helpdesk support.

### c. Accessibility User Testing

In support of Accessibility requirements like the ACAA, Usablenet can conduct Usability testing with representative members of the disability community such as Visual, Auditory, Tactile and Cognitive.

Usablenet will plan and coordinate the recruitment, logistics and development of a test plan for the research. Recruitment will comprise of participants selected from representative members as outlined above. Usability testing can be completed either in specialized lab environment, or at a participant's chosen location, with an experienced moderator. A Testing Report will follow the completion of the research, detailing the findings of the usability testing.

#### Benefits of Accessibility User Testing include:

- **Experience:** Over 15 years' experience working with web accessibility and users living with disabilities to ensure optimal functionality in accessible websites
- **Research Expertise:** World-class UX experts to plan, moderate and execute usability testing.
- **Recruitment:** We have access and partnerships with many disabled community groups.

# Usablenet

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Interested in a Free Consultation?  
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