



# Evolution of a Technology Policy

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# 504 and ADA Self-Evaluation

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- UF Technology policy goes back to ADA Self-Evaluation which was completed and submitted January 26, 1993
  - UF 504 evaluation did not specifically mention technology access
  - Self-evaluation stated policy “as departments receive requests for access to individual labs that the departments have a plan already developed to address the issue, and that the equipment be installed as soon as possible. The department on campus ultimately charged with computer access should also have a plan to assist these labs with access. The CPD recommends that equipment should be available to users no later than five working days after a request is made.”
  - In addition to this it was recommended that the university provide funding for one full-time FTE to be responsible for computer access on campus.
- Technology policy also listed in the UF Faculty Guide to Teaching and Working with Students with Disabilities (1993, 1995, 1997, 2002)

# 504 – ADA - 508

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- There is considerable discussion about the guidelines in 508 but lets not forget that 504, since 1973 has provided that (104.44 Academic adjustments)
- “A recipient to which this subpart applies shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure that no handicapped student is denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under the education program or activity operated by recipient because of the absence of educational auxiliary aids for students with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills. (d. auxiliary aids)
- This means that since the Rehabilitation Act was in place that institutions with federal dollars were required to provide equal access to all programs, services and activities (web access and computing just being a couple of covered areas).
- Web accessibility also comes under both 504 and ADA and as a result when the web institutions should have taken the necessary steps to ensure that their websites were accessible – its nice to have 508 but the real protection comes under 504 and ADA where program and activity access are required.



# Technology Policy and FTE

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- Policy officially in place since 1993 – simple and to the point
- FTE funded during 1993 and someone was in place from 93-98 with the sole responsibility of providing assistance to students that used assistive types of technology.
- Dual responsibility for FTE – Computer department and Dean of Students
- 98-present – working with Provost to fund the position again

# Policy

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- The technology policy has always been hidden (within old Self-Evaluation) and there was no ownership on behalf of the computing people on campus.
- UF goes through transition and creates an office for Academic Technology headed by a Vice Provost.
- Vice Provost develops campus wide committee to address computing and technology access on campus. Within one of the subcommittees the accessible technology policy and FTE are discussed.
- The committee adopts a new policy and approved by Provost – the reason to present it to the committee was to secure campus wide recognition and ownership instead of the responsibility of the Dean's Office or the ADA Office – it is a computing and technology access issue and should be the responsibility of those working in that area!

# Policy

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- After 2 years of rewrites the new policy approved by Vice Provost
  - Established UF policy requires that students requesting accommodations for a documented disability must be registered with the Dean of Students Office Disability Resources Program. At the time a student or employee with a documented disability requires adaptive software or hardware in any UF computer lab or administrative unit, staff in computer labs and other administrative units will forward a request to the Director of the Assistive Technology Lab. The Director of the Assistive Technology Lab, in consultation with the Director of Disability Resources in the Dean of Students Office, is responsible for evaluating and making necessary purchases and installations in the appropriate lab, department, or college. This is a demand-oriented policy and thus requires quick action to ensure that the student is offered a reasonable accommodation to provide appropriate access to educational or programmatic materials, according to ADA requirements. The Dean of Students Office and the Assistive Technology Lab Director will purchase and install the software and/or hardware within 5 school days of receipt of the request. Employees with a disability seeking reasonable accommodations to enable them to perform the essential functions of their job should promptly notify their supervisor and the UF ADA Coordinator.
  - The intent of this demand-oriented policy is to ensure that up-to-date resources are acquired and placed where and when they are needed for disabled UF employees and students. The policy is further intended to assure that UF's limited resources are used in the most effective way to meet specific needs. UF is committed to providing the best possible services to all students and employees at the time there is a reasonable need or request.

# Evolving Campus

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- As administrations change so does the administration of various policies
- As administrations change there may be a need to remind them of specific policies
- Policies need to be campus wide and not just local
- The original policy was presented and accepted within a few months
- The most recent update to the policy took approximately 2 years from start to finish
- Departments that are charged with specific tasks need to be responsible for their areas – local disability related access issues should not be pushed onto the disability resource office or ADA
  - For computing access the responsibility should lie with those responsible for computing. If necessary they can call upon the disability experts for assistance
  - When it comes to issues of ADA and 504 access then the DOS and ADA can step in and assist.

# Web Accessibility Policy

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- Since the first day UF hired a full time Web Master (8 years) the issue of web accessibility has been discussed.
- We are a little further along then we were 8 years ago but still there is no requirement on campus to design accessible websites.
- The Web Master has posted the web access guidelines but there is no requirement
- We have tried unsuccessfully to place a deadline on accessible websites – but that deadline has been postponed and postponed.
- New UF Web Site look – main pages – just to get the word disability services listed as a main link on every page has been a chore
- Web access is a daily concern and until it is part of the culture then it won't happen!
- Main issue - the ADA office has pushed the responsibility off on the area responsible and they haven't seen it as a priority.



# Discussion

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- Lessons learned – involve the campus and get them to buy in, take ownership and help write the policy.
- What are other campuses doing?
- Has the road to equal access been easy or difficult?