



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Washington, DC 20420**

**PC Adaptive Training Program
Information Technology Support Service**

Purpose: The PC Adaptive Training Program provides PC-based consulting, technical support and training on using PC's with standard office automation applications and systems interfaced with adaptive solutions to disabled veterans, VA employees, and government employees with disabilities. This program has been operational since 1984 when we opened our first Information Technology Center.

Program Coverage: In Fiscal Year 1994 we extended our services to blinded veterans in the Washington metropolitan area through the department's Blind Rehabilitation Service. In Fiscal Year 1995 our services were extended to the VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Education Service.

Training: Our staff has developed courses in using the PC, Windows 98, Word Processing, Microsoft Excel, PC-based scanning systems, using keyboards instead of the mouse and using the Internet with adaptive systems. We also developed courses on Operation of the Braille 'N Speak, Braille Lite, and Type 'N Speak which are particularly helpful to employees who are blind or visually impaired. Course handouts are provided in accessible formats (Braille, disk, or tape). Training is provided on an individual basis and instruction is tailored to meet the unique needs of each student. Courses on Microsoft Access and Microsoft Power Point are currently under development.

Section 508 Accessibility Progress: About 18 months ago the department began preparing for this important law in a number of ways. It established the Internet Users Working Group which has developed a policy on Internet/Intranet services that includes appropriate accessibility language and a handbook to implement that policy for use by our web page designers; these are in draft form. This group has overseen the complete redesign of our home page which now includes labeled image tags and provides descriptions of link contents helpful to people with vision impairments using screen-reader applications. Our world-renowned PC Adaptive Training Program team has been interfacing with this group since July of 1999. Team members are currently assisting the department's webmasters with testing for Section 508 compliance on our Intranet and Internet sites to build towards having one of the most useable web sites in the federal system.

We belong to the federal Universal Access Working Group (UAWG) established by the General Services Administration's Center for IT Accommodations. ~~and~~ We are co-chairing the Rapid Site Evaluation Preparation team formed by that center which has extended our web site testing services to other federal agencies. To this end, Patrick Sheehan has demonstrated the use and effect of screen-reader applications accessing the web as part of the GSA's web accessibility seminars on developing accessible websites. *It is* now being offered to webmasters from all federal agencies on a bi-weekly basis. Susan Boaz and Patrick have provided telephone and in-person consultations to webmasters from across the country regarding good web page design and will test pages and proffer advice upon request.

Contact Information: For more information about this program, call Patrick Sheehan on 202-273-6543, Susan Boaz on 202-273-6542, or Joseph Derenge on 202-273-6546. You may also FAX us at 202-273-9967 or write us at Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Stop 0451TS, Washington, D.C. 20420.

We look forward to providing quality adaptive PC training and web site evaluation services to your organization in the near future.