



# USABILITY & Accessibility CENTER

## The Center

### Usability & Accessibility Solutions That Work

Universities and businesses depend on Web sites and Web-based information systems to communicate with a broad spectrum of users. As the computer-literate generation ages, there will be even greater demand for usable, accessible, and sophisticated information technology. People of varying educational levels, cultural backgrounds, ages, experiences, and physical abilities will need to retrieve information or reach a desired goal efficiently and easily.

Michigan State University's Usability & Accessibility Center promotes research on human-computer interaction and provides leadership in evaluating the degree to which new interface technologies are intuitive, useful, usable, accessible, and appealing to an ever-widening audience.

Both research- and service-based, the MSU Usability & Accessibility Center:

- **Conducts research and usability/accessibility testing** within MSU and for businesses and industries, nonprofit and community-based organizations, and governmental agencies
- **Provides training, education, and consulting services** on accessibility, usability evaluation methodologies, and user-centered design techniques
- **Disseminates critical usability/accessibility information** through publications, educational programming, workshops, and symposia, contributing to a fuller understanding of best practices
- **Supports graduate and undergraduate education** by employing students who gain real-world experience in planning and conducting usability tests and by making the lab facilities available as a resource for MSU credit courses and curricular programs
- **Works collaboratively to develop grant proposals**, conduct research on interface technologies and their development processes, and study the entire technology development life cycle, including the initial technology design, development issues, and evaluation of user performance
- **Serves as a hub for professional, scholarly, and public discourse** about usability/accessibility, facilitating a speaker series with notable experts and scholars, developing a knowledge database, and participating in local, regional, national, and international usability/accessibility communities of practice
- **Functions as a lab facility** for contract use by businesses, organizations, schools, and the university community for conducting training, focus groups, usability tests, and more

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"Usability and accessibility are cutting-edge research issues, not simply social interests of the University. MSU's Usability & Accessibility Center is where our research agenda and our social responsibilities meld together for an important set of activities. We can blend access, economic competitiveness, and quality of life with our cutting-edge research and really make a difference for society."

**– Lou Anna K. Simon  
President  
Michigan State University**

## The Center (continued)

The University's research, teaching, modeling, and collaborative approach distinguishes the Center from private sector facilities. Usability (including navigation, information architecture, content appropriateness, and language usage), and accessibility (taking into account those with impaired vision, limited mobility, and other disabilities) are always addressed in tandem. And while most labs are internally focused, MSU's service orientation makes this Center available not only to the MSU community but to public and private clients as well.

Staffed by a talented team with an outstanding blend of knowledge and experience, the Center is designed to take a very human approach in applying hard science to critical usability and accessibility questions. Real people and real-time feedback technologies enable researchers, instructors, Web designers, information system architects, business/community leaders, and marketing professionals to better understand the effectiveness and usability of their Web and information systems *from the user's perspective*. In turn, this new knowledge can be applied to the creation and improvement of their technical communications, services, and marketing.

Designed as a high-end facility with state-of-the-art technology for testing and design research, the Center is a major source of usability and accessibility information for both scholars and practitioners, putting MSU at the forefront of information technology assessment. An interdisciplinary, campus-wide team of experts generates new knowledge and answers increasingly complex questions—extending knowledge and transforming the lives of people in communities, across the state, and throughout the world.

### Center At-a-Glance

- Testing and evaluation:
  - User/usability assessment
  - Accessibility testing
  - User-centered design research
  - Focus groups
  - On- and off-site testing/evaluation
- Consulting
- Training and education
- Hands-on teaching, demonstration, and research site for faculty, students, businesses, and organizations
- Valuable repository for usability/accessibility research findings, data, and focused expertise



#### For more information, contact:

**Sarah J. Swierenga, Director**  
MSU Usability & Accessibility Center  
Michigan State University  
Kellogg Center, Garden Level  
East Lansing, MI 48824-1022

Phone: (517) 353-8977  
E-mail: [uac@msu.edu](mailto:uac@msu.edu)  
Web: [usability.msu.edu](http://usability.msu.edu)

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