

Accessibility of PeopleSoft Products

An Oracle White Paper

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Accessibility Features of Peoplesoft Products

Oracle's goal is to ensure that disabled end-users of our products can perform the same tasks, and access the same functionality as other users. To accomplish this, the PeopleTools product has been designed to generate HTML content that meets the standards of Section 508, a milestone U.S. law passed in 1998 that requires federal agencies to purchase information technology products that meet specifications defined by the Access Board.

This paper discusses two distinct facets of accessibility related to PeopleSoft products: how to use PeopleTools to design and generate content that is accessible, and how to use PeopleSoft Applications if you are disabled.

Oracle makes no warranty that code generated by PeopleTools will inter-operate with all Assistive Technology (AT) or user agents (browsers). An accessible solution is achieved only when the user's operating system, browser, assistive technology and Oracle software all have coded to, and interpreted similarly, the same standards.

For more information about Oracle's Accessibility program, including additional resources to learn more about accessibility laws, standards, and regulations, as well as Oracle product status, visit www.oracle.com/accessibility

Using PeopleTools to design and build applications that are accessible

When you create or modify PeopleSoft Internet Architecture pages for your system, consider the needs of all users who might access these pages. Make sure that users with disabilities can navigate quickly and cleanly through your transactions when using screen reader software. Before you design your page, use the following checklist to create a properly designed application page that also addresses important usability issues:

- Do all functional images have labels? Do these labels effectively communicate the purpose of the image?
- Do all data entry fields have labels near the entry field?
- Do all grid columns have labels (excluding columns with buttons or links)?
- Do all grids and scroll areas have titles?
- Do all buttons and links have unique labels?
- Do adornment images have labels deactivated?
- Is the tab order correct?
- Is deferred processing activated? If not, is field processing kept to a minimum?
- Do foreground and background colors provide sufficient contrast?
- Do your self-service pages have instructional text?
- Did you remove abbreviations used in labels and column headers?
- If your page contains HTML not generated by PeopleTools (such as code in an HTML area) or an applet, first check that the code follows the Section 508 accessibility standards. The applicable standards are in Subpart B, Technical Standards, Section 1194.22 Web-based Intranet and Internet Information and Applications. See <http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/508standards.htm>

Some of these features are set in design time and can be activated or deactivated by the system administrator and the end user. The system administrator controls the availability of functions to the user from PeopleTools Security. The end user can then activate the options on the My Personalizations page.

A detailed discussion of these design principles is available in the Enterprise PeopleTools 8.49 PeopleBook: Peoplesoft Application Designer > Designing Pages for Optimal Performance and Accessibility.

http://download.oracle.com/docs/cd/E05317_01/psft/acrobat/pt849apd-b0307.pdf

As with any standards or design recommendations, following these rules does not guarantee that a product is accessible or usable. Ultimately there is no substitute for testing a product with the intended target audience.

How to Use PeopleSoft Applications If You Are Disabled

PeopleSoft applications include several accessibility features to help people with disabilities. These features support the use of assistive technologies, such as screen readers for blind users.

PeopleSoft accessibility features include the following:

- Alternate text for images, group boxes, buttons, navigation buttons for grids and scroll areas, collapsible section icons, hide and expand grid tabs, prompt buttons, and scroll left or right buttons.
- Additional links and anchors that enable screen reader software to bypass navigation content, such as page tabs.
- The removal of page links from the bottom of pages to reduce redundancy when using screen reader software.
- A feature that presents the elements on the body of a page in a linear format (for blind users operating a screen reader only).

Your system administrator grants access to the Accessibility Features option in PeopleTools. However, you can turn this option on or off in My Personalizations.

In accessibility mode, all pages except the home page include invisible links that can help you skip repetitive links in the content frame:

- "Skip over navigation links," the first link in the content frame, lets you skip the content navigation links—such as New Window or Customize Page—that appear on all pages. You can access this link quickly with a screen reader by skipping to the content frame, in which case the link is the first one in the frame. You can also use a window listing all the links on the page, in which case you use can type "J" and look for "Jump over navigation links."
- "Go to navigation links," located after the content navigation link, sends you back to the "Jump over navigation links " link located before the content navigation links.

Note. If the Accessibility Features option does not appear on the Personalizations page, contact your system administrator to enable this feature.

Enabling Accessibility Features

To enable accessibility features:

1. Click the My Personalizations content reference in the menu pagelet.

The Personalizations page appears.

2. In Personalization Categories, click the Personalize Option button that is next to the General Options description.

The Option Category: General Options page appears.

3. Select one of the following options from the Accessibility Features the drop-down list box:
 - a. Select Use accessible layout mode to alter the display of a page for maximum efficiency.
 - b. Select Use standard layout mode to use the standard page layout.
 - c. Select Accessibility features off option to disable the accessibility features.

This option is selected by default.

4. Click OK to save your changes.

To verify that your accessibility settings are in place, sign out of the system and sign in again.

Additional documentation on setting accessibility mode for PeopleSoft Enterprise Applications is located in PeopleTools PeopleBooks in the Using PeopleSoft Application PeopleBook.

http://download.oracle.com/docs/cd/E05317_01/psft/acrobat/pt849upa-b0307.pdf

Keyboard Navigation

PeopleSoft offers keyboard navigation alternatives to using the mouse. These shortcuts are classified into two categories: hot keys and access keys.

For more information on using hot keys and access keys, please see Enterprise PeopleTools 8.49 PeopleBook: Peoplesoft Application Designer > Working with Browser-Based Applications > Using Keyboard Shortcuts.

http://download.oracle.com/docs/cd/E05317_01/psft/acrobat/pt849upa-b0307.pdf

Summary

Beginning with PeopleTools 8.14 delivered in June 2001, PeopleSoft and Oracle have made many enhancements to ensure that the HTML generated by PeopleTools meets the standards of Section 508. If you are developing a product using PeopleTools, you should be able to create a product that meets the Section 508 standards by following these guidelines. If you are a user of PeopleSoft Applications, you should be able to operate the product in a manner comparable to a user that is not disabled, and with a wide variety of AT provided that any AT and any other products used properly interoperate with it.

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