Empress Software Accessibility Initiative

Summary
Section 508, an amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, requires Federal agencies to ensure that electronic and information technology is accessible to people with disabilities. In compliance with the U.S. Federal Government's Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards, Empress Software products are accessible to individuals with disabilities in a fashion comparable to the services it offers to the public who are not individuals with disabilities.

This report recognizes the requirements of US Federal IT Accessibility Initiative (FITAI) in regard to the usage of Empress Software products.

Empress Software Product Overview
The software accessibility standards that are applicable to Empress Software products are:

      1194.21 Software applications and operating systems.
      1194.31 Functional performance criteria.
      1194.41 Information, documentation, and support.

Empress Software flagship product:

- Empress RDBMS

and optional products:

- Empress HLI C++ Extension
- Empress HLI Dynamic SQL C Extension
- Empress JDBC Interface
- Empress HLI Fortran f77 Extension
- Empress Distributed Server
- Empress Connectivity (ODBC Client/Server)
- Empress Replication Server

are compliant to the above mentioned standards. The above list of Empress Software products will be referenced in the following text as "Empress products".

Empress products work tightly with the underlying operating system allowing the database to interoperate fully with operating system accessibility features and creating a Data Management System that is accessible to people with disabilities. For example, Empress Data Management System interfaces with assistive technologies like screen readers and Braille devices for people with vision impairments.

Empress products fulfill the Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility standards:

§ 1194.21 Software applications and operating systems.
When software is designed to run on a system that has a keyboard, product functions shall be executable from a keyboard where the function itself or the result of performing a function can be discerned textually.

    ☑ Empress products support full keyboard functionality. The features/commands/utilities of Empress products are designed to run on a system with a keyboard and are capable of being executed as textual input and providing textual output.

Applications shall not disrupt or disable activated features of other products that are identified as accessibility features, where those features are developed and documented according to industry standards. Applications also shall not disrupt or disable activated features of any operating system that are identified as accessibility features where the application programming interface for those accessibility features has been documented by the manufacturer of the operating system and is available to the product developer.

☑ Empress products may cooperate with activated features of other products or operating systems that are identified as accessibility features.

A well-defined on-screen indication of the current focus shall be provided that moves among interactive interface elements as the input focus changes. The focus shall be programmatically exposed so that assistive technology can track focus and focus changes.

☑ Empress products execute with textual commands providing efficient, full keyboard-executable interaction. The underlying operating system provides Empress products with a well-defined on-screen indication of the current focus.

Sufficient information about a user interface element including the identity, operation and state of the element shall be available to assistive technology. When an image represents a program element, the information conveyed by the image must also be available in text.

☑ Empress products work tightly with the underlying operating system allowing the database to interoperate fully with operating system accessibility features. Since interaction to Empress products is done via text mode input/output, user element interaction with assistive technologies is achieved through the underlying operating system.

When bitmap images are used to identify controls, status indicators, or other programmatic elements, the meaning assigned to those images shall be consistent throughout an application's performance.

☑ Empress products do not use any kind of images to identify controls, status indicators, or other programmatic elements.

Textual information shall be provided through operating system functions for displaying text. The minimum information that shall be made available is text content, text input caret location, and text attributes.

☑ Empress products display textual information through operating system functions.

Applications shall not override user selected contrast and color selections and other individual display attributes.

☑ Empress products do not attempt to override user selected contrast and color selections or other individual display attributes.

When animation is displayed, the information shall be displayable in at least one non-animated presentation mode at the option of the user.

☑ Empress products do not use animation.

Color coding shall not be used as the only means of conveying information, indicating an action, prompting a response, or distinguishing a visual element.

☑ Empress products do not use color coding to convey information.

When a product permits a user to adjust color and contrast settings, a variety of color selections capable of producing a range of contrast levels shall be provided.

☑ Empress products do not have provisions for color adjustment and contrast settings.

Software shall not use flashing or blinking text, objects, or other elements having a flash or blink frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.

☑ Empress products do not use flashing or blinking text, objects, or other elements having a flash or blink.

When electronic forms are used, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.

☑ Empress products do not use electronic forms.

§ 1194.31 Functional performance criteria.

At least one mode of operation and information retrieval that does not require user vision shall be provided, or support for assistive technology used by people who are blind or visually impaired shall be provided.

☑ Empress products are well-suited to interface with assistive technologies such as voice recognition software and screen readers because interaction to Empress products is done via text mode input/output.

At least one mode of operation and information retrieval that does not require visual acuity greater than 20/70 shall be provided in audio and enlarged print output working together or independently, or support for assistive technology used by people who are visually impaired shall be provided.

☑ Empress products are well-suited to interface with assistive technologies such as voice recognition software or enlarged visual displays since an interaction to Empress products is done via text mode input/output.

At least one mode of operation and information retrieval that does not require user hearing shall be provided, or support for assistive technology used by people who are deaf or hard of hearing shall be provided.

☑ Empress products do not require user hearing.

Where audio information is important for the use of a product, at least one mode of operation and information retrieval shall be provided in an enhanced auditory fashion, or support for assistive hearing devices shall be provided.

☑ Empress products do not use audio information.

At least one mode of operation and information retrieval that does not require user speech shall be provided, or support for assistive technology used by people with disabilities shall be provided.

☑ Empress products do not require user speech.

At least one mode of operation and information retrieval that does not require fine motor control or simultaneous actions and that is operable with limited reach and strength shall be provided.

☑ Empress products do not require fine motor control or simultaneous actions, and operate with limited reach and strength by the provisions of underlying software and hardware.

§ 1194.41 Information, documentation, and support.

Product support documentation provided to end-users shall be made available in alternate formats upon request, at no additional charge.

☑ Empress Products support documentation is available in a variety of formats including text, HTML and PDF files. Alternate formats can be provided to end users upon request, at no additional charge.

End-users shall have access to a description of the accessibility and compatibility features of products in alternate formats or alternate methods upon request, at no additional charge.

☑ End-users have access to a description of the accessibility and compatibility features of Empress products in text, HTML and PDF files. Alternate formats are available upon request, at no additional charge.

Support services for products shall accommodate the communication needs of end-users with disabilities.

☑ Empress Software provides several alternative channels of support services in order to offer the best possible choice for individuals with disabilities.

Working with Assistive Technologies

Accessibility to technology is a shared responsibility for both software and hardware vendors. People with disabilities use specialized hardware and software to enable them to interact with their computers in ways that suit their specific needs. The accessible design of Empress products allow the Empress Data Management System to interface with a variety these assistive technologies. The assistive technologies include systems or software that is commonly used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

For example, the Empress RDBMS works with screen readers, a software application that reads the content of a computer screen through the use of specialized software and simulated speech synthesizers.