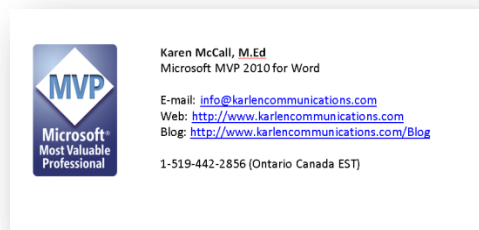




Karlen Communications

Karen McCall, M.Ed.
Company Profile

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Karen McCall received the Microsoft MVP/Most Valued Professional Award in 2009, 2010 and 2011 for her work with Microsoft Word.

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Introduction

Karlen Communications has been around in one form or another since 1989. It evolved from a part-time business into a full-time business in 2003.

Over the past 21 years projects have involved work in:

- Teaching in college certificate and diploma programs.
- Teaching in university degree programs.
- Consulting and strategic planning services.
- On-site training.
- Online training using WebEx, TC Conferencing, Go-To-Meeting, Blackboard, Web CT and A-Tutor.
- Curriculum development including customization for individual clients.
- Document remediation for accessibility.
- Accessible software development.
- Authoring books on accessible document design.
- Writing articles for magazines on accessible document design.
- Desktop publishing, Linotype ready and camera ready artwork for newsletters and magazines.
- Continued Beta testing of Adobe software, Microsoft Office software, JAWS screen reading software for persons with a visual disability.

We offer a wide range of services related to the accessibility of existing documents, creating more accessible documents, accessible software development, and implementing legislative standards in your organization.

Samples of our writing style and detail to information are located on the Karlen Communications web site. There you will find several documents in accessible tagged PDF to download and explore.

As a starting point, please review the page on [Microsoft Office 2007 Accessibility](#)¹ or [Microsoft Office 2010 Accessibility](#)².

¹ Microsoft Office 2007 Accessibility:

<http://www.karlencommunications.com/MicrosoftOfficeAccessibility2010.html>

² Microsoft Office 2010 Accessibility: <http://www.karlencommunications.com/MicrosoftOfficeAccessibility.html>

Karen McCall, Brief Bio

Karen is the founder of Karlen Communications as well as the author of the books sold through Karlen Communications.

Her academic background is in education having earned a B.Ed. and Ontario Teacher's Certificate for the Junior-Intermediate grade levels. She tackled several additional qualifications to her teaching certificate including special education for children with learning disabilities, cooperative education, computer science and technology and English as a Second Language.

Karen went on to complete her Masters of Education in Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto.

To formalize her computer skills Karen earned a Computer Systems Analyst Level 1 Certificate from Sheridan College of Applied Arts and Technology.

The training she provides to clients has a strong academic and teaching component and this is evident in the books she writes and the curriculum she develops.

Karen taught at Mount St Vincent's University in Halifax NS in the Master of Education for Teachers of the Visually Impaired. She developed the course content and delivered it during the summer semester.

Karen has taught courses at Sheridan College in Oakville ON in both the Continuing Education department and the Business School department. She developed and taught courses for Northcentral Technical College in Wausau WI and recently completed a teaching assignment at Mohawk College in Brantford ON.

Karen was an Instructional Designer and then Instructional Design Manager for Ryerson University's Distance Education Unit overseeing the development and delivery of online courses.

Her passion for ensuring the accessibility and usability of digital environments including hardware, software and content itself are the driving force of Karlen Communications.

Consulting and Strategic Planning

The place to start if your organization is not familiar with access to content and software for people with disabilities is to learn what this means. Karlen Communications provides information sessions to demonstrate both inaccessible and accessible content. During these sessions the discussion is frank and honest as to the barriers and impact of inaccessible digital environments and why your organization will want to consider accessibility issues beyond legislative standards.

The basis for any planning toward accessible digital environments is knowing what the standards are and which ones can be implemented immediately, which ones can be implemented within a month based time frame and which ones can be implemented over the next few years or over the lifecycle of the procured software.

If your organization uses custom developed software how do you plan to optimize the accessibility of the software when it is revised or updated? How do you add legislative criteria to an RFP or tender process? Should accessible software cost more? What do you need to do? How are you going to train staff? What if staff doesn't want to do this? How do you make sure new hires have the skill base to understand accessibility in digital environments?

There are many issues around panic and anxiety of the unknown which is why Karlen Communications provides consulting for policy and standards planning for accessible digital environments.

We consider employees who might need portable devices to perform their work. This could involve choosing a cell phone or SmartPhone that supports screen reading or screen magnification or voice recognition. How often is adaptive technology updated for employees with disabilities? Can they access the digital environments they need to work effectively and productively?

Can your customers and clients access the information on your web site including forms and information based documents?

If you are developing Apple apps are you ensuring that they are accessible using VoiceOver?

The planning centres around an ability to use any of your organizational digital environments without a monitor or a mouse. This is the goal in its basic form.

Karlen Communications can assist in planning for organizational evolution toward seamless accessibility.

Accessible Document Design Solutions

Karlen Communications offers several solutions for accessible document design. The process starts with the "buy in" from management and the creation of a policy of standards. If your organization wants to ensure that legislative standards such as the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act or Section 508 in the U.S. are included and met, we can provide consulting on what this will look like for your organization.

Karen McCall is providing feedback and comments for the Refresh of Section 508 in the U.S. Any services contracted from January 1, 2010 will be based on the standards in the current draft of the Refresh of Section 508. Since the Refresh of Section 508 is more detailed than the existing 508 standards your organization will meet criteria for the present and future.

For clients who are looking for the creation of AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act) IAS [Integrated Accessibility Standards] this can be a bit more difficult. The IAS which include "standards" for information communication, employment and transportation point to WCAG 2.0. However the language of WCAG 2.0 which is a set of guidelines is the language of guidelines as opposed to using "must" and "shall" statements which one would find in traditional standards documents. The sections of the IAS focusing on employment tend to concentrate on post hiring accommodation as opposed to ensuring the work environment is inclusive. These types of details and issues are part of determining compliance.

Karlen Communications can provide education and training for accessible:

- Microsoft Word 2007 and 2010 documents.
- Microsoft PowerPoint 2007 and 2010 documents.
- Adobe InDesign documents that are then converted to tagged PDF.

We can provide remediation of existing untagged PDF or improperly tagged PDF documents.

Karlen Communications can assist you in creating document templates that incorporate the elements of accessibility your organization identifies as critical.

We are also experienced in consulting on ensuring that dynamically created PDF reports are accessible. This means that both the template and dynamic data populating it are accessible.

For employees with visual disabilities we can provide training on using their adaptive technology to work more productively and efficiently with the accessible templates and documents your organization will be creating.

Document and Software Auditing

Karlen Communications has been doing document and software audits for the past ten years. Our process is simple and robust: we create a checklist of the standards you want to comply with and use a screen reader to spot test for links, headings, tables and form controls.

We do not test for and will not take on projects that demand “JAWS compliance” or any other “adaptive technology based” compliance. There is no such thing and this approach to “accessibility” limits the accessibility of content to a specific version of the adaptive technology at a specific point in its development cycle. We use the standards and the capabilities of the authoring tools to establish the benchmarks of accessibility.

For documents this includes the ability to navigate quickly to content, to access all content essential to the understanding of the document, access to information for images and complex diagrams and to any form controls for documents.

For software audits the elements tested include the ability to perform any function of the software using the keyboard and to have those functions also accessible by a screen reader. This means that as the end-user presses a keyboard command the screen reader will echo the command and then read the element that the end-user is on. For example in Microsoft Word 2007 if Alt + F is pressed it takes the end-user to the Office Button on the menu and expands it. For testing purposes if the custom application implements the same keyboard command will a “file” menu take focus and expand and will a screen reader be able to access any of the components of that menu.

In addition will the software applications respect the alternate colour scheme of the end-user? For example someone with a visual disability might use a high contrast black colour scheme that is available in their operating system. Does the application respect this and accept the high contrast black colour scheme or does it override it causing an accessibility issue. In this case failure to respect the end-user display settings would mean a failure of one of the Section 508 standards.

Complete audit reports are provided for documents and software. Consulting is available during the procurement and design process to ensure that legislative standards can be complied with.

Books for Purchase or Site Licensing

Karen McCall is often asked how she started writing books on accessible document design. As someone who uses adaptive technology, Karen often found that the “help” documentation wasn’t as helpful as it was supposed to be. By taking notes to refer back to when repeating tasks and consolidating the notes in one document Karen realized she had enough material for a workshop. As content continued to be developed the workshop became an online course and within a year the online course became a book. The first book “Accessible and Usable PDF Documents: Techniques for Document Authors” was and is the only book of its kind providing document authors with techniques for accessible PDF while also providing insights into how adaptive technology accesses PDF content. This book is now in its second edition and Karen is working on the third edition.

From the PDF book came the question by document authors on how to create accessible documents from the source application. This would lessen the remediation needed when the documents were converted to tagged PDF. The result was the first in the “Logical Document Structure Handbook” series for Word 2003.

One of the comments regularly received by Karen is that she is able to take extremely complex technical information and make it understandable for the average person.

The following books are available for individual or site licenses:

- Logical Document Structure Handbook: Word 2007, ISBN 0-9738370-9-8.
- Logical Document Structure Handbook: Word 2007 Legal Edition, ISBN 978-0-9782675-3-7 with techniques on accessible redacted documents.
- Logical Document Structure Handbook: Word 2010, ISBN 978-0-9782675-4-4.
- Logical Document Structure Handbook: Word 2010 Legal Edition, ISBN 978-0-9782675-5-1 with techniques on accessible redacted documents.
- Logical Document structure Handbook: PowerPoint 2007, ISBN 978-0-9782675-6-8.
- Logical Document structure Handbook: PowerPoint 2010, ISBN 978-0-9782675-7-5
- Accessible and Usable PDF Documents: Techniques for Document Authors Second Edition, ISBN 978-0-9782675-2-0.

The books for the Office 2010 applications will be available January 2011. If you are creating legal documents Karlen Communications recommends the legal editions of the books. They are the same as the other version but have information on redacted content.

Our Clients and Presentations

From 2005 to 2010, as well as working with our own clients, we were retained by Criterion 508 Solutions Inc in the United States to provide Section 508 compliance services to their clients.

A cross section of all clients is represented in the following list:

- Ontario Government, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Government Services.
- BMO/Bank of Montreal.
- Citibank., J P Morgan., and US Bank.
- MasterCard.
- DHS/Department of Homeland Security.
- FEMA/Federal Emergency Measures.
- FDIC/Federal Deposit Insurance Commission.
- Scotiabank.
- CIBC/Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce.
- RBC/Royal Bank of Canada.
- Law Society of Upper Canada

Conference Presentations

Karen McCall has been the keynote speaker at two conferences:

- AHEAD in Athens Georgia.
- Instructional Design Conference, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

For the past several years we've been providing pre-conference hands-on and demonstration workshops. The following is a sample of the conferences presented at.

- Section 508 Coordinators Conference, Gettysburg, PA.
- Association for Reporters of Judicial Decisions Conference, Halifax NS
- Accessing Higher Ground, Boulder and now Westminster CO.
- California State University Northridge Campus Center on Disability annual conference/CSUN, Los Angeles and now San Diego CA.
- Assistive Technology Industry Association, Orlando FL.
- Fusion – Desire2Learn Users Conference, Held in a different city each year.
- Distance Teaching and Online Learning Conference, Madison WI.