

### In This Issue

- **Tips for referencing a server control from a client side in Javascript**
- **Section 508 compliance – what it is and how SDI is on top of it**
- **Looking at custom software as a business management tool**

## How to reference a server control from a client side Javascript

By Wallace "Wally" McClure

Imagine that you have a text control like this:

```
<asp:TextBox ID="txtName" runat="server" />
```

I see all kinds of examples that get the control value like this:

```
document.forms[0].txtName
```

or

```
document.getElementById("txtName")
```

While it might work in simple situations, it won't work all of the time. How about this:

```
document.forms[0].<%=txtName.ClientID%>
```

or

```
document.getElementById("<%=txtName.ClientID%>")
```

By referencing the txtName.ClientID property, you get the client id of the control. Why is this important? If the control is contained within another container, the name is mangled to generate a unique value, which is more than the simple name of the control. ■

## Section 508 Compliance

By Luci Harrell

At Scalable Development, we are experts in Section 508 compliance. But what, exactly, does that mean? Well, in a nutshell, we have the expertise and experience, coupled with the technical capabilities, to build and implement applications that clearly surpass standards set by the government concerning online accessibility.

Section 508 was created as part of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act. This exists to ensure that people with disabilities have protections in their daily living, and that their rights are not compromised because of their disabled status. This legislation, adopted in 1973, has since been amended.

Section 508 deals, specifically, with information technology. Basically, the government requires that all information systems implemented by a federal agency, government contractor, or any system used by any federal employees, meet certain standards. Employees with disabilities should be able to access and utilize these systems in a way that is comparable to employees without disabilities.

[See Accessibility on Page 2](#)

## Software as a Management Tool

By Stu Lustman

Custom software can do lots of things for a business, from automating repetitive tasks to allowing greater productivity and ease of use. It can automate the creation of new documents, spreadsheets with calculations and all kinds of other things that we take for granted every day. How, you ask, is software an effective management tool?

[See Software on Page 2](#)

## Accessibility

Accessibility provisions are not something required of federally affiliated entities only. In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act was enacted, requiring all businesses to *physically* accommodate disabled persons.

But what about online businesses? Shouldn't they provide equal accommodations? Last year the courts said, 'yes.' The National Federation of the Blind brought a lawsuit against Target because its webstore didn't accommodate screen readers.<sup>1</sup> The final decision was this: businesses, whether physical or virtual, must be accessible to people of all disabilities. In essence, screen readers, to online businesses, are what handicap ramps are to physical businesses.

This is where Section 508 comes in. It provides a solid outline of requirements that must be met by government affiliates, yes, but these guidelines prove to work well for private companies, too.

Any development work for any governmental sector that we have done in the past, or are currently working on, has to meet Section 508

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***“...we have the expertise and experience, coupled with the technical capabilities, to build and implement applications that clearly surpass standards set by the government concerning online accessibility”***

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requirements. We believe that, because we have the knowledge and the technical means to employ systems which are screen reader amenable, for instance, we can offer these types of accessibility features as efficient and practical implementations to our private sector clients. And, because we have ample experience implementing this type of code and meeting these requirements, we can probably complete the task in fewer hours than the competition.

For more information on Section 508, compatibility requirements, resources or news, visit [www.section508.gov](http://www.section508.gov). ■

<sup>1</sup> Screen readers are add-on programs which, literally, read the screen aloud, enabling the blind to utilize computers and access the internet like anyone else. They pick up on alt-text, which is embedded in all images and text contained within 508 compliant websites.

## Software

Good custom software allows for greater efficiency and productivity, even through the use of something as simple as a form field. That form field, for instance, may allow accurate information to pass easily onto multiple documents. For those of us in fields with many resources, forms, applications and/or paperwork to manage, this is nothing short of a Godsend.

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A tool such as a custom application lends a business to more effective management. The reasoning is simple – human error is reduced and greater time, money and energy can be spent on other, ‘big picture’ areas. With a secure custom application in place, resources and

efforts can be directed more towards marketing the business, improving customer service or increasing client retention rates. These are areas too often left to chance, or not discussed at all, since management at most firms (big and small) consists of doing what is required to put out any daily or weekly fires that might arise.

Automating a process, so that a person is not required in order for it to be done accurately, allows for the managers to actually manage. It allows business owners and managers the time and efforts to look forward and to be innovative and proactive, rather than staying behind the curve by being only reactive. It's one less fire for management to have to put out each day.

Custom software solutions also allow for the people in a business to do more tasks that they like to have the time to do, whether it is research or marketing or more client contact. All in all, as a management tool, a software solution designed and build to fit a business's specific needs is a real win/win/win for everyone involved. ■

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