OVERVIEW

This August, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced requirements and compliance deadlines that impact communications and technology accesses for people with hearing loss. The first was the order requiring closed captioning of internet video clips (MB Docket No. 11-154) which establishes an effective date of September 4, 2014. They also adopted rules that complement previous commitments made by wireless carriers to support text-to-911 by May 2014. Now, in addition to the four largest wireless carriers in the U.S. (AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon), certain IP-based text applications and the remaining wireless carriers are expected to support text-to-911 by the end of the year. The FCC also released a Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (PS Docket No.s 11-153 and 10-255) seeking comment related to technical issues regarding enhanced location provision, text-to-911 roaming support, and potential text service capabilities.

Lastly, the FCC’s Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB) is accepting comments on the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau Seeks Comment on Its Tentative Findings About the Accessibility of Communications Technologies for the 2014 Biennial Report Under the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA). The FCC requests that comments address their reported findings regarding CVAA compliance with accessibility requirements for telecommunications and advanced communications services and equipment, the effect of related recordkeeping and enforcement obligations, and existing accessibility barriers that may still exist with respect to new communications technologies. The deadline for public comment is September 11, 2014.
REGULATORY ACTIVITIES

FCC SEeks Input on the Accessibility of Communications Technologies

August 28, 2014 – The FCC’s Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB) released a public notice this month seeking comment on the impact of the CVAA: Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau Seeks Comment on Its Tentative Findings about the Accessibility of Communications Technologies for the 2014 Biennial Report under the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) [CG Docket No. 10-213]. The FCC requests that comments address their reported findings regarding: (1) the level of compliance with requirements that telecommunications and advanced communications services and equipment be accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities; (2) the effect of related recordkeeping and enforcement obligations; ads (3) the extent to which accessibility barriers still exist with respect to new communications technologies.

This information will be assessed in the 2014 Biennial Report to Congress, required by the CVAA. The report is due to Congress by October 8, 2014. The deadline for public comment is September 11, 2014. For more information and to view the full version of the document, please click the link below.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau Seeks Comment on Its Tentative Findings about the Accessibility of Communications Technologies for the 2014 Biennial Report Under the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act

ALL WIRELESS PROVIDERS REQUIRED TO SUPPORT TEXT-TO-911

August 8, 2014 - The FCC issued a release establishing compliance deadlines for text-to-911 services. The adopted rules complement previous commitments made by wireless carriers to support text-to-911 by May 2014. In addition to the four largest wireless carriers in the U.S. (AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon), certain IP-based text applications and the remaining wireless carriers are expected to support text-to-911 by the end of the year. The rulemaking establishes a six-month grace period after that time, should 911 call centers request the service in their area. However, there remains unresolved issues, thus the FCC’s Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking [PS Docket No.s 11-153 and 10-255] is seeking comments related to technical issues regarding enhanced location provision, texts to 911 roaming support, and potential text service capabilities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FCC Adopts Rules to Promote Widespread Text-To-911 Availability
Second Report and Order and Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
FCC Requires Closed Captioning for Internet Video Clip By September

August 6, 2014 – The FCC released a public notice informing citizens of an adopted order requiring closed captioning of internet video clips [MB Docket No. 11-154]. According to the Federal Register summary, published August 5, 2014, the rules concerning video clips delivered using Internet protocol will be effective on September 4, 2014. Compliance dates are as follow:

- January 1, 2016: “Straight lift” clips or video clips containing a single excerpt of a captioned television program with the same video and audio previously aired on television;
- January 1, 2017: “Montages” or a single file containing multiple straight lift clips;
- July 1, 2017: Video clips of programming shown live or near-live on television.

The FCC is also requesting additional comments on the Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking by October 6, 2014, with reply comments by November 3, 2014.

Additional Information

Notice of Effective Date of Rules Governing Closed Captioning of IP-Delivered Video Clips

Publications & Reports

The Accessibility of Cloud Computing

August 21, 2014 - Media Access Australia, Australia’s only non-profit organization devoted to media accessibility for individuals with disabilities, released a report discussing the uses, benefits, and accessibility challenges of cloud computing for individuals with disabilities. Some of the benefits highlighted in The Accessibility of Cloud Computing: Current and Future Trends include the ability for people with disabilities to integrate assistive technologies, the constant availability of cloud storage via profiles, and the ability to synchronize cloud accessibility preferences in recent Windows technologies.

The report also acknowledged that cloud-based services have challenges as a result of platform variations. Because app and web solutions offer different cloud accessibility features depending on which ecosystem consumers choose, the report advocates for industry compliance with the W3C Web Accessibility Standards when creating cloud access. Specifying the need for inclusive accessibility design for cloud platforms, the report calls for industry, consumer, and government collaboration, as well. For access to a full copy of The Accessibility of Cloud Computing: Current and Future Trends, please click the link below.

Additional Information

The Accessibility of Cloud Computing: Current and Future Trends
OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

CSUN CALL FOR PAPERS: TECHNOLOGY & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
August 6, 2014 — The 2015 International Technology & Persons with Disabilities Conference (CSUN) announced a call for papers to be considered for inclusion in the third volume of the Journal of Technology and Persons with Disabilities. Currently, CSUN is accepting paper proposals for the scientific/research Track and has provided a list of recommended topics including but not limited to aging, augmentative and alternative communications (AAC), emerging assistive technologies, healthcare, education, and information and communications technology (ICT). Accepted papers will also be presented at the 2015 CSUN Conference to be held March 2 -7 in San Diego, California. Paper proposals are due September 19, 2014 and final papers are due May 1, 2015.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
CSUN Call for Papers
[http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference/2015/openconf-science-research/overview.php]

ANVATO COMPLIES WITH ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS ALMOST 2 YEARS EARLY
August 6, 2014 – Anvato, provider of the video platform and multi-device player TV Everywhere, announced that their turnkey video software has reached full compliance with the FCC’s latest closed-captioning mandate. The FCC extended IP closed-captioning to “straight-lift” video clips, montages, and video clips of programming shown live and near-live on television in July. According to Anvato, they have met these requirements, as well as captioning compliance for back-catalog content less than a month after the ruling. Though closed-captioning of past video content is scheduled for January 1, 2016, Anvato has met FCC accessibility requirements nearly 2 years before the scheduled date, adding additional multi-language and keyword-search features. President and CEO of Anvato, Alper Turgut states, “As a market leader in implementing these new mandates, Anvato has been—and will continue to stay—a step ahead of the latest requirements to ensure our customers have the most advanced technology, not only for compliance but also to maintain their competitive edge.”

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Anvato Enables Broadcasters to Meet Latest FCC Accessibility Requirements for TV Everywhere

NFB CALLS FOR ACCESSIBLE VOTING: ONLINE BALLOT MARKING
August 5, 2014 – In preparation of the 2014 Congressional Elections, the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) is compelling states to make online ballot-marking systems accessible to voters with disabilities. The Uniformed and Overseas Citizen Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) requires all states to allow certain U.S. citizens to vote by absentee ballot in federal elections. The resolution requests that states allow the same convenience to individuals with disabilities that are provided to individuals serving in the military, federal government employees, citizens abroad, and those who qualify for the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB).

The push for electronic ballot delivery options references eLect®, an internet voting solution that allows voters to use screen readers, print reading and voice recognition software when casting their ballot. According to the press release, “Online ballot-marking is accessible absentee voting, it provides voters with disabilities the option to mark their ballots on their smartphone, tablets and computers using the same assistive devices and tools that they use to navigate the web throughout their daily lives.” With the 2014 Congressional election around the corner – November 4, 2014 – the NFB is encouraging states to make voter participation more inclusive for people with disabilities.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**
National Federation of the Blind Endorses Online Ballot Marking

**GOOGLE AWARDS FUNDS FOR THE EXPANSION OF SMARTSIGNDICTIONARY**
August 2014 - Harley Hamilton, of Georgia Tech’s College of Computing – Center for Accessible Technology in Sign, won a Google Faculty Research Award to expand the SMARTSignDictionary (SSD). SSD is an English to American Sign Language (ASL) dictionary that was designed to support students that are deaf as they read English text. It can be used in several capacities: on fixed or mobile platforms, with eBooks, captioned video, internet pages, online documents, and more. According to Dr. Hamilton, SSD is distinct from other sign dictionaries which are typically created for use by hearing people. SSD in its current form is YouTube based and includes an estimated 50,000 words. The award will allow SSD to double in size. To try it yourself, visit http://www.cats.gatech.edu/cats/SMARTSignDictionary/versions.htm.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**
Google Research Faculty Awards – August 2014

**WIRELESS RERC UPDATES**

**NEW APP INCREASES ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH PRINT DISABILITIES**
August 19, 2014 – IDEAL Group Apps4Android, the world’s largest developer of Android accessibility apps, announced the release of the “Document Knowledge Miner” app. The app assists individuals with physical, developmental, cognitive, and others disabilities to gain access to information in documents. The innovation in this app is that it can access document information even if it isn’t presented in an accessible format. Developed with support from the Wireless RERC’s App Factory and NIDRR, the app can be downloaded from the Google Play Store.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
IDEAL Group Apps4Android Releases Innovative Knowledge Mining App for People with Print Disabilities
[http://www.apps4android.org/?p=4765]

WIRELESS RERC MAKES EAS ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS RECOMMENDATIONS
August 14, 2014 – The Wireless RERC and Georgia Tech’s Center for Advanced Communications Policy (CACP) submitted comments to the FCC’s Notice of Proposed Rulemaking In the Matter of Review of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) [EB Docket No. 04-296]. As a result of the nationwide EAS test revealing issues with text crawls, the FCC requested public comments about the accessibility of EAS and visual text crawls.

CACP and Wireless RERC comments highlighted the need for EAS nationwide testing to account for human ability factors, as well as technical considerations when setting a national standard for text crawls. Their comments advised that any standards should consider the needs of people with vision disabilities, as well as those that simultaneously experience vision and hearing loss; noting a correlation between visual acuity and caption reading ability.

Further comments and recommendations concerning non-English alerts, text crawl placement, audio accessibility, and text-to-speech were made as well. For more information, please click the link below.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Comments of Rehabilitation Engineering Center for Wireless Technologies (Wireless RERC)

SURVEY: DEFINING CURRENT PRACTICES IN TEACHING UNIVERSAL DESIGN
The Wireless RERC is interested in learning more about the presentation of Universal Design in university-level design courses. We are currently surveying instructors who teach design-related courses. If you are an instructor in a design-related discipline such as human-computer interaction, biomedical engineering, industrial design, human factors, or rehabilitation engineering please complete the survey.

Although it is not necessary for you to have taught a course that included Universal Design, it is important for you to have an awareness of the definition and/or philosophy associated with Universal
Universal design is "the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design." If you are not familiar with this definition or a similar one, please ignore this survey request. Please pass this survey request along to colleagues who may be teaching about Universal Design.

The survey is brief and will aid in defining current practices in teaching about Universal Design. Your responses will also assist us in developing course strategies and resources for instructors who have a range of experience and knowledge related to Universal Design. To complete the survey, please go to: http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1742743/Design-Instructors-and-UD

Thank you in advance for providing feedback. If you have further questions or would like to provide more detailed feedback, please contact carrie.bruce@gatech.edu.

**EASE OF USE & WIRELESS DEVICE MODIFICATIONS BY ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The third issue of the SUNspot, a series of research briefs providing tangible information about accessibility and usability, focuses on various technology and assistive modifications that people with disabilities might make to their mobile devices. The newsletter shares the latest findings and data collected from the Survey of User Needs (SUN), a questionnaire essential to the Wireless RERC’s research initiative. Focusing on the use and usability of wireless technology by people with disabilities, the current version (Version 4) of the SUNspot reports preliminary results from data collected September 2012 through September 2013. Because higher rates of people with disabilities are using mobile devices, this issue highlights the various difficulties and usability challenges disabled individuals face when using cellphones, tablets, and other wireless devices. For a view a copy of SUNspot, please click the link below.

**SHEPHERD CENTER AND WIRELESS RERC AWARDED GOOGLE GRANT**

The Shepherd Center and the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Wireless Technologies (Wireless RERC) have been awarded the Google Glass Accessibility Grant to develop an application to assist individuals who experience brain injury-related memory loss. The $15,000 award amount will go towards app development and testing on the Google Glass device. The wearable computer technology will aid in helping users recognize people who do not regularly frequent their social circle, a common issue for those who have memory loss.
The Google Glass device includes head-mounting, optical display, smartphone-like features and voice response technology, ideal for those who may have usability challenges. Dr. John Morris, the project leader, references three potential benefits of the app:

- If the solution proves effective, people living with brain injury may enjoy greater levels of community and family participation, with lower levels of stress and anxiety;
- The user-testing research involved with the app development could help researchers develop a specific clinical practice protocol for use of electronic memory aids;
- The research and development community could benefit from this work through the researchers’ presentation of their results at conferences and in professional publications.

The app will be free to the public upon release. For more information, please click the link below.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Google Awards Grant to Shepherd Center Researchers to Create Wearable Computer App for People with Memory Deficits
[http://news.shepherd.org/google-awards-shepherd-center-researchers-a-grant-to-develop-a-wearable-computer-app-for-people-with-memory-impairment/]

DISCOVER WIRELESS ACCESSIBILITY! TIPS FOR CONSUMERS WITH DISABILITIES

The Wireless RERC partnered with AT&T early in 2014 to produce Discover Wireless Accessibility!, a series of outreach workshop for consumers with disabilities. They have traveled to Atlanta, Ga., Austin and Dallas, Texas, Chicago, Ill., and Washington, D.C. educating consumers about the accessibility features available on their mobile devices. Concentrating on iOS 7 and Android 4.4 smartphones and tablets, Discover Wireless Accessibility! produced five presentations that varied in topic from general accessibility features to those specific to consumer ability. To view Discover Wireless Accessibility! presentations, please see the links below.

New Fall/Winter 2014 and 2015 Discover Wireless Accessibility! Workshop Locations and Dates with be announced soon. If you’re interested in attending one of the events, hosting an event or have other questions, please contact:

Ben Lippincott, 404-894-7034, ben@imtc.gatech.edu

VIEW FULL PRESENTATIONS BELOW

General Accessibility Features Presentation
[http://wirelessrerc.org/sites/default/files/publications/Accessibility%20Features%20of%20Smartphones.pdf]

Accessibility Features for People with Cognitive Challenges
Dr. Helena Mitchell, executive director of Georgia Tech’s Center for Advanced Communications Policy (CACP), was named a Regents' Researcher by the University System of Georgia. This highest of research honors, given by the Board of Regents of the state of Georgia, celebrates Dr. Mitchell’s scientific accomplishments and contributions to her field of research. Dr. Mitchell was recruited to Georgia through the Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholar program that spans educational, community and business environments. Her areas of specialty include broadband and wireless communications, educational technologies, regulatory and legislative policy, emergency/public safety communications, and universal service to vulnerable, rural and inner city populations. In addition to being executive director for CACP, Dr. Mitchell is a Principal Research Scientist at the Georgia Institute of Technology, School of Public Policy within Ivan Allen College. In tandem, she is currently the Principal Investigator for the following grants and contracts:

- **Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Wireless Technologies (Wireless RERC)** funded by the U.S. Department of Education since 2001 to research, evaluate and develop innovative wireless technologies and products that meet the needs, enhance independence and improve the quality of life and community participation of individuals with disabilities.

- **Wireless Emergency Alerts: Optimizing Ability of message Receipt by People with Disabilities** funded in 2014 by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Science and Technology Directorate. The project’s objectives are to maximize WEA message diffusion to deaf and hard of hearing citizens by developing a prototype signaling system designed around the needs of this population; and to conduct focus group and survey research to better understand how people with disabilities and those with access and functional needs respond to WEA messages.

- **IPAWS Alerts for People with Disabilities or Language Differences** funded in 2013 by FEMA’s Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) Project Management Office to supply evidence based, unbiased technical and policy options and recommendations on emergency communications, warnings and alerts that can advance the goals of the IPAWS program.
UPCOMING EVENTS

THE ARC’S 2014 NATIONAL CONVENTION
The ARC’s 2014 National Convention will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana September 30 – October 2, 2014. The Convention aims to offer an environment for people to come together to “learn, improve and lead the movement for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) into the future.” Registration for the convention is currently open.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
The Arc’s 2014 National Convention

17TH ANNUAL ACCESSING HIGHER GROUND CONFERENCE
The Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) will host the 17th Annual Accessing Higher Ground Conference from November 17 – 21, 2014 in Westminster, Colorado. The conference will offer those within higher education and industry discussions and information on use of accessible media, adoption of universal design practices, and compliance with accessibility policies. Registration for the event is now open and can be accessed here.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
17th Annual Accessing Higher Ground
[http://accessinghigherground.org/index.html]

SAVE THE DATE: 2014 ANNUAL COMPENDIUM OF DISABILITY STATISTICS AND RESEARCH-TO-POLICY ROUNDTABLE
The Disability Statistics and Demographics Rehabilitation and Research Training Center (StatsRRTC) announced two upcoming events in the Capitol Hill area this December: the Annual Compendium of Disability Statistics release briefing and the Fourth Annual Research-to-Policy Roundtable meeting. Mark your calendars for Wednesday, December 3rd, 2014, as both events plan to engage attendees with presentations and dialogue.

The Annual Compendium of Disability Statistics briefing and workshop will be held from 9:00am - 10:30am,. From 10:30am – Noon. There will also be a presentation by the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project: Health and Health Care Disparities Among Individuals with Disabilities.
The Research-to-Policy Roundtable meeting is scheduled from 1:30pm - 3:30pm. The roundtable will give attendees the opportunity to discuss the many ways that research can assist in developing programs and policies that support individuals with disabilities. Registration will open for these events in September. For more information, please click the link below.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

2014 Annual Compendium of Disability Statistics and Research-to-Policy Roundtable

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**TECHNOLOGY AND DISABILITY POLICY HIGHLIGHTS**
August 2014

The Technology and Disability Policy Highlights (TDPH) reports on national and local public policy events and recent wireless technological advances and political activities; and tracks emerging issues of interest to individuals with disabilities. *Technology and Disability Policy Highlights* is published monthly by the Wireless RERC. The Wireless RERC is a research center that promotes universal access to wireless technologies and explores their innovative applications in addressing the needs of people with disabilities. For more information on the Wireless RERC, please visit our web site at [http://www.wirelessrerc.org].

For further information on items summarized in this report, or if you have items of interest that you would like included in future editions, please contact this edition’s editors Amelia Williams [Amelia@cacp.gatech.edu] or Salimah LaForce [salimah@cacp.gatech.edu].

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