Technology and Disability Policy Highlights

August 2015

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# Overview

In August, The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced the development of a communications platform to establish interoperability standards for all two-way video communications providers. An FCC news release regarding the platform indicated that it will enable people who are deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind to converse with businesses and government agencies using American Sign Language (ASL). The beta version will be available in late 2015, and final version, in spring 2016.

At the 2015 Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc. (TDI) Biennial Conference, FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler discussed how difficulties experienced by the people with disabilities could be addressed using broadband enabled technology. He stated, “It is time for people who speak with their hands and hear with their eyes to enjoy modern advancements in communications technologies. It’s time for you to be able to have your video products work together, so you can call whomever you wish, whenever you wish, from anywhere. The platform we are launching has tremendous potential to ensure that you will be able to do this.”

The 2015 edition of [*Tips for Emergency Use of Mobile Devices*](http://www.jik.com/Mobile%20Devices.pdf), by Disability Policy Consultant, June Isaacson Kailes was released. It provides guidelines for optimal use of your mobile device before, during and after an emergency. It covers emergency contacts, alerts, texting, documents, apps, power back-up charging options, bookmarks, “No Service” backup plans, skill drills and more.

The Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies (G3ict), in collaboration with AT&T, announced the release of [*Internet of Things: New Promises for Person with Disabilities*](http://hosted.verticalresponse.com/606411/06c432e23d/282552261/9073aa0f6e/)*.* According to the press release, both networks and devices have had recent developments that have enabled a greater range of connected devices and Internet of Things (IoT) functionalities and the report explores the impact of IoT on persons with disabilities.

Several App updates were also announced. The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), AccessWorld, app has a new, more accessible version available on the iTunes store. Nuance Communications, Inc. announced plans to launch the new Dragon Anywhere app that brings advanced dictation capabilities to phones, tablets, and desktops. Access and Evacu8 are collaborating on developing an app that will function as an aid for emergency egress of both people with and those without disabilities, as well as, everyday indoor navigation tool.

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# Regulatory Activities

**FCC Chairman Wheeler Remarks at the 2015 TDI Conference**

August 20, 2015 – At the 2015 Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc. (TDI) Biennial Conference, FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler discussed how difficulties experienced by the people with disabilities could be addressed using broadband enabled technology. He encouraged conference attendees to think of accessibility during the development of technologies instead of as an afterthought. Chairman Wheeler shared how the FCC is implementing this advice through the development of an open source platform that includes accessible communications options that could eventually evolve into a much more immersive experience for people using accessible technology. “It is time for people who speak with their hands and hear with their eyes to enjoy modern advancements in communications technologies. It’s time for you to be able to have your video products work together, so you can call whomever you wish, whenever you wish, from anywhere. The platform we are launching has tremendous potential to ensure that you will be able to do this.” Chairman Wheeler concludes by stating that this evolution only occurs if developers adopt the use of this new platform and start developing technology and software to be used in its landscape. According to Wheeler, it is up to the people to bring this new platform into the forefront of accessible technology. An FCC news release regarding the platform indicated that it will enable deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind to converse with businesses and government agencies using American Sign Language (ASL). It will have desktop and mobile app capabilities designed to work with ASL users. The platform will be used to establish interoperability standards for all two-way video communications providers. Developers will also receive access to the source code of this platform to encourage app development and ensure easy functionality of new apps on the platform. It will be available in the beta version late 2015, and final version, in spring 2016.

#### Additional Information

[Remarked of Chairman Wheeler](http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2015/db0820/DOC-334979A1.pdf)

[<http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2015/db0820/DOC-334979A1.pdf>]

[Commission to Offer Open Source Video Access Platform to Increase Adoption of Direct Communications Access](http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2015/db0820/DOC-334978A1.pdf)

[<http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2015/db0820/DOC-334978A1.pdf>]

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# Publications & Reports

**Emergency Preparedness and Your Mobile Device**

August 2015 – There are several steps to prepare your mobile device in case of an emergency. One of the most basic is making sure there are a set of emergency contacts easily accessible on your device. This means ensuring that your contacts are saved to the device and to the SIM card. Various Apps are also available for an array of functions such as first aid information, emergency shelter locations, and geographical emergency alerts. It is also always a good idea to have power backup strategies in case a situation where the power goes out. All of these tips and more can be found in the 2015 edition of [*Tips for Emergency Use of Mobile Devices*](http://www.jik.com/Mobile%20Devices.pdf), by Disability Policy Consultant, June Isaacson Kailes. The publication provides guidelines for optimal use of your mobile device before, during and after an emergency. It covers emergency contacts, alerts, texting, documents, apps, power back-up charging options, bookmarks, “No Service” backup plans, skill drills and more.

#### Additional Information

Tips for Emergency Use of Mobile Devices

[<http://www.jik.com/Mobile%20Devices.pdf>]

**G3ICT and AT&T Report on the Internet of Things & people with Disabilities**

August 11, 2015 – The Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies (G3ict), in collaboration with AT&T, announced the release of a report on the impact of the Internet of Things (IoT) on people with disabilities. According to the press release, both networks and devices have had recent developments that have enabled a greater range of connected devices and IoT functionalities. The [*Internet of Things: New Promises for Person with Disabilities*](http://hosted.verticalresponse.com/606411/06c432e23d/282552261/9073aa0f6e/) is a 22-page document exploring the impact of IoT on persons with disabilities. You can request a hardcopy or download the report at the following link: <http://g3ict.org/resource_center/publications_and_reports/p/productCategory_books/subCat_2/id_335>.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[G3ICT AND AT&T ANNOUNCE NEW REPORT, ‘THE INTERNET OF THINGS: NEW PROMISES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES’](http://hosted.verticalresponse.com/606411/06c432e23d/282552261/9073aa0f6e/)

[<http://hosted.verticalresponse.com/606411/06c432e23d/282552261/9073aa0f6e/>]

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# Other Items of Interest

**Call for Papers – 31st Annual International Technology & Persons with Disabilities Conference**

August 2015 – The Center on Disabilities at California State University, Northridge announced the scientific/research track call for papers (CFP) for the 4th volume of the Journal of Technology and Persons with Disabilities and 31st Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference (commonly referred to as the CSUN Conference). Submissions may be made between August 10th and September 18, 2015. They are also accepting proposals for the general track (i.e. presentation only) and for pre-conference workshops. The CSUN Conference will be held March 21 - 26, 2016 at the Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel in San Diego, California.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[31st Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference](http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference/2016/sessions/)

[http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference/2016/sessions/]

**New Version of AccessWorld App**

August 2015 – According to the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), AccessWorld, an app sponsored by AFB, recently had a new, more accessible version hit the iTunes app store. This app allows users better access to the AFB’s popular online magazine. Users can now search the full archives, have enhanced article sharing capabilities, and have a new text resizing method. The app is now available for free on the iTunes app store.

#### Additional Information

[The New AccessWorld App Is Now Available!](HTTPS://WWW.AFB.ORG/AFBPRESS/PUB.ASP?DOCID=AW160808)

[<https://www.afb.org/afbpress/pub.asp?DocID=aw160808>]

[AccessWorld - By American Foundation for the Blind](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/accessworld/id460177148?mt=8)

[<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/accessworld/id460177148?mt=8>]

**ZoomText and Window-Eyes are Back**

August 31, 2015 – According to the results of our 6th WebAIM Screen Reader User Survey, there has been a resurgence in the use of the screen readers ZoomText and Window-Eyes in the last 18 months. Driven by recent developments, percent of users for both of these readers is up roughly 15%. Window-Eyes became freely available in January 2014; this was a driving factor in the market share increase. Al Squared, the owner of ZoomText and Window-Eyes, also revamped their marketing tactics to attract new users. With these developments it is hoped that these programs will be more involved with web accessibility testing to make sure they work across various platforms like different web browsers.

#### Additional Information

[The Resurgence of ZoomText and Window-Eyes](http://webaim.org/blog/resurgence-of-zoomtext-and-window-eyes/)

[<http://webaim.org/blog/resurgence-of-zoomtext-and-window-eyes/>]

**New Program Manager Hired at Life Labs**

August 31, 2015 – Gabriel Forsythe y Korzeniewicz was introduced as the new program manager at Life Labs. He will be involved with identifying, developing and supporting innovations that help people with disabilities. According to the press release, Gabriel “…will be taking the lead in expanding [the] Innovation Lab series as well as establishing a game-changing entrepreneur’s program…” He is considered a great addition to the team and brings with him experience from tech startups. Since Gabriel has a family member with Down Syndrome, he reports always being passionate about aiding people with disabilities through the entrepreneurial technology space.

#### Additional Information

[Life Labs Welcomes New Program Manager, Gabriel Forsythe y Korzeniewicz!](http://lifelabs.ucp.org/lifelabs-welcomes-programs-manager/)

[<http://lifelabs.ucp.org/lifelabs-welcomes-programs-manager/>]

**New App in Development to Help People with Disabilities Navigate Buildings**

August 22, 2015 – Access and Evacu8 are working together to develop a picture based app to guide people with disabilities in, out, and around the interior of buildings. As a result of a two year consultation with people with disabilities, businesses and fire and rescue services, Access and Evacu8 decided to collaborate on developing this project. The app will also function as an aid for emergency egress of both people with and those without disabilities. The development is being funded through the Kickstarter campaign Evacu8me & Directmii app development until October 8th with a goal of 29,000 euros. Upon completion the app will give instructions in multiple languages and have a free and paid version that functions without any need of an internet connection, in case one is not available during an emergency.

#### Additional Information

[Access and Evacu8 ltd.'s New App Helps People with Disabilities Not Get Lost in Translation](http://www.pr.com/press-release/633978)

[<http://www.pr.com/press-release/633978>]

**Dragon Anywhere, a new voice dictation app for Android and iOS**

August 18, 2015 – Nuance Communications, Inc. (Nuance) announced its plans to launch the new Dragon Anywhere app that brings advanced dictation capabilities to phones, tablets, and desktops. According to Nuance, this new technology has the potential to make any on the go tasks involving a recording much easier to document and/or produce reports. Peter Mahoney, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Dragon stated, “By leveraging the cloud, Dragon Anywhere provides sophisticated dictation, editing, and formatting capabilities not offered by any other mobile voice dictation application, ensuring that professionals can stay productive wherever their work takes them.” This subscription based app will launch in the Fall of 2015 on Android and iOS.

#### Additional Information

[Nuance Introduces Dragon Anywhere – Bringing Professional-Grade Dictation, Voice Editing, and Formatting to iOS and Android](http://www.nuance.com/company/news-room/press-releases/Nuance-Introduces-Dragon-Anywhere.docx)

[<http://www.nuance.com/company/news-room/press-releases/Nuance-Introduces-Dragon-Anywhere.docx>]

[<http://www.nuance.com/for-business/by-product/dragon/dragon-anywhere/index.htm>]

**Motorola Solutions Foundation Presents UCP’s Life Labs with Grant**

August 17, 2015 – A $20,000 Innovation Generation Grant, presented by the Motorola Solutions foundation, was awarded to the United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) to advance the Life Lab’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) initiative. The Innovation Generation Grant program is working toward increasing interest in STEM initiatives among U.S. students with a focus on girls and underrepresented minorities (including those with disabilities). The curriculum developed by Life Labs, aided by this grant, will be made accessible in the form of a toolkit on iTunes U to all of the UCP’s affiliates to further promote their mission. This toolkit will give an average of 100 programming hours to roughly 900,000 students and teachers across the United States. As relayed in the UCP press release, Jossef Scarantino, Acting Director of UCP’s Life Lab stated, “It’s amazing to watch people who participate in an Innovation Lab leave with a greater understanding of the challenges that people with disabilities face and a new confidence that they can participate in solving some of those challenges…This program has the power to change career trajectories and open up a new worlds of creativity and innovation.”

#### Additional Information

[UCP’s Life Labs Receives Motorola Solutions Foundation Innovation Generation Grant](http://lifelabs.ucp.org/ucps-life-labs-receives-motorola-solutions-foundation-innovation-generation-grant/)

[<http://lifelabs.ucp.org/ucps-life-labs-receives-motorola-solutions-foundation-innovation-generation-grant/>]

**Peckham is hiring for IT jobs and is providing Disability training**

August 6, 2015 - Peckham, Inc. is hiring in the Lansing, Battle Creek, and Grand Rapids, Michigan area for people with disabilities and veterans. They are hiring more than 125 IT Help Desk agents for full and part-time positions and wages range from $14 to $18 with a $3.51 health and welfare benefit and opportunities for additional raises. Applicants must be a U.S. citizen, pass a federal background check, have a high school diploma and a CompTIA certification in either A+, Network+ or Security+ and some help desk experience through internship or employment is preferred. Peckham is providing free certification training for qualifying individuals who have an interest in becoming an IT-Tier 1 Help Desk agent but has no experience. If you are interested in applying for the job or starting training for an IT career at Peckham, contact Dave Atherton at (517)316-4037 or email [datherton@peckham.org](mailto:datherton@peckham.org).

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Peckham Provides Entry-Level IT Opportunities for People with Disabilities](http://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2015/08/06/peckham-provides-entry-level-it-opportunities-for-people-with-disabilities/)

[http://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2015/08/06/peckham-provides-entry-level-it-opportunities-for-people-with-disabilities/]

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# Wireless RERC Updates

**Helena Mitchell selected to Delegation in Cuba**

Wireless RERC Principal Investigator, Helena Mitchell, was selected to be part of a delegation to Cuba in early August 2015.  The Delegation was sponsored by the New York Diversity Council who selected 24 members from across the U.S.  Dr. Mitchell is part of the Education Interest Section and met with universities, broadcast executives, ministry of higher education and other organizations to discuss areas of mutual interest.

**Take the Survey of User Needs (SUN)**

The Wireless RERC's 2015 Survey of User Needs (SUN) for Wireless Technologies is still open. It‘s available in both English and Spanish. The SUN is our cornerstone survey of wireless technology use and usability by people with all types of disabilities. First launched in 2002, the SUN is the only national source of comprehensive information and insight into the wireless technology needs of people with disabilities.

SUN data are used by the wireless industry, regulatory agencies, advocacy organizations and other researchers to inform their work. Over the years, more than 6000 people with disabilities have completed the SUN, and more than half have joined our national Consumer Advisory Network (CAN).

Please consider participating in the Survey of User Needs and sharing it with your networks. You can participate on the web, on the phone, or we can send you a paper copy with a postage paid return envelope.

On the web, please go to this address: [**https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SUN-2015**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Almm6pKWRoe4bLrBoBiBLLSsAEX4U6Z9qvArYmzspO1grSzgoAhX7BEjNmBVOCewzKFzJfj1-RttDJram8b2fvw1bnqvLDtZvj7KALFFf4fAwhXIJCn_oW_Jw0p73Ft9YEr2Jd1PqNQF8K07NtRx3_H0hovw0lr_P63TCpx7xiYkc5gy-AzsPsoDKpxWrCacdRRQWo8-0SxOq7CtW1YpqjGwBXQI-HAbvXsMdZ3S5rK1yzbp3YnXlxdYt71QLk7jU91Yv0rc_lpzTnxsUsS8Ao0P3mkebAasjrQaEbwDOZTtaHqAxMBG8pSGuE_P9vP64y_YJgFrWnnCKPszovWXV1YrGpPme12l693v5YNN8GQ=&c=J5gXrtB50_k7qMoPCVvEVj0_vOXpZ-bkPplhgXDkvn808R9deFl8hQ==&ch=i1yuPCr7Hno8MtABcPJo1pX6VGDxbTWC4_jeO7pHoNgbv7ZBhkC6TA==)

To complete the survey over the phone or to request a paper copy, contact John Morris at:[**john\_morris@shepherd.org**](mailto:john_morris@shepherd.org)or 404-367-1348

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[2015 Survey of User Needs (SUN) for Wireless Technologies](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Almm6pKWRoe4bLrBoBiBLLSsAEX4U6Z9qvArYmzspO1grSzgoAhX7BEjNmBVOCewzKFzJfj1-RttDJram8b2fvw1bnqvLDtZvj7KALFFf4fAwhXIJCn_oW_Jw0p73Ft9YEr2Jd1PqNQF8K07NtRx3_H0hovw0lr_P63TCpx7xiYkc5gy-AzsPsoDKpxWrCacdRRQWo8-0SxOq7CtW1YpqjGwBXQI-HAbvXsMdZ3S5rK1yzbp3YnXlxdYt71QLk7jU91Yv0rc_lpzTnxsUsS8Ao0P3mkebAasjrQaEbwDOZTtaHqAxMBG8pSGuE_P9vP64y_YJgFrWnnCKPszovWXV1YrGpPme12l693v5YNN8GQ=&c=J5gXrtB50_k7qMoPCVvEVj0_vOXpZ-bkPplhgXDkvn808R9deFl8hQ==&ch=i1yuPCr7Hno8MtABcPJo1pX6VGDxbTWC4_jeO7pHoNgbv7ZBhkC6TA==)

[[**https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SUN-2015**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Almm6pKWRoe4bLrBoBiBLLSsAEX4U6Z9qvArYmzspO1grSzgoAhX7BEjNmBVOCewzKFzJfj1-RttDJram8b2fvw1bnqvLDtZvj7KALFFf4fAwhXIJCn_oW_Jw0p73Ft9YEr2Jd1PqNQF8K07NtRx3_H0hovw0lr_P63TCpx7xiYkc5gy-AzsPsoDKpxWrCacdRRQWo8-0SxOq7CtW1YpqjGwBXQI-HAbvXsMdZ3S5rK1yzbp3YnXlxdYt71QLk7jU91Yv0rc_lpzTnxsUsS8Ao0P3mkebAasjrQaEbwDOZTtaHqAxMBG8pSGuE_P9vP64y_YJgFrWnnCKPszovWXV1YrGpPme12l693v5YNN8GQ=&c=J5gXrtB50_k7qMoPCVvEVj0_vOXpZ-bkPplhgXDkvn808R9deFl8hQ==&ch=i1yuPCr7Hno8MtABcPJo1pX6VGDxbTWC4_jeO7pHoNgbv7ZBhkC6TA==)**]**

[Encuesta sobre las Necesidades del Usuario respecto a las Tecnologías Inalámbricas](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SUN-Esp_2015)

[<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SUN-Esp_2015>]

**RERC lanza la Encuesta sobre las Necesidades del Usuario respecto a las Tecnologías Inalámbricas-2015**

El Centro de Investigación sobre la Ingeniería de la Rehabilitación con Tecnologías Inalámbricas (Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Wireless Technologies, Wireless RERC) ha lanzado la Encuesta sobre las Necesidades del Usuario respecto a las Tecnologías Inalámbricas-2015 (Survey of User Needs for Wireless Technologies 2015, SUN-2015).

El fin de esta encuesta es descubrir cómo la gente con discapacidades usa tecnología inalámbrica para consumidores. Se enfoca principalmente en los teléfonos celulares, sin embargo, también incluye preguntas sobre otros tipos de dispositivos como las tabletas, por ejemplo el iPad de Apple y el Kindle Fire de Amazon, Surface de Microsoft, y otros dispositivos similares.

Los datos que se recopilen ayudarán a los diseñadores e ingenieros a elaborar nuevos dispositivos y servicios inalámbricos que satisfagan las necesidades de las personas con discapacidades. Desde el año 2001 más de 6000 personas han completado esta encuesta.

Invitamos a todas las personas con cualquier tipo de discapacidad o limitación física, cognitiva, o sensorial completar el questionario. Se puede completarlo en el Web: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SUN-Esp_2015>. Si prefiere completar el questionario en papel o por telefono, por favor comuníquese con John Morris: 404-367-1348; [john\_morris@shepherd.org](mailto:john_morris@shepherd.org)

Sus respuestas son importantes para nosotros, incluso si usted no usa la tecnología inalámbrica. El questionario se puede completar con la ayuda de un asistente o una enfermera si no puede completarlo directamente usted mismo.

No venderemos ni utilizaremos su información personal de otra manera que no sea para realizar la investigación sobre el tema de esta encuesta. Sus datos personales permanecerán en estricta confidencialidad.

# Upcoming Events

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**Tools for Expanding Closed Captioning of Public Access Programming**

The Federal Communications Commission is holding a forum to start a discussion about closed captioning of public access and governmental programming shown on television. The forum will be held on **November 10, 2015, 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM EST at 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20554.**  It will include conversations about the benefits of closed captioning. This event will engage policy makers, local politicians, engineers and more, in order to raise awareness of the issues surrounding captioning of public access and governmental programming.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[FCC Announces Roundtable Event to Discuss Closed Captioning of Public Access and Governmental Programming](https://www.fcc.gov/events/roundtable-discussion-closed-captioning-public-access-and-governmental-programming)

[<https://www.fcc.gov/events/roundtable-discussion-closed-captioning-public-access-and-governmental-programming>]

**Accessing Higher Ground (AHG) 2015 Conference**

AHG 2015 will convene in **Westminster (Denver), Colorado on November 16-20, 2015**. Conference sessions will focus on accessible media, universal design and assistive technology in the university, business and public setting; legal and policy issues, including ADA and 508 compliance; the creation of accessible media and information resources, including Web pages and library resources. The audience and speakers are expected to be comprised of web designers & project managers, assistive technologists, ADA coordinators, human resource personnel, persons with disabilities, disability specialists, faculty, course designers, media specialists and programmers, IT and communication managers. Join the crowd and register at <http://accessinghigherground.org/registration/>.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Conference Website](http://accessinghigherground.org/)

[<http://accessinghigherground.org/>]

**Technology and Disability Policy Highlights,** August 2015

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The Technology and Disability Policy Highlights (TDPH) reports on national public policy events and tracks emerging issues of interest to individuals with disabilities, researchers, policymakers, industry, and advocacy professionals. The TDPH 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 Dalton Nechanicky [Dalton@cacp.gatech.edu] or Salimah LaForce [salimah@cacp.gatech.edu].

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