Technology and Disability Policy Highlights

February 2015



# Overview

In February, the federal government displayed their commitment to increasing the number of people with disabilities in the American workforce by hosting the White House Summit on Disability and Employment. The Summit offered attendees information and resources to help implement this initiative and was timed with the release of the *Resource Guide for Employers on Recruiting, Hiring, Retaining, and Promoting People with Disabilities*, a document designed to help identify relevant federal and federally-funded resources for employers who seek to provide people with disabilities the opportunity to obtain, succeed, and advance in their profession.

Additionally, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a Public Notice **[WT Docket No. 10–254; WT Docket No. 07–250; DA 15–46]** extending comment dates and correcting errors found in their December 23rd request for updated information on current hearing aid compatibility regulations for wireless handsets. Seeking to implement provisions of the *Twenty-first Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010* (CVAA), the rulemaking sought to update the record on whether the FCC should (1) revise the hearing aid compatibility requirements to apply in a technologically neutral manner to all mobile wireless devices used for voice communications, and (2) move away from the fractional compliance regime that exists today and implement a requirement that all mobile wireless devices must comply with the hearing aid compatibility rules.

In other news, the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), released its *Fiscal Year 2014 Organization Highlights* report announcing that the organization has changed its name to the Administration for Community Living (ACL). The report provides stakeholders, Congress, and the Obama Administration with a summary of the department’s accomplishments and activities in preparation for the new fiscal year. The new direction of ACL promises to leverage the work of the Wireless RERC, along with the corresponding appointment of Dr. Helena Mitchell, Principal Investigator for the Wireless RERC, to the FCC’s Disability Advisory Committee (DAC).

**Click the headings below to link directly to a particular section.**

[Regulatory Activities](#regulatoryactivities)

[Publications & Reports](#PublicationsandReports)

[Other Items of Interest](#otheritemsofinterest)

[Wireless RERC Updates](#wirelessrercupdates)

[Upcoming Events](#Upcomingevents)

# Regulatory Activities

**Commerce Department Seeks Comments on NTIA Proposed Census Questions**

February 4, 2015 – The Department of Commerce has issued a request for comment concerning the National Telecommunications and Information Administration’s (NTIA) proposal to add 61 questions to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2015 Current Population Survey (CPS). The questions proposed by NTIA concern gathering reliable data on the use of broadband and high speed Internet, primarily in U.S. households. According to the comment request, Congress, the FCC and other stakeholders are working to develop policies that align with President Obama’s “national goal of universal, affordable broadband access for all Americans.” These departments cite a need for comprehensive, systematic, and current data in order to effectively implement policies regarding broadband, considering the current progress of broadband deployment and adoption. Comments concerning this request are due April 6, 2015 and should address the following:

1. Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility;
2. The accuracy of the agency’s estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information;
3. Ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
4. Ways to minimize the burden on respondents of providing the requested information, including through the use of automated collection techniques.

Submitted comments will be a matter of public record and included in the request to the Office of Management and Budget approval of the collected information, a requirement of the Paper Reduction Act.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Computer and Internet Use Supplement to the Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-02-04/pdf/2015-02087.pdf)

[<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-02-04/pdf/2015-02087.pdf>]

**FCC Extends Comment Dates for Wireless Hearing Aid Compatibility Regulations Information**

February 5, 2015 – The FCC released a notice [**47 CFR Part 20**] correcting errors found in their December 23rd request for updated information to assess whether current hearing aid compatibility rules for wireless handsets effectively address the needs of people who are Deaf and hard of hearing. The December public notice was issued on behalf of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (Wireless Bureau) and the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB) seeking insight into the current consumer experience, technical or other barriers to the provision of hearing aid compatible devices on new wireless technologies, and considerations to amend FCC rules for Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) compliance. The notice was published as an effective date instead of comment and reply deadlines. As a result, comment and comment reply deadlines were extended to: February 5, 2015 to file comments; February 20, 2015to file reply comments.

This extension came in response to a joint request by Telecommunications Industry Association, (CTIA)—The Wireless Association, and Hearing Loss Association of America to extend reply dates. Given recent deployment of LTE networks, Wi-Fi calling, and various other developments, wireless hearing aid compatibility issues are of grave importance to those who use assistive technology and those that advocate on their behalf. While some of the rules currently impose hearing aid compatibility requirements based on the underlying network technology and not on a device’s functionality, the FCC sought to update the record on two principle issues:

1. Should the FCC revise the hearing aid compatibility requirement to apply in a technologically neutral way to all mobile wireless devices that can be used for voice communications?
2. Should the FCC consider moving away from the fractional compliance regime that exists today and implement a requirement that all mobile wireless devices must comply with the hearing aid compatibility rules?

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Request for Updated Information and Comment on Wireless Hearing Aid Compatibility Regulations; Correction and Extension of Comment Dates](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-02-05/pdf/2015-02427.pdf)

[http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-02-05/pdf/2015-02427.pdf]

**DOJ Reaches Accessibility Agreement with County in Missouri**

February 18, 2015 – The Department of Justice (DOJ) announced that it has entered into a settlement agreement with Washington County, Missouri under Project Civic Access, an initiative ensuring that public entities throughout the country comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The settlement agreement follows a compliance review that found architectural and other barriers (i.e. communication).

The alleged violation of the ADA was highlighted when Randy Barron, a wheelchair user, attempted to apply for a marriage license at a county building but found that the ramp descending to the Record of Deeds was too steep for safe entrance to the office. The subsequent compliance review also found that the space did not provide sufficient room for comfortable maneuverability.

Under the agreement, Washington County has agreed to take appropriate steps toward improving access for people with disabilities. The terms of this agreement include the following: “physically modifying facilities surveyed by the Department so that they are accessible; retaining an Independent Licensed Architect; appointing an ADA Coordinator; adopting a Grievance Procedure; providing auxiliary aids and services necessary to ensure effective communication; ensuring accessibility of polling places; ensuring that emergency procedures, plans, and shelters accommodate people with disabilities; and posting and publishing a notice to inform members of the public of the provisions of Title II and their applicability to the County's programs, services, and activities.”

Barron stated, “[I am] happy to know that Washington County will be ensuring the accessibility of its buildings and programs. So many aspects of public life require access to the county’s facilities and services, from paying taxes, to going to court, to getting married.”

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Settlement Agreement](http://www.ada.gov/washington_county_pca/washington_county_sa.html)

[<http://www.ada.gov/washington_county_pca/washington_county_sa.html>]

**Section 508 Refresh - Proposed ICT Standards and Guidelines**

February 27, 2015 – The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) issued a notice proposing to revise and update existing Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as well as Telecommunications Act Accessibility Guidelines under Section 255 of the Communications Act of 1934. Both of which were implemented over 15 years ago, the Access Board is seeking comments that will assist the board in updating regulations to reflect the technological advancements of the twenty-first century (i.e. smartphones, mobile processing capabilities of tablets and other mobile devices).

The proposed Section 508 standards will replace the current product-based approach with technical requirements, including information and communications technology (ICT) accessibility and functionality requirements. The proposed changes to this section include:

* Access Board application of WCAG 2.0;
* Outlining covered electronic content;
* Expanding interoperability requirements; and
* Issuing requirements for real-time-text.

The proposed 255 guidelines will also include revisions to provide clarity by defining terms like “usable” to directly reflect how qualifying devices should provide subsequent support to users with disabilities. Notable proposed changes include:

* Requiring manufacturers of telecommunications equipment to provide real-time-text functionality wherever a telecommunications product provides real-time, two-way voice communication; and
* Application of WCAG 2.0 to electronic documents.

Comments, whether written or electronically submitted, will be accepted on or before May 28, 2015.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Standards and Guidelines](http://www.access-board.gov/attachments/article/1702/ict-proposed-rule.pdf)

[<http://www.access-board.gov/attachments/article/1702/ict-proposed-rule.pdf>]

# Publications & Reports

**White House Summit Introduces New Disability Resource Guide for Employers**

February 3, 2015 –In February, the federal government displayed their commitment to increasing the number of people with disabilities in the American workforce by hosting the White House Summit on Disability and Employment. Presented by the White House Domestic Policy Council and the Curb Cuts to the Middle Class Initiative, the Summit offered members of industry, patrons, and disability advocates the opportunity to share experiences in creating a more dynamic and inclusive workforce through recruitment, new hire, promotion, and retention strategies. Attendees were also provided with information and resources to help implement this initiative, including the *Resource Guide for Employers on Recruiting, Hiring, Retaining, and Promoting People with Disabilities*.

The resource guide, designed to answer common questions raised by employers, identifies relevant federal and federally-funded resources for employers who seek to provide people with disabilities the opportunity to obtain, succeed, and advance in their profession.

Notable attendees included Secretary of Labor Tom Perez and Kathy Martinez, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy. Perez delivered the event’s keynote address, while Martinez spoke as part of a panel on workplace practices. Additional panels at the summit addressed “strategies for preparing the next generation of workers with disabilities and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act's disability-related provisions.”

For more information about the White House Summit on Disability and Employment, please click [**here**](https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/02/03/advancing-employment-opportunities-people-disabilities). To download a copy of the *Resource Guide for Employers on Recruiting, Hiring, Retaining, and Promoting People with Disabilities*, please click the link below.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[*Resource Guide for Employers on Recruiting, Hiring, Retaining, and Promoting People with Disabilities*](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/employing_people_with_disabilities_toolkit_february_3_2015_v4.pdf) [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/employing_people_with_disabilities_toolkit_february_3_2015_v4.pdf>]

**NIDRR Changes Name & Releases 2014 Fiscal Year Report**

February 17, 2015 – The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR formerly NIDRR) released its Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 Organization Highlights Report, a summary for stakeholders, Congress, and the Obama Administration summarizing department accomplishments and activities. The report announces that the organization formerly-known as the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), under the authority of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, will be moved to the Administration for Community Living (ACL) within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

This change will be reflected by NIDILRR-funded centers and research collaborators. The FY 2014 Report gives a breakdown of the department’s program budget, in addition to other notable information about the department. Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers receive the third highest amount of support with $14.3 million in funding, following Rehabilitation Research Training Centers ($21.1) and Model Systems ($18.1). Though the report does not outline upcoming changes, the NIDILRR-funded Wireless RERC will continue in its mission “to research, evaluate and develop innovative wireless technologies and products that meet the needs, enhance impendence and improve the quality of life and community participation of individuals with disabilities."

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research FY 2014 Organization Highlights](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/nidrr/2014organizationhighlights.pdf)

[<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/nidrr/2014organizationhighlights.pdf>]

# Other Items of Interest

**Bureau of Engraving and Printing Distributes Free Currency Readers**

The U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) announced it will distribute free currency readers to eligible blind and low-vision individuals, a preemptive solution to the Federal Reserve’s tactile-enhancement of currency notes. Originally announced in the form of a July 2014 press release, the BEP and National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress (NLS) are collaborating through their U.S. Currency Reader Program to promote access to paper currency. This serves as a BEP initiative, which is also realized through the BEP’s assistance when developing the Wireless RERC-funded **IDEAL Currency Reader®**.

The pilot of the U.S. Currency Reader Program began in September where approximately 12,000 were pre-ordered and delivered. The national rollout of the program allows all U.S. citizens, or legal residents in the U.S. who are blind or visually impaired, access to the **iBill® Currency Identifier**. The iBill® “identifies all denominations of U.S. paper currency by either voice announcement, tone pattern, or vibration pattern.”

Currency Readers are currently available and may be requested by submitting the U.S. Currency Reader application form to: U.S. Currency Reader Program, 14th & C Streets, S.W., Washington, DC 20228. The form is available in English and Spanish, and may be accessed **[HERE](http://www.moneyfactory.gov/uscurrencyreaderform.html)**. Additional information is also available by contacting BEP at **meaningful.access@bep.gov** or (844) 815-9388.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[U.S. Currency Reader Program](http://www.moneyfactory.gov/uscurrencyreaderpgm.html)

[http://www.moneyfactory.gov/uscurrencyreaderpgm.html]

**CEA Appointed to Disability Advisory Committee**

February 17, 2015 – The Consumer Electronics Association (CEA), the technology trade association that represents the U.S. consumer electronics industry, was appointed as an inaugural member to the FCC’s Disability Advisory Committee (DAC). In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the DAC will provide policy guidance to the FCC, assist in educating the public on disability-related matters and facilitate the participation of consumers with disabilities. Author of the currently used closed captioning protocol, CEA will contribute to DAC recommendations concerning the accessibility of closed captioning and video description, access to televised emergency information, and other related issues.

CEA vice president of regulatory affairs Julie Kearney stated, “As the leading technology trade association representing over 2,000 consumer electronics companies, we are dedicated to ensuring that innovative technologies and services are accessible to people with disabilities. We applaud the chairman and the commissioners for their commitment to this issue and we look forward to working with the DAC to better meet the needs of people living with disabilities.”

For more information about the Consumer Electronics Association’s appointment to the DAC, please click the link below.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[CEA Named to FCC Disability Advisory Committee](http://www.ce.org/News/News-Releases/Press-Releases/2015-Press-Releases/CEA-Named-to-FCC-Disability-Advisory-Committee.aspx)

[<http://www.ce.org/News/News-Releases/Press-Releases/2015-Press-Releases/CEA-Named-to-FCC-Disability-Advisory-Committee.aspx>]

**Verizon Wireless Announces VelaSense: A Mobile App Suite to Aid Visually-Impaired**

Feb. 26, 2015 – Verizon Wireless issued a public notice this month announcing its deployment of VelaSense by Visus, an application suite for the people with visual impairments. Now exclusively available to Verizon Wireless users with Android smartphones, VelaSense bundles various adaptive technologies into one device. Though designed to work on any handset, VelaSense currently functions on Android operating systems that are series 4.3 or higher.

The software “employs the use of GPS for point-to-point navigation, 4G LTE and WiFi for cloud computing, downloading software upgrades, and using social networking applications. It also uses Voice recognition for users issuing verbal commands.” Developed in collaboration with the Verizon Innovation Program and Visus Technology Inc., VelaSense intended to make navigation easier on mobile devices and in the physical world. Additionally, VelaSense helps users with visual impairments regain their independence by assisting them during everyday activities (i.e. identify colors, determine the denomination of currency, and reading product labels).

Barbara Kaplan, National Marketing Operations and accessibility services manager for Verizon Wireless, stated, "Verizon is at the forefront of providing access, products and services to the disabled and our collaboration with Visus is one way wireless devices and technology can work together to provide an impactful solution for visually impaired customers."

A 30-day free trial is now available to Verizon Wireless customers who download VelaSense. Following the trial, customers may subscribe to VelaSense for $14.99 a month, a fee that will be added to the customer's bill or paid at the time of subscription. For more information about VelaSense, please click [HERE](http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/wireless-technology-helps-visually-impaired-300041913.html).

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Wireless Technology Helps Visually-Impaired](http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/wireless-technology-helps-visually-impaired-300041913.html)

[http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/wireless-technology-helps-visually-impaired-300041913.html]

**GAATES Honors Zero Project WITH 2015 Award of Recognition**

Feb. 27, 2015 – The Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments (GAATES) announced the Zero Project as the 2015 recipient of the GAATES Award of Recognition. As an international organization committed to accessible and sustainable social and virtual environments, this year’s GAATES awards recognized the Zero Project as a leader in “independent living and political participation,” the theme of the United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Mr. Martin Essl, Mr. Jacob Von Uexkull and Mr. Michael Fembek also received special recognition.

The Zero Project, was recognized for “their leadership in providing the platform for the exchange of ideas and best practices in independent living and political participation (2015), accessibility (2014) and employment (2013), and for facilitating the on-going global implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.”

The GAATES Award of Recognition is presented annually to individuals or groups who “promote the full inclusion of persons with disabilities through the implementation of the CRPD based on the principles of Universal Design.”

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[GAATES Presents Award of Recognition to the Zero Project](http://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2015/02/27/gaates-presents-award-of-recognition-to-the-zero-project/)

[<http://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2015/02/27/gaates-presents-award-of-recognition-to-the-zero-project/>]

# Wireless RERC Updates

**Top 25 TDPH Topics of 2014**



Technology and Disability Policy Highlights (TDPH) editors produced over 190 stories in 2014, covering a wide range of disability access issues. The graphic word cloud above depicts the twenty-five most used keywords in 2014. Not surprisingly, “hot” topics were accessibility, the provision of accessible services, assistive technology, wireless technology, and policy. The provision of accessible services included policy considerations, as reflected though Department of Justice consent decrees with municipalities and educational institutions and FCC rulemakings concerning IP relay, emergency communications, and video programming, to name a few. The TDPH stories concerning wireless technology as a keyword addressed linking hearing aid technology to wireless devices, inclusive design, text-to-911, accessible and assistive apps, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreted wireless emergency alerts, using wireless technology as a workplace accommodation, and more. The assistive technology (AT) content included adaptations of Google Glass, AT utilized to access websites, AT used to access wireless emergency alerts, and wireless device modifications.

While our most frequent information source was the FCC, we developed reports from a variety of homes: the White House, The Department of Justice, Department of Labor, FEMA, National Council on Disability, Mobile Manufacturing Forum, Pew Research Center, Paciello Group, United Nations, Apps 4 Android, Sprint, Nomensa, Anvato, and many more for a total of 62 discrete sources in all.

As you may have noticed, the TDPH is organized by story type. The following chart shows the percentage of stories for each type (i.e. legislative, regulatory, publications and reports, other items of interest and Wireless RERC news.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Story Type** | **Percent** |
| Legislative Activities | **8.2%** |
| Regulatory Activities | **31.4%** |
| Publications and Reports | **7.5%** |
| Other Items of Interest | **34.0%** |
| Wireless RERC Updates | **18.9%** |

Table 1 - Percentage of TDPH Stories by Story Type

The TDPH reaches 660 subscribers directly via email, and extends to a much greater audience through social media. We engage over 851 members in our LinkedIn Group ([ATPG](https://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=1854667&trk=my_groups-b-grp-v)), 545 followers on Twitter ([@CACPGT\_wRERC](https://twitter.com/CACPGT_wRERC)), and 257 fans on Facebook ([WirelessRERC](https://www.facebook.com/WirelessRERC)). In 2014 alone, the Wireless RERC’s social media presence on Twitter was able to reach more than 450,000 profiles/people. If you missed last month’s issue that highlighted [Top TDPH Stories of 2014](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/content/newsroom/top-tdph-stories-2014-thank-you-sharing), measured by social media sharing rates, last year’s top ten stories were:

* [AT&T and the Wireless RERC Launch Mobile Device Training For People with Disabilities](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/content/newsroom/consumer-wireless-education)
* [House Passes Social Media Emergency Response Bill](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/content/newsroom/house-passes-social-media-emergency-response-bill)
* [CSUN 2015 Call for Papers: Technology & Persons with Disabilities](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/content/newsroom/csun-2015-call-papers-technology-persons-disabilities)
* [Smart Steps Mobile App: Decisions Made Easy](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/content/newsroom/smart-steps-mobile-app-decisions-made-easy)
* [Save the Date: 2014 Annual Compendium of Disability Statistics and Research-to-Policy Roundtable](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/content/newsroom/save-date-2014-annual-compendium-disability-statistics-and-research-policy)
* [FCC Issues Final Rules for Closed Captioning](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/content/newsroom/fcc-issues-final-rules-closed-captioning)
* [W3C Proposes New Recommendations for Web Applications](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/content/newsroom/w3c-proposes-new-recommendations-web-applications)
* [Survey: Defining Current Practices in Teaching Universal Design](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/content/newsroom/survey-defining-current-practices-teaching-universal-design)
* [Blind and Deaf Consumer Preferences for Android and iOS Smartphones](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/content/newsroom/blind-and-deaf-consumer-preferences-android-and-ios-smartphones)
* [Participants Needed! Focus Group on Emergency Information](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/content/newsroom/participants-needed-focus-group-emergency-information)

If you haven’t already, please also join us on LinkedIn ([ATPG](https://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=1854667&trk=my_groups-b-grp-v)), Twitter ([@CACPGT\_wRERC](https://twitter.com/CACPGT_wRERC)), and Facebook ([WirelessRERC](https://www.facebook.com/WirelessRERC)).

**Healthy Environments and Active Lifestyles (HEAL) Open House**

The 7th Annual Healthy Environments and Active Lifestyles (HEAL) Open House will be held on April 14, 2015 from 5:00 PM to 8:30 PM. The event will feature student design projects from the Wireless RERC’s universal design course, BCS - the Chartered Institute for IT, Southeast Regional Group Youth Code Club and ongoing research from many organizations within Georgia Tech, including the Wireless RERC’s App Factory, the Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (CATEA), the Aware Home Research Initiative and the Institute for People and Technology (IPaT), among others. Those interested in attending are asked to RSVP at <http://www.healatgt.gatech.edu/content/RSVP>.

#### Additional Information

[HEAL Event](http://www.healatgt.gatech.edu/?q=Welcome)

[<http://www.healatgt.gatech.edu/?q=Welcome>]

**Three Wireless RERC Papers Win Best of CSUN 2014**

February 2, 2015 – The Wireless RERC and the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) on Universal Interface and Information Technology Access were selected among Best Papers at last year’s *29th International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference*, or CSUN 2014. Both NIDRR-funded RERCs, three papers from the Wireless RERC were named among the best to appear in the latest issue of the *Journal on Technology and Persons with Disabilities*, and one from the RERC on Universal Interface and IT Access.

The three papers from the Wireless RERC include:

* [Futures of Disabilities: Is Technology Failing Us?](http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.3/133380)*,* James White, Salimah LaForce, Braeden Benson, page 119

This paper examines possible reasons why technology may not be living up to its promise for some people with disabilities (including poor policy implementation, low accessibility, cost, disinterest, lack of awareness, prejudice) and describes preliminary results from the first round of a futures-oriented Delphi survey.

* [Hearing Aid Compatibility of Cellphones: Results from a National Survey](http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.3/133372)*,* John Morris, James L. Mueller, Michael L. Jones, page 13

This paper presents findings from a national survey research project conducted in 2013 by the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Wireless Technologies (Wireless RERC) to understand the current experiences of users of hearing aids and cochlear implants with regard to compatibility of their mobile wireless phones with their hearing technology. Data are analyzed for all respondents who use hearing aid or cochlear implant technology, as well as by age and type of aids (behind-ear, in-ear, bone-anchored, cochlear implant).

* [Wireless Technology Uses and Activities by People with Disabilities](http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.3/133373)*,* John Morris, James L. Mueller, Michael L. Jones, page 29

This paper presents findings from the Survey of User Needs (SUN), a national survey on use and usability of mainstream wireless technology by people with disabilities. Data from the most recent SUN conducted in 2012-2013 will be presented, focusing on the wireless activities of people with disabilities. Data on the following uses will be analyzed: accessing the internet, text messaging, emailing, downloading and using mobile apps, social networking, using GPS and location based services. Results show that as a group, people with disabilities use wireless services at rates similar to the general population. However, substantial variation exists in use of some services between disability types, mainly those with hearing, speech or vision loss.

The paper abstract from the RERC on Universal Interface and IT Access is below:

* [Computerized Decision Support for People with Disabilities: Review and Outlook](http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.3/133381) *,* Yao Ding, Gregg C. Vanderheiden, page 134

People with disabilities often need professional support and advice in daily life decisions such as choosing a job, a health care plan, or an access product that best fits their needs. However many people face barriers to professional support due in large part to lack of funding and lack of adequately trained providers. Recent years have seen many applications of computerized decision support, showing great potential to aid decision-making with populations as diverse as people with disabilities. In this paper, we review the state of the art technology and research on decision support systems for people with disabilities, and point out problems, potentials, and research needs.

These and all of the articles from this issue are available for free of charge. To access the full text of the *Journal on Technology and Persons with Disabilities*, please click the link below.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[NARIC Announcement](https://naricspotlight.wordpress.com/2015/02/02/rerc-presentations-selected-as-best-papers-at-csun-2015/)

[<https://naricspotlight.wordpress.com/2015/02/02/rerc-presentations-selected-as-best-papers-at-csun-2015/>]

[Journal on Technology & Persons with Disabilities Volume 2](http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.3/133355)

[http://scholarworks.csun.edu/handle/10211.3/133355]

**Wireless RERC’s Dr. Helena Mitchell Appointed to FCC’s Disability Advisory Committee**

February 10, 2015 – Dr. Helena Mitchell, Executive Director at Georgia Tech’s Center for Advanced Communications and Principal Investigator for the Wireless RERC, was appointed to the FCC’s Disability Advisory Committee (DAC).

In response to the Commission’s call for membership and nominations, the Commission received over 120 applications. After careful consideration of all applications and nominations for membership, the Commission has selected 36 Members and 3 Ex Officio Federal Government Representatives (Non-Voting Members).

The first meeting of the DAC will be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2015, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the FCC’s headquarters, Room TW-C305 (Commission Meeting Room), 445 12th Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20554. Members of the Committee will discuss the following: roles and responsibilities of the Committee and its members, issues that the Committee will address, recommended subcommittees, subcommittee membership and meeting schedule, the tasks for which each subcommittee will be responsible, and any other topics related to the DAC’s work that may arise.

FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler stated, “This new Committee will provide sorely needed expertise and recommendations from consumer and industry stakeholders on communications and video programming issues. We look forward to using this expertise to improve our ability to meet the needs of consumers with disabilities.”

To read more about the FCC Disability Advisory Committee, please visit the link below.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[FCC Announces First Meeting Date of The Disability Advisory Committee And Appointment Of Membership](http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2015/db0210/DA-15-194A1.pdf)

[<http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2015/db0210/DA-15-194A1.pdf>]

# Upcoming Events

**Public Policy Luncheon on Next-generation 911 to Address Accessibility**

The Center for Advanced Communications Policy (CACP), the Federal Communications Bar Association (FCBA) of Atlanta, and Cox Communications, Inc. will present a luncheon panel on “Next Generation 911:  Location Accuracy, IP Transition and PSAPs, Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and other 911 Related Issues.” The discussion will take place on March 27th from 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm at the Georgia Tech Research Institute: 250 14th St., NW, (Room. 119), Atlanta, GA 30318.

Panelists include:

* Brian Fontes, CEO, NENA The 9-1-1 Association
* Matthew Gerst, Counsel, Director of External and State Affairs, CTIA—The Wireless Association
* Jose Jimenez, Executive Director of External Affairs, Cox Communications Inc.

Moderated by Kennard B. Woods, Senior Counsel, Friend, Hudak & Harris, LLP.

The doors will open at 11:30 a.m. The panel discussion will begin promptly at 12:15 p.m. Complimentary box lunches will be provided with a choice of the following: ham and Swiss, turkey and Swiss, tuna salad, chicken salad or vegetarian.

Please RSVP with reservation confirmation and sandwich selection to: jackie@cacp.gatech.edu or 404-385-4612 by **March 25, 2015**.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Center for Advanced Communications Policy News](http://www.cacp.gatech.edu/node/77#storyhejhdhehhfyfyfyfyfyfyfyfyf)

[<http://www.cacp.gatech.edu/node/77#storyhejhdhehhfyfyfyfyfyfyfyfyf>]

**NFB Hosts 2015 Jacobus tenBroeck Disability Law Symposium**

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) is hosting the *2015 Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium* from March 26 to 27 in Baltimore, Maryland. Named in honor of the constitutional law scholar and founder of NFB, the event celebrates the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by looking ahead to the next twenty-five years. The theme for this year’s symposium is “The Americans with Disabilities Act at 50: The Future of Disability Law and the Right to Live in the World.” The event will offer legal experts, students, and advocates of rights for people with disabilities the opportunity to engage in workshops and discuss topics such as: the future of disability, how to enable the participation of people with disabilities in court proceedings, the unique challenges faced by criminal suspects and offenders with intellectual and developmental disabilities, a vision for the next twenty-five years to improve and augment the ADA, Rehabilitation Act, and more.

The event will take place at the NFB Jernigan Institute, 200 East Wells Street at Jernigan Place, Baltimore, Maryland 21230. Registration fees apply: $174 for general admission, $25 for students.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Conference Registration](https://nfb.org/civicrm/event/register?reset=1&id=49)

[<https://nfb.org/civicrm/event/register?reset=1&id=49>]

**Pacific ADA Update Conferences**

The Americas with Disabilities Act celebrates its 25th Anniversary this year with the Pacific ADA Center 2015 ADA Update Conferences, a dual event that allows leaders in disability law and advocates the opportunity to engage disability-related issues and topics. Each conference will feature distinguished speakers and experts in the field and provide the most up-to-date information on ADA regulations, law, and cases. Participants may choose to attend in either Oakland, California or Phoenix, Arizona, with each conference providing:

* ADA Basics (optional)
* Two morning plenary sessions and discussion
* 30 breakout session choices - intermediate and advanced
* ADA tracks on:
* Employment
* Facility Accessibility
* US Access Board - Design
* Department of Justice (DOJ)
* Post-Secondary Education
* Emergency Preparedness
* Accessible Information Technology

The ADA Update Conference in Oakland, California will be held March 16-17, 2015 at the Oakland Marriott City Center 1001 Broadway, Oakland, California 94607. Some additional sessions will be held at the Oakland Convention Center, which can be accessed from the hotel. To register, please click [HERE](http://adapacific.org/oakland_conference/registration.php).

The ADA Update Conference in Phoenix, Arizona will take place April 12-14, 2015 and include local representatives from enforcement agencies, EEOC, DOJ, U.S. Access Board, Education, and the State of California. Additional information regarding location and registration are currently unavailable.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Oakland ADA Update Conference Website](http://adapacific.org/oakland_conference/registration.php)

[<http://adapacific.org/oakland_conference/>]

**AFB and Arizona AER Host 2015 Leadership Conference**

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) and Arizona Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) are jointly hosting the 20*15 Leadership Conference: Rising to the Challenge*. The annual Leadership Conference covers relevant topics in the field of blindness and offers the opportunity for conference attendees to engage technology experts, corporate representatives, educators, and rehabilitation professionals. Registration is now open. The event will be held April 9-11, 2015 at the Renaissance Phoenix Downtown Hotel, 50 East Adams Street, Phoenix, AZ 85004. Conference fees are $150 for one day, $250 for two days, and $300 for three days.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[American Foundation for the Blind Leadership Conference 2015 and the Arizona AER Statewide Conference](http://www.afb.org/info/about-us/events-and-awards/american-foundation-for-the-blind-leadership-conference-2015/123)

[http://www.afb.org/info/about-us/events-and-awards/american-foundation-for-the-blind-leadership-conference-2015/123]

**UCB Announces Two-Day Epilepsy Hackathon in Atlanta and Brussels**

Union Chimique Belge (UCB), an international manufacturer of biopharmaceutical products in Brussels, Belgium, announced that it will sponsor two simultaneous epilepsy hackathons – “Hack Epilepsy.” The event aims to attract digital experts to help build innovative solutions for people with epilepsy, a common brain disorder that impairs physical, psychological, and social functioning of over 65 million people around the world.

The hackathon will be held simultaneously in Atlanta, Georgia and Brussels, Belgium on April 24-26 2015, providing the opportunity for patients, epilepsy specialist, and digital experts to collaborate. Teams at “Hack Epilepsy” will compete for prize money to fund an innovative prototype that will benefit people with epilepsy.

Erik Janssen, Vice President Global Patient Solutions Epilepsy at UCB stated, “We want to support patients, their families and caregivers, with digital solutions that can connect them to valuable sources…Creative, highly skilled online developers and designers relish the challenge of coming up with practical, workable prototypes that can be of real value to people with a severe disease such as epilepsy.”

For more information and to register for Hack Epilepsy, go to [www.hackepilepsy.com](http://www.hackepilepsy.com).

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Hack Epilepsy Website](http://www.hackepilepsy.com/)

[<http://www.hackepilepsy.com/>]

**M-Enabling Summit**

The *4th Annual M-Enabling Summit* will take place June 1-2, 2015 at the Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel, 2800 South Potomac Ave, Arlington, Virginia 22202. M-Enabling is a two day conference and showcase dedicated to promoting solutions and implementing accessible mobile communications and services for persons of all abilities and senior citizens. Participants will have the opportunity to gain insight on how accessible mobile applications and services transform customer relations for the private and public service sectors. The Summit also provides the opportunity to network with industry, governments, and Fortune 500 companies promoting universal access and greater usage.

The 2015 M-Enabling Summit will feature wearable computing, Near Field Communications, mobile payments, cloud solutions, M2M, Internet of Things, as well as new apps and services.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[2015 M-Enabling Summit](http://m-enabling.com/reg.html)

[<http://m-enabling.com/reg.html>]

**Society for Disability Studies 2015 Annual Conference**

The Society for Disability Studies (SDS) is holding their 28th annual conference in Atlanta, June 10-13, 2015.  This year's theme, “getting it-right/s,” will address focus areas such as ADA Legacy, Communities / Identities, Critical Design & Technology Studies, Power and Privilege, Professional Development, and Translational Research in Health Sciences and Disability Studies. Each strand will have three to four related events, varying in format (complete panels, individual presentation, topical discussion, workshop, poster, etc.).

The event will be held at Hyatt Regency Atlanta, 265 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, Georgia, USA, 30303. For more information, contact the SDS Atlanta 2015 Program Committee at sdsconf15@gmail.com.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Conference Website](https://www.disstudies.org/conferences/atlanta)

[<https://www.disstudies.org/conferences/atlanta>]

**National Federation of the Blind National Convention 2015**

The National Federation of the Blind announced that their 2015 National Convention will take place July 5-10, 2015 at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando, Florida. The primary function of the national convention is to address policy issues in the upcoming years and officer/board member elections. The NFB convention also provides practical benefits for attendees including seminars for those new to blindness and reviews of the latest adaptive technology for the blind.

The Rosen Centre Hotel is located at: 9840 International Drive, Orlando, Florida 32819. Hotel reservations can be made at (800) 204-7234 after January 1. Additional information as to meetings, schedule, hotel, etc., may be obtained as it becomes available by visiting the link below.

#### ADDITIONA INFORMATION

[National Federation of the Blind National Convention 2015](https://nfb.org/convention)

[<https://nfb.org/convention>]

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



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].

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This is a publication of the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Wireless Technologies supported by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research of the U.S. Department of Education, grant # H133E060061. The opinions contained in this publication are those of the grantee and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Education.