



TECHNOLOGY AND DISABILITY POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

November 2012



OVERVIEW

In November the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a Public Notice (PN) and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), seeking public input on accessibility topics. The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau asks for comments on the effectiveness of FCC rules regarding hearing aid compatibility (HAC) of wireless handsets; and the Consumer and Government Affairs Bureau requests feedback on making emergency information, video description, and the equipment used to deliver the information more accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

At the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting held on November 2, 2012, FCC Chairman Genachowski acknowledged the FCC's commitment to following recommendations from the mHealth Task Force and the incorporation of mHealth technologies in standard medical practice within the next five years. With this effort, the FCC will address the interests and accessibility needs of people with disabilities, low-income individuals and other under-served groups when evaluating and making recommendations regarding the implementation of telehealth technologies.

The FCC announced their next open meeting will be held on December 12, 2012 including an agenda item on a proceeding related to Next Generation 911 (NG 9-1-1) services. This would develop and deploy Text-to-911 services for all individuals, including those with disabilities.

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REGULATORY ACTIVITIES

WIRELESS BUREAU WANTS COMMENTS ON HEARING AID COMPATIBILITY

November 1, 2012 — The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau is seeking public input on the effectiveness of Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules regarding hearing aid compatibility (HAC) of wireless handsets. The Bureau previously released a 2010 Review Public Notice that addressed the compatibility and accessibility of various wireless phones to people with hearing aids and cochlear implants. However, there have been technological advances since the 2010 Review PN and in this **PN [10-254]**, the Bureau is interested in how these advances have affected HAC. In addition, the Bureau seeks comments and information on the 2011 revision of American National Standards Institute Technical Standard C63.19 (ANSI Standard C63.19) which “expanded the range of frequencies over which hearing aid compatibility can be tested to 698 MHz – 6 GHz and established a direct method for measuring the radio frequency (RF) interference level of wireless devices to hearing aids.”

The FCC issues PNs to inform the public of upcoming actions or events and occasionally a PN will invite the public to submit comments and input regarding the rule or policy under review. This allows any individual to submit their views on the issue and participate in the development of policies related to telecommunications and broadcast issues. Comments can be filed electronically using the FCC’s Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) or by paper format and there is no particular format or length required. All that needs to be included in the comment is the docket number or rulemaking number to which the comment refers to, the commenter’s name and views. However, its advised that commenters reference the section(s) in the PN their feedback refers to. Comments are due on or before January 7, 2013.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Commission Public Notice](#)

[http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2012/db1101/DA-12-1745A1.pdf]

Extended Comment Date Notice

[http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2012/db1127/DA-12-1898A1.pdf]

Guide to Filing Comments

[<http://www.fcc.gov/guides/how-comment>]

Electronic Comment Filing System

[<http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/>]

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF THE UNDERSERVED IN TELEHEALTH DEVELOPMENT

November 2, 2012 — A recommendation regarding the Mobile Health (mHealth) Task Force was made at the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting on November 2, 2012. The mHealth Task force was organized in 2012 and is comprised of academic, industry and government leaders that research the barriers and develop solutions to rapid deployment and adoption of wireless health technologies. The importance of this research is represented in an estimate by Nerac, a Connecticut research firm, that by 2020, “at least 160 million Americans will be monitored and treated remotely for at least one chronic condition.” Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Genachowski stated that the FCC will follow recommendations from the mHealth Task Force and work towards making mHealth technology a “routine medical best practice within five years.” With this effort, the CAC asks the FCC to include and address the interests and accessibility needs of people with disabilities, low-income individuals and other under-served groups when evaluating and making recommendations regarding “affordable connectivity and compatibility for telehealth devices.”

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Draft CAC Recommendation](#)

[http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-317190A1.pdf]

IMPLEMENTING THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY COMMUNICATIONS AND VIDEO ACCESSIBILITY ACT OF 2010

November 19, 2012 — The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) [**12-107**] to implement specific provisions of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA). The FCC seeks comments regarding making emergency information, video description, and the equipment used to deliver the information more accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Related to Section 202 of the CVAA, the NPRM proposes the required use of a secondary audio stream to provide visual emergency information aurally, thereby increasing the accessibility of televised emergency information. The FCC is also looking for comments on the benefits and costs of providing emergency information on a secondary audio stream. Under the assumption that the FCC was to require increased accessibility of visual emergency information via a secondary audio stream, the FCC seeks comments on the extent to which the FCC should allow the use of text-to-speech (TTS) technologies. With regards to Section 203

of the CVAA, the FCC seeks comments on how to confirm that television equipment is capable of delivering video description and making emergency information accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The FCC maintains that the proposed rule revisions in this NPRM support the purpose of the CVAA to “update the communications laws to help ensure that individuals with disabilities are able to fully utilize communications services and equipment and better access video programming.” Comments must be submitted on or before December 18, 2012 and Reply Comments must be submitted on or before December 28, 2012.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#)

[<http://www.fcc.gov/document/notice-proposed-rulemaking-accessible-emergency-infovideo-desc>]

[PDF of Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#)

[http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2012/db1119/FCC-12-142A1.pdf]

[Comment Deadlines](#)

[http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2012/db1128/DA-12-1908A1.pdf]

TEXT-TO-911 SERVICES COULD BECOME A REALITY

November 21, 2012 - The next open meeting of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will be held on Wednesday, December 12, 2012 at 1:00pm EST. Agenda items include: a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking related to broadband services; a Report and Order related to increasing support for rural health care services; and a Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking related to Next Generation 911 (NG 9-1-1) services that would develop and deploy Text-to-911. This would enable individuals, including those with disabilities, to contact 911 emergency services through a text message, which would be “a first step toward additional next generation services offering wider access to 911 responders.” The meeting will be streamed live over the Internet on the FCC Live web page at <http://www.fcc.gov/live>.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[News Release](#)

[http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-317548A1.pdf]

[FCC Live Web Page](#)

[<http://www.fcc.gov/live>]

WIRELESS RERC NEWS

USING MOBILE APPS FOR MEMORY MANAGEMENT AFTER A BRAIN INJURY

On November 16, 2012, John Morris, Wireless RERC research scientist, and Tracey Wallace, a speech language pathologist at Shepherd Center, presented at the 2012 American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) Convention. The presentation highlighted a variety of practice guidelines and

techniques that use various mobile applications and can help with memory management in individuals recovering from a brain injury.

The theme of the 2012 ASHA Convention was "Evidence of Excellence: Opportunities and Outcomes", which focused on the partnership between clinical practice and research, as it relates to the most current research, tools, and techniques to be applied in the area of speech-language and hearing. The Convention was held at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Georgia, from November 15-17, 2012.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[PDF of Presentation](#)

[<http://wirelessrerc.org/sites/default/files/publications/ASHA%202012%20Memory%20Aids%20FINAL.pdf>]

WIRELESS RERC PRESENTS AT CSUN 2013

Four Wireless RERC papers will be featured at the 2013 International Technology & Persons with Disabilities Conference (CSUN) in San Diego, February 25-March 2, 2013. The papers include: *App Factory: Assistive and Accessibility App*, which will be a demo session; *Wireless Technology Use and Disability* based on the Survey of User Needs; *Social Media, Public Emergencies & Disability*, which is related to the Survey on Emergency Communications; and *Survey Says! National EAS Test Accessibility Study* that discusses the on-line survey and focus groups conducted in November 2011. Come meet us in San Diego!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Conference Details](#)

[<http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference/>]

2012 SURVEY ON EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Wireless RERC has launched a new survey on emergency communications. The survey questions address emergency services, public alerts and warnings, and social media use during emergencies. We conducted this survey once before, almost two years ago; because technology is changing so rapidly and new government rules are being implemented, we deem it the right time to conduct the survey again. The data will be of great interest to regulatory authorities and other professionals working to improve emergency response and disaster relief for people with disabilities.

New to this version of the survey is the inclusion of a question for the respondent to identify if he/she is a caregiver. In this way, we hope to collect rich data on the caregiver experience as it relates to emergency communications technologies and behaviors, as well as the experiences of individuals with disabilities.

Consumers and industry colleagues, please feel free to distribute the link to the survey widely. As an incentive for taking the survey, we will be giving away two \$100 Amazon gift certificates to two lucky respondents. Let your voice be heard!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Start the Survey on Emergency Communications and People with Disabilities!](#)

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Emergency-Communication-2012?utm_source=Industry/CAN%20Newsletter%2011/5/2012&utm_campaign=Re%3AWireless%201/5/2012&utm_medium=email]

PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO BROADBAND ACCESS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

November 2012 — Time Warner Cable (TWC) Research Program on Digital Communications published a report by Krishna Jayakar, Ph.D of Pennsylvania State University entitled: "Between Markets and Mandates: Approaches to Promoting Broadband Access for Persons with Disabilities." The focus of the report is on identifying the gaps and barriers in broadband access and adoption by individuals with disabilities in order to develop programs and policies that can address these challenges. The four primary barriers identified are: accessibility to electronic devices and their compatibility with assistive technologies; the costs associated with broadband technologies; inaccessible online content; and individuals' unease with broadband technology and a lack of knowledge of its potential benefits. In addition, case studies are evaluated of programs and policies previously implemented to increase access to broadband technology to individuals with disabilities. The results showed that there was not one policy that worked best but rather policies should, in general, respond to the needs of the heterogeneous population of individuals with disabilities and coordinate stakeholders' efforts to accomplish this goal. Fernando R. Laguarda from TWC notes the importance of this report and the impact that broadband can have on individuals with disabilities, as "it can empower social networking, mentoring, and connecting with the broader world... [and] expands access to information, resources, and tools to meet complex needs in emergencies and disasters."

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[PDF of Report](#)

[http://www.twcresearchprogram.com/pdf/TWC_Jayakar.pdf]

[TWC Research Program on Digital Communications Reports](#)

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

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

YOUTUBE CAPTIONING IN SIX MORE LANGUAGES

November 28, 2012 — YouTube announced that automatic captioning will be available for YouTube videos in six languages: German, Italian, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Dutch. This is in addition to the closed captioning already provided for English, Japanese, Korean and Spanish videos. YouTube acknowledges that there will be some errors with automatic captioning but that there are tools the content creators can use to improve the quality of their captions. YouTube noted that there are approximately “200 million videos with automatic and human-created captions on YouTube, and [we] continue to add more each day to make YouTube accessible for all.”

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[YouTube Announcement](#)

[<http://youtube-global.blogspot.com/2012/11/youtube-automatic-captions-now-in-six.html>]

[Webcast Registration](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAKING NEXT GENERATION 911 EMERGENCY SERVICES MORE ACCESSIBLE

The Emergency Access Advisory Committee (EAAC) will hold their next meeting on Friday, December 14, 2012 from 10:30am to 3:30pm EST. The EAAC is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) advisory committee that was created under the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA). The primary responsibility of the EAAC is to evaluate and recommend “the most effective and efficient technologies and methods” that allow individuals with disabilities access to Next Generation 911 (NG 9-1-1) emergency services. The agenda for the upcoming EAAC meeting includes discussion on reports drafted by EAAC subcommittees that relate to ensuring individuals with disabilities have access to 911 emergency services. The meeting is open to the public.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Public Notice](#)

[http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-12-1875A1.pdf]

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE, PARTICIPATION AND HEALTHY AGING THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

On December 19, 2012 the Institute of Medicine/National Research Council Forum on Aging, Disability, and Independence will present a public workshop entitled: “Fostering Independence, Participation and Healthy Aging through Technology”. The workshop will be held in the Keck Center of the National

Academies in Washington, DC from 8:30am-5:00pm EST. The focus of the workshop is on how existing and emerging technologies can be employed to help aging adults whose independence and engagement in the community has been impaired. In addition, there will be discussion focused on “barriers to the development and adoption of these promising technologies.” Attendance to the workshop is free of charge and will be made available via webcast for those unable to attend in person (registration is required).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Workshop Announcement and Agenda](#)

[<http://www.iom.edu/Activities/Aging/AgingDisabilityForum/2012-DEC-19.aspx>]

[Webcast Registration](#)

[<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1089334/HSP-Webcast-Workshop-on-Fostering-Independence-and-Healthy-Aging-Through-Technology-12-19-12>]

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Technology and Disability Policy Highlights 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 researches, evaluates and develops innovative wireless technologies and products that meet the needs, enhance independence and improve quality of life and community participation of people with disabilities. For more information on the Wireless RERC, please visit our web site at [<http://www.wirelessrerc.org>].

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