Technology and Disability Policy Highlights

November 2013

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# Overview

In November, the United States District Court found that New York City failed to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities when planning for and responding to disasters in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The court highlighted that the plan does not include provisions for the accessibility of transportation, emergency shelters, or emergency communications for people with disabilities. Although the case only holds the City liable for their actions, the decision highlights the importance of accessibility during emergencies for people with disabilities within all communities.

In the regulatory arena, the federal Communications Commission (FCC) has revised the process for filing complaints regarding the accessibility of “advanced communications services and equipment, Internet browsers built into mobile phones, and telecommunications services and equipment.” The new procedures will allow individuals to contact companies directly concerning accessibility issues. Complaints can also be resolved with help from the FCC Disability Rights Office. Following the release of a blog post by FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler highlighting future efforts of the FCC Technology Transitions Policy Task Force, the FCC released a Public Notice [DA 13-2078] to inform interested parties of ways to provide the Task Force with comments or feedback. The notice particularly highlights that interested parties are welcome to request ex parte meetings with the Task Force and may do so by submitting meeting requests to <mailto:TechTaskForce@fcc.gov>.

The Wireless RERC requests your assistance with distributing the [Wireless Emergency Alerts Survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WirelessRERC_WEA_Survey) to people with disabilities. The survey is available in both [**English**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WirelessRERC_WEA_Survey) and **İ[en Español](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WirelessRERC_WEA_Encuesta)!**. Feel free to cut and paste the announcement located in the Wireless RERC news section and share it with our contacts.

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

[Judicial Activities](#_Legislative_Activities)

[Regulatory Activities](#regulatoryactivities)

[Other Items of Interest](#otheritemsofinterest)

[Wireless RERC Updates](#wirelessrercupdates)

[Upcoming Events](#Upcomingevents)

# Judicial Activities

## Court Rules that NYC Violated the ADA

November 7, 2013 — A recent ruling by the United States District Court found that New York City failed to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities when planning for and responding to disasters in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. While the court acknowledged the robustness of the City’s emergency preparedness plans, it also concluded that the City has not done enough to “provide people with disabilities meaningful access to its emergency preparedness program.” Specifically, the court highlighted that the plan does not include provisions for evacuating people with disabilities from multistory buildings, providing accessible evacuation transportation, ensuring that shelters are ADA accessible, ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities are met during power outages, or providing accessible communications for people with disabilities. Although the case only holds the City liable for their actions, the decision highlights the importance of accessibility during emergencies for people with disabilities within all communities.

#### Additional Information

[ADA Case: Opinion and Order](http://www.scribd.com/doc/182639061/159-Opinion-and-Order-pdf#fullscreen)

[<http://www.scribd.com/doc/182639061/159-Opinion-and-Order-pdf#fullscreen>]

# Regulatory Activities

## FCC Revises Complaint Procedures for Resolving Accessibility Issues

November 13, 2013 — The FCC released a Public Notice [DA 13-2177] highlighting new procedures for filing complaints regarding the accessibility of “advanced communications services and equipment, Internet browsers built into mobile phones, and telecommunications services and equipment.” The new procedures follow two recent CVAA mandates which require advanced communications systems and equipment and internet browsers on mobile phones to be accessible to people with disabilities. The complaint procedures allow individuals to contact the company directly with accessibility issues or to contact the FCC Disability Rights Office, which will work with the individual and the company to try and resolve the accessibility issue. Informal complaints may now only be filed *after* the individual has contacted the FCC Disability Rights Office to request dispute assistance. For additional information concerning a company’s accessibility customer care representative, consumers are encouraged to visit [http://apps.fcc.gov/rccci-search/search.action or to call 202-418-2517](http://apps.fcc.gov/rccci-search/search.action%20or%20to%20call%20202-418-2517) (voice) or 202-418-2922 (TTY).

#### Additional Information

[Public Notice [DA 13-2177]](http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2013/db1114/DA-13-2177A1.pdf)

[<http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2013/db1114/DA-13-2177A1.pdf>]

[Complaint Procedures](http://www.fcc.gov/accessibility-complaints-255-716-718-action-options)

[<http://www.fcc.gov/accessibility-complaints-255-716-718-action-options>]

## FCC Task Force to Address the IP Transition

November 19, 2013 — On November 19, FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler released a blog post entitled *The IP Transition: Starting Now.* The post highlighted future efforts of the FCC Technology Transitions Policy Task Force concerning evolving communications networks, often called the “IP transition.” Specifically, the post noted considerations for an Order providing the FCC with recommendations regarding the implementation, data collection practices and consideration of policy issues for IP transition pilot projects. Following Chairman Wheeler’s post, the FCC released a Public Notice [DA 13-2078] describing the ways that “interested parties can provide input into the work of the Task Force.” The notice particularly highlights that interested parties are welcome to request ex parte meetings with the Task Force and may do so by submitting meeting requests to <mailto:TechTaskForce@fcc.gov>.

#### Additional Information

[Public Notice [DA 13-2078]](http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2013/db1119/DA-13-2078A1.pdf)

[<http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2013/db1119/DA-13-2078A1.pdf>]

[The IP Transition: Starting Now](http://www.fcc.gov/blog/ip-transition-starting-now?fontsize=)

[<http://www.fcc.gov/blog/ip-transition-starting-now?fontsize=>]

# Other Items of Interest

## Call For Participants: Cognitive Accessibility Task Force

November 6, 2013 — The newly developed W3C Cognitive Accessibility Task Force is seeking new members. The Task Force, which is a joint effort of the Protocols Formats Working Group (PFWG) and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Working Group (WCAGWG), will work to provide guidance to ensure that web content is accessible for people with cognitive and learning disabilities. Those interested in joining the Task Force must also be members of either the PFWG or the WCAGWG and can contact [The Cognitive Accessibility Task Force](mailto:janina@rednote.net,joshue.oconnor@cfit.ie,akirkpat@adobe.com) for more information.

#### Additional Information

[Cognitive Accessibility Task Force](http://www.w3.org/WAI/PF/cognitive-a11y-tf/)

[<http://www.w3.org/WAI/PF/cognitive-a11y-tf/>]

## Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

November 7, 2013 — W3C has issued a request for reviewers for the last call working draft regarding Implementing User Agent Accessibility Guidelines (UAAG) 2.0. The draft provides guidance for designing accessible user agents, which include “web browsers and other types of software that retrieve and render web content.” The updated version of the draft now includes mobile accessibility examples to demonstrate how “web browsers that follow UAAG benefit people with disabilities.” Some examples include individuals who may need to utilize alternative content for images to prevent excessive scrolling or need to set closed captioning as the default for all videos. W3C is now seeking final comments on the draft, which are due by December 16, 2013 to [public-uaag2-comments@w3.org](mailto:public-uaag2-comments@w3.org).

#### Additional Information

[For Review: Implementing UAAG 2.0](http://www.w3.org/WAI/Overview.html#x20131107b)

[<http://www.w3.org/WAI/Overview.html#x20131107b>]

## Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines: Call for Testing

November 7, 2013 — W3C announced that the Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (ATAG 2.0) have been published as a W3C Candidate Recommendation. ATAG 2.0 provides guidelines for developers to ensure that authoring tools, including “content management systems, learning management systems, HTML editors, blogs, wikis, social media, and development environments,” both produce accessible content and are accessible for people with disabilities. At this stage in the process, W3C encourages all developers to test the recommendations to ensure that they can be implemented in various projects. W3C also requests comments regarding all authoring tools that have met ATAG 2.0 criteria, so that these tools can be mentioned in the ATAG 2.0 Implementation Report. All comments are due by December 7, 2013 and can be sent to <mailto:public-atag2-comments@w3.org>.

#### Additional Information

[ATAG 2.0 Implementation Testing](http://www.w3.org/WAI/Overview.html#x20131107b)

[<http://www.w3.org/WAI/Overview.html#x20131107b>

## LifeLabs Presents the Design-athon

November 11, 2013 – In November, United Cerebral Palsy’s Life Labs partnered with Enabled by Design and Futuregov to host the first International Enabled by Design-athon in Washington, D.C. Over 100 participants not only had the chance to hear from experts on accessibility and design, but were able to participate in an “immersive usability workshop,” where they created prototypes of accessible and attractive products. Of the event, Stephen Bennett, President and CEO of UCP, noted, “United Cerebral Palsy is thrilled to have hosted this year’s exciting and hugely successful Design-athon. Many of the prototypes built today have the potential to be fully developed, brought to market—and to change the lives of people with disabilities. In just its first year in the United States, the Design-athon has proved that it is not only a great opportunity for discussion and collaboration, but is truly an inspiration for innovation among some of our country’s top science and technology experts.” Of all the prototypes created at the event, the top prize went to “Sous Chef,” “a mobile kitchen island with variable height.”

#### Additional Information

[Design-athon Press Release](http://ucp.org/ucp-holds-first-international-design-athon/)

[<http://ucp.org/ucp-holds-first-international-design-athon/>]

## New Funding Opportunity for Disability and Rehabilitation Research

November 19, 2013 — The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) has announced award applications for Minority-Serving Institutions to conduct research and development Field Initiated Projects (FIPs). Working to “improve the capacity of minority entities [conducting] high-quality disability and rehabilitation research,” the FIPs program is offering both research and development awards with the purpose of “[developing] methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technology that maximize the full inclusion and integration” into all aspects of daily life for people with disabilities. The estimated available award is $200,000 for a project no longer than 36 months. The application for the awards is available beginning November 19, 2013, and the final deadline for applications is February 18, 2014.

#### Additional Information

[NIDRR Award Application [FR Doc No: 2013-27559]](https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/11/19/2013-27559/applications-for-new-awards-national-institute-on-disability-and-rehabilitation-research-disability)

[<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/11/19/2013-27559/applications-for-new-awards-national-institute-on-disability-and-rehabilitation-research-disability>]

## NIDRR Awards Funding for Cloud Computing Research

November 25, 2013 — The U.S. Department of Education National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) has awarded $3.7 million to Carnegie Mellon University to conduct a Disability Rehabilitation Research Project (DRRP) on Inclusive Cloud and Web Computing. The project is a collaboration between Carnegie Mellon, Syracuse University and The University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). Project team director, Aaron Steinfeld, noted, “There has been great progress over the years on Web accessibility standards and systems, but there is still a lot of work left to do.” The five-year project will focus on enhancing web accessibility including the accessibility of web interfaces, the “presentation of information on the web,” and “ways to dynamically change pointing and clicking actions on web pages.” More information on the project can be found at <http://inclusiveweb.org/>.

#### Additional Information

[Carnegie Mellon Press Release](http://www.cmu.edu/qolt/News/2013/cmu-awarded-disability-rehabilitation-research-project-on-inclusive-cloud-and-web-computing.html)

[<http://www.cmu.edu/qolt/News/2013/cmu-awarded-disability-rehabilitation-research-project-on-inclusive-cloud-and-web-computing.html>]

## Save the Date! State of the Science on Employment & Disabilities

November 27, 2013 — The University of New Hampshire in partnership with the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for Evidence Based Practice in Vocational Rehabilitation (RRTC-EBP-VR) and the Kessler Foundation will host a State of the Science Conference, April 8-9, 2014 at the Hyatt Regency in Bethesda, Maryland. The conference will address employment disparities for people with disabilities by “[showcasing] research from three NIDRR-funded employment rehabilitation research and training centers.” When available, additional information regarding the conference, including registration, will be provided at <http://www.researchondisability.org>.

#### Additional Information

[Research on Disability](http://www.researchondisability.org)

[<http://www.researchondisability.org>]

# Wireless RERC Updates

## Wireless RERC Awards Funding for App Development

November 25, 2013 — Each year, the Wireless RERC’s App Factory invites experienced organizations or individual developers based in the U.S. to submit proposals for financial support to develop assistive and/or accessibility apps which can be used to enhance the utility and usability of wireless products and services for customers with and without disabilities. Following a call for proposals earlier this year, the App Factory is excited to announce that five apps have been selected for development during the 2013-2014 grant year. The apps selected for development include:

* **cTDS**, an Android application to incorporate continuous proportional control to an existing Tongue Drive System, which uses discrete (switch-based) tongue motion as the input method for electric wheelchair control or other environmental control functions.
* **Help Me**, an iOS mobile application which supports individuals with cognitive disabilities in reducing anxiety, resolving everyday problems, and increasing independence through cognitive decision trees and backup support.
* **Mobile-Friendly Context Discovery Services**, an Android mobile application which will enable mobile device users with print disabilities, needing/trying to read E-books, PDF files, Word documents, Text files, and other digital works to (1) more easily identify and focus on the major points of content; (2) better understand the concepts being presented; and, (3) more effectively remember what they read.
* **RheumMate**, an iOS mobile application which will enable users with musculoskeletal joint health issues to capture and share information about their joint health with their health care provider.
* **Zyrosky**, a mobile game application for both Android and iOS platforms, to enhance the effectiveness of exercise for children with limited fine motor control by encouraging and monitoring completion of their prescribed exercises.

#### Additional Information

[The App Factory](http://wirelessrerc.org/content/app-factory-d1)

[<http://wirelessrerc.org/content/app-factory-d1>]

## Take and Share the Wireless Emergency Alert Survey!

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) can be received on cell phones across the country. These alerts are automatic, provide AMBER alerts, and weather emergency notifications. Unlike text alerts you may receive from your city, county, or institution, you do not have to sign-up to receive WEA messages. The Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Wireless Technologies (Wireless RERC) is interested in your level of awareness of WEA messages. This survey will also help us understand how accessible and useful you think they are.

[**Start** the Wireless Emergency Alert Survey (in English)!](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WirelessRERC_WEA_Survey) ***or* İ**[**en Español**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WirelessRERC_WEA_Encuesta)**!**

**As an incentive for taking our 2013 WEA survey you will have a chance to win one of two $100 Amazon gift cards!**

If you wish to take the survey over the phone, please email**[DeeDee Bennett](mailto:deedee.bennett@cacp.gatech.edu" \t "_blank)**or call her at 404-385-4618.

#### Additional Information

[Start the Wireless Emergency Alert Survey!](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WirelessRERC_WEA_Survey)

[<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WirelessRERC_WEA_Survey>]

# Upcoming Events

## 2013 Compendium Briefing and Research-to-Policy Roundtable

The release of the 2013 Compendium of Disability Statistics and the Third Annual Research-to-Policy Roundtable will take place on December 11, 2013 at the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C. The Compendium is a web-based tool used to “pool disability statistics.” The release of the Compendium will be followed by a “one-hour workshop on the sources and uses of disability statistics” and the Research-to-Policy Roundtable, where researchers and disability advocates will be able to discuss ways that research can influence policy and programs affecting people with disabilities. For those unable to attend, the event will be broadcast live on the web.

#### Additional Information

[Annual Compendium of Disability Statistics and Research-to-Policy Roundtable](http://www.researchondisability.org/home)

[<http://www.researchondisability.org/home>]

## North Georgia Digital Economy Conference

The Georgia Technology Authority will host the North Georgia Digital Economy Conference on December 12, 2013 at the Lanier Technical College Forsyth Conference Center in Cumming, Georgia. During this interactive conference, “technology pros, business innovators, online educators,” and students will have the opportunity to discuss “the ways people can collaborate to benefit from Internet-age economic development, education, health care, and community innovation.” The conference will also address digital education, workforce development, and the future of broadband in Georgia. Those interested can register for the event [here.](http://www.cviog.uga.edu/gta/register.php)

#### Additional Information

[North Georgia Digital Economy Conference](http://www.cviog.uga.edu/gta)

[<http://www.cviog.uga.edu/gta>]

**Technology and Disability Policy Highlights**

November 2013

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 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, Braeden Benson [braeden@cacp.gatech.edu] or Salimah LaForce [salimah.laforce@cacp.gatech.edu].

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