

[View our profile on LinkedIn - Clickable button](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=001BAYcM6XeLJHdRXRV2X7aDlNH5PKaF2SSpyupMxkLvrvLec3G20arTN3hl_C5tqpuCKtN1URu1IyEg0-XB2AR0Azck2WjLK8ksxFtVnwNToFbq21rNvPpkVAf6RL6wsuMoAifPNu8U94fj8auaeM_cCj87S2qXNSl)Technology and Disability Policy Highlights  

August 2018

With the congressional recess occurring in August, this issues’ legislative section includes disability law related activities that occurred over the summer. For example, the Commission on Disability Rights brought Resolution 116C to the American Bar Association (ABA) House of Delegates. Resolution 116C advises that Title II and III of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) be expanded in its interpretation of discrimination of people with disabilities to be inclusive of digital “places,” devices, and applications. Also, the week before the congressional recess, Senator Bob Casey [D-PA] introduced the *Office of Disability Policy Act of 2018* [**S. 3261**], “To establish the Office of Disability Policy in the legislative branch.” The work of the Office would be to track and analyze proposed legislation to determine its potential effectiveness, possible unintended consequences, and likely impacts and outcomes for people with disabilities.

In the regulatory space, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a Public Notice requesting stakeholder input on *Tentative Findings for the 2018 Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) Biennial Report* [**CG Docket No. 10-213**]. They reported on the state of industry compliance with accessibility provisions of the CVAA noting areas where progress has been made, as well as indicating where work needs to be done. Regarding the latter, the accessibility of new and emerging technologies was deemed as promising, but design considerations will have to carefully consider people with disabilities to fulfill the promise.

In Wireless RERC news, John Bricout, PhD, who is the director of the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (UMN), and his collaborators at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) are investigating the socially assistive capabilities of "Pepper," a versatile 4-foot tall humanoid robot. They found that increases in human-robot social engagement were related to discernible drops in depression following three-week interactions with Pepper. This work paved the way for developmental aspects of the project that Bricout and his UTA collaborators are currently pursuing on Pepper as a respite robot for older caregivers with adult children who have developmental disabilities.

This issue also includes news about indoor wayfinding, the CDC’s new disability prevalence statistics, Google’s native hearing aid support, smart tags, a Braille standard, and more.

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legislative Activities

**House Resolution 116C Expansion of**

August 7, 2018 - Earlier this month, the Commission on Disability Rights brought Resolution 116C to the American Bar Association (ABA) House of Delegates. Resolution 116C advises that Title II and III of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) be expanded in its interpretation of discrimination of people with disabilities to be inclusive of digital “places,” devices, and applications. With Resolution 116C, inaccessibility to technology in general, and goods and services delivered via technology should be considered discriminatory. In creating this resolution, its supporters hope for courts to apply the ADA to reach maximum digital accessibility and inclusion for all. Resolution 116C was passed with enormous support by the ABA. To actively demonstrate its support, the ABA House of Delegates is undergoing updates to its website and beta-testing to ensure that it is accessible to all users. [Source: ABA]

#### Additional Information:

[Resolution 116C](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/images/abanews/2018-AM-Resolutions/116c.pdf)

[[https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/images/abanews/2018-AM-Resolutions/116c.pdf](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/images/abanews/2018-AM-Resolutions/116c.pdf%20)]

[House resolutions decry over-discipline in schools, urge tech access for those with disabilities](http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/disability_rights_resolutions?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=ABA+Journal+Daily+News)

[<http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/disability_rights_resolutions?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=ABA+Journal+Daily+News>]

**Increased Funding in Upcoming Fiscal Year for Adaptive Technology**

Summer 2018 - Across the nation, an increased number of educational institutions, state and local governments are incorporating smart technologies into their adaptive technology programs (AT). State AT programs are a provision of the *Assistive Technology Act of 1998* (as amended). The Act funded states to improve access to adaptive technology by people with disabilities. By utilizing smart technology, states and other institutional actors, hope to expand the reach of the program to more people with varying types of disabilities.

Traditionally, states were limited in their ability to provide extensive smart technology services as a part of their AT Act programs. However, the federal government will allocate an additional $38 million for state AT Act programs in the fiscal year 2019. This additional funding will enable states to incorporate more mainstream, smart technology options for use in an assistive manner. For instance, apps such as Vital allow for personalized information about an individual on the autism spectrum to be shared with police officers. Information may include what will trigger certain responses and appropriate strategies for de-escalation. States like Minnesota have already begun utilizing this technology.

States are also interested in robotic telepresence. This form of smart technology allows the user to interact with others when they are not physically present. Telepresence robots can enable school and work attendance for users with illnesses or disabilities who otherwise would be excluded. Other smart technologies include text-to-911 services and smart home environment devices. The article specifically mentions Amazon’s Echo which some users have found particularly useful for hands-free or eyes-free access to tasks such as unlocking doors, setting the temperature, and turning on lights. The expansion of the types of technologies that state AT Act programs can distribute is a welcome advancement that is anticipated to improve independent living outcomes for people with disabilities. [Source: Dawn Kawamoto, Government Technology]

Additional Information:

[Adaptive Technology Programs Turn to Robotics and IoT to Help People Who Have Disabilities](http://www.govtech.com/health/Adaptive-Technology-Programs-Turn-to-Robots-and-IoT-to-Help-People-Who-Have-Disabilities.html)

[<http://www.govtech.com/health/Adaptive-Technology-Programs-Turn-to-Robots-and-IoT-to-Help-People-Who-Have-Disabilities.html>]

**Proposed Office of Disability Policy**

Summer 2018 – The week before the congressional recess, Senator Bob Casey [D-PA] introduced the *Office of Disability Policy Act of 2018* [**S. 3261**], “To establish the Office of Disability Policy in the legislative branch.” This bill was born from Senator Casey’s assertion that too often the federal government develops legislation without factoring in the possible implications and impact it will have on an important segment of the U.S. population, people with disabilities. S. 3261 proposed that the Office of Disability Policy (Office) be part of the non-partisan Government Accountability Office. The work of the Office would be to track and analyze proposed legislation to determine its potential effectiveness, possible unintended consequences, and likely impacts and outcomes for people with disabilities. The establishment of the Office could lead to more evidence-based, research-driven policies. S. 3261 was assigned to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. [Source: Congress.gov]

#### Additional Information:

[Office of Disability Policy Act of 2018](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3261/text)

[<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3261/text>]

Regulatory Activities

**FCC Reports on the State of Advanced Communications Accessibility**

August 23, 2018 – The FCC’s Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau released a Public Notice requesting stakeholder input on *Tentative Findings for the 2018 Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) Biennial Report* [**CG Docket No. 10-213**]. A provision of the CVAA requires that the FCC evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the CVAA and submit a report to Congress on the state of industry compliance. From the stakeholder comments submitted in the spring of 2018, [including those made by the Wireless RERC](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/wireless_rerc_comments_2018_cvaa_implementation_evaluation.pdf), the FCC tentatively finds that progress has been made in some areas of accessible communications, while in others more work remains to be done. For example, they cite the increase in hearing aid compatible cell phones and the accessibility features found in smartphones as evidence of industry compliance with the CVAA regarding mobile devices. However, they also note that the accessibility advances in smartphones and other advanced communications devices and services have left non-smartphones in a state of stasis.

As noted in Wireless RERC comments, some users with disabilities’ access to smartphones is limited by the interface design and thus, have chosen to use non-smartphones. “I use the old fashion phone because with the iPhone I have problems with the scroll and the touch features…so I prefer old fashion phones, they did not demonstrate the ring before I bought it, I just got it because it’s easy to hit the buttons.[[1]](#footnote-1)” However, users such as these make a tradeoff in device functionality and computing capability (e.g., mobile Internet browsing). It appears that improved design of smartphones, particularly the user-interface options, could relieve the need for some people with disabilities to remain users of basic and feature phones.

Another area noted for both its progress and problems was that of customer and technical support. While the industry has continuously added multiple ways for people with disabilities to access customer service agents trained on accessibility features, they also indicated that consumers with disabilities continue to have problems finding devices with the needed accessibility features. The tentative findings go on to address new communications technologies such as virtual and augmented reality, agreeing that they “hold the promise of improving the quality of life for consumers with disabilities.” However, there exist accessibility barriers that need to be addressed. The final report, detailing the above and much more, will be sent to Congress on October 8, 2018.

Additional Information:

[Tentative Findings for the 2018 Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) Biennial Report [CG Docket No. 10-213]](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-18-832A1.pdf)

Public Notice: [Word](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-18-832A1.doc) || [PDF](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-18-832A1.pdf)

Wireless RERC Updates

# Pepper the Robot Creates Bonds of Trust and Emotion for Humans at Different Age Levels to Improve Quality of Life

Wireless RERC researcher, John Bricout, PhD, who is the director of the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (UMN), and his collaborators at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) are investigating the socially assistive capabilities of "Pepper," a versatile 4-foot tall humanoid robot. Pepper can provide social, physical and emotional support for older adults and people with disabilities.

Preliminary research, conducted by the Emotional Robotics Living Lab at UTA, focused on interactive engagements with Pepper by having humans act out Shakespearean sonnets with the robot. They found that increases in human-robot social engagement were related to discernible drops in depression following three-week interactions with Pepper. This work paved the way for developmental aspects of the project that Bricout and his UTA collaborators are currently pursuing on Pepper as a respite robot for older caregivers with adult children who have developmental disabilities.

The collaborative UMN-UTA team is conducting a study to investigate how to engage the attention, trust, and comfort of care recipients while providing respite for older adult caregivers. The aim is to have Pepper demonstrate engaging, trustworthy, caring, and ethical behavior consistent with the caregiving role. The development team is using a new video of Pepper showing how the robot will talk and move to begin an iterative feedback process for aligning Pepper's behavior with the expectations of the caregiver and care recipient.  The team will record participants' perspectives and reactions on how Pepper's voice, speech pattern, responsiveness, and body movements might impact their caregiving and receiving interactions with the robot.  The team will then go back and modify Pepper's programming for a subsequent live trial and analysis, from which observations and insights can be drawn.

Bricout notes "the broad aim of our work is to extend the capabilities and quality of life of older adults and people with disabilities, leveraged by socially assistive robotics as partners in learning and action."

Additional Information:

[Read more about Pepper the robot and the collaborative research team,](HTTPS://WWW.UTA.EDU/NEWS/RELEASES/2017/11/GREER%20RELEASE%20ROBOTS.PHP)

[[https://www.uta.edu/news/releases/2017/11/Greer%20release%20robots.php](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001fxia0qyPOYe1qYQ0WjyTzk5yt97PntsjNyxsIqVjtbauUKplzyrUl10w0gor5oRl5otHV3252wWgldS49KKymf3ufRvmlBCpCog2jvEx8pQk83wXOiFN_BKOd6ISOyFI1JzCWZcO4Qh5KDtXbQVJ9ecuPPMqz2vHUJ_-hEEsrQENKVmVzzAurl3ZanZTls1jFG21PGmQAueVvk3zk6SHdYsjj2ijfLC3aAajmjuOmrWEySsvKMD-uMarpxn82UxwLYKnZ8l5gK-osCxJHsR0K8nEPup2yGL049opoptnjJ7MIzVpTTaY0uD8OyPbj9fOA--W-AfggxbKzJZwH1ePpeKIpWPHC2QvZgCfXxI2K6CMsWpc13FpTjLlUvCpIg1xaeqoZGEpzsyADHV9Jkn2qf3IG_0giabyQ_eOlNGWujEBHuzkQ5l-UqhltoAHfdC0DvZxzmWEIYw=&c=hV1JGDardYuLhXCLSws254-oKPL_UEWCqvVCSiqjQQkftflt9IpxuA==&ch=71lJgbrSohDJ7A0lgdrZryt_4tq2zhSDYaIX8hoUrZ7aMa7eWFtonw==)]

# Nathan Moon Attends RESNA 2018 and Board of Directors Meeting

Wireless RERC project director, Dr. Nathan Moon, attended the RESNA 2018 Conference, which was held in Arlington, VA, on July 12-15, 2018. RESNA, the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America, is the premier professional membership organization dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of people with disabilities through increasing access to technology solutions.

Nathan participated in the annual Board of Directors meeting, which focused on RESNA's strategic plan for 2019-2023. This marked Nathan's last year as a member of the Board, for which he was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation during the conference. He will remain a co-chair for the RESNA Government Affairs Committee.

The conference included sessions by program officers from the National Institute for Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), including a keynote address by NIDILRR Director Dr. Robert Jaeger. Several Rehabilitation Engineering and Research Centers (RERCs) held their State of the Science conferences in conjunction with RESNA, which added to the program's emphasis on cutting-edge technology for people with disabilities.

Additional Information:

[RESNA 2018 Conference](http://x8la2j.attendify.io/)

[<http://x8la2j.attendify.io/>]

# Tell Us About Your Wireless Devices!

To inform the inclusive development of wireless technologies and services, the[**Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Wireless Inclusive Technologies (Wireless RERC)**](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/tags/newsroom/wireless-rerc-news)is collecting data on people with disabilities’ user experiences and expectations.

Your responses will:

* Help designers and engineers make more accessible wireless devices and services for people with disabilities.
* Inform recommendations to better ensure inclusive policies and practices.

Take the survey online at <http://bit.ly/2018UserNeedsSurvey>

Or

To take the survey by telephone contact: Salimah LaForce at 404-894-8297

Other Items of Interest

**RightHear, an Indoor Wayfinding App**

August 23, 2018 - This month, tech company RightHear launched their app in the U.S. market. The app has indoor wayfinding capabilities for people that have vison disabilities. It works by mimicking a facility’s directory board. Clients of RightHear (i.e., building owners and managers) place virtual iBeacon signs throughout the building, and as the user approaches, the app speaks about what is close. For instance, it may share information such as “Macy’s to your right” or “The library is in 500 feet to your right. Hours are 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.” However, clients of RightHear may choose to place virtual signs on every door in a building or create a virtual directory to help people with vision disabilities orientate themselves with their surroundings. Initially, RightHear worked specifically to increase accessibility in facilities such as malls, hospitals, museums, and universities. Now, RightHear expanded the app's capabilities by integrating it with other companies such as Lyft and Uber. The app’s potential is far-reaching as it allows users to have more information about what is in the building and the venues have the opportunity to increase their visitors.

Additional Information:

[Visual Impairment Accessibility App Launched in the U.S.](http://www.landmobile.co.uk/news/righthear-visual-impairment-accessibility-app-launched-us-1/)

[<http://www.landmobile.co.uk/news/righthear-visual-impairment-accessibility-app-launched-us-1/>]

**Children with Autism Respond Positively to Social Robots**

August 22, 2018 - This month, a collaborative of researchers published their study, [Improving social skills in children with ASD using a long-term, in-home social robot](http://robotics.sciencemag.org/content/3/21/eaat7544), in the *Science Robotics* journal. During the study, interactive robots were placed in the homes of children with autism. They found that engagement with these “social” robots for thirty minutes a day resulted in improvement in social behaviors, such as eye contact. The researchers reevaluated the children after the trial month and were able to identify clinical measurements of improvement. These behavioral improvements were sustained after the robots were removed from the home and the children continued the acquired prosocial communication skills. The researchers suggest the use of a social robot outside of the traditional clinical setting may be a valuable social learning tool. [Sources: Science Robotics; Michelle Diament, disabilityscoop]

Additional Information:

[Improving social skills in children with ASD using a long-term, in-home social robot](http://robotics.sciencemag.org/content/3/21/eaat7544)

[<http://robotics.sciencemag.org/content/3/21/eaat7544>]

‘Social Robots’ Show Promise As Autism Intervention

[<https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2018/08/31/social-robots-autism-intervention/25438/>]

**CDC Reports 1 in every 4 U.S. Adults have a Disability**

August 21, 2018 - The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently conducted a survey that found 25% of American adults, or 1 in 4, live with a disability. This estimate represents an increase in prevalence reported by the U.S. Census Bureau. However, the two organizations use different research designs which could account for the differing results. The CDC study categorized the reported disabilities into six types: mobility, cognition, hearing, vision, independent living, and self-care. They found that the most common disability was mobility which affects 1 in 7 non-institutionalized, adults. Of particular interest, the CDC noted that the percentage of adults with disabilities increased as income decreased which suggests a correlation between socioeconomic status (SES) and disability; an indication that inadequate access to health care could be an influencing factor. The data from this survey also highlighted that gender, race/ethnicity, SES, and those living in the South influenced the rate of disability. Specifically, the sample of women, American Indians, and adults with a low-income had increased disability prevalence. “Identifying disparities in access to health care highlights disability types and selected demographic groups that might benefit most from interventions that improve health care access, receipt of needed health services, and coordinated care. These have the potential to improve health behaviors, prevent secondary conditions, delay the progression of disability, or, through early detection of disease, permit early intervention that might improve health outcomes. Improved understanding of disability-specific differences in health care access and the provision of medical care might improve the specificity and effectiveness of interventions, accessibility, and outreach to reduce disability-specific disparities in health care access.” [Source: CDC]

Additional Information:

[Prevalence of Disabilities and Health Care Access by Disability Status and Type Among Adults-United States, 2016](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6732a3.htm)

[<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6732a3.htm>]

**Google Latest Efforts in Accessibility**

August 20, 2018 - Google increased efforts and devoted funding to making technology more accessible to people with disabilities. Google’s notable accessibility features include adjustable magnification, contrast settings, and TalkBack. This past spring, Google Maps released “wheelchair accessible” routes for their navigation system. While this summer saw a preview of an upcoming application called Lookout. The app’s primary function is to give users live descriptions of their environment whether it be through the smartphone camera, computer vision, or natural language processing. But the funding and support for accessibility extend beyond the “Googleplex” network of inventions and technologies. Google representatives sit on several web accessibility standard boards while the company regularly publishes accessibility guides for the public. Google also hosts a free online accessibility development class. Google’s commitment to diversity in technology is visible through their efforts and monetary support. [Source, Jillian D’Onfro, CNBC]

Additional Information:

[How Google has stepped up its efforts to makes its own tech more accessible to the disabled](https://www.nod.org/how-google-has-stepped-up-its-efforts-to-makes-its-own-tech-more-accessible-to-the-disabled/)

<https://www.nod.org/how-google-has-stepped-up-its-efforts-to-makes-its-own-tech-more-accessible-to-the-disabled/>

**LiveTag: Technology Wherever You Go**

August 16, 2018 - Developers at the University of California San Diego (UC San Diego) recently created printable smart tags that are made of metal but resemble flexible paper, and are attachable to everyday items. The tags reflect radio signals and essentially become smart, connected devices that can be sensed by a WiFi receiver. The metal tags are unique as they only reflect specific signals within a WiFi frequency range. Upon changing the material and design of the metal tag, the type of signal (e.g., Bluetooth or cellular signals) will also change. Researchers demonstrated how this technology could help its users track things such as water consumption by placing a metal tag on the water bottle. Depending on the amount of water intake by its user, reminders and updates would be sent to the user’s phone. Currently, LiveTag is still in the development phase as its limited in WiFi connection (three feet). However, the implications of producing technology like this suggest that users with disabilities could largely benefit from its detection features. One conceivable application is on prescription bottles. [Source: UC San Diego News Center]

Additional Information:

[These Tags Turn Everyday Objects Into Smart, Connected Devices](https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/pressrelease/these_tags_turn_everyday_objects_into_smart_connected_devices)

[<https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/pressrelease/these_tags_turn_everyday_objects_into_smart_connected_devices>]

[(Journal Article PDF )LiveTag: Sensing Human-Object Interaction Through Passive Chipless WiFi Tags](https://pages.cs.wisc.edu/~chuhan/wp-content/uploads/LiveTag_NSDI.pdf" \t "_blank)

[<https://pages.cs.wisc.edu/~chuhan/wp-content/uploads/LiveTag_NSDI.pdf>]

# Google is Developing Native Hearing Aid Support for Android

August 16, 2018 - While iPhones have had native hearing aid compatibility support for quite some time through their collaborations with hearing aid manufacturers called, "Made for iPhone Hearing Aids and Sound Processors," Google's Android operating system has largely been left out.  Until now.

It is being [reported](https://www.theverge.com/circuitbreaker/2018/8/16/17701902/google-native-hearing-aid-support-android-gn-hearing) that Google is hard at work designing a Bluetooth hearing aid compatibility solution in collaboration with GN Hearing. GN Hearing is a Danish company that produces the popular ReSound Linx Quattro and the Beltone Amaze hearing aids, and will be the first two models to take advantage of the new technology. The two companies are creating a new hearing aid specification for Android called Audio Streaming for Hearing Aids (ASHA). It reportedly has low latency and high-quality audio, while also being battery-efficient. Hearing aids using the ASHA spec will be able to connect to an Android device without having to use another third-party device, like a neck loop, so that users can stream music from their device or hear audio from a phone call directly into their hearing aids.

One of the issues affecting Bluetooth hearing aid compatibility with Android devices has been fragmentation. There are just too many different versions of the OS out there, and not everyone has upgraded their devices to the latest version. But as manufacturers slowly start rolling out finalized upgrades of the OS to their customers,  hearing aid users who have Android smartphones should be able to take advantage of this new exciting ASHA specification. [Source: Dami Lee, The Verge]

Additional Information:

[Google is developing native hearing aid support for Android](https://www.theverge.com/circuitbreaker/2018/8/16/17701902/google-native-hearing-aid-support-android-gn-hearing)  
[<https://www.theverge.com/circuitbreaker/2018/8/16/17701902/google-native-hearing-aid-support-android-gn-hearing>]

**Evaluating Accessibility to Broadband Customer Services**

August 13, 2018 - U.K. News company, Cable, recently conducted an extensive investigation on the quality of service that the Deaf community receives from six major broadband providers. The survey concluded with many customers that are Deaf denouncing the providers’ customer service as “insulting” and “inaccessible.” These companies are legally required by the *Equality Act of 2010* to ensure that their services are accessible to all users, and that if needed, reasonable accommodations be made. However, the survey found that these broadband providers were missing the mark. The respondents stated the websites lacked features such as an “Accessibility” tab and that customer service agents lacked training and guidance for interacting with people that are Deaf. “Many deaf customers, including myself, have struggled immensely to resolve issues with internet providers, such as trying to close an account, because they have claimed that they can only communicate via the phone. This is despite making these providers aware via social media of why we were unable to use the phone.”

The report revealed that though the *Equality Act of 2010* was passed eight years ago, mainstream technology broadband companies in the U.K. have not improved upon the accessibility of their services. In response, Ofcom, the UK’s communication regulator, published changes to its standards that require broadband companies to outline their measures to ensure accessibility of services. [Source: Oprah lash, Cable]

Additional Information:

[Investigation: How accessible are broadband customer services to the deaf community?](https://www.cable.co.uk/news/how-accessible-is-the-telecoms-industry-for-the-deaf-community--700002616/)

[<https://www.cable.co.uk/news/how-accessible-is-the-telecoms-industry-for-the-deaf-community--700002616/>]

**Plug and Play: A Universal Standard for Braille**

Summer 2018 – The non-profit USB Implementers Forum released a new universal Human Interface Device (HID) standard for Braille. The USB Implementers Forum is comprised of companies like Apple, Google, and Microsoft. The Braille standard, once implemented, will allow for people who are blind or have low vision to use the displays across different devices. The aim of the project is for Braille readers to “plug and play” in the same way that keyboards and mice do without having to install a Braille driver. This development in assistive technology has the potential to improve the employment experiences of people who use Braille by streamlining access to the workstations and other devices. Jeff Petty of Microsoft stated, “Developing an HID standard for braille displays is one example of how we can work together, across the industry, to advance technology in a way that benefits society and ultimately improve the unemployment rate for people with disabilities.” [Sources: USB Implementers Forum, Inc.; Thomas McMullan, alphr]

Additional Information:

[USB-IF Publishes HID Standard for Braille Displays](http://www.usb.org/press/USB-IF_HID_press_release_FINAL.pdf)

[http://www.usb.org/press/USB-IF\_HID\_press\_release\_FINAL.pdf]

[Apple, Microsoft and Google join forces to create a universal standard for braille displays](http://www.alphr.com/technology/1009481/apple-microsoft-google-braille-display-standard)

[<http://www.alphr.com/technology/1009481/apple-microsoft-google-braille-display-standard>]

Upcoming Events

**Georgia Digital Government Summit**

The 2018 Georgia Digital Government Summit will convene September 20-21, 2018 in Atlanta, GA. Produced by Government Technology, their passion is helping to spread best practices and stimulate innovation in the public sector. The Summit has an advisory board that gathers public and private sector leaders to create an agenda designed to present relevant and actionable session content for the local and state government organizations attending the summit.

Additional Information:

[2018 Georgia Digital Government Summit](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001fxia0qyPOYe1qYQ0WjyTzk5yt97PntsjNyxsIqVjtbauUKplzyrUl10w0gor5oRlgk4NYgnyS8MQs9dEIKzdXmArAjvFNq_hC8nKIljjtBh0MaDgwGYMSqEhO4vP5an2ti7hYb4O9vFQh5QuH8NudFoli-5_gApydqPiZxEOGevOu9myRStnfXUf5jUopjnwY3IBXME7AafivJHUK717BJWjTeame1w7RfEwhtegjcUzQoFWyjhmPw3zzrNUrTRojGy5R0v97lfYbJ6vZdsyecUMxYf2FFkD6qMQ9jceZqiAEZVV1wGgkUgVa1qThfPTEJU9WiVV9M5W47fmdGJbFBCCsf7VV0pxtIxg1FFXlVYbs8mcOsmeeJemLRAqJUuSbG3Q3EF1jDHhOquWsr4yy4TUE7IJzkrIaLDVdtzz0Hgl-avTRpKsxw==&c=ncCEMky7pxAUJ-qcLisXinQVE_vlFE4tzPeJtuLuKsvAhwNq1t6QjQ==&ch=EfoeVXOKTTI6bnIdSCp8NP5GXXKLF0kOtZ-Spmxm552M43qoaEsKMQ==)

[[http://www.govtech.com/events/Georgia-Digital-Government-Summit.html](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001fxia0qyPOYe1qYQ0WjyTzk5yt97PntsjNyxsIqVjtbauUKplzyrUl10w0gor5oRlgk4NYgnyS8MQs9dEIKzdXmArAjvFNq_hC8nKIljjtBh0MaDgwGYMSqEhO4vP5an2ti7hYb4O9vFQh5QuH8NudFoli-5_gApydqPiZxEOGevOu9myRStnfXUf5jUopjnwY3IBXME7AafivJHUK717BJWjTeame1w7RfEwhtegjcUzQoFWyjhmPw3zzrNUrTRojGy5R0v97lfYbJ6vZdsyecUMxYf2FFkD6qMQ9jceZqiAEZVV1wGgkUgVa1qThfPTEJU9WiVV9M5W47fmdGJbFBCCsf7VV0pxtIxg1FFXlVYbs8mcOsmeeJemLRAqJUuSbG3Q3EF1jDHhOquWsr4yy4TUE7IJzkrIaLDVdtzz0Hgl-avTRpKsxw==&c=ncCEMky7pxAUJ-qcLisXinQVE_vlFE4tzPeJtuLuKsvAhwNq1t6QjQ==&ch=EfoeVXOKTTI6bnIdSCp8NP5GXXKLF0kOtZ-Spmxm552M43qoaEsKMQ==)]

**Mobile Education Alliance Symposium**

The mEducation Alliance Symposium will convene November 9-8, 2018 in Washington, D.C. This year’s theme is *Using Technology to Scale Support for Teacher and Community Educators in Low-Resource Environments*. Specifically, the Symposium will address instruction in the traditional and non-traditional educational classroom environment, capitalizing on how mobile technology can augment instruction and learning. Some sub-themes include supporting learners with disabilities, delivering instruction in crisis and conflict settings, and coaching and mentoring.

Additional Information:

[mEducation Alliance Symposium](http://www.meducationalliance.org/?page_id=670)

[<http://www.meducationalliance.org/?page_id=670>]

**Open Mobile Summit**

The 2018 Open Mobile Summit will convene November 27 through 28, 2018 in San Francisco, California. Themes for the 10th annual event include the age of the connected consumer, delivering seamless and personalized experiences, digital strategy, and engaging consumers. Companies such as Telsa, Uber, Bumble, and LinkedIn are sending executive representatives to share how their companies address the Summit’s themes.

Additional Information:

[2018 Open Mobile Summit](2018%20Open%20Mobile%20Summit)

[<https://events.incite-group.com/oms/>]

**Technology and Disability Policy Highlights,** August 2018

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The Technology and Disability Policy Highlights (TDPH) is a monthly newsletter that reports on national public policy events and tracks emerging issues of interest to individuals with disabilities, researchers, policymakers, industry, and advocacy professionals. 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 website 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 editor Salimah LaForce [[salimah@cacp.gatech.edu](file:///C:\Users\salimah\OneDrive%20-%20Georgia%20Institute%20of%20Technology\wiRERC_2016%20-%202021\TDPH\April%202017\salimah@cacp.gatech.edu)], Dara Bright [<mailto:dara.bright@cacp.gatech.edu>], and Ben Lippincott [<ben@imtac.gatech.edu>].

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1. CACP Collaborative (2015). Investigate Experiences with Technologies Used for Emergency Alerting and Behavioral Response [Focus Groups Notes]. *DHS S&T Project: Optimizing Ability of Message Receipt* [Contract No. HSHQDC–14–C – Booo4]. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)