## [Logo reads Wireless Inclusive RERC](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/home)

## Technology and Disability Policy Highlights - May 2019

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In May, the eighth annual Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) was celebrated to bring about awareness and activities that support access and inclusion for people with all types of disabilities. The primary audience of GAAD is the “design, development, usability, and related communities who build, shape, fund, and influence technology and its use.” As a result, many companies launch accessibility initiatives on GAAD. This year saw access and inclusion news from Procter and Gamble’s Herbal Essences, Lloyds Banking Group, Google, Microsoft, Be My Eyes, Verizon, and Apple, among others. In keeping with the theme of influencing technology development, Verizon highlighted the [Teach Access](http://teachaccess.org/) program, a coalition of technology players who seek to integrate accessible and inclusive design and development into higher education curriculums.

In the regulatory space, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is considering how to expand the use of C-Band. The C-Band Alliance offered a market-based proposal that they believe will “enable an accelerated deployment of 5G in the US.” However, the FCC stated that C-Band Alliance’s proposal had raised additional questions on how to repurpose the spectrum and how to properly allocate ownership.

In Wireless RERC News, the outreach team produced two new videos that are available on our [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/user/WIrelessRERC/featured) and featured on our [website](http://www.wirelessrerc.org/?utm_source=Wireless+RERC+Newsletter+2019%2F03%2F15&utm_campaign=Wireless+RERC+Newsletter+2019%2F03%2F15&utm_medium=email).  The first video, [Customizing Wireless Emergency Alert Settings on Android Devices](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIE81uIlF80&t=7s), is an update to our popular Android-focused Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) video. The second video, [American Sign Language Interpretation Overview of The Wireless RERC and Website](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuwiqHsVOdU), is meant to provide information about the Wireless RERC for website visitors whose primary language is American Sign Language (ASL). We also shared two new SUNspots. [SUNspot 01: Use of Mobile Phones by Individuals with Disabilities (2017-2018)](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001rA8tQp15OM9QZSGplIvgX9FKp7fUa7Fb9ZnlRTsyK5tGG7uUs_1roR3otLoyN_CpTI8OHG02MMJl7foXi7oWxVZGSDwtycKjYkezJkOxWPRRYRd1heccFYiwsCmyQBriPGJ886dPRNPJ8-dHVV5e0AFUT0sKb6YzUXC8R38xqP-1cMnxXDJv-zqQ2wVLJg4uWaDE8EqiFYsOcZbPmYUaqOW7aUZnPeE3SykSQLn91Ui9PZwmY0gpBUrDhXqD0EPRN7fatIpE8phKRHLk84uednti43AnltbUOg5atG0BAdj3xuvn4EHvcfWit60_mt8N0B738V-3a09me77SL-3gC6NAbTcDNxU8CctmhPyjXVyB_C280_m2FHdQlL5ytEbeTTR3Qzn9-9Ii2tb1fT0sI1bwahh4Lr_xmvvfKl2Cb4yK5M4DA7jPNUjhiLzfX5fptTCoyhGt8XWJ7Gw1dYtm14Gzwx3oDPM8VtKUXgQEfbkQO8-fbpWSNnzPnuTMcSLJMdAj-DyLWYPzUXhYN2XHjPKzx3Zglf7uSZhri3eITFc=&c=BMr5DYGeEhHxXWcSu98ETV7L6nHFlxkxcl9FABmcMxncRVqa0K12IA==&ch=p1nR-W5qaLZC6mK-Svp3gfHHv2Q8uoZPyPntDxisWakGGZz0ouDsmg==) presents key findings regarding mobile phone use and satisfaction by consumers with disabilities. [SUNspot 02: Use of Wireless Technology Features and Wireless Device Activities by Individuals with Disabilities (2017-2018)](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001rA8tQp15OM9QZSGplIvgX9FKp7fUa7Fb9ZnlRTsyK5tGG7uUs_1roR3otLoyN_Cp-uTuxtuhBuZewg0Sop01VIgpSG5Yv64TPePGCf7t8xstCpLRWyUSmVggho2vVlveHDRhVJfORB_usSoACUjRGb4M8GYTtv4KyHSlJ8_LkZlBKORGiS7wcTu8owXTCmv3uYjGDt14C8-Lkcx7kbB8sCvn95vxfXpGyLsAXIiJ6_PZZAEirLBZjgzDjCaV5DakSL7Duy9wfEK1Afv9wIf77WmpOOLAYse0qJrRgVfyTgpx_eWY2RiDPfHfX1JSSg9FpqbpHIMSRVxTziL3b6QdbURf8liFcYk-da5a9nkl6pCsMEN5OQVpDHsON9JSXK1zEkVATKfyy55FJX6VHLSpwDvZsO5jJObxlzWygVNDkOXdG3INj-sgswECRnyz9-mu1JIYEwOLlqCOkkPNDF21AuCTKRPnOrXOWJggK7kJUeZ4KOTrnJCVTYDVp1_mu34N4PfjuFn0x1oDP3ZgtleipauvcdaU9ecczumgE_0aMK8AB84NAhK2A_P5ESGhRpt0&c=BMr5DYGeEhHxXWcSu98ETV7L6nHFlxkxcl9FABmcMxncRVqa0K12IA==&ch=p1nR-W5qaLZC6mK-Svp3gfHHv2Q8uoZPyPntDxisWakGGZz0ouDsmg==) presents key findings regarding the use of wireless technology features, including real-time-text, intelligent assistants, and visual and audio display options.

This issue also includes news about the Wireless Resiliency Cooperative Framework, artificial intelligence, accessible gaming, Live Caption, Live Relay, Project Euphoria, accessible digital environments in higher education, and more.

**Regulatory Activities**

**Feedback Sought on Fair Wages for People with Significant Disabilities**

May 2019 - The U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is requesting commentary and perspectives from stakeholders on the Fair Labor Standards Act, Section 14(c). Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), passed in 1938, allows public and private employers to obtain special certificates from the Department of Labor’s Wage & Hour Division that allow them to compensate workers with significant disabilities at rates below the current federal minimum wage based on the individual’s level of measured productivity (CPSD, 2019). The [online dialogue](https://14cdialogue.ideascale.com/) encourages individuals with disabilities to share their stories and personal experiences as influenced by Section 14(c). The information gathered from this national online dialogue will be summarized and given to ODEP with the aim of promoting positive, lasting change through effective policymaking. [Source: IdeaScale]

#### Additional Information:

# [The Section 14(c) National Online Dialogue](https://14cdialogue.ideascale.com/)

# <https://14cdialogue.ideascale.com/>

**FCC Mulls Over C-Band Clearing for Acceleration of 5G Deployments**

May 3, 2019 – The FCC is preparing a call for comment on how to expand the use of C-Band spectrum primarily through satellite operators. The C-Band Alliance offered a market-based proposal. However, the FCC shared that thus far the dialogue surrounding C-Band in general, and C-Band Alliance’s proposal specifically, has raised additional questions on how to repurpose the spectrum and how to properly allocate ownership. The FCC will also request comments on how enforceable interference protection rights are for network operators with receive-only satellite dishes, particularly since those one-way dishes can’t cause interference. The C-Band Alliance stated that “the Public Notice’s purpose is to increase clarity on several topics as the FCC continues its work on the C-band clearing proceeding. Clearly, interference protection of satellite services is a key consideration. We look forward to responding to the Commission’s inquiries and working cooperatively to build consensus from the many stakeholders involved. We are convinced – and have received significant support – that our proposal is the best suited way to achieve both protection of the incumbent services to millions of US television households and an efficient clearing of C-band spectrum to enable an accelerated deployment of 5G in the US.” The FCC’s comment window lasts 45 days following publication of the Public Notice in the Federal Registrar — 30 days for initial comments and an overlapping 45 days for reply comments.

As it pertains to people with disabilities, 5G holds the promise of expansion of wireless rehabilitation and health monitoring systems, and smart public and private spaces that can enhance independent living, among other things. As such, accessible, assistive, and mainstream technologies will require higher bandwidth to accommodate these data-intense transmissions, as well as the exponential growth of devices that will be connected to the network. Because the stakes are so high, the FCC appears to be taking a measured approach to assessing the C-Band Alliance proposal. Will a market-based approach be in the best interest of the public good? You will be able to share your opinion when the Public Notice is released. [Source: Caleb Henry, SpaceNews]

#### Additional Information:

# [FCC asks for more input on C-band](https://spacenews.com/fcc-asks-for-more-input-on-c-band/)

# <https://spacenews.com/fcc-asks-for-more-input-on-c-band/>

**Wireless RERC Updates**

**Two New Videos Available on Wireless RERC's YouTube Channel**

May 2019 - The Wireless RERC outreach team produced two new videos that are available on our [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/user/WIrelessRERC/featured) and featured on our [website](http://www.wirelessrerc.org/?utm_source=Wireless+RERC+Newsletter+2019%2F03%2F15&utm_campaign=Wireless+RERC+Newsletter+2019%2F03%2F15&utm_medium=email).  The first video is an update to our popular Android-focused WEA video that shows users how to customize the WEA settings on an Android device running OS version 8. This video intends to show how to enable or disable the various settings available in the WEA menu to suit your needs. Some of the settings could be considered accessibility features, so we wanted to ensure that Android users knew about these so that they do not unnecessarily miss a potentially life-saving WEA message. The video is captioned and has ASL interpretation.

The second video is meant to provide information about the Wireless RERC for website visitors whose primary language is ASL. It gives a basic overview of our mission and the Wireless RERC’s research, development, training, and dissemination projects. This video is ASL interpreted and captioned.

#### View the videos:

* [Customizing Wireless Emergency Alert Settings on Android Devices.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIE81uIlF80&t=7s)  
  [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIE81uIlF80&t=7s>]
* [American Sign Language Interpretation Overview of The Wireless RERC and Website](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuwiqHsVOdU)

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuwiqHsVOdU>]

**We encourage everyone to** [**subscribe to our YouTube channel**](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0UQhZcJ1zwKJ_2S4Gbev3Q) **as we have more great videos coming out in 2019!** The next release will feature the Amazon Echo, a three-part series and step-by-step guide for people who are blind and have low vision on unboxing, the controls, and syncing the app to the Echo.

**Mobile Phone Use, Satisfaction, Features, and Activities**

May 2019 – The Wireless RERC created SUNspots to share easily digestible data points from the Wireless RERC's cornerstone survey, the Survey of User Needs (SUN). The SUN tracks the use and usability of wireless technology by people with disabilities. Data collection for this version of the SUN started in 2017 and ended in 2018.  We are currently in the process of analyzing the data and will be sharing it periodically with you through these SUNspots, and via a larger report in the future.

The data collected from the SUN is used by RERC staff to inform R&D directions for our projects and outreach activities, to support our regulatory filings, and by industry to improve the accessibility of their products and services. Please find links to the two new SUNspots below to see how wireless technology is being used by people with disabilities.

* [**SUNspot 01: Use of Mobile Phones by Individuals with Disabilities (2017-2018)**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001rA8tQp15OM9QZSGplIvgX9FKp7fUa7Fb9ZnlRTsyK5tGG7uUs_1roR3otLoyN_CpTI8OHG02MMJl7foXi7oWxVZGSDwtycKjYkezJkOxWPRRYRd1heccFYiwsCmyQBriPGJ886dPRNPJ8-dHVV5e0AFUT0sKb6YzUXC8R38xqP-1cMnxXDJv-zqQ2wVLJg4uWaDE8EqiFYsOcZbPmYUaqOW7aUZnPeE3SykSQLn91Ui9PZwmY0gpBUrDhXqD0EPRN7fatIpE8phKRHLk84uednti43AnltbUOg5atG0BAdj3xuvn4EHvcfWit60_mt8N0B738V-3a09me77SL-3gC6NAbTcDNxU8CctmhPyjXVyB_C280_m2FHdQlL5ytEbeTTR3Qzn9-9Ii2tb1fT0sI1bwahh4Lr_xmvvfKl2Cb4yK5M4DA7jPNUjhiLzfX5fptTCoyhGt8XWJ7Gw1dYtm14Gzwx3oDPM8VtKUXgQEfbkQO8-fbpWSNnzPnuTMcSLJMdAj-DyLWYPzUXhYN2XHjPKzx3Zglf7uSZhri3eITFc=&c=BMr5DYGeEhHxXWcSu98ETV7L6nHFlxkxcl9FABmcMxncRVqa0K12IA==&ch=p1nR-W5qaLZC6mK-Svp3gfHHv2Q8uoZPyPntDxisWakGGZz0ouDsmg==) presents key findings regarding mobile phone use and satisfaction by consumers with disabilities.
* [**SUNspot 02: Use of Wireless Technology Features and Wireless Device Activities by Individuals with Disabilities (2017-2018)**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001rA8tQp15OM9QZSGplIvgX9FKp7fUa7Fb9ZnlRTsyK5tGG7uUs_1roR3otLoyN_Cp-uTuxtuhBuZewg0Sop01VIgpSG5Yv64TPePGCf7t8xstCpLRWyUSmVggho2vVlveHDRhVJfORB_usSoACUjRGb4M8GYTtv4KyHSlJ8_LkZlBKORGiS7wcTu8owXTCmv3uYjGDt14C8-Lkcx7kbB8sCvn95vxfXpGyLsAXIiJ6_PZZAEirLBZjgzDjCaV5DakSL7Duy9wfEK1Afv9wIf77WmpOOLAYse0qJrRgVfyTgpx_eWY2RiDPfHfX1JSSg9FpqbpHIMSRVxTziL3b6QdbURf8liFcYk-da5a9nkl6pCsMEN5OQVpDHsON9JSXK1zEkVATKfyy55FJX6VHLSpwDvZsO5jJObxlzWygVNDkOXdG3INj-sgswECRnyz9-mu1JIYEwOLlqCOkkPNDF21AuCTKRPnOrXOWJggK7kJUeZ4KOTrnJCVTYDVp1_mu34N4PfjuFn0x1oDP3ZgtleipauvcdaU9ecczumgE_0aMK8AB84NAhK2A_P5ESGhRpt0&c=BMr5DYGeEhHxXWcSu98ETV7L6nHFlxkxcl9FABmcMxncRVqa0K12IA==&ch=p1nR-W5qaLZC6mK-Svp3gfHHv2Q8uoZPyPntDxisWakGGZz0ouDsmg==) presents key findings regarding the use of wireless technology features by SUN respondents, including real-time-text, intelligent assistants, and visual and audio display options. We also discuss the use of wireless devices by individuals with disabilities for a variety of activities. Whereas SUNspot 1 focused on the devices themselves, this report focuses primarily on the capabilities built into those devices and their relationship to the users' reported functional limitations and difficulties.

**Wireless RERC on the Record: Improving the Wireless Resiliency Cooperative Framework**

May 20, 2019 – The Wireless RERC submitted reply comments in response to the FCC’s Public Notice**,** *Improving the Wireless Resiliency Cooperative Framework* **[PS Docket No. 11-60**]. The comments commended the voluntary actions and investments of the wireless industry has undertaken to harden their networks to withstand disaster events. However, we contended that more could be done to ensure that people with disabilities are included in the planning and deliberations, and consequential actions of the Framework. Specifically, the Wireless RERC agreed with Verizon’s assertion that “the Framework also should continue to preserve wireless providers’ ability to determine, based on sound engineering principles and objective factors like available coverage and traffic demands, where and how to allocate their assets and services in a locality to most effectively and efficiently respond to a disaster.[[1]](#footnote-1)”

The impacts of large-scale disasters are highly variable and continually changing as events unfold. Prescribing a metric for where and how much pre-positioning of assets based on population size could potentially delay restoration to the hardest impacted areas that contain some of our nation’s more vulnerable to disaster populations. For example, the population-size formula would systematically exclude rural areas from pre-disaster positioning of assets. There is a higher prevalence of disability in rural America compared to urban areas.[[2]](#footnote-2) This fact, coupled with a population-size formula, places rural residents with disabilities in jeopardy of extended delays to wireless services that they rely on for accessible communications. We also recommended that the criteria for mutual aid and service restoration not rule out area’s that have been deemed to have no user access. There are many residents without the financial resources to comply with evacuation orders. Though the area may have been designated as mandatory evacuation, reports have shown that people with disabilities and the elderly often remain in these areas. Thus, providers retaining the flexibility to quickly restore communications access via wireless devices would literally be a lifeline for residents who need saving by search and rescue parties.

Wireless RERC reply comments also supported comments made by CTIA and the Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (“TDI”), Hearing Loss Association of America (“HLAA”), National Association of the Deaf (“NAD”), Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning/Washington State Independent Living Council (“CIEP/WASILC”), and California Coalition of Agencies Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (“CCASDHH”) (collectively “Consumer Groups”). The full document can be accessed below.

#### Additional Information:

PDF icon[wireless\_rerc\_reply\_comments\_wireless\_resiliency\_cooperative\_framework\_final.pdf](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/wireless_rerc_reply_comments_wireless_resiliency_cooperative_framework_final.pdf)

Doc Icon[wireless\_rerc\_reply\_comments\_wireless\_resiliency\_cooperative\_framework\_final.docx](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/wireless_rerc_reply_comments_wireless_resiliency_cooperative_framework_final.docx)

**Other Items of Interest**

**AI Applications, People with Disabilities, and Older Adults**

May 2019 - The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine held a workshop in the Fall of 2018 entitled [*Artificial Intelligence Applications for Older Adults and People with Disabilities: Balancing Safety and Autonomy*](https://www.nap.edu/read/25427/chapter/1). The workshop opened with Gregory D. Hager, who examined the state of knowledge about Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI, according to Hager, is “that activity devoted to making machines intelligent, and intelligence is that quality that enables an entity to function appropriately and with foresight in its environment.” Hager, in this first session, explains AI “hype cycles” which are essentially periods of ebb and flow where public expectations and anticipations of AI peak and then wane when the limits of the technology are reached. He concluded the session by asserting the potential social impact of AI stating, “these new tools are really powerful, and I think that as our society ages, we’re going to be hitting economic and social barriers that AI can help us address.”

In the second session, Majd Alwan from LeadingAge and Brian Bard from the Administration for Community Living discussed the consumer perspective. They delved into people with disabilities’ real experiences with AI-powered applications. During the talk, Bard asserted that “AI needs to be more invisible and more integrated so that you can put it in someone’s home.” He further commented, “the biggest thing that I would like to see is autonomous transportation. I want a vehicle I can roll in and that can drive me to work.” Bard later acknowledged a significant barrier to AI-powered applications: cost. Often, AI applications are not affordable. This led Bard and Alwan to discuss the need to include people with disabilities and their caregivers in the design process of new AI applications.

Later sessions addressed the importance of creating smart communities, infrastructure for building AI technology into cities, and concerns and unintended consequences. Jon Sanford from Georgia Tech engaged in a talk that explored mobility and aging in place. He argued that “mobility is key to successful aging in place, but you can’t get to the mobility aspect unless you can successfully age in place in your own home.” He explained that more development of interfaces capable of receiving multimodal inputs, as opposed to just voice is needed because functional abilities not only change as one ages or due to injury or illness but for certain disability types, on a daily basis. Possibly one of the greatest signifiers of intelligence is adaptability, as such, Jon suggested that AI should evolve to be able to “automatically adjust to an individual’s ability at the moment of use.” Subsequent sessions explored promoting health and well-being and providing care, AI social engagement, and social inclusion, the reality versus the promise of AI, and concerns related to the development of AI applications such as unintended consequences, ethics, and personal values.

#### Additional Information:

[Artificial Intelligence Applications for Older Adults and People with Disabilities: Balancing Safety and Autonomy - Proceedings of a Workshop—in Brief](https://www.nap.edu/read/25427/chapter/1)

<https://www.nap.edu/read/25427/chapter/1>

**Reasserting the Commitment to Disability Rights**

May 16, 2019 - The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) signed an All County Letter (ACL), No. 19-45, to remind County Welfare Departments (CWDs) of their continued obligation to ensure people with disabilities have meaningful access to all state and federally funded public assistance and social services programs. This ACL reaffirms the rights of people with disabilities to reasonable accommodations in California Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids, In-Home Supportive Services, Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants, Medi-Cal, and other programs. The letter outlines the types of accommodations that could be used to facilitate communications access for people for are blind or low vision (e.g., screen reader, audio recording, large font, braille), Deaf or hard of hearing (ASL interpreter, cued speech, live captions, tactile interpreter), have speech disabilities (e.g., transliterator, communication boards), and who have limited English Proficiency (LEP) (e.g., spoken language interpretation, video remote interpreting).

Regarding interpreting, the letter highlights that “CWDs shall not rely on minor children to interpret except in an emergency involving a threat to the safety or welfare of an individual or the public, and when no interpreter is available. (28 CFR § 35.160(c)(2).” This prohibition is significant as anecdotal evidence suggests it is common practice to utilize children as interpreters or translators for parents with LEP. However, such a practice could be inappropriate depending on the content of the conversation, deny the adult privacy, and jeopardize adherence to ethical guidelines associated with certain social services such as those related to general and mental healthcare. The Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund encourages advocate partnerships to assist with the appropriate implementation and monitoring of the reasonable accommodations mandate. [Source: Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund]

#### Additional Information:

[California Highlights Disability Social Service Expectations in Landmark All County Letter](https://dredf.org/2019/05/23/california-highlights-disability-social-service-expectations-in-landmark-all-county-letter/?mc_cid=1a0a25f7df&mc_eid=7ce92b06b7)

<https://dredf.org/2019/05/23/california-highlights-disability-social-service-expectations-in-landmark-all-county-letter/?mc_cid=1a0a25f7df&mc_eid=7ce92b06b7>

[ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 19-45](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ACL/2019/19-45_ES.pdf?ver=2019-05-17-134850-523)

http://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ACL/2019/19-45\_ES.pdf?ver=2019-05-17-134850-523

**Microsoft Patent Portends a Customization Feature for Accessible Gaming**

May 7, 2019 – Last year, Microsoft patented a controller tailored for gamers that are blind or have low vision. The controller includes upgrades such as the bump matrix display. This feature displays braille characters positioned for gamers to access easily. It also includes upgrades such as a series of paddles. These paddles permit gamers with a visual disability to quickly send chat messages coded in Braille. Though the controller is not currently in production nor has Microsoft released any additional information. The controller signals the development of technology that is inclusive of people with visual disabilities from the onset of gaming design. [Source: Andrew Liszewski, Gizmodo]

#### Additional Information:

[Microsoft Patent Imagines an Xbox Controller Customized for Gamers with Visual Impairment](https://gizmodo.com/microsoft-patent-imagines-an-xbox-controller-customized-1834579413)

<https://gizmodo.com/microsoft-patent-imagines-an-xbox-controller-customized-1834579413>

**Google Innovates for Access**

May 9, 2019 – In anticipation of Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD), Google unveiled several accessibility initiatives that seek to improve daily living for people with disabilities. One such invention is the new Live Caption feature on Android phones that will transcribe any audio or video in real time regardless of the audio’s source. For example, captions can be generated from audio recordings of an in-person conversation or audio feedback on a maps app. It also allows users who are nonverbal to respond by typing. In efforts to innovate for access, Google is also working on two additional initiatives: Project Euphonia and Live Relay. The former project utilizes artificial intelligence to decipher people with speech impairments’ words and transcribe them. The latter project, Live Relay, assists with making phone calls more accessible for people with hearing disabilities. Google CEO Sundar Pichai shared that “Building for everyone also means ensuring that everyone can access our products. We believe technology can help us be more inclusive and (artificial intelligence) is providing us with new tools to dramatically improve the experience for people with disabilities.” [Source: Shaun Heasley, DisabilityScoop]

Additional Information:

Google Unveils New Accessibility Initiatives

<https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2019/05/09/google-unveils-new-accessibility-initiatives/26594/>

**University of Arkansas Takes A Stand: Accessibility For All**

May 10, 2019 – In response to the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other federal and state laws, the University of Arkansas is implementing a policy to ensure that electronic and information technology (EIT) are accessible to all members of their community. The policy sets technical standards and places responsibility for accessible EIT on university employees. The policy also explicitly outlines which digital material falls under the EIT category. Electronic and information technology, as defined by the University of Arkansas’ policy, is information technology, equipment, or interconnected systems used to create or maintain data or information. The term electronic and information technology includes, but is not limited to, the internet and intranet websites, content delivered in digital form, electronic books and electronic book reading systems, search engines and databases, learning management systems, classroom technology and multimedia, personal response systems (“clickers”), and office equipment such as classroom podiums, copiers, and fax machines. It also includes any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment that is used in the automatic acquisition, creation, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information. This definition includes telecommunications products (such as telephones), information kiosks, computers, ancillary equipment, software, firmware and similar procedures, and services.

The University of Arkansas developed an EIT Accessibility Committee to lead the policy implementation process. The EIT’s Accessibility Committee lists their implementation steps in the following order: gathering baseline/subsequent-year information, identification of challenges to and priorities for plan implementation, communicating the policy and plan to the university community, resources and budget, assignment of specific responsibilities, evaluation and remediation of existing issues, procurement of new EIT, training and feedback. According to Vice Provost, Donald Judges, the institution aims to “ensure that people with disabilities can navigate the university’s electronic spaces and use digital learning materials with as close to the same ease of use and functionality as people without disabilities.” [Source: University of Arkansas News].

#### Additional Information:

[New Electronic and Information Technology Policy Helps University Ensure Accessibility](https://news.uark.edu/articles/48218/new-electronic-and-information-technology-policy-helps-university-ensure-accessibility)

<https://news.uark.edu/articles/48218/new-electronic-and-information-technology-policy-helps-university-ensure-accessibility>

**Celebrating Global Accessibility Awareness Day Around the World**

May 16, 2019 – The eighth annual Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) was celebrated on May 16th to bring awareness, activities, and continue the dialogue on access and inclusion for people with all types of disabilities. The primary audience of GAAD’s focus is the “design, development, usability, and related communities who build, shape, fund, and influence technology and its use.” While in Qatar, the Mada Assistive Technology Center of the Ministry of Transport and Communications launched a GAAD awareness campaign. The week-long campaign included a number of activities and events and several training workshops for ICT-related stakeholders. In celebration of GAAD, four industry leaders, Procter and Gamble’s Herbal Essences, Lloyds Banking Group, Google, and Microsoft collaborated with Be My Eyes to evaluate the accessibility of their products. Be My Eyes is a free mobile app that has more than 2 million volunteers who act as on-call visual interpreters for people who have vision disabilities. These companies will partner with Be My Eyes and offer free expert support for products and services; however, it is unlike the traditional customer service centers where one calls and attempts to describe an issue. All calls are conducted by live video through the individual’s mobile camera. This functionality makes it easier for the customer/technical service agent to understand and correct the problems for callers with visual disabilities.

Other major household-names such as Verizon, Google, and Apple, participated in GAAD. To hone in on accessibility issues, Verizon utilized their Bug Bash team to detect accessibility bugs in their products. They also opened their Accessibility Labs across the country in locations like New York, Boston, and Sunnyvale. Their Media Service team partnered with the National Disability Leadership Alliance to provide search engines with stock images of people with disabilities that defy stereotypes and authentically portray the everyday life of people with disabilities. In honor of GAAD, Verizon also highlighted Teach Access, a coalition of tech players who seek to integrate accessible and inclusive design and development into higher education curriculums. As a co-founder of Teach Access, Verizon shared its efforts to teach accessible design to budding developers.

Google announced its augmented Google Home device features. The increased accessibility of the Google Home was sparked by a strategic cloud engineer’s sibling who is legally blind and nonverbal. The development of the augmented Google Home has been titled Project Diva. The device triggers commands to the Google Assistant without a voice. Ahead of GAAD, Google also announced the company’s other accessibility projects such as the Google Maps program that allows users to find places with ramps and entrances for wheelchairs. Lastly, Apple highlighted its GAAD inspired initiatives on their company’s front page where users are encouraged to explore Apple’s accessibility page. Apple also highlights various apps such as Proloquo2Go, Strava, Audible, djay, Ready to Roll, and more. [Sources: The Peninsula Qatar; Matt Shebanek, Verizon; Mitchel Broussard, MacRumors; Marguerite Reardon, cnet; Be My Eyes; and GlobalAccessibilityAwarenessDay.org]

#### Additional Information:

[Mada Center celebrates Global Accessibility Awareness Day](Https://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/17/05/2019/mada-center-celebrates-global-accessibility-awareness-day)

<Https://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/17/05/2019/mada-center-celebrates-global-accessibility-awareness-day>

[Building digital access for all](https://www.verizon.com/about/news/building-digital-access-all)

<https://www.verizon.com/about/news/building-digital-access-all>

[Apple Highlights Global Accessibility Awareness Day with Front-Page Feature [Updated]](https://www.macrumors.com/2019/05/16/apple-com-accessibility-day/)

<https://www.macrumors.com/2019/05/16/apple-com-accessibility-day/>

[How one man made Google Home more accessible for anyone](https://www.cnet.com/news/google-assistant-gets-more-accessible-inspired-by-a-brothers-love/)

<https://www.cnet.com/news/google-assistant-gets-more-accessible-inspired-by-a-brothers-love/>

[#GAAD2019: Four Industry Leaders Announce Shared Commitment to Accessible Customer Service](https://www.bemyeyes.com/newsroom/gaad2019-four-industry-leaders)

<https://www.bemyeyes.com/newsroom/gaad2019-four-industry-leaders>

[Global Accessibility Awareness Day](https://globalaccessibilityawarenessday.org/)

<https://globalaccessibilityawarenessday.org/>

**Upcoming Events**

**AAAED 45th National Conference and Annual Meeting**

The 45th National Conference and Annual Meeting will convene June 11 through 13, 2019 in Indianapolis, IN. The theme will be “Moving Beyond Diversity Towards Equity and Inclusion.”

#### Additional Information:

[AAAED Conference Website](https://www.aaaed.org/aaaed/Conference.asp)

<https://www.aaaed.org/aaaed/Conference.asp>

**M-Enabling Summit 2019**

The M-Enabling Summit will convene from June 17 to June 19, 2019, in Washington, D.C. Summit presenters will cover topics such as robotics, wearables, virtual and augmented reality, artificial intelligence, and IoT.

#### Additional Information:

[Conference Registration](http://www.m-enabling.com/conreg.html)

<http://www.m-enabling.com/conreg.html>

**Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) 2019**

APPAM 2019 will convene July 29 through 30, 2019 in Barcelona, Spain. Co-hosted by [The Johns Hopkins University - University Pompeu Fabra (JHU-UPF) Public Policy Center](https://www.upf.edu/web/jhu-ppc), this year’s theme is “Public Policy in an Era of Rapid Change.” A global perspective will be taken at this conference with a particular emphasis on informing policies that address social inequalities.

#### Additional Information:

[APPAM 2019](http://www.appam.org/2019-international-conference/)

<http://www.appam.org/2019-international-conference/>

**Technology and Disability Policy Highlights, May 2019**

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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, user experiences, and expectations 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 editors 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)] or Dara Bright [[dara.bright@cacp.gatech.edu](mailto:dara.bright@cacp.gatech.edu)].

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1. Comments of Verizon. (2019). In the Matter of Improving The Wireless Resiliency Cooperative Framework [11-60]. Washington, D.C., April 29, 2019. Available at <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filing/10430525524260> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Caruthers, A. (2017). Disability in rural America. Retrieved from <https://www.communitycommons.org/2017/02/disability-in-rural-america/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)