

## **Broadband Issues Affecting People with Disabilities**

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- Critical Importance of Broadband
  - “Always on” connection
  - Needed for independence, employment, productivity, citizenship
  - Taking the place of other forms of communication
  - IP Telephony, IM, e-mail, chat – functionally similar or identical but may lose access because of new classification as information services
  
- Market Forces – Insufficient to Protect Disability Needs
  - String of legislative, regulatory measures to ensure access
  - Community too small and fragmented to be influence competitive forces
  
- Accessibility Barriers to Broadband Services
  - Visual barriers to graphical interfaces
  - Mouse-driven commands without keyboard equivalents
  - Garbled TTY messages
  
- Readily Achievable Accessibility Features
  - Formats usable with screen-readers
  - Audio and text options (redundancy)
  - Keyboard equivalents
  - Packet solutions

***Goal: Insure that these and other features are incorporated into the design of broadband technologies. If not incorporated early on, expensive and burdensome retrofitting will be needed at a later date.***

- Legal Theories to Ensure Disability Access
  - Use of ancillary jurisdiction via Section 255 and Title I (previously used to reach IVR and voice mail systems)
  - Use of universal service obligations
  - Dual Congressional goals furthered:
    1. accessibility
    2. ubiquitous availability of broadband