



**425 Bush Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94108
Phone: (415) 773-0388
FAX: (415) 773-0380
TTY: (415) 773-0399**

ZeroDivide Salon Series

The ZeroDivide Salon Series focuses on topical issues relevant to the field of philanthropy and the disadvantaged communities served. ZeroDivide Salons bring together a small group of topical experts, philanthropists, and community leaders in a casual, off-the-record setting. Participants share ideas and generate creative thinking around current issues involving technology adoption in underserved communities.

On October 29th, Kathleen Martinez, Assistant Secretary for Disability Employment Policy at the Department of Labor, led a ZeroDivide Salon focused on the topic: "Accessibility and universal design look in the Web 2.0 world." Participants discussed potential impacts which the lack or lag in accessibility will have on the ability of people with disabilities to participate in the workplace and in the growing world of social networking, online education, advocacy efforts, and community organizing."

ZeroDivide compiles and disseminates key issues and findings which result from these Salons, in order to better facilitate collaborative thinking and action between government, non-profit agencies, and individuals.

A roster of each Salon's attendees, their professional affiliations, and summary notes from the session are distributed shortly after the conclusion of each session. The product of the October 29th Salon is appended.



ZeroDivide Salon Attendees, October 29, 2009:

Jackie Brand, Disability Advocate
Vint Cerf, Google, VP and Chief Internet Evangelist
Jim Fruchterman, Benetech, President & CEO
Tessie Guillermo, ZeroDivide, President & CEO
Betsy Hambrecht, WR Hambrecht + Co
Neil Jacobson, Abilicorp, CEO
Kathy Martinez, ODEP Asst. Secretary for Disability Employment Policy
Kristen McCarthy, Private Philanthropist
Mike McCarthy, Franklin Templeton Investments, Senior VP, Director of Equity Research
Tanya Peterson, SF Zoo, Executive Director
Tim Wu, ZeroDivide, Chief Strategy Officer

Summary of Key Issues from October 29, 1009 ZeroDivide Salon:

- I. Participants agreed on several key overarching concepts
 - a. In disability policy and/or programmatic creation, one of the inherent primary obstacles is the wide range of physical/mental disabilities that must be addressed – “one size” does not fit all. Disabilities are idiosyncratic and fall across a wide continuum of needs. Thus, every disability is unique and therefore requires different accessibility tools and solutions.
 - b. While technology can be a solution in creating equal workplace and educational opportunities for people with disabilities, technology can also create new barriers.
 - c. While disability access and awareness with the employment and educational sectors has increased in recent years, people with disabilities still do not have age-appropriate learning opportunities in “soft skills,” otherwise known as one’s Emotional Intelligence Quotient, which encompass such traits as team participation, negotiation, business etiquette, cultural competence, etc.
 - d. While technology is often very useful in enabling disabled children to more quickly learn “hard skills” such as reading, writing, math and science basics, it has the potential to further distance them from “soft skills” training by removing them from the connectivity of real-life social and peer interactions. For example, “Special Education” may have done a disservice to disabled children by shunting them away to “that other place” in the school system.
 - e. Most approaches to solving disability access barriers focus on “obvious” disabilities like mobility, hearing, vision. We are much worse at addressing “non-immediately obvious” disabilities such as Asperger’s Syndrome, CFS, etc.
 - f. The United States has an image in the rest of the world as being on the cutting edge of disability access and inclusion, but in reality, places like the European Union are much farther ahead in addressing access needs.

- II. Participants shared ideas on potential solutions to disability access barriers. Suggestions included various iterations and perspectives on the following areas:
 - a. Demonstrate how tools which have been created to improve functionality and quality of life for people with disabilities work not only for people with disabilities, but for the wider general non-disabled population as well. For example, the Da Vinci robotic surgical process was created initially with disabled populations in mind, but is now widely used as a minimally invasive surgical technique for an extremely broad range of surgical procedures.
 - b. Involve and integrate the best minds in a variety of professional, political, and academic environments to address disability access issues. For example, MBA programs often take on “one” disability project as part of the educational curricula. Expand this to a greater number of

projects or to multi-disciplinary opportunities.

- c. Illustrate success stories in which technology, policy advocacy, business approaches, or other means effectively addressed disability access. Highlight WHY these approaches were successful, and how to scale them so that these are not isolated incidents.
- d. Because the European Union and other entities are much further along in effective disability approaches than is the USA, multi-national companies like IBM which work in these environments must comply with these higher standards. The US government should encourage and incentivize these multi-nationals to continue their work in this area.
- e. Technological e-advocacy needs to be developed as a more effective tool, because technology naturally offers opportunities for access to government decision makers, such as 24/7 online access.
- f. The federal government can easily offer accessible services such as online job applications for government jobs and contractors, and coordinated accommodation standards across all federal agencies.
- g. Government can encourage research and development of assistive technologies through tax credits and other financial incentives to the appropriate business entities.
- h. Online social networking sites such as Second Life, Facebook, Twitter offer great opportunities for disabled people to learn and engage in "soft skills" development, because disabilities are not apparent in the virtual world.

III. Participants posed the following questions for follow-up and discussion. We welcome any suggestion, ideas, or answers to these questions, and hope that they might lead to further interaction amongst Salon participants.

- a. What solutions/programs can be developed at the local and community levels by individuals through their own personal philanthropy?
- b. How can private industry and business better contribute to fostering accessibility?
- c. What are the most immediately identifiable targets for the development of better assistive technologies?
- d. What are specific ways in which social networking can be leveraged to include and improve access opportunities for people with disabilities?
- e. Create a wider forum through which to publish and disseminate "can do" personal stories and successful applications of both technological and non-technological solutions to disability access issues.
- f. Find other mechanisms for engaging the non-disabled population so that accessibility solutions are perceived as global needs rather than isolated, limited applicability concepts.