

Both my wife and I are totally blind, and each of us are users of cell phones. We therefore have a vested interest in obtaining the greatest possible access to all facets of communications equipment which non-disabled persons take for granted.

My wife's cell phone has no accessibility features whatsoever. She is able to make and receive phone calls but has no means of determining battery status, roaming, or signal strength. Nor can she send or receive email or text messages--features which most other users utilize frequently. She has a prepaid account with Net10, a subsidiary of Tracfone which offers no phones with speech output, thus precluding her even from checking her monthly balance in terms of remaining minutes or renewal date. Additionally, Tracfone offers no mechanism whatsoever other than the on-screen method for determining these. This information cannot be retrieved by telephoning customer service. This is not unique to Tracfone. Although the major carriers offer phones with speech output, most of the secondary carriers do not do so as they are not required to do so.

My cellular carrier is T-Mobile. T-mobile has disabled the accessibility features in its android phone offerings. Therefore, I purchased a second-hand phone for \$300 which had been speech enabled by its former user.

I provide the above information so as to make the case that all carriers both major and minor should be required to make available telephones which meet the needs of the disabled, especially for those who are blind and/or hearing impaired. Why must those of us who have these problems be required to pay hundreds of dollars merely to gain access on a par with others who sometimes pay as little as \$10 for comparable features?

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to share my thoughts on these matters.

Cordially,

Donald L. Roberts