

I am legally blind and can not read fonts on a standard cell phone. It has been difficult to find a phone, which I can operate without assistance. Cell phone manufactures do not develop standard phones for the visually impaired. Currently, I own a LG, which has limited speech output. Without the assistance of my wife, I could not fully use this phone. All my contacts are in speed dial and I memorize their number in order to operate my phone. My phone can't even read back a text message. The phone states that it reads voice prompts, but lacks in total accessibility.

Verizon Wireless, my carrier, offers the H2Ozone with TALKS (a screen reading software), for visually impaired users and sells for \$125 with a two year contract. I have never used this phone to test it;s capabilities. The Verizon Wireless webpage state that it provides a user full accessibility. Other users of the phone stated it lacked the speed to run the TALKS software and the phone didn't work consistently. I wanted to test the phone myself, but Verizon only sells them via the web store. One can not test them at a Verizon Store. I would have to buy it first then test it. TALKS if bought solo is \$300. but the only phone that Verizon sells that is compatible is the H2Ozone. Every 2 years, I enter the Verizon Store and ask the representative about phones for the visually impaired. Every time I get a blank look. Verizon's web page provides a list of phones with voice prompt, but every phone on the list lacks the ability to send or read a text. Verizon Wireless has not provided a adequate phone for the visually impaired.

Working in the Washington DC metro region, everyone has a Blackberry. Currently, their is no software built in to a blackberry to support a blind individual. Oratio is a third party screen reading software just released in Feb/10. The cost on top off the blackberry is \$500. This software is in its beta stage and still has bugs. The iPhone is the only phone I have heard of providing screen reading built into the phone. I have heard it is very good, but it is still expletive and doesn't work on Verizon wireless.

In my conclusion, phone manufactures are not making cell phones assessable to the visually impaired. A normal phone can not be operated by a blind individual with out expensive third party software. I would ask the FCC to support cell phone manufactures to make standard options for the blind user.

I would be happy to provide further input upon request.

Thanks,

Matt