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Federal Communication Commission
21st Century Communication and Video Accessibility Act
Specialist CPE Distribution Program
Comments to Docket CGB 10-210

HumanWare is the manufacture of the Deaf Blind Communicator (DBC) and has surveyed several trainers that have worked with a variety of deaf blind consumers who have received the DBC from various state agencies.

Please consider reviewing the perspective and experience that we provide below:

“The time it takes to train a deaf-blind person would depend on their age, how long they have known Braille and their level of reading, their communication level (communicate by sign language, Braille, or finger spelling, and etc.) and their background experiences using technology.

For the first visit, I take the time to introduce the person to all of the equipment and related features for the TTY and face to face. I go through each piece and let the person identify them.

For the younger generation, I find that they are able to understand how the DBC works on the first day of training. Generally around 3 hours. I will go back two or three times to see if they can make and receive calls and generate a face to face conversation on their own without any help.

For the senior population, the training can go on for at least 4 to 5 different visits and at least a few hours at a time. I never go over more than 3 hours as it is exhausting for the individual and do not want to put them on information overload at one time.”

Joan Rushing, Deaf Blind Program Manager, Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind and contract trainer for ITAC Illinois

In speaking with several other trainers, they have defined categories that would assist in determining the approximate level of training required:

Current TeleBraille users: Those consumers already have experience using technology and placing TTY calls. Sending an SMS or text message is a very similar process. Those that also use a computer can learn the DBC basic functions with by one or two three hours sessions. Those that are less familiar with a computer or more intimidated by changing devices could require three sessions.

Current BrailleNote users or consumers using other types of technology: Current BrailleNote users can quickly learn the DBC since they are already familiar with the BrailleNote's Menu System and content sensitive help. One three hour session would provide them with orientation of the companion device and review of the DBC Menu System and Options Menu to make their personal settings or configurations. Those not familiar with the BrailleNote but using other technology would have a good understanding of the DBC usually by the 2nd session.

Senior population not using technology: This population requires the highest level of training and may require one session merely for orientation. One feature is introduced per session, with review and practice and might require as many as four or five sessions.

Thank you for allowing us to suggest these training guidelines for your consideration.

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