



City of Wheaton, Illinois

City of Wheaton
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August 7, 2013

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: *In the Matter of Accessibility of User Interfaces, and Video Programming Guides and Menus, MB Docket No. 12-108, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 13-77)*

Dear Commissioners:

The City of Wheaton, Illinois submits this letter in the above-referenced rulemaking proceeding (NPRM) in support of the comments filed by the Alliance for Community Media; the Alliance for Communications Democracy; Montgomery County, Maryland; and the National Association of Counties, National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors & U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Wheaton is a city of 53,000 + residents that has operated and overseen 5 PEG channels since 1988. These include one public access, two government and two educational channels. The public access channel runs community-produced or supported programming 12 hours per day. One government access channel provides city-related programming as well as all City Council and many Board/Commission meetings. Both of the above channels are augmented with electronic bulletin boards that are regularly updated with information about meeting times, local events, non-profits, school info, park district info, city structure and current projects and more. The educational channels are run by Wheaton College and College of DuPage with educational and community programming. Both channels run programming 24 hours per day. The second government channel runs an interactive bulletin board accessible from residents phones allowing those in the community without internet access the added ability to get information from the City. Our programming is available to over 12,000 subscribers in Wheaton, IL.

We carry many of programs on our channel(s) of which a few, at this time, are closed captioned

We can provide program description information for our programs with some accessibility options such as closed captions. Currently Comcast's Program Guide lists our three channels as "Gov't + Pub Access", "Government Access" or "EDUACCESS". This level of information is inadequate to meet the accessibility goals of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA). Viewers cannot determine from the MVPD's video programming guide what our programs are and whether our programs are accessible. Thus, viewers with visual or auditory disabilities cannot make meaningful video program choices.

Soon our community will also served by AT&T's U-verse multichannel video service, which has created unique and especially difficult problems for visually-impaired viewers wishing to view PEG channel programming that are discussed in the comments filed by the Alliance for Communications Democracy, the Alliance for Community Media, and Chicago Access Corporation (CAN TV).

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Unlike the linear PEG channels on our incumbent cable operator's system, which the visually impaired can reach simply by remembering the right channel number 10, 17, 18, 72 and 99. With AT&T's PEG product the visually impaired must somehow, after punching in channel 99, figure out how to visually navigate a series of menus and sub-menus just to reach any of our PEG channels. The more PEG channels in the DMA and the more PEG channels in each jurisdiction, the more sub-menus the visually impaired must somehow figure out how to "see" and navigate. In our area, AT&T has many different local jurisdictions, and a total of **over** 100 different PEG channels, on its "channel 99" PEG application. As a result, a visually-impaired subscriber, after inputting channel 99 and waiting for it to load, must somehow visually navigate a menu of over 90 different local community jurisdictions and find and press the correct one, and then after that, visually navigate a sub-menu of well **over** 100 different PEG channels, and find and press the correct one, to reach our PEG channel. Moreover, AT&T PEG product's lack of a truly effective "last channel" function for PEG creates yet more problems for the visually impaired if they wish to go to or from a PEG channel from or to a non-PEG channel to another.

In short, the visually impaired are genuinely, and dramatically, disadvantaged compared to the non-visually impaired in accessing, and being able to have the same functionality with respect to, our PEG channels on AT&T's U-verse system.

We urge the Commission to adopt rules that would require video programming guides and menus which display channel and program information include, for all channels, high level channel and program descriptions and titles, as well as a symbol identifying the programs with accessibility options (captioning and video description).

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Gary White
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