

Michael Hansen
5635 Lenox Ave.
Lincoln, NE 68510
mhansen4@gmail.com

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Kris Monteith
Acting Bureau Chief
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Reply to the Coalition of E-Reader Manufacturers' Petition for Waiver from CVAA
Accessibility Requirements, CG Docket No. 10-213

Dear Ms. Monteith:

I am a blind Nebraskan in his 30s that works for the University of Nebraska – Lincoln as a computer system administrator. I am a very active reader and have relished the amount of books that have become available digitally the last several years. Previously the only way I could enjoy a good book was if it had been produced in a recorded format either by the publisher or the Library of Congress Talking Book and Braille program. Not every book is made into an audible format; I would even go as far as to say that most are not. Accessible e-book readers are making it possible that I can have access to main stream publications as soon as sighted people.

I strongly oppose the Petition for Waiver submitted by the Coalition of E-Reader Manufacturers, requesting that e-readers be exempt from the Twenty First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA).

I mentioned that I am employed by the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. It is not uncommon for me to see several articles in campus publications each year talking about the efforts of this or that professor trying to incorporate e-book technology into their classroom. Requiring that these e-book readers be accessible to the blind is pivotal step in leveling the playing field in education. So much time today is spent by blind students trying to get their textbooks adapted into an accessible format. Frequently this process continues several weeks into the course or for some unfortunate students it continues throughout the entire length of the course as they receive their book in installments. This puts the student in awkward situations having to ask the professor for special waivers because materials weren't available. By requiring e-book readers to be fully

accessible you are putting blind students on a level playing field and making them competitive in the classroom.

Some of these manufactures as saying that the primary purpose of their devices are not the advanced communication services (ACS) and that part of their device should be exempt from having to be accessible. Well I remember back in the mid 1990's when I took calculus in college. The course required every student to have a graphing calculator. However they strongly encouraged everyone to have a TI-85. This was because not only was that the calculator that the instructors knew how to use and could help students with but the instructors also wrote special programs that ran on these calculators and if you didn't have one you had to hope you had a good friend in the class.

I see e-book readers in the classroom having similar problems as my calculator example. If all the students have brand X e-book reader and the blind student has brand Y because it is accessible then the teacher may not be able to assist them if they are having trouble. Also inspired professors trying to make the most of technology could easily be leaving blind students out in the dark. Unlike the calculator example however this problem wouldn't be limited to a single math class but in the next 10 years could easily relate to every class they are enrolled in.

I strongly urge the FCC to reject the Coalition's petition and uphold the spirit of the CVAA. E-readers and the ACS features found in that equipment must be made accessible and granting a waiver would perpetuate the digital divide and discrimination in the marketplace that I face every day.

Sincerely,

Michael Hansen