

To Whom It May Concern:

Name: Ronald Flormata

Address: 91-1727 Bond St., Ewa Beach, HI 96706

My Background:

I used to be an I.T. professional until my vision deteriorated to a point where I do not have any functional vision left. I believe I have enough years of using and fixing PCs in the past that helps me move on using the technology although not to the extent that I wanted to achieve.

Presently, I

use Windows-based computers aided by JAWS screen reader. On the smart devices side, I have an iPhone 5, iPod, BookSense XT and Victor Reader Stream.

Using the PC

Without JAWS, it is just too difficult to use the computer even with Windows Narrator. But then you pay \$1000 to get JAWS. I have learned to transition to using the PC with JAWS. However, not all programs are JAWS accessible. Case in point, JAWS cannot read virus scan results by Symantec's Norton Antivirus. I have consulted Freedom Scientific, developer of JAWS, and they confirm this predicament. What good is a scan if you don't have a knowledge of where your system stands. Microsoft's Security Essential is too slow and some users say it does not detect/stop all viruses. Note that Norton Antivirus is not the only program that JAWS can't read.

Accessing the Internet with Windows/JAWS goes well and I can navigate to almost all objects on

a page. I use Internet Explorer and JAWS helps a lot. Some pages, particularly those with captchas are a pain even with assistance from audio with background noise.

I developed and maintain, as WebMaster, the Hawaii Association of the Blind's website. Below the

frontpage I can't even read from a digital counter the number of hits we've taken.

Email: I have a hotmail account. Now that it employs a Microsoft Outlook interface, it took me a while to get used to in reading messages. I still have to figure out how to delete a message. I have been an avid fan of Bookshare.org where I download dozens of books on my PC. I just transfer these downloaded books to my BookSense and read them on my leisure anywhere anytime.

Smart Devices

BookSense and Victor Reader Stream are 100% accessible. No surprise here since they were designed and developed for the blind from the ground up.

I have an iPod 5th generation which has VoiceOver and that opens the door to the blind.

Everything on this gadget is accessible once you turn on VoiceOver.

My first venture into talking cellphones was the Nokia N82 using TALKS screen reader. But again,

you have to pay extra for TALKS. The KNFB reader app on this device enables the phone to possess OCR capabilities. It can even read US currency. One negative of this device is speed - excruciatingly slow. Accuracy is not 100% especially with money reader.

In my honest opinion, the iPhone with VoiceOver is one of the most, if not the most, blind friendly mobile phones on the market today. And with thousands (and growing) of apps, its value just keeps on climbing. People say it is a small computer with telephone capability and then some. I wholeheartedly agree.

Aside from the generic apps of iPhone (Phone, Mail, Safari, Music, Message), here are just some of the

more used apps I have on my iPhone 5:

- * LookTel Money Reader
- * Navigon GPS
- * BlindSquare
- * daBus (Honolulu bus transit app)
- * PriceCheck (Amazon.com price lookup)
- * Register (Squareup.com app used in conjunction with Square credit card reader)
- * Prizmo (OCR)
- * iBooks
- * Kaiser Permanente

The one thing I love about iPhone with VoiceOver is the ability to access and change iPhone settings. This is a feature I did not find in HTC myPhone RUNNING Android a few years ago. By this time, I hope Google has improved on their TalkBack screen reader to make Android phones more accessible for the blind.

Needless to say, I can easily use my iPhone to make/receive calls, receive/write text messages, browse the Web, read/compose email messages, play music, launch/close apps.

I prefer to read and delete email messages on my iPhone. Reading US currency is so easy with LookTel money reader - reliably fast and accurate.

With a good Internet connection, you can even give voice commands to iPhone via SIRI.

Veering away from the core of these experiences, I would like to touch on other consumer electronics. I have to confess, I am an audio enthusiast. Video could have been in my realm had it

not been for my condition. Wouldn't it be nice if I could "see" what the settings are on my television - such as electronic program guide, video source? The remote control must be the key

since this is the bridge between the user and the TV. When I set up my audio preamp, just like I used to when the vision was still working albeit with much difficulty, I had to read the display on the

unit or tv. There is much to be desired on this front.

Through the CVAA, I do hope the mainstream technology manufacturers adhere to the spirit of this important law in order to meet the intended objectives.

