

TAP INTO BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH ACCESSIBILITY SOLUTIONS

Learn what U.S. laws & regulations require and how your company can turn compliance into a business opportunity



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SAVE MY SEAT!

ABOUT THE WEBINAR

Providers of communications services, Internet-solutions, and other information technologies operating in the U.S. are subject to a variety of legal duties intended to advance greater accessibility and ease of use related to the services and products they make available to consumers with disabilities, in particular consumers who are deaf, blind, and/or have physical disabilities. Too often, compliance with many legal and regulatory duties is perceived as a “necessary evil” by the business community – imposing costs without any meaningful economic benefits. This perception has historically hindered the advancement of the legitimate public interest goal of ensuring all Americans, regardless of disability, have access to the same products, services, and solutions on equal terms.

This distinguished and knowledgeable panel will:

- *Provide firsthand insights into how persons with disabilities interact with a variety of modern-day technologies and solutions to highlight the benefits of advanced accessibility, while identifying persistent deficiencies*
- *Educate our audience about the laws and regulations governing disability access and how they impact various communications, Internet-based and other information technology solutions providers*
- *And, notably, shine a light on the opportunities and other commercial benefits that arise when technology businesses, particularly communications vendors, focus on not just ensuring compliance with applicable legal duties, but making “disability access” a priority*

Are you doing everything you can to make your company’s solutions accessible and easy to use for consumers who are deaf and/or blind?

Are you missing out on business opportunities by ignoring potential customers and well-qualified job applicants with disabilities?

- *Did you know that more than 3.5 million Americans are legally blind?*
- *Did you know that nearly 1 in every 20 Americans is deaf or hard of hearing? That’s a population of over 10 million.*
- *In 2019, 19.3 percent of persons with disabilities were employed.*

Together, the deaf and blind communities, alone, represents a market opportunity of nearly 15 million disabled consumers!

(Nearly one-third of whom are actively engaged in the modern workforce)

ABOUT THE PANELISTS



About the FCC Disability Rights Office

The FCC Disability Rights Office addresses disability-related matters, including access to telecommunications services and equipment; hearing aid compatibility; access to advanced communications services and equipment; access to Internet browsers built into mobile phones; telecommunications relay services; the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program; accessible video programming and video programming apparatus (access to televised emergency information, closed captioning on television and television programs on the Internet, audio description, and accessible user interfaces, text menus, and program guides). The Disability Rights Office provides expert advice and assistance to other Commission bureaus and offices, consumers, industry members and others on issues relevant to persons with disabilities.



About Michal Nowicki

Michal Nowicki is an Associate Attorney at Marashlian & Donahue, PLLC. Michal has a strong personal interest in the 21st-Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) and disability access generally. Even well before joining Marashlian & Donahue, Mr. Nowicki helped the National Federation of the Blind convince the FCC to deny Amazon's petition for a permanent exemption from CVAA accessibility requirements for e-book readers. He has also worked closely with Comcast and DirecTV to ensure that both companies comply with FCC regulations requiring audio description for the blind and visually impaired. More recently, Mr. Nowicki responded to the FCC's request for public comments on how audio description rules have been implemented, hoping that the FCC will expand the requirements to cover video-on-demand programming. Finally, Mr. Nowicki proudly chairs the National Federation of the Blind of Illinois Advocacy Committee, which confronts access barriers faced by blind Illinoisans and equips them with the resources necessary to adjust to vision loss and thrive without sight. Mr. Nowicki explained how the CVAA benefits blind professionals at the 2019 National Association of Blind Lawyers meeting, and he will provide an in-depth overview of audio description requirements under the CVAA, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act at the 2021 Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium.

ABOUT THE PANELISTS



About Darrin Caddes

Darrin Caddes is the Vice President of Corporate Design for Poly Inc. In this role, Caddes leads a global team responsible for all aspects of design and creative execution including industrial design, packaging, ergonomics, user experience, brand and facility development. Prior to Poly, Caddes worked as a Sr. Designer for Fiat Automotive and BMW before becoming the Design Director for Indian Motorcycle Inc. He has been the recipient of numerous international design and innovation awards and has had his work on display at the Pinakothec der Moderne, Germanys largest museum dedicated to modern art and design. Caddes also taught classes for Art Center College of Design in California and Switzerland and has been a guest speaker at Stanford University, Georgetown University, Facebook, UC Santa Cruz, University of Michigan, Art Center College of Design, Istituto Europeo and Scuola d'Arte Applicata, as well as a keynote speaker at numerous design conferences and forums.

In 1999, while working as a motorcycle designer, Caddes suffered a work-related injury while test driving a prototype vehicle which left him with limited use of his dominant hand and arm. Then, in March 2001, Caddes became paralyzed in a motorcycle crash in Mexico which left him paralyzed and confined to a wheelchair. In both instances, Caddes continued with his work through his hospitalization and rehabilitation. In 2004, he began working for Plantronics, now Poly, as their VP of Corporate Design. In all aspects of his career, whether it be vehicles, lifestyle accessories or communication devices, Caddes views the products he is responsible for as physical extensions of the end user. "The mission of our design team is, not only to create simple and intuitive user experiences," Caddes says, "but to empower the end user, to help them hear, see and communicate better than they ever could, regardless of their personal strengths or limitations." "Our goal is to turn our customers into superheroes." "We don't need to save the day ourselves; we just want to make the capes."

Caddes is also quite active in community service through volunteer work and serving as Executive Sponsor for the Poly Woman's Leadership Group, as well as Board Trustee Ametrias for the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History.