

Disability Advisory Committee (DAC)

Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023

Certified by DAC Co-Chair Kim Charlson — September 19, 2023

On September 7, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. EDT, the second meeting of the fifth term of the DAC was called to order by DAC Co-Chairs Kim Charlson of the Perkins School for the Blind and Kyle Dixon of NCTA – the Internet & Television Association. The meeting was the first in-person meeting of the DAC since February 2020.

Chairwoman Rosenworcel welcomed the DAC members. She shared highlights of the Commission's work since the previous DAC meeting in April, 2023, and explained how the DAC's work contributed toward the work the FCC is doing. Commissioner Nathan Simington noted that new Video Relay Service rates are moving forward, and recognized advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automated Speech Recognition (ASR).

Alejandro Roark, Chief of the FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB), noted that September marks the 50th anniversary of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. He also informed the DAC of an upcoming listening session of the Task Force to Prevent Digital Discrimination and the National Digital Connectivity and Lifeline Awareness Week, both scheduled for the following week. He also raised the upcoming national emergency test and educating members about best practices for accessible emergency preparedness. Diane Burstein, CGB Deputy Bureau Chief, expressed her gratitude to Disability Rights Office (DRO) staff who helped make the DAC meeting possible.

Joshua Mendelsohn, DAC Designated Federal Officer (DFO), summarized communications protocols and housekeeping rules for the DAC members. DAC Co-Chair Kim Charlson then led a roll call of members present.

Suzy Rosen Singleton, DRO Chief, and Eliot Greenwald, DRO Deputy Chief, shared briefings from DRO and discussed topics of interest, including matters concerning video programming, emergency communications, and modern communications.

Richard Ray, Co-Chair of the National Emergency Number Association's Accessibility Committee and Chair of the Direct Video Calling (DVC) working group, then introduced the working group's report and recommendation. An amendment was proposed by Brianne Burger from the U.S. Department of Education, and was adopted by the full DAC. The recommendation, as amended, was voted upon and passed.

After a brief break, Arpan Sura, Chief Counsel at the FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, discussed the FCC's approach to AI, emphasizing its potential for empowerment. He also touched on the role of AI in accessibility, such as AI-generated captions and audio descriptions. He concluded by posing questions for future consideration.

Thomas Wlodkowski, Vice President, Accessibility and Multicultural Technology and Product, Comcast, and Chair of the Audio Description working group, provided an update on the working group's progress. He mentioned that the group is examining the current state of audio description and its challenges. The group has consulted with various stakeholders and experts and is in the process of finalizing a report which he expects to be ready for the next DAC meeting.

The meeting opened for public participation. There were no public questions or comments. Closing remarks were made by DAC Co-Chairs Kim Charlson and Kyle Dixon, and the next DAC meeting date – January 25, 2024 – was announced.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

September 7, 2023 Attendees:

Organization	Representative
Amazon.com, Inc.	Kristine Hackman
American Association of the DeafBlind (AADB)	René Pellerin
American Council of the Blind (ACB)	Clark Rachfal
American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)	Sarah Malaier
Apple, Inc.	James Craig
The Arc	Katy Schmid
AT&T Corporation	Linda Vandeloop
Cerebral Palsy and Deaf Organization (CPADO)	Mark Hill
ClearCaptions, LLC	Matthew Palmer
Comcast NBCUniversal	Thomas Wlodkowski
Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD)	Juli Robinson
Consumer Technology Association (CTA)	Rachel Sanford Nemeth
Convo Communications, LLC	Amanda Montgomery
CTIA - the Wireless Association	Avonne Bell
Hamilton Relay, Inc.	Beth Slough
Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)	Lise Hamlin
Helen Keller National Center (HKNC)	Scott Davert
InnoCaption	Cristina Duarte
National Association of Broadcasters (NAB)	Joshua N. Pila
National Association of State Agencies Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NASADHH)	Annie Urasky
National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA)	Theodore R. Dorsette III
National Captioning Institute (NCI)	Darlene Parker
National Emergency Number Association (NENA)	Richard Ray
National Federation of the Blind (NFB)	Justin Young
NCTA – The Internet & Television Association	Kyle Dixon
Perkins School for the Blind	Kim Charlson
Sorenson Communications, LLC	Michael Maddix
TDIforAccess, Inc. (TDI)	AnnMarie Killian
T-Mobile USA, Inc.	Shellie Blakeney
University of Pittsburgh Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Wireless Technologies for People with Disabilities	Lindsey Morris
Verizon Communications, Inc	Ian Dillner
VITAC	Heather York

ZP Better Together, LLC	Gregory Hlibok
U.S. Access Board	Timothy P. Creagan
U.S. Department of Education	Brianne Burger
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Lisa Bothwell
U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Aaron Kubey

CGB Staff Speakers

Alejandro Roark

Diane Burstein

Suzy Rosen Singleton

Eliot Greenwald

Josh Mendelsohn