



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FCC CONSUMER INFORMATION BUREAU PARTICIPATES
IN RESCHEDULED TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND DISABILITY ACCESS
WEB CAST TRAINING FORUM ON OCTOBER 1

*Bureau Chief Dane Snowden Provides Remarks on Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act
Deputy Bureau Chief Karen Peltz Strauss, Expert Panelist*

Washington, DC – K. Dane Snowden, chief of the Consumer Information Bureau at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), will provide introductory remarks for a free Live Web Cast training entitled “Making Telecommunications Products and Services Accessible to People With Disabilities.”

The web cast, originally scheduled for September 11, will be held Monday, October 1 from 1 to 3 PM.

Sponsored by the Information Technology Technical Assistance and Training Center (ITTATC), a non-profit consortium housed at the Georgia Institute of Technology, the web-enabled training forum will include practical advice from the FCC on the requirements of Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act. The purpose of the event is to expand awareness among consumers on FCC regulations for Section 255 and to educate industry designers, managers, and marketers on FCC requirements for making telecommunications products and services accessible to America’s 53 million Americans with disabilities.

Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 requires telecommunications manufacturers and providers of telecommunications services to make their products and services accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities, if readily achievable. If it is not readily achievable to provide access, Section 255 requires manufacturers and providers to make their devices and services compatible with the peripheral devices and specialized customer premises equipment that are commonly used by people with disabilities. Examples of accessible designs include the raised ‘nib’ “number 5” on phone keypads to provide orientation, talking caller ID, text telephone or TTY compatibility with phone systems, and bills provided in alternative formats such as large font or even Brailled. People with vision or hearing disabilities benefit greatly from design and fabrication of products and services that include the requirements of Section 255, although America’s growing aging population and people with other physical and mental limitations also likely benefit from the design requirements.

(over)

FCC Consumer Information Bureau Deputy Chief Karen Peltz Strauss is the expert panelist on the Training Forum, providing live information and technical assistance to participants' questions about Section 255 during the two-hour long broadcast. Additionally the training forum will address the regulations for Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, effective June 21, 2001, that require federal departments and agencies to procure, maintain, use and develop electronic and information technology (including telecommunications) that meets new disability access standards. Speakers from other agencies will address these regulations.

ITTATC's training event is broadcast 1:00- 3:00 P.M. EST, via the web, from the Chantilly, VA, studios of TVWorldwide.com's AbleTV.net with free registration available at www.ittatc.org. The webcast will feature AbleTV.net's captioned video streaming or "webcapturing" process to aid those with disabilities in participating in the training forum via chat, E-mail, facsimile and phone.

FCC Consumer Information Bureau contact in Disabilities Rights Office: Jenifer Simpson at 202-418-0008 (voice), 202-418-1169 (TTY), or Email jsimpson@fcc.gov.

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