

Comments to
Facilitating Access to Copyrighted Works for Visually Impaired Persons and Draft
Treaty Proposal

I am an Assistive Technology Specialist that started working as a Rehabilitation Teacher for the Visually Impaired nearly 30 years ago. In working with blind and visually impaired customers, it was a critical part of my job to instruct customers in use of talking books to access recorded copyrighted books, magazines, college texts and other information. This also included using modified cassette recorders to be able to take notes and create personal organization and labeling systems. As Digital recorders and Digital book players have replaced these early devices, the blind and visually impaired have been able to access current materials in much more convenient formats. Copyright considerations were maintained by eligibility determination, made through the National Library Service, where users applied for and received players and reading materials in appropriate format. As new avenues and opportunities for accessing print information in alternate formats are opened, preservation of the rights of the blind and visually impaired to accessing print information is critical. Balancing the rights under the copyright laws with the equal access rights guaranteed under the A.D.A. will be critical as we move forward on this. Eligibility determination for access may still need to be a part of this to preserve copyrighted materials but maintaining equal access for the blind and visually impaired to print material is a critically important right guaranteed under the A.D.A.

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