**Dots and Dashes**

**May 30, 2023**

# **Register for ACB’s 2023 Convention**

ACB’s 2023 Conference & Convention registration is now open for everyone! ACB’s 2023 convention takes place from June 19-July 7. The virtual portion begins June 19 with the Call to Order. Resolutions will take place from June 20-22, and Constitution and Bylaws will take place on June 23. ACB’s hybrid convention sessions begin on June 30 and end on July 7, with all in-person events taking place in Schaumburg, IL. [**Find details on how to register for convention**](https://acb.org/2023-convention-registration).

**Audio Description on Max**

On May 23, HBO Max became Max and launched with over 6,500 hours of audio-described content thanks to the 2020 agreement that Disability Rights Advocates (DRA) and Disability Law Center, Inc. negotiated on behalf of the American Council of the Blind (ACB) and Bay State Council of the Blind. [**Find out what to expect on Max with this info from Warner Bros. Discovery**](https://acb.org/Max-Launch)**.**

# **ACB’s GAAD Celebration**

On a special video edition of the ACB Advocacy Update, we commemorated Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) with a discussion about the importance of digital access with particular focus on the experiences of people who have multiple disabilities. [**Access ACB’s GAAD video presentation on YouTube**](https://youtu.be/XE9VCGGPpjs).

# **2023 White House GAAD Listening Session**

On Global Accessibility Awareness Day, representatives from the American Council of the Blind, American Association of People with Disabilities, American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), National Association of the Deaf (NAD), National Disability Rights Network, National Federation of the Blind, and the Honorable Tony Coelho met with the White House Domestic Policy Council and key Administration stakeholders to discuss digital inclusion and accessibility. We look forward to continuing our work to make the virtual environment accessible for everyone with the Administration and our allies.

# **What’s New With ADP**

On last week’s episode of the ACB Advocacy Update, Clark and Swatha met with Tabitha Kenlon, ACB’s Audio Description Project Coordinator, and Kim Charlson, Co-Chair of the Audio Description Project Steering Committee, about all that is new with the Audio Description Project (ADP). Join us as we discuss the upcoming ADP Conference, the annual ACB Conference and Convention, the Audio Description Awards Gala, and all the other projects and committee activities happening this year. [**Listen to this episode of the ACB Advocacy Update**](https://acb-advocacy-update.pinecast.co/episode/4352093f/what-s-new-with-the-audio-description-project).

# **Global Accessibility Awareness Day Statement for Digital Inclusion**

On Global Accessibility Awareness Day 2023, 52 national disability organizations joined together to celebrate the transformative impact of accessible technology and call on the federal government to require websites and software applications to be accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. [**Read the GAAD statement from national disability advocates**](https://acb.org/2023-GAAD-statement).

# **2023 BADIE Award Winners**

The ACB Audio Description Project BADIE essay contest received dozens of entries from students across the country. Our judges were impressed by the writing skills and the engaging critiques of audio description in educational and entertainment media. We thank everyone who submitted an essay! [**Read the complete list of winners and learn more about the BADIE contest**](https://acb.org/2023-BADIE-winners).

# **Accessible Video Conferencing Platforms**

On May 17, Senator Edward J. Markey and Representative Anna G. Eshoo released a press release applauding the FCC for announcing [proposals](https://www.fcc.gov/document/rosenworcel-proposes-video-conferencing-services-accessibility-rules) that would for the first time ensure video conferencing platforms comply with accessibility requirements for people with disabilities. This announcement mirrors requirements in the lawmakers’ legislation, the Communication, Video, and Technology Accessibility (CVTA) Act*.* The CVTA is an ACB legislative imperative, and accessible access to video conferencing platforms is critical for ACB and our members to engage in our modern digital world. We commend Chair Rosenworcel from the FCC for moving this issue forward under the Commission’s existing authority, and we commend Sen. Markey and Rep. Eshoo for their leadership to ensure communications technology is accessible for everyone. Read the press release: [**Sen. Markey, Rep. Eshoo Applaud FCC for Proposed Video Conferencing Accessibility Rules**](https://www.markey.senate.gov/news/press-releases/sen-markey-rep-eshoo-applaud-fcc-for-proposed-video-conferencing-accessibility-rules?fbclid=IwAR2dKmj7y9LywNj02OQCpGbFViDXOFWC33LE9ibk3gwjes-yl4uuDccKC7I).

# **Bipartisan Open Letter Supporting Digital Access**

The Honorable Tony Coelho and Former Speaker Newt Gingrich released a bipartisan open letter urging Congress to identify digital accessibility challenges faced by members of the disability community and create new legislation to make the virtual environment accessible for all. In April, ACB and other disability organizations met with Coelho and Gingrich to discuss digital inclusion, and continue to take part in this conversation to make digital accessibility a bipartisan issue. [**Read the open letter**](https://www.gingrich360.com/2023/05/18/the-internet-should-be-accessible-and-usable-for-americans-with-disabilities/).

# **DOJ and Department of Education Dear Colleague Letter**

The U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education issued a [**joint Dear Colleague letter on the online accessibility of colleges, universities, and other postsecondary institutions**](http://ow.ly/rBc050OuIeE). Many colleges, universities, and other postsecondary institutions increasingly rely on their websites and third-party online platforms to provide services, programs, and activities to members of the public including learning platforms, podcasts and videos, and third-party platforms like YouTube, Spotify, and Apple Podcasts. The letter reiterates that Title II of the ADA and Section 504 requires that these institutions provide equal opportunities to people with disabilities in all their operations and highlights recent web accessibility enforcement activities and technical assistance.

# **New Accessibility Features on iOS**

Apple announced it will roll out new accessibility features this year. This includes Point and Speak, which will allow people with visual disabilities to interact with physical objects that have several text labels, and an upgrade to Voice Control that will enable users to phonetically edit text. [**Learn more about Apple’s new accessibility features**](https://techcrunch.com/2023/05/16/apple-reveals-upcoming-accessibility-features-for-iphone-ipad-and-mac/?fbclid=IwAR2dKmj7y9LywNj02OQCpGbFViDXOFWC33LE9ibk3gwjes-yl4uuDccKC7I&guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly9sLmZhY2Vib29rLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAABsuj7v6tF9-AEulKm4S5DF7nSy1FMtJhKwXTrwwZxB_fm140YlVm3_cK6Vjk7a4ZvRtCYPA6CmP4weMbUODmwwe98PdH5zKUJ3hY4gWeniSAS-T0QpkLBBsIUbffebCCrirxWh9lZajTNjQJfe73KYv56dC29oj02ovvk9mPtRK).

# **Student Researchers Need You!**

A team of students at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor's Center for Academic Innovation is conducting a study to understand the experiences and needs of students with various accessibility needs while using educational software. If you are a current or former college student with unique accessibility needs, the team needs you! Participation involves one or two 45-minute sessions (either in person if you’re in the Ann Arbor area or online if you’re remote). If you’re interested in participating, or have any questions, reach out to Jessica at **zcjess@umich.edu**.

# **Open Casting Call: Sight Unseen**

Casting Director Blyth Nailing is on a search for the lead of a Canadian television series “Sight Unseen” on Blink49/CTV. They are looking for blind, partially sighted and low-vision actors to audition for the role of Tess Bell (30-50s, female, open ethnicity), a detective who quits the force after she starts losing her vision, but continues her search for a missing woman from an old case she left behind. Filming takes place July to early November 2023 in Vancouver, Canada. A valid passport is required for U.S. actors. No professional acting experience necessary. To be considered for this role, please email a recent photo along with your name, city of residence, confirmation that you have a valid U.S. passport for travel, which organization you found this casting call through, and a brief description of your connection to the vision loss community to **sightunseen2023us@gmail.com**.