

Date sent: Friday, June 21, 2013
Subject: FCC Seeks Comment on User Interfaces, Program Guides, and Menus

Comment Due Date: July 15, 2013
Reply Comment Due Date: August 7, 2013

The Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA) directs the FCC to implement new rules to ensure access to video programming. The FCC released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on May 30, 2013, asking for comment on how the FCC should implement the following requirements of the CVAA:

- The CVAA requires the user interfaces (function controls) of “digital apparatus” that receive or play back television programs to be accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. For these “digital apparatus,” the CVAA requires access to closed captioning and video description features through a mechanism (like a button, key, or icon) for activating the closed captioning or accessibility features. “Navigation devices” are excluded from the “digital apparatus” requirements.
- The CVAA requires “navigation devices” that provide on-screen text menus and guides for the display or selection of multichannel video programming to be accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. For “navigation devices” with built-in closed captioning capability, the CVAA requires access to the closed captioning capability through a mechanism (like a button, key, or icon) for activating the closed captioning or accessibility features.

The FCC also seeks comment on several other issues, including:

- What kinds of equipment or devices are covered “digital apparatus” or “navigation devices”? Which requirements should apply to televisions, personal computers, smartphones, and DVD players? Which requirements should apply to set-top boxes supplied by multichannel video programming distributors, such as a cable company?
- Which user interfaces (function controls) must be made accessible to individuals who are blind or visually impaired?
- Which “accessibility features” should users be able to activate through a mechanism, like a button, key, or icon? Should users be able to activate or deactivate the accessibility feature in a single step? Does “accessibility features” include closed captioning, video description, or settings, such as selecting the font, color, and size of the closed captions?
- What deadline(s) should the FCC set for these requirements?

For additional information on this proceeding, contact Adam Copeland of the Media Bureau, Policy Division, Adam.Copeland@fcc.gov, (202) 418-1037, or Maria Mullarkey of the Media Bureau, Policy Division, Maria.Mullarkey@fcc.gov, (202) 418-1067.

Links to the NPRM:

Word: http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-13-77A1.docx
PDF: http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-13-77A1.pdf

Links to Statement by Commissioner Pai:

Word: http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-13-77A2.docx

PDF: http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-13-77A2.pdf

Links to the Public Notice (announcing comment deadlines and meeting dates):

Word: http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-13-1398A1.doc

PDF: http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-13-1398A1.pdf