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Digital Divide - Commission

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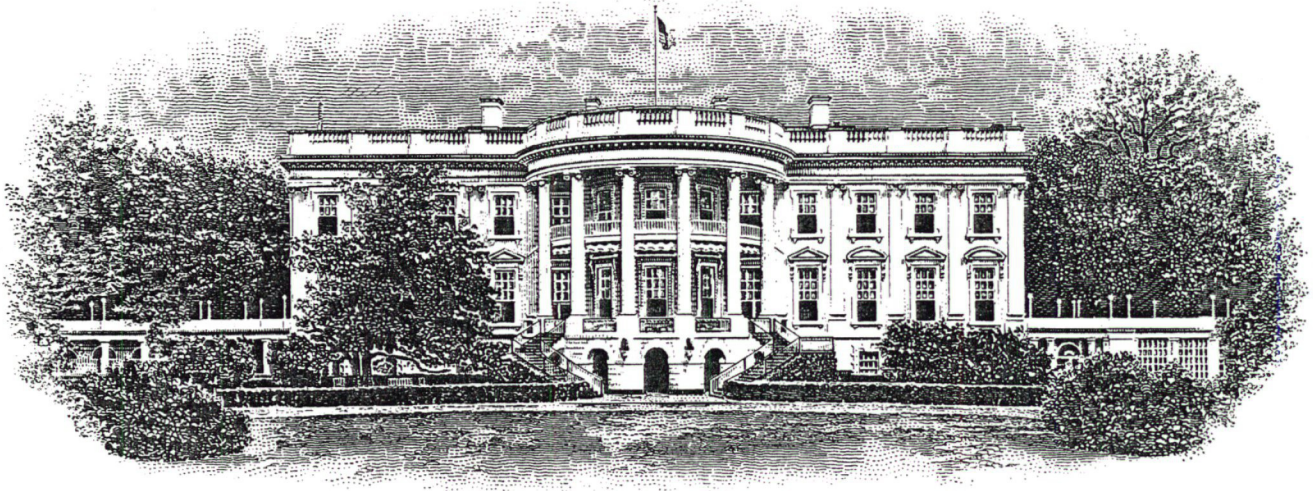
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THE WHITE HOUSE



OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON

Jonathan M. Young

Associate Director for Disability Outreach

Phone: 202-456-7032

TTY: 202-456-5128

Fax: 202-456-0362

To:

Jean Simi

Fax:

810-766-1753

Date:

9/7/00

Phone:

810-238-5651

Page one of:

10

Comments:



Jonathan M. Young
09/07/2000 02:22:17 PM

Record Type: Record

To: jsimi@mott.org @ inet

cc:

Subject: Task Force

Jean,

It was a pleasure to speak with you. Thanks for letting me offer an overview of the President's Digital Divide Initiative and the Task Force/Commission idea. As I mentioned, the purpose of this Task Force is to be a one-year effort to provide continuity with the next Administration and help energize efforts at education and outreach to colleges and universities. It would be a privately-organized, not-for-profit effort, as opposed to a Presidential Commission, in order to ensure impartiality with the change of administration and with respect to the high-tech industry.

Below please find a draft version of a proposal that is under development by Larry Scadden of the National Science Foundation, Steve Jacobs of IDEAL at NCR (a non-profit within NCR focusing on Disability issues), and several others, who are working to finalize the proposal this week. My role has been to facilitate discussion about what objectives the Task Force might be best suited and most able to address.

I am also attaching three letters to give you an idea of some of the broader activities associated with the President's Digital Divide Initiative. One letter is from CEOs of high-tech companies about making their products and services accessible. Another is from university presidents about supporting accessible design in their academic programs. And the final one is from CEOs about hiring people with disabilities. These will all be presented to the President in conjunction with his September 21st trip. The university letter, for example, would blend well with the ongoing efforts of the Task Force.

My direct line is 202-456-7032. And my fax is 202-456-0362. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Young



Task Force Proposal.



0905-ceo-employment.CEO Tech Letter 08-16 University Letter 08-15.

TASK FORCE ON EQUAL ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY AND OPPORTUNITY

The Task Force on Equal Access to Technology and Opportunity will meet President Clinton's "Call to Action" to bridge the Digital Divide among people with disabilities by promoting efforts to 1) increase the affordability of information technology and, 2) improve the infrastructure for designing and delivering technology.

This year marked the 10th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which identified "equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency" as our nation's "proper goals regarding individuals with disabilities." We have made considerable progress in ten years: Physical structures are rapidly becoming more accessible, and social attitudes about the potential of people with disabilities are changing. Nevertheless, high rates of unemployment among people with disabilities indicate that much remains to be done need before the ADA's goals are fully realized.

Information technology is fundamentally altering the way Americans work, purchase goods and services, communicate, and play. We see these changes in education, in the economy, and in recreation. In time it will infiltrate the core of our democracy with interactive polling of, and deliberations by, the citizenry. Some communities have already experimented with online voting. For people with disabilities, information technology can be a key to unlock a multitude of opportunities -- in education, health care, employment, and entertainment.

In an era of growing dependence on the electronic distribution of information, access to the information infrastructure is essential for everyone. Unfortunately, there are wide disparities among those who do and do not have access to computers and the Internet. For several years, discussion about closing this "Digital Divide" has focused on divisions of race, income, geography, and education. This year President Clinton unveiled his "Digital Divide" initiative to bridge this access gap and increase opportunities for tens of millions of economically disadvantaged people. Corporations, government, and the not-for-profit sector have worked collaboratively toward this end.

There is also a "Digital Divide" according to disability. Discussions of access to technology tend to focus on the availability of that technology. But there is an equally important concept: the "usability" of the technology once it is made available. The mere proliferation of computer and information technology does not guarantee usability by people who have disabilities. The increasing use of public transaction machines and information kiosks pose additional challenges to the disability community. Automatic teller machines are ubiquitous, and many governmental agencies are providing their services electronically. If these technologies are not fully usable by people with disabilities, the Information Age can set them even further behind rather than be a tool for empowerment.

On September 21, President Clinton plans to devote a component of his Digital Divide Initiative to the needs of people with disabilities. He will make a series of public and private announcements aimed to reach five main goals:

- (1) Information technology products and services should be designed from the outset so they are more usable by people with disabilities.
- (2) The state-of-the-art of specialized assistive technology should be improved to permit enable use of existing information technology.
- (3) Information technology should be pursued as an opportunity to increase the employment of people with disabilities and sustain our national economic growth.
- (4) Existing "digital divide" initiatives should be designed so that people with disabilities can take advantage of them.
- (5) Basic information technology as well as highly specialized assistive technologies should be made more affordable for people with disabilities.

A long-standing commitment by and collaboration among diverse sectors of society will be required to achieve these goals. Inspired by President Clinton's initiative, the [name of home entity] proposes to create a Task Force aimed at two important systemic issues: 1) affordability and, 2) education and outreach. This Task Force will bring together American business and industry, universities, not-for-profit organizations, foundations, and government agencies to implement existing commitments and identify recommendations for new courses of action.

(1) Affordability of technology. The Assistive Technology Act was designed to identify ways to improve the delivery of assistive technology, including to low and moderate-income households. Federal funding for these projects is set to begin sunseting. The Task Force will identify key recommendations to help address the ongoing needs of the Tech Act projects and explore additional mechanisms to support the financing of information technologies for people with disabilities.

(2) University infrastructure. One of the most important determinants for the long-term success of our efforts will be the ability to integrate concepts of usability and availability of information technology into the higher education system. Engineering and computer science majors and graduate students must learn to consider issues of product usability through their study of the principles of product design. They will then carry those principles into industry and their own teaching. These design principles include the development of flexible, multi-modal interface techniques that can work across all disabilities and in all environments.

Under this theme, the Task Force will consider at least four issues:

(A) Integrating accessibility content throughout the engineering and computer science curricula -- at the undergraduate, graduate, and life-long learning levels. Designers of interactive technology must consider the needs of product users. "Universal design" is a term commonly used today to refer to a process whereby environments and products are designed with built-in flexibility so they are usable by as many people as possible, regardless of age and ability. The

concept of "user-centered design" is also used to refer to the process wherein the designer considers the specific needs and desires of the potential users during the design process. This can only be accomplished by watching and talking with the consumer population.

(B) Developing a research agenda to support the advance of "Universal Design" and Assistive Technology.

C) Ensuring the accessibility of computer and internet-based learning materials, as well as the accessibility of university-supported information systems.

(D) Promoting opportunities in accessible and usable distance-learning.

(E) Improving the usability of information technology in university career centers.

The Task Force will be charged with developing action plans that will address goals in five specific areas:

Meeting and sustaining these goals will require attention to the structural issues of how groups such as industry and universities integrate accessibility and income inequities. We believe that the creation of a Task Force is an effective way to launch the desired national initiative and to keep the momentum going. The Task Force will have representation from industry, academia, advocates, and government.

The Administration is already working with University presidents to commit to taking many of the essential steps within academia. The Task Force would therefore be valuable in helping to make the commitments a reality. The Task Force should also help develop additional strategies to make information technologies more widely available to people with disabilities throughout the country.

Dear Mr. President,

As CEOs of leading American businesses, one of our biggest challenges is recruiting and retaining workers with the skills needed for our firms to compete and win in the global marketplace. We believe that one of the ways to meet this challenge is to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities, especially since new information and communications technologies will make it even easier for people with disabilities to participate in the workforce. We are therefore proud to commit ourselves to promoting the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of candidates and employees with disabilities.

People with disabilities also represent an untapped resource that can help fill the need for qualified and highly skilled employees. A 30-year Dupont study, for example, has indicated that employees with disabilities have above average records in job performance, dependability, attendance, and safety. Today's information technologies provide an unprecedented opportunity for people with disabilities to expand the scope of their contributions -- and for our companies to meet the growing demand for workers. To make concrete progress toward increasing the employment of people with disabilities, complementing the Federal government's recent hiring commitment, and to help our businesses grow, we will work to take the following steps:

- Target disability in our diversity recruitment goals as we do for minorities and women, including, wherever appropriate, specific hiring targets;
- Promote the recruitment of youth with disabilities through summer internships, mentoring programs, "career awareness" activities, and community education programs that provide employment and leadership training;
- Create partnerships with disability organizations to identify barriers to employment for people with disabilities and to identify job candidates;
- Include disability issues as part of our company's diversity training for all employees;
- Incorporate images of disability in our company's internal and external promotional and marketing materials;
- Ensure that equal access to all company programs, including social activities, is incorporated into the early planning of those programs; and
- Develop and promote reasonable accommodations policies, including the availability of assistive technologies.

This is important both to reach the inclusion goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act and to sustain our national economy. Despite historic economic growth, people with disabilities remain unemployed at rates unacceptably high -- several times that of the general population. Becoming gainfully employed gives people the economic means to become more fully integrated into our society and enhances one's sense of dignity. By

hiring people with disabilities in our companies we can help change the social attitudes that continue to stand in the way of full inclusion of people with disabilities.

Thank you for your leadership in this area; we look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Draft August 16, 2000

As the CEOs of a number of America's leading high-tech companies, we strongly support your efforts to promote the accessibility of information and communications products and services for people with disabilities.

We believe that there are two compelling reasons to do so. First, accessible information technology can be a powerful tool for expanding opportunity in the emerging information society. If our products and services are designed to be accessible, people with disabilities will find it easier to work, access a growing universe of electronic information and services, and lead more independent lives. If we fail to do this, people with disabilities could be further isolated from the mainstream of our economy and our society. Second, there are sound economic and commercial incentives to make our products more accessible. Globally, there are over 750 million people with disabilities, and there are 55 million in the United States alone. Making our products accessible will also make it easier for us to serve the rapidly growing population of seniors. Moreover, increasing the accessibility of our products can often improve their functionality for everyone, not just for people with disabilities. Designing products and services that can give customers a choice of input and output mechanisms will help people with disabilities, but it will also help the mobile professional trying to access the Web on a handheld wireless device.

This issue requires private sector leadership. The federal government can help create the right policy environment, but it is ultimately companies that must design, develop and market accessible products and services. To make concrete progress on this issue, and to elevate its importance within our companies, all of us are committed to developing a corporate-wide policy on accessibility within the next six months. The specifics of our policies will vary because of the different markets that we serve, but all of us will seek to include the following private sector "best practices" as appropriate:

- Raise the level of awareness of accessibility issues within our company, and provide our employees with the training they need to design accessible products and services;
- Develop accessibility guidelines for products and services, and hold product development groups accountable for implementing these guidelines where technically and economically feasible;
- Involve people with disabilities in the design and testing of our products and services;
- Devote sufficient product development and engineering resources to identify and rapidly address known accessibility problems, particularly as we develop new versions of our products;
- Make it easier for our developer community to create accessible products and services through training, guidelines, and technology solutions such as authoring tools;
- Document the accessibility features of our products and services;

- Support internal and external (e.g. university-based) research and development that will improve the state-of-the-art of accessible technology that is relevant to our products and services; and
- Implement standards that advance accessibility, such as the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) guidelines on accessible browsers, Web content and authoring tools.

As industry, we will also commit to establishing a Web site that will collect private sector policies on accessibility as a way of encouraging the rapid dissemination and adoption of best practices. Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Draft August 15, 2000

Dear Mr. President:

As the Presidents of a number of America's leading research universities, we are writing to express our support for your efforts to make information and communications technologies more accessible for people with disabilities, and to describe what our universities are prepared to do to support this objective.

This is an important goal. If we design information and communications technologies so that they are accessible, people with disabilities will find it much easier to live, learn and work as we enter the Information Age. If we fail to do this, people with disabilities could become increasingly isolated from the economic and social mainstream.

As universities with strong programs in engineering and computer science, we believe that we can make a significant contribution to this national goal. We educate the next generation of IT professionals and entrepreneurs, and provide continuing education for IT experts that are already in the workforce. Our faculty conducts the long-term research that often shapes and influences future developments in the information and communications industry, and which could lead to breakthroughs in accessibility. Each of our universities has unique assets that we can bring to bear on this problem, but we are all committed to taking concrete steps in this area. We will work to:

- Make "universal design" and accessibility part of the education that we provide to computer scientists and engineers at all levels -- undergraduate, graduate and continuing education;
- Ensure that our Web sites and on-line resources are accessible to people with disabilities;
- Look for ways to increase support for research to improve the state-of-the-art in this area by seeking federal, state, private sector and foundation funding -- and providing internal "seed funding" to new or existing faculty that wish to pursue this as a research topic;
- Contribute to efforts by the federal government to develop a comprehensive research agenda in this area;
- Help train experts who can serve as a national resource on this issue by participating in standards-setting efforts that incorporate accessibility, evaluating the accessibility of IT products and services, and providing technical assistance to companies seeking to enhance the accessibility of their products and services;
- Develop a strategy for increasing participation of people with disabilities in our computer science and engineering programs; and
- Encourage our faculty who are developing cutting-edge applications of IT to consider accessibility concerns.

Thank you for your leadership in this important area.



director <director@icdri.org>

08/25/2000 11:02:55 AM

Please respond to director <director@icdri.org>

Record Type: Record

To: "Waddell, Cynthia" <cynthia.waddell@ci.sj.ca.us>, "Young, Jonathan (Home)" <jonathanyoung@erols.com>, Jonathan M. Young/WHO/EOP
cc: "'Urban, Mark (NC State)'" <mark.urban@ncmail.net>, director <director@icdri.org>
Subject: Re: Digital Divide Site Visit by President & ICDRI

Dear Cynthia

ICDRI would be more than happy to post the Blue Ribbon Commission informational materials, as mentioned in your attached message.

We eagerly await the green light on this effort as well as for the Best Practices for accessible web at the university system.

Best Regards,

Pauline Diego-Aguilar
E.D. - International Center for Disability Resources on the Internet
415-509-1696
director@icdri.org
www.icdri.org

----- Original Message -----

From: Waddell, Cynthia <cynthia.waddell@ci.sj.ca.us>
To: 'Young, Jonathan (Home)' <jonathanyoung@erols.com>; 'Young, Jonathan (WHOPL)' <Jonathan_M._Young@who.eop.gov>
Cc: 'Urban, Mark (NC State)' <mark.urban@ncmail.net>; 'Aguilar, Pauline Diego (ICDRI)' <director@icdri.org>
Sent: Thursday, August 24, 2000 1:24 PM
Subject: Digital Divide Site Visit by President & ICDRI

> Jonathan,

>

> After our conversation today regarding the Blue Ribbon Commission/Digital
> Divide Task Force, I was reminded that since ICDRI is willing to post
> university best practices, they most likely would be willing to post the
> Blue Ribbon Commission informational materials. For public relations
> purposes, it would be helpful to announce on 9/21 the url for the
Commission

> so that people would know how to follow this activity as the Commission
> moves forward. What do you think? I have copied Pauline Aquilar, ICDRI
> Executive Director, about this thought.

>

> Also, I recall that yesterday you were still seeking sites the President
> could visit on his Digital Divide tour in the East. As you know, today
the

> State of North Carolina is announcing their statewide IT architecture for
> accessibility. You indicated that it would be old news around 9/21.

> However, it is probable that the North Carolina Governor would be willing
to

> issue the State Directive to State CIO's on the implementation of the
> accessible IT architecture on 9/21 if your office expressed an interest in
> timing the directive with the President's visit. In addition, you might
> consider having the President visit the high tech companies in Raleigh to
> showcase CEO efforts on web accessibility and employment of people with
> disabilities. I understand that Raleigh is the third largest
concentration

> of high tech companies in the US- after Silicon Valley and Boston. For
> example, PSI Net is located in Raleigh and its employee, Mark Urban, was
the

> author of the blueprint for the State of North Carolina accessible IT
plan.

>

> Best regards,
> Cynthia Waddell

>

>

> -----

> Cynthia D. Waddell

> ADA Coordinator

> City Manager Department

> City of San Jose, CA USA

> 801 North First Street, Room 460

> San Jose, CA 95110-1704

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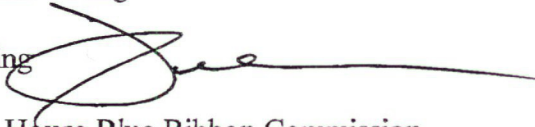
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>

The
Narragansett
Group, Inc.

Joseph R. King
Chairman and
Chief Executive Officer

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jonathan Young
FROM: Joe King 
RE: White House Blue Ribbon Commission
DATE: August 22, 2000

Jonathan, I have been doing a great deal of thinking about the organizational purpose, structure and composition of the White House Blue Ribbon Commission on Disability Issues. I wanted to share my thoughts with you.

First, and most importantly, I recommend that there be clear-cut goals and responsibilities established for the Commission. In addition, there should be a series of expectations and outcomes. Otherwise, there is a danger that this initiative will be just another one-year Commission that meets and talks about issues, while accomplishing very little.

I recommend that the Commission have as its first priority changing the way America perceives people with disabilities. This would be an umbrella objective that could then give rise to highly focused efforts in addressing the assistive technology prioritized needs of people with disabilities. These two functions flow directly into the emerging Internet initiatives designed to serve this group of Americans and will outline the third priority of the Commission, which should be to address the very real, near term steps to reduce the digital divide for people with disabilities and their families. The Commission has an opportunity to essentially lay out a five-years blueprint what needs to be done for each of these areas.

If these three priorities are the objectives of the Commission, then the fourth objective should be to establish linkages to corporations that have the power and interest to make a difference in each of these areas. Clearly defined objectives are the key to attracting the right corporate executive to serve on the Commission and to implement its recommendations after the Commission work is concluded. Creating a prioritized strategy in making a difference in a few key areas should be the primary purpose of this group. The effectiveness of the Commission is likely to be measured not by the quality of the meetings and discussions, but in fact by actions taken during and after the Commission's tenure.

Dallas/Fort Worth, TX
Salt Lake, UT
Washington, D.C.

I understand that your current thinking is to have a twelve-member Commission. My initial recommendations would be to divide those twelve appointments into components. The first component would be the chairmanship of the Commission and the presence of national disability leaders. I would strongly recommend that you suggest Justin Dart for Chairman for all the obvious reasons. I would also recommend that you seriously consider Duncan Wyeth of Michigan to be Vice Chairman. Duncan serves on the national board of UCP, was formerly a member of the International Paralympic Committee and is a prominent state leader of disability issues in Michigan. You probably would also want to invite two or three additional disability leaders from the leading non-profit disability organizations, including the MDA, Easter Seals and UCP, etc. I would also recommend you consider appointing Paul Alterman, the Chairman of the Society for the Advancement of Travelers with Handicaps (SATH). Paul lives in Florida and could rally the entire Travel industry around the Commission's initiatives.

I believe the Commission should recruit senior executives from the Communications and Advertising industries. Mr. Frank Bennack, CEO of the Hearst Corporation, would be a perfect selection. Frank and Hearst Corporation have a twenty-year record of supporting disability issues and could be invaluable to the Commission as a Communications medium.

From the Advertising industry, I would recruit Young & Rubicam, who as you know, have spent the last two years and \$1.5 million in pro bono work, creating the public education campaign for UCP. They would be a natural selection to build on their work and transfer it to the Commission's objectives. Carl Hartman, Senior Partner, is the key Y&R executive in the construction of the campaign. Either Carl or the president of Y&R (whose name escapes me) would be a great selection.

I believe that two commission positions should be allocated to companies involved in Internet initiatives (2) and assistive technology activities (2). With respect to the Internet, I would recommend you consider Rob Gordon, the President and CEO of TSIG.com. Rob is one of the up and coming players in the competition to create the vertical portal for people with disabilities. My other recommendation would be to select Jim Kimsey, President Emeritus of AOL.

With regard to assistive technology, I'd like to think about it a bit more but the president of Ameritech would be a natural.

I don't know whether you have any interest in reaching out to Americans with a philanthropic background and/or prominent Republican supporters, but if you did, Rebecca Freeman-Walters of Tampa, Florida, would be an excellent choice.

So, Jonathan, at first cut, I would recommend Justin Dart as Chairman (1), Duncan Wyeth as Vice Chairman (2), a senior executive from Hearst (3) and from Y&R (4), four prominent disability leaders from the non-profit sector (5, 6, 7, 8), Rob Gordon (9) and Jim Kimsey (10), and two assistive technology corporate leaders (11 and 12).

On a personal note, I would like to play a supportive role with the Commission, as well. The

Narragansett Group would obviously donate my time in helping to structure and provide fundraising support to the Commission.

Jonathan, I would also recommend that you seriously consider approaching Paul Burke at UCP to assist in both raising funds for the Commission and in recruiting leaders from the Communication and Advertising industry. This issue is so important to Paul and to UCP that I am certain that UCP would lend a portion of his time to the Commission's efforts. Paul is the architect of the entire UCP public education campaign and was the key leader in soliciting approximately \$18 million of pro bono contribution as well as real corporate sponsorship dollars. Between his contacts and mine, we should be able to raise the necessary funding and corporate support for Commission activities.

There are a few other people that you may also want to consider. Mr. Ray Grace, President of Creative Direct Response, is one of the foremost fundraisers in the nation. Ray's organization represents over 23 major national non-profits and could make a significant contribution to the Commission. Sheila Raviv, Worldwide Director of Constituent Relations for Burston-Marsteller, is here in Washington and would provide the Commission with a major public relations capacity. Andrew Kallok, President of Credit Card Center in Philadelphia, is the driving force behind some of the country's most innovative fundraising through the use of ATM machines.

I hope this helps and I will continue to think about this further. I look forward to seeing you on Friday and to reviewing this important issue.



Pitney Bowes

DATE: September 22, 2000

TO: Mr. Jonathan Young
Office of the President
United States of America

Fax # 1-202-456-0362

FROM: Joseph M. Ercolano
Director, Government Affairs

Tel. # 1-203-351-6263
Fax. # 1-203-961-0291

Liz Puglisi (Assistant) – Tel. # 1-203-351-6021

Number of pages to follow: - 2 -



Attached is our Chairman's letter to President Clinton.

Thank you.

###



Michael J. Critelli
Chairman of the Board
and Chief Executive Officer

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September 22, 2000

The Honorable William J. Clinton
President
United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

As CEOs of leading American businesses, one of our biggest challenges is recruiting and retaining workers with the skills needed for our firms to compete and win in the global marketplace. We believe that one of the ways to meet this challenge is to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities, especially since new information and communications technologies will make it even easier for people with disabilities to participate in the workforce. We are therefore proud to commit ourselves to promoting the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of candidates and employees with disabilities.

This is important both to reach the inclusion goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act and to sustain our national economy. Despite historic economic growth, people with disabilities remain unemployed at rates unacceptably high – several times that of the general population. Becoming gainfully employed gives people the economic means to become more fully integrated into our society and enhances one's sense of dignity. By hiring people with disabilities in our companies we can help change the social attitudes that continue to stand in the way of full inclusion of people with disabilities.

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The Honorable William J. Clinton
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Page 2.

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- Develop and promote reasonable accommodations policies, including the availability of assistive technologies;
- Whenever possible, promote the recruitment of youth with disabilities through summer internships, mentoring programs, "career awareness" activities, and community education programs that provide employment and leadership training; and,
- Create partnerships with disability organizations to identify barriers to employment for people with disabilities and to identify job candidates.

Thank you for your leadership in this area. We look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Critelli
MJC:liz

TASK FORCE ON EQUAL ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY AND OPPORTUNITY

The Task Force on Equal Access to Technology and Opportunity will meet President Clinton's "Call to Action" to bridge the Digital Divide among people with disabilities by promoting efforts to 1) increase the affordability of information technology and, 2) improve the infrastructure for designing and delivering technology.

Introduction:

This year marked the 10th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which identified "equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency" as our nation's "proper goals regarding individuals with disabilities." We have made considerable progress in ten years: Physical structures are rapidly becoming more accessible, and social attitudes about the potential of people with disabilities are changing. Nevertheless, high rates of unemployment among people with disabilities indicate that much remains to be done need before the ADA's goals are fully realized.

Information technology is fundamentally altering the way Americans work, purchase goods and services, communicate, and play. We see these changes in education, in the economy, and in recreation. In time it will infiltrate the core of our democracy with interactive polling of, and deliberations by, the citizenry. Some communities have already experimented with online voting. For people with disabilities, information technology can be a key to unlock a multitude of opportunities -- in education, health care, employment, and entertainment.

In an era of growing dependence on the electronic distribution of information, access to the information infrastructure is essential for everyone. Unfortunately, there are wide disparities among those who do and do not have access to computers and the Internet. For several years, discussion about closing this "Digital Divide" has focused on divisions of race, income, geography, and education. This year President Clinton unveiled his "Digital Divide" initiative to bridge this access gap and increase opportunities for tens of millions of economically disadvantaged people. Corporations, government, and the not-for-profit sector have worked collaboratively toward this end.

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- (5) Basic information technology as well as highly specialized assistive technologies should be made more affordable for people with disabilities.

Proposal for Task Force:

A long-standing commitment by and collaboration among diverse sectors of society will be required to achieve these goals. Inspired by President Clinton's initiative, the Disability Network of Flint, Michigan, proposes to create a Task Force aimed at two important systemic issues: 1) affordability and, 2) education and outreach. This Task Force will bring together American business and industry, universities, not-for-profit organizations, foundations, and government agencies to implement existing commitments and identify recommendations for new courses of action.

(1) Affordability of technology. The Assistive Technology Act was designed to identify ways to improve the delivery of assistive technology, including to low and moderate-income households. Federal funding for these projects is set to begin sunseting. The Task Force will identify key recommendations to help address the ongoing needs of the Tech Act projects and explore additional mechanisms to support the financing of information technologies for people with disabilities.

(2) University infrastructure. One of the most important determinants for the long-term success of our efforts will be the ability to integrate concepts of usability and availability of information technology into the higher education system. Engineering and computer science majors and graduate students must learn to consider issues of product usability through their study of the principles of product design. They will then carry those principles into industry and their own teaching. These design principles include the development of flexible, multi-modal interface techniques that can work across all disabilities and in all environments.

Under this theme, the Task Force will consider at least four issues:

(A) Integrating accessibility content throughout the engineering and computer science curricula -- at the undergraduate, graduate, and life-long learning levels. Designers of interactive technology must consider the needs of product users. "Universal design" is a term commonly used today to refer to a process whereby environments and products are designed with built-in flexibility so they are usable by as many people as possible, regardless of age and ability. The concept of "user-centered design" is also used to refer to the process wherein the designer considers the specific needs and desires of the potential users during the design process. This can only be accomplished by watching and talking with the consumer population.

(B) Developing a research agenda to support the advance of "Universal Design" and Assistive Technology.

(C) Ensuring the accessibility of computer and internet-based learning materials, as well as the accessibility of university-supported information systems.

(D) Promoting opportunities in accessible and usable distance-learning.

(E) Improving the usability of information technology in university career centers.

The Task Force will be charged with developing action plans that will address goals in five specific areas:

Meeting and sustaining these goals will require attention to the structural issues of how groups such as industry and universities integrate accessibility and income inequities. We believe that the creation of a Task Force is an effective way to launch the desired national initiative and to keep the momentum going. The Task Force will have representation from industry, academia, advocates, and government.

The Administration is already working with University presidents to commit to taking many of the essential steps within academia. The Task Force would therefore be valuable in helping to make the commitments a reality. The Task Force should also help develop additional strategies to make information technologies more widely available to people with disabilities throughout the country.

Final Products from the Task Force:

A final report will be presented to the President in the fall of 2001 to summarize Task Force activities, findings, and recommendations with the goal of soliciting Administration support of implementing Task Force Recommendations and Action Plans.

The Recommendations and Action Plans will address the two objectives of the Task Force and be designed to bridge the Digital Divide among people with disabilities: namely promoting efforts to 1) increase the affordability of information technology and, 2) improve the infrastructure for designing and delivering technology. The action items will be directed to each

of the stakeholder communities that can significantly affect efforts to reduce or eliminate the digital divide for people with disabilities. The targeted stakeholder communities include:

- Government agencies that support the distribution of equipment and services to people with disabilities;
- Industry associations whose members produce information technology;
- Businesses that employ users of information technology;
- University engineering, science, and design departments;
- Educational institutions that prepare students for careers in engineering, computer science, and information technology management and maintenance; and,
- Government agencies that support research and development of information technology, networking services, and instructional materials and media.

Topics for Action Plans to be prepared by the Task Force:

Affordability of Information Technology

- Identify, develop and implement the next logical steps for continuing the work of the Tech Act projects nationwide;
- Development of financial Strategies and policies to make high priced adaptive technologies affordable to people with disabilities;
- Increase in employment opportunities for people with disabilities in jobs that provide financial independence (e.g., recruiting and training people with disabilities in high technology installation and maintenance, engineering, and related-scientific careers)

Design and Delivery of Information and Assistive Technology;

- Include principles of "design for all" into university engineering curricula
- Ensure that research and development of information technology, networking services, and instructional materials and media supported with Federal funds result in products that are usable by people with disabilities.

Suggested Task Force Composition:

Co-Chairs:

Michael Zelle
Executive Director, The Disability Network
Flint, MI

Lawrence Scadden, Ph.D.
Senior Program Director, National Science Foundation
Washington, DC

Members:

James Billy
Executive Director, Harlem Center for Independent Living
New York City, NY

Denise Denton
Dean of Engineering, University of Washington
Seattle, WA

Margaret Doumitt
Executive Director, STAR Center
Jackson, TN

James Foley
Director, Mitsubishi Electronic Research Laboratory
Cambridge, MA

Larry Goldberg
Director, National Center on Accessible Media
Boston, MA

Steve Jacobs
President, IDEAL at NCR
Dayton, OH

Earl Johnson
Founder of Enabling Technologies Project, Sun Microsystems
San Francisco, CA

Eric Jolly
Senior Scientist and Vice President, Education Development Center
Newton, MA

Deborah Kaplan
Executive Director, World Institute on Disability
Berkeley, CA

Joy Kniskern
Director, Georgia Tech Act Project
Atlanta, GA

Sue Kroeberg, Ed.D.
President, Association on Higher Education and Disability
AZ

Priscilla Sanderson
Director, American Indian Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
Flagstaff, AZ

M. Richard (Dick) Shaink
President, Mott Community College
Flint, MI

Jim Tobias
Inclusive Technologies
Matawan, NJ

Gregg Vanderheiden
Director, Trace Research and Development Center
Madison, WI

Cynthia Waddell, J.D.,
Disability Access Coordinator, City of San Jose
San Jose, CA

* Bio sketches of the co-chairs and members are available upon request

TASK FORCE ON EQUAL ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY AND OPPORTUNITY

The Task Force on Equal Access to Technology and Opportunity will meet President Clinton's "Call to Action" to bridge the Digital Divide among people with disabilities by promoting efforts to 1) increase the affordability of information technology and, 2) improve the infrastructure for designing and delivering technology.

This year marked the 10th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which identified "equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency" as our nation's "proper goals regarding individuals with disabilities." We have made considerable progress in ten years: Physical structures are rapidly becoming more accessible, and social attitudes about the potential of people with disabilities are changing. Nevertheless, high rates of unemployment among people with disabilities indicate that much remains to be done need before the ADA's goals are fully realized.

Information technology is fundamentally altering the way Americans work, purchase goods and services, communicate, and play. We see these changes in education, in the economy, and in recreation. In time it will infiltrate the core of our democracy with interactive polling of, and deliberations by, the citizenry. Some communities have already experimented with online voting. For people with disabilities, information technology can be a key to unlock a multitude of opportunities -- in education, health care, employment, and entertainment.

In an era of growing dependence on the electronic distribution of information, access to the information infrastructure is essential for everyone. Unfortunately, there are wide disparities among those who do and do not have access to computers and the Internet. For several years, discussion about closing this "Digital Divide" has focused on divisions of race, income, geography, and education. This year President Clinton unveiled his "Digital Divide" initiative to bridge this access gap and increase opportunities for tens of millions of economically disadvantaged people. Corporations, government, and the not-for-profit sector have worked collaboratively toward this end.

There is also a "Digital Divide" according to disability. Discussions of access to technology tend to focus on the availability of that technology. But there is an equally important concept: the "usability" of the technology once it is made available. The mere proliferation of computer and information technology does not guarantee usability by people who have disabilities. The increasing use of public transaction machines and information kiosks pose additional challenges to the disability community. Automatic teller machines are ubiquitous, and many governmental agencies are providing their services electronically. If these technologies are not fully usable by people with disabilities, the Information Age can set them even further behind rather than be a tool for empowerment.

On September 21, President Clinton plans to devote a component of his Digital Divide Initiative to the needs of people with disabilities. He will make a series of public and private announcements aimed to reach five main goals:

- (1) Information technology products and services should be designed from the outset so they are more usable by people with disabilities.
- (2) The state-of-the-art of specialized assistive technology should be improved to permit enable use of existing information technology.
- (3) Information technology should be pursued as an opportunity to increase the employment of people with disabilities and sustain our national economic growth.
- (4) Existing "digital divide" initiatives should be designed so that people with disabilities can take advantage of them.
- (5) Basic information technology as well as highly specialized assistive technologies should be made more affordable for people with disabilities.

A long-standing commitment by and collaboration among diverse sectors of society will be required to achieve these goals. Inspired by President Clinton's initiative, the [name of home entity] proposes to create a Task Force aimed at two important systemic issues: 1) affordability and, 2) education and outreach. This Task Force will bring together American business and industry, universities, not-for-profit organizations, foundations, and government agencies to implement existing commitments and identify recommendations for new courses of action.

(1) Affordability of technology. The Assistive Technology Act was designed to identify ways to improve the delivery of assistive technology, including to low and moderate-income households. Federal funding for these projects is set to begin sunseting. The Task Force will identify key recommendations to help address the ongoing needs of the Tech Act projects and explore additional mechanisms to support the financing of information technologies for people with disabilities.

(2) University infrastructure. One of the most important determinants for the long-term success of our efforts will be the ability to integrate concepts of usability and availability of information technology into the higher education system. Engineering and computer science majors and graduate students must learn to consider issues of product usability through their study of the principles of product design. They will then carry those principles into industry and their own teaching. These design principles include the development of flexible, multi-modal interface techniques that can work across all disabilities and in all environments.

Under this theme, the Task Force will consider at least four issues:

(A) Integrating accessibility content throughout the engineering and computer science curricula -- at the undergraduate, graduate, and life-long learning levels. Designers of interactive technology must consider the needs of product users. "Universal design" is a term commonly used today to refer to a process whereby environments and products are designed with built-in flexibility so they are usable by as many people as possible, regardless of age and ability. The

concept of "user-centered design" is also used to refer to the process wherein the designer considers the specific needs and desires of the potential users during the design process. This can only be accomplished by watching and talking with the consumer population.

(B) Developing a research agenda to support the advance of "Universal Design" and Assistive Technology.

(C) Ensuring the accessibility of computer and internet-based learning materials, as well as the accessibility of university-supported information systems.

(D) Promoting opportunities in accessible and usable distance-learning.

(E) Improving the usability of information technology in university career centers.

The Task Force will be charged with developing action plans that will address goals in five specific areas:

Meeting and sustaining these goals will require attention to the structural issues of how groups such as industry and universities integrate accessibility and income inequities. We believe that the creation of a Task Force is an effective way to launch the desired national initiative and to keep the momentum going. The Task Force will have representation from industry, academia, advocates, and government.

The Administration is already working with University presidents to commit to taking many of the essential steps within academia. The Task Force would therefore be valuable in helping to make the commitments a reality. The Task Force should also help develop additional strategies to make information technologies more widely available to people with disabilities throughout the country.



"Scadden, Lawrence A" <lscadden@nsf.gov>

09/06/2000 12:31:23 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Jonathan M. Young/WHO/EOP, "NJArgoff@aol.com" <NJArgoff@aol.com>, "steve.jacobs@daytonoh.ncr.com" <steve.jacobs@daytonoh.ncr.com>

cc: "Scadden, Lawrence A" <lscadden@nsf.gov>

Subject: Draft proposal for Blue-Ribbon Commission

OK, here is my first rough draft of a brief proposal sans budget. As you will note, I tried to incorporate all of your contributions plus some of my own.

All suggestions and edits will be appreciated.

Where do we go from here?

Larry

Draft Proposal, 9/6/00

A BLUE-RIBBON COMMISSION ON TECHNOLOGY AND DISABILITY

Information technology is fundamentally altering the way Americans work, purchase goods and services, communicate and play. We see these changes in education, in the economy, and in recreation. In time, it is bound to infiltrate to the core of our democracy with interactive polling of, and deliberations by, the citizenry. Some communities have already experimented with online voting.

In the era of growing dependence on electronic distribution of information, availability to and use of the information infrastructure is essential for everyone. Unfortunately, the gap between the computer haves and have-nots continues to widen creating what is now commonly called the digital divide. Today's discussion of the digital divide centers on the needs of the tens of millions of economically disadvantaged people in this country who do not have access to the essential information technology. We must close this access gulf, but another issue often lies below the surface of deliberation: namely the usability of the technology once it is made available. The proliferation of computer and information technology does not guarantee usability by people who have disabilities.

A related problem concerns the rapid proliferation of public transaction machines and information kiosks that produce additional challenges to the disability community. Automatic teller machines are ubiquitous, and many governmental agencies are providing their services electronically. Use of these terminals requires the use of keyboards, touch screens, telephone handsets, and smart cards.

Full participation by individuals with disabilities in the information society requires independent use of these information technologies. Appropriate information technology will result in significantly increased educational and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

To support
To achieve this desired goal, the President will establish a Blue-Ribbon Commission charged with developing action plans for American business and industry, universities, and government agencies that will lead to the development and distribution of affordable information technology that can be used by everyone including people with disabilities in education, employment, and health care delivery.

The Blue-Ribbon Commission will focus on two core themes:

(1) Affordability of technology. The Assistive Technology Act was designed to identify ways to improve the delivery of assistive technology, including to low and moderate-income households. Federal funding for these projects is set to begin sunseting. The commission will identify key recommendations to help address the ongoing needs of the Tech Act projects and their broader mission.

(2) University infrastructure. One of the most important determinants for the long-term success of our efforts will be the ability to integrate concepts of usability and availability of information technology into the higher education system. Engineering and computer science majors and graduate students must learn to consider issues of product usability through their study of the principles of product design. They will then carry those principles into industry and their own teaching. These design principles include the development of flexible, multi-modal interface techniques that can work across all disabilities and in all environments.

Under this theme, the Commission will consider at least four issues:

(A) Integrating accessibility content throughout the engineering and computer science curricula -- at the undergraduate, graduate, and life-long learning levels. Designers of interactive technology must consider the needs of product users. "Universal design" is a term commonly used today to refer to a process whereby environments and products are designed with built-in flexibility so they are usable by as many people as possible, regardless of age and ability. The concept of "user-centered design" is also used to refer to the process wherein the designer considers the specific needs and desires of the potential users during the design process. This can only be accomplished by watching and talking with the consumer population.

(B) Ensuring the accessibility of computer and internet-based learning materials, as well as the accessibility of university-supported information systems.

(c) Promoting opportunities in distance-learning.

(d) Improving the usability of information technology in university career centers.

*Palag... Sent
President
initiative*

The Commission will be charged with developing action plans that will address goals in five specific areas:

(1) Information technology products and services should be designed from the outset so they are more usable by people with disabilities. For example, an information kiosk cannot be used by a person in a wheelchair unless the user can see and reach the controls, and a person who is blind cannot use the system unless controls are appropriately labeled and the information is presented alternatively in audio or braille.

(2) The state-of-the-art of specialized assistive technology should be improved through targeted research and development efforts to permit better use of existing information technology. For example, remote access to public information kiosks should be provided through customized input and output technology.

People with Disabilities should be trained in the use of information technology to meet the growing need for technologically skilled workers in our nation's work force. The unemployment rate for people with disabilities is much higher than for the general population. Improvements in the availability of technologies for students with disabilities can be a central mechanism for people to develop the skills they need to compete in the marketplace. Training on usable information technology will make people with disabilities qualified to compete for more jobs and thereby help fill the demand for high-skilled information technology employees. Communication technology also will allow some people with disabilities to work from home.

(4) The existing "digital divide" initiatives should be designed so that people with disabilities can take advantage of them. For example, the national network of Community Technology Centers should be designed so that people with disabilities have full access to their physical environments and information technology.

(5) Methods to ensure the availability of expensive assistive technology needed by people with disabilities for education and employment must be addressed. For example, people who are paralyzed can operate computers by monitoring eye-gaze or brain waves, but the technology is usually too expensive for low or moderate-income households.

Meeting and sustaining these goals will require attention to the structural issues of how groups such as industry and universities integrate accessibility and income inequities. We believe that the creation of a Blue-Ribbon Commission is an effective way to launch the desired national initiative and to keep the momentum going. The Commission will have representation from industry, academia, advocates, and government.

The Administration is already working with University presidents to commit to taking many of the essential steps within academia. The commission would therefore be valuable in helping to make the commitments a reality. The commission should also help develop additional strategies to make information technologies more widely available to people with disabilities throughout the country.