

Summary

(T9B)

Accessibility of Online Based Material for Persons with Deafness

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Internet accessibility for people with deafness is only lightly addressed by the two primary resources for Internet accessibility, the Section 508 law requiring all Federal agencies to make their electronic information accessible to persons with disabilities, and the accessibility guidelines developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). These resources primarily focus on the visual aspects of the Web site. Because the Internet is predominantly a visual medium, people with a visual impairment would seem to have the most difficult barrier to overcome. Deafness is viewed as less of an impediment to Web site access. In fact, people who are deaf do report a higher rate of computer usage than people with other forms of disability. Nevertheless, people who are deaf or hard of hearing do have accessibility issues that need to be considered.

Research into accessibility for the hearing impaired led to the development of six specific guidelines as follows:

- 1) Provide text equivalents of auditory content.
- 2) Provide non-text equivalents for text.
- 3) Avoid false perception of sound.
- 4) Provide context and orientation information.
- 5) Use clear and simple language.
- 6) Provide clear navigation mechanisms.

This presentation will review each of the six guidelines

and how they can be applied to the development of online material.