

IVIE Motivator Newsletter

FALL 2024

Welcome to the quarterly IVIE Motivator Newsletter!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. MESSAGE FROM IVIE PRESIDENT

2. MEMBER OPPORTUNITIES

**3. Independent Visually Impaired Entrepreneurs
ONLINE Business Expo**

4. Am I Actually an Entrepreneur? What About You?

5. Why you should use a password manager

6. Seven Strategies for Goals You Can Accomplish

7. IVIE “Entrepreneur Exchange” Call Tips and IVIE Email Discussion Posts

8. WHAT's NEW?

9. SUBMITTING NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

MESSAGE FROM IVIE President

Hi members,

After a busy summer, are you ready to jump in to fall and a new year? In the articles in this issue, I hope you learn some ideas which will help your business. Perhaps, they might motivate you to try something new.

I encourage you to check the IVIE member directory for new and updated member listings. Please invite other

blind and visually impaired entrepreneurs to join us for any of our upcoming events. I get all notifications of new people joining our IVIE email discussion group. Please continue to share your tips and suggestions. The IVIE board appreciates all your involvement, whether providing info on the email discussion lists or participating in our monthly calls.

We will have our fall online business expo on Saturday, November 16 from 11:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Do pass along the information to business owners who might benefit from this opportunity.

If any of you have suggestions for IVIE, particularly for reaching additional entrepreneurs, please let us know. If you have suggestions for the IVIE website: ivie-acb.org or the quarterly newsletter, please send them to info@ivie-acb.org. You can also reach me at 303-963-5153.

Happy reading,

Ardis Bazyn

MEMBER OPPORTUNITIES

IVIE will continue to provide opportunities for members to network and share ideas. If you have not already taken advantage of the following options available for members, please consider participating in one or all of them.

- On the second Sunday each month, 6 PM Pacific/9 PM Eastern, IVIE sponsors an ACB community call called the IVIE “Entrepreneur Exchange”. Each month, a speaker often gives tips on a particular topic and each attendee gets the opportunity to introduce themselves and their business. Comments and questions are appreciated on each call.

Join our upcoming calls, see dates below:

- November 10: “Entrepreneur Exchange” topic: “tips for moving from Windows 10 to Windows 11.”
- December 8: “Entrepreneur Exchange” “Is your business doing anything special for the holidays?”
- January 12: “Entrepreneur Exchange”.

- The IVIE email discussion list is available for members and others interested in creating or developing a

business to share announcements, resources, opportunities, and other information of interest. If you are not on the general IVIE email discussion list, please subscribe by sending an email to ivie+subscribe@acblists.org

- All members should be on the IVIE-members email list for members only. If you are not currently subscribed, please send an email to ivie-members+subscribe@acblists.org. Members can share entrepreneur related information, IVIE business related information such as potential Constitution and Bylaw amendments, resolutions, and positive strategies to improve IVIE in the future. The quarterly Motivator newsletter is sent to the IVIE-members email list. All upcoming calls and events are also publicized on this list as well as anything members wish to share with other members.
- The IVIE business directory gives members a free chance to advertise their business and publicize contact information for networking or business purposes. If you'd like changes to your listing on the business directory, please send an email to info@ivie-acb.org or call 303-963-5153. We want to share your specific details in your member directory listing. Those without businesses have their personal information on the list so

anyone can contact them. If members would like to add why they joined, they can do so by saying retired business owner, their current job- title and company, someone with resources to share, etc.

- Our quarterly newsletter is sent to members via the IVIE-members email list. Members can submit articles about their business or give helpful tips to readers. See suggested topics under the article at the end of the newsletter called “SUBMITTING ARTICLES”.

On the fifth Sunday each quarter, if we do not have a book to discuss, we'll have an open discussion call.

The Independent Visually Impaired Online Business Expo

November 16, 2024

11:30 AM Eastern: networking

11:45 AM: Welcome Ardis Bazyn, IVIE President

**First facilitator: Carla Hayes will list the day's
presenters**

12 Noon: Carla Hayes, CEO

Lengua-Learn Communications

**Language school with adaptive products from ILA,
accessible digital recorders, and educational
materials**

724-941-8184

lengual@verizon.net

lengua-learn.com

12:30 PM: All about IVIE

**Join the IVIE email discussion list - send an email to
ivie+subscribe@acblists.org**

info@ivie-acb.org

IVIE-ACB.org

1 PM: Hayley Agers

DOTERRA Wellness Advocate

**Provides education on essential oils; DIY groups
make cleaning products, handmade gifts, room
sprays, etc.**

C: 425-870-3865

H: 360-653-5572

Blindessentials@gmail.com

my.doterra.com/hayleyagers

1:30 PM: Facilitator Ron Brooks

**1:30 PM: Cathy Schmitt Whitaker, CPC, ELI-MP, Ed.D.,
CLDS**

E3 Coaching and Speaking LLC

**Career and Energy Leadership Coaching, Motivational
Speaking, Complimentary Discovery Coaching
Session - Blending knowledge of self-improvement
and meditation**

Cathy@MyE3Coach.com

840-588-7146

MyE3Coach.com

2 PM: Jeremy Johansen

Farmer Host

Website design and hosting

sales@farmerhost.com

510-667-9577

farmerhost.com

2:15 PM: Edward Cohen

EZ2See® Products LLC

**Uniquely designed, highly-accessible weekly planner,
sticky note pads and no-bleed pens**

800-234-8291

Info@EZ2SeeProducts.com

2:30 PM: Robin Mandell

Songbird Yoga with Robin

**Online yoga, meditation, and mindful movement
classes for groups and individuals.**

robin@songbirdyoga.com

songbirdyoga.com

3 PM: Facilitator Ardis Bazyn

3 PM: Ray Wright

Wright Turn Only.

**Handcrafted wooden items including writing pens,
seam rippers, back scratchers, ice cream scoops,
pizza cutters, key rings and many other products.**

**"Where everything I create is handcrafted with vision,
not sight"**

wrightturnonly@gmail.com

801-560-9866

3:30 PM: Charlotte Lang

Mama Otter's Tidbits

Handmade gemstone and seasonal jewelry

Mamaotter1@gmail.com

952-300-2188

mamaotter.com

3:45 PM: Christine Chaikin

Insightful Publications

**Publisher of resource handbooks for the blind and
visually impaired communities.**

insightfulpub@gmail.com

808-329-9512

in-sightful.com

4 PM: Ardis Bazyn, CEO

Bazyn Communications

Speaker, Business Coach, and Writer

303-963-5153

abazyn@bazyncommunications.com

bazyncommunications.com

4:30 PM: Christopher Peterson, President and CEO

Penny Forward

**Offering Online financial wellness education courses
and group and one to one financial coaching for \$9 a
month or \$99 a year.**

888-332-5558

chris@pennyforward.com

pennyforward.com

5 PM: Antonio Guimaraes

Access To Places

Home of the tactile graphics club of the month

954-222-2377

info@accesstoplaces.com

accesstoplaces.com/tgc

**5:15 PM: Wrap-up. Final comments from presenters
and questions from participants.**

Am I Actually an Entrepreneur? What About You?

By Ron Brooks – Phoenix, Arizona

I'm on the Board of the ACB special interest affiliate known as IVIE. IVIE stands for "Independent Visually Impaired Entrepreneurs," and while I've got the visually impaired part down, I'm not too sure if the label of "entrepreneur" actually fits. In fact, when I hear someone refer to me as an entrepreneur, I sort of feel like an impostor. After all, I haven't invented anything—at least not yet. I haven't gone out and raised a bunch of money from angel investors or venture capitalists. I haven't ridden the high of meteoric growth, and I haven't plummeted into the depths of poverty alongside some brilliant idea that just never caught on. All I did was sit down at my kitchen table, go online, and complete the paperwork for incorporating my small consulting business, [Accessible Avenue](#), and I only did that because it was 2020; we were in lock-down; and I knew I was going to lose the job I already had working for someone else. And let's be clear. Accessible Avenue is really little. In fact, I'm still working a full-time job—just to make the ends meet while I continue trying to bootstrap Accessible Avenue to breakeven. Me, and entrepreneur? Really?

Well, the answer is an emphatic "yes!" And I'm betting there are lots of other people out there, who have no idea that they are just as entrepreneurial as I am—maybe even more so.

How Can I Tell if I'm an Entrepreneur?

According to Merriam-Webster, an entrepreneur is “one who organizes, manages, and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise” Definitely sounds like someone who starts or runs a business, and that’s definitely true. But wait! There’s more. People who manage or assume risk for a business—or an enterprise also fit into Merriam-Webster’s definition. So if you ever served as a manager with decision-making authority with a business, or at any other organization, then you’re also in the Entrepreneur’s club. In fact, I’ve read books and heard speeches from entrepreneurs, where they told their stories, and many of those stories began with newspaper routes, lemonade stands, and all manner of creative ways these people found to scrounge money or create something new. I can tell you that in my own case, I have been an entrepreneur for decades—not because I was always a business owner, but because I treated my job and my duties like any other owner might treat his or her own small business. So for me, being an entrepreneur is more of an attitude than a special category of people who own things.

From Being In Charge” to True Entrepreneurship

Based on Webster’s definition, anyone who owns or manages a business, or who tells subordinates what to do can technically be called an “entrepreneur.” But if you want to succeed as an entrepreneur, there’s a sixteen-letter word that defines the attitudes and habits you will want to cultivate. That six-syllable word is “entrepreneurship,” and in my opinion, it’s what really differentiates the true entrepreneurs from those who just happen to be in charge. Now if you ask fifty entrepreneurs what that means, you’ll get fifty answers. In fact, there are entire libraries of books, written to define that single powerful word, “entrepreneurship.” But we don’t have the time nor the space to cover all that ground, so here are just a handful of the biggies. Some of these ideas are mine. Others come directly from some of the most successful and famous entrepreneurs of all time. All of them are attributes that can help anyone develop a more entrepreneurial mindset.

- Be curious. – It is easy to make assumptions based on prior experience. By approaching every new opportunity, every new challenge, every new task, every new relationship with curiosity instead of

preconceived notions based on what happened last time, you may find that things have changed, and the circumstances that generated difficulties in the past, offer potential for success today. Here's a simple example. In the past, PDF documents could not be read by screen reading software. If I let past experience govern my feelings about PDF documents, I would never try to open them, meaning that I would never know that Adobe Systems has done a lot of work to make PDF documents more accessible, and today, most of them can be read using screen readers and braille displays. The same is true for the entrepreneur. Past experiences do not determine present and future outcomes. Use them as learning experiences, and do not assume that they will determine your success or failure going forward.

- Say “yes” when you can. – Whether it’s volunteering for a new project, or trying something different, or taking on a new role, saying “yes” is the only way to move forward. Saying “no” ends conversation. Saying “yes” opens doors and makes new possibilities available. It creates the space for risk, and also the space for reward. To be clear, there are times to say, “no.” If an opportunity is not in keeping with your personal mission, goals, or interests, it could become a huge distraction. But when a new opportunity presents itself, try to assess it from a place of

possibility. As a friend puts it, “Start with ‘yes,’ or at least ‘maybe.’ You can always say ‘no’ later.”

- Take ownership. – There are two pieces to ownership: taking on the work, and taking responsibilities for the results. First, doing the work: When I began my career back in 1993, I knew very little, but somewhere along the line, I had learned the value of taking ownership. Every time my boss asked for a volunteer—and this is for anything at all, I raised my hand. As a result, my boss gave me more opportunities to try new things. As a result, I tried more, failed more, learned more, succeeded more. Eventually, I got a promotion, and then a better job with a new employer. Then, another job, followed by additional promotions and more money. It was this self-induced progression that gave me the chance to learn what I needed to know in order to launch my own business. And the second component of taking ownership: taking responsibility for the results—good or bad. I learned this one at a personal development workshop back in 1998, and taking responsibility for the results is one of the most powerful lessons I have ever learned. Here’s why. First, if I accept responsibility for what happens, I have at least some ability to affect the outcome—even if it’s just in how I react to what is happening around me. Second, and more to the point of entrepreneurship, trying and

falling short is the best way to create the motivation for learning to do better, but only if you take responsibility for having fallen short in the first place. After all, who is going to keep trying if their efforts cannot affect the outcome? Short answer: no one. So in a very real sense, failure breeds success, because it's the trying, falling short, taking responsibility, learning, and trying again, that results in success.

- Be persistent – In the words of Albert Einstein, “I tried and failed 99 times, and on the 100th time, came success.” It doesn't always take dozens or hundreds of attempts to succeed, but practice and repetition create the opportunities to learn and refine—whether you're playing the piano, honing your skills as a writer, or designing a product or process. Being persistent also pays in terms of finding ultimate success. AS Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple, put it: “I'm convinced that about half of what separates the successful entrepreneurs from the non-successful ones is pure perseverance.”
- Dedicate time to self-reflection – Most mornings, one can find me at my keyboard, journaling, and one of the questions I ask myself each day is this: “What did I learn yesterday, and how can I use that information going forward?” Some days, it's easy, and I can write paragraphs about what I did, what I learned, and how I can do better tomorrow. On other days, it's harder,

and I find myself reflecting on the fact that I learned, yet again, that I like fried green tomatoes.

Nevertheless, I force myself to dig deep for some kind of self-reflection each morning, and my reason for doing it is simple. If I don't learn something from what happened yesterday, I'm doomed to repeat the lesson today, tomorrow, and into the future. Put another way, I can't move forward until I learn from what just happened. But don't take my word. **Elon Musk puts it this way:** "I think it's very important to have a feedback loop, where you're constantly thinking about what you've done and how you could be doing it better." If it's good enough for Elon, it's good enough for me.

- Be optimistic. - I inherited optimism from my dad, and it has served me well. No matter how hard my life or my job seems, I always feel like there's a brighter day out there in the future, and the only question is how to find it. And for the entrepreneur, optimism isn't just a feel-good thing. Optimism is the attitude that makes the effort, the occasional failures, and the perseverance to keep going possible. Hey, this is hard stuff. If I weren't so optimistic, I would have given up a long time ago.

If You're an Entrepreneur, IVIE is for You.

I joined IVIE back in 2020 because I had started a business, and I figured I might be able to learn something useful, maybe meet a few other blind and visually impaired business owners along the way. Those were good reasons to join, but now that I've been an entrepreneur as well as an IVIE member for a few years, I want everyone to know that there's more to entrepreneurship, and there's more to IVIE than owning a business.

If you are a present or aspiring entrepreneur, IVIE is for you. If you want to develop the attitudes and habits of an entrepreneur, IVIE is for you. If you want to meet other people who are entrepreneurs or learning entrepreneurship, IVIE is for you. So check us out: our monthly calls, our quarterly newsletter, or our annual business meeting, and then join us. You'll be glad you did. And if you want to learn more about IVIE, you can do that too. Head over to

<https://ivie-acb.org>

Why you should use a password manager

Imagine having a secure digital notebook where you can store all your passwords safely. That's essentially what a password manager is. It's like taking that book of passwords, locking it in a safe and having that safe follow you around so it's there ready with your passwords whenever you need to access a secure website. It'll even log in for you!

Using a password manager means:

You only need to remember one main password, called a "master password" (this is the 'key' to your virtual safe). Your passwords are much more secure than they would be written down on paper or in a notebook. You can have a copy of your passwords on all of your devices: your computer, tablet, and phone (you just install the software where you need it*). If your phone or laptop gets lost or damaged you will still be able to access your passwords on another device; it's not like losing the password book.

It can create strong, unique passwords for you. So no more frustration when a site tells you you need a password of a certain length with a number, capital letter and symbol and you don't need to remember them - the password manager manages this for you. If you change a password, it will update that password on all your devices.

(*some Password Managers limit this in the free version.)

How to use a password manager

Using a password manager might seem complicated at first, but once you start using them, you'll soon wonder how you ever managed without one. Here's how it works: Choose and install a password manager (some good free options are listed below).

Create your master password - make it strong but memorable. Read our factsheet: [How to create a strong, memorable password](#). You might want to write down your master password for your chosen password manager and store it somewhere securely (home safe or a safety deposit box).

When you log into a website for the first time, the password manager will offer to save your login details. Say "yes" to save them securely. The next time you visit that website, the password manager will automatically fill in your username and password for you. All you have to do is click "log in".

It's that easy!

Helpful features of password managers

Most good password managers can do more than just remember your passwords. They offer several other helpful features. They can create strong, unique passwords for you. Many can store other important information like passport numbers or bank card details. Some let you safely share passwords with family members

or other people you trust to access to your accounts or information - you can even do this without revealing the password.

Digital inheritance

Password sharing also brings us to another issue of the modern world, the issue of accessing online accounts in the event of someone's death, what we refer to as 'digital inheritance'. Good online security is great at making sure we keep our data safe, but in the event of someone's death, next of kin or executors of estates often find themselves unable to access these accounts to close them down, gather assets, or simply notify people.

Some password managers offer a 'digital inheritance' feature that allows a secure way of managing this. Alternatively, this may be an occasion where you write down your master password to your vault and store it somewhere safe (in an actual safe for example) for someone to use in the event of your death. Do bear in mind that there are some accounts, such as bank accounts, that have specific procedures for granting access to your finances. Having access to your username and password would not be enough to prove that a person has your permission to access your data and finances on your behalf, and could get them into a lot of trouble if they try to do so.

So which password manager should you pick? Some commonly used free options are below.

Bitwarden

Bitwarden is completely free and fully-functional for personal use and is trusted by experts as it is Open Source (which allows experts to check out all the code to make sure it's doing what it says it does! It works on unlimited devices, stores unlimited passwords, and is free for personal use and is trusted by security experts. Some people find it a little complicated to begin with.

Avira Password Manager

Avira Password Manager - Avira is probably better known for its free antivirus software often coming pre-installed on many laptops, but their password manager is equally good. It works on unlimited devices. It stores unlimited passwords. It is easy to use but doesn't allow password sharing.

NordPass

NordPass - Nord is a well-known provider of security software and their password manager is a popular choice. It works on unlimited devices, stores unlimited passwords, and it's easy to set up and use but can only be used on one device at a time.

LastPass

LastPass is one of the best known password managers. It has unlimited number of passwords and Relatively easy to use and organize. It can be shared with 1 other person. the free version has limited features.

Remember, a password manager is like a trusted friend who never forgets your passwords. It helps keep your online accounts safe and makes it easier to use strong, unique passwords for each account. With a little practice, you'll find it makes your online life much simpler and more secure.

<https://abilitynet.org.uk/news-blogs/why-you-need-password-manager-now>

Seven Strategies for Goals You Can Accomplish

By: Ardis Bazyn

Before you begin each year, it's imperative to set GOALS for your business. Looking at the past year is the first step towards setting your goals for the next one. What are the successes that you had? Did anything fail? What lessons, good and bad, did you learn? The key to setting good goals to accomplish during the new year is to build on your successes and learn from your mistakes. Use this knowledge to benefit your business. Achieving goals should be an enjoyable and satisfying experience, and using these tips should help you get there.

1. Just writing goals down doesn't work unless you incorporate a plan of action. I'd recommend jotting down a list of ALL your priorities you wish to achieve.

2. Your goals could include: starting a newsletter, improving your data base system, adding new content to your website, incorporating social media strategies, estimating sales for the year, or developing a new marketing or business plan. It's a good idea to limit the number of your goals to six. Setting too many goals requires too many action steps leaving you discouraged before you start.

3. As you are writing down goals, you should include shorter term goals: 1 month, 3 months, and longer term goals (1 year or more).

4. The most difficult task is creating a realistic action plan that you can easily follow. Clear and measurable goals will make it easier to understand what tactics are important to reach these goals. This is your ACTION plan. Very specific steps will guide you. The closer the goals, the more specific the details.

5. A time-line should show when each step on the way should be accomplished. Once your goal list is completed, you can focus on reaching your goals. Since you've set your tasks, you should have clear direction.

6. Reviewing your progress regularly will help keep you on track. Dedicate some time each week to review your progress. Notice any potential obstacles or problems before they stop your plans completely.

7. Plan a reward at the end of a major task. It will make you feel good about your achievements and help you get energized for your next steps.

Since running a business on your own can be stressful, getting support from a coach can help you when you have difficulty planning what to do next. Having someone to listen to your thoughts, give you feedback, or just make you feel accountable can be invaluable. Support can be your key to getting started.

If possible, include your employees in this process, realizing it will take a little longer. The final result will be well worth it. The process will give your employees ownership and responsibilities to achieving your goals. They become part of the process, part of the success.

--For business coaching or other assistance with your organization or business, contact Bazyn Communications.

IVIE “Entrepreneur Exchange” Call Tips and IVIE Email Discussion Posts

Read below for some of the valuable information learned at the recent “Entrepreneur Exchange” calls.

- On the August 11 “Entrepreneur exchange call, Cheryl Cumings, Workforce Development Manager at The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc., shared some marketing tips to use for your business. Securing your next opportunity requires a blend of strategic networking, continuous skill development, and leveraging innovative assistive technologies. Her tips and resources should help you navigate your business effectively. She said it’s crucial to engage in self-awareness. Understanding your strengths and abilities, identifying the type of work you want to pursue, and recognizing the unique value you bring are important first steps. Networking is all about building relationships and staying connected within your industry. Reaching out to former colleagues, friends, and family members to let them know you’re looking for new opportunities can often lead to unexpected leads. Inform your network about your business pursuits. Personalized messages or catch-up calls can be effective. Attend Industry Events: Participate in webinars, conferences, and meet-ups related to your field. Leverage Social Media: Use LinkedIn to connect

with industry professionals, join relevant groups, and participate in discussions. To stand out, it's crucial to continually build your skills and be well-prepared. Emphasize your experience. Specific examples of tasks you've handled can make you more compelling. Be ready to discuss the types of equipment or systems you've worked with and how you handled troubleshooting issues. Demonstrate your ability to prioritize tasks efficiently. Discuss how you manage multiple responsibilities and deadlines. Assistive technology plays a crucial role in helping individuals with disabilities navigate business independently. Two powerful apps that can assist you are Be My Eyes and Aira Explorer. The Be My Eyes app connects visually impaired users with volunteers who assist with various tasks, including business -related activities. The LinkedIn support feature is particularly useful for profile creation and searching. Use the app to read text and view images, ensuring your resume and documents are well-formatted and accurate. Aira Explorer is a paid service and offers a free feature specifically for entrepreneurs, providing 30 minutes of assistance every 24 hours. They can even assist with navigating physical spaces, such as finding the entrance to a building for meeting clients. Leveraging these tips and tools will enhance your chances of improving your business.

- On the September 8 “Entrepreneur exchange call, Carla Hayes led the open discussion on “What challenges we have faced as business owners and how we handled them. This was expanded for participants to share a problem and ask those on the call for possible solutions. The challenge most faced was keeping motivated.
- On the October 13 “Entrepreneur exchange call, Ardis led on the topic “keeping motivated to move forward with your business”. Ardis shared the following tips to assist you. Have a purpose or mission. Be a disciplined goal setter- keep a to do list. Think positive thoughts, don't let negativity stop you. Keep a sense of humor- laugh at yourself. Don't get side-tracked. Be self-confident. When you feel negative, change your attitude. Use negative experiences to build your strengths. Have integrity and help others succeed. Be persistent. Be willing to take risks. When mistakes happen, shrug them off. Surround yourself with reliable and competent people. Keep a high energy level. Schedule time to renew- take a day off. Contribute to society. Believe in a higher power. Enjoy your work so you can work with total involvement.

Some content from the IVIE email lists posts follow as an example of some items you can share on the IVIE list. IVIE encourages you to share items of particular interest to business owners.

- ACB Sends Representative to speak at the Rideshare Rally in San Francisco
 - The Youth and Adult Program Manager for the Lighthouse of Houston sent this invitation. I would like to encourage visually impaired business owners to be vendors at our “Santa, Sip and Shop” event. .
 - This link is for a virtual event hosted by the National Disability Institute for small businesses
https://www.disabilityownedconvening.com/?utm_medium=govdelivery&utm_source=email
 - The American Council of the Blind is collaborating with Global Perspectives, an IQVIA business, which specializes in recruiting patients for paid scientific studies. They are launching a new non-interventional study on Geographic Atrophy (advanced dry AMD).
-

What's New?

(Items in this column are not endorsed by the IVIE board. If you wish to contribute an item for this column, please send it to info@ivie-acb.org)

Accessibility Support Phone Lines You Should Know

With a welcomed emphasis on accessibility and inclusion, numerous companies now offer specialized support services for customers with vision loss. They are there to help you get the most out of their products and to ensure your devices are set right to accommodate your needs.

Amazon's Accessibility Customer Service - 888-283-1678

Call to speak with an accessibility specialist who can help you buy books and other products, or get you directly to tech support for Amazon devices and services including Alexa, Kindle & Fire Tablet.

Audible Support: 888-283-5051.

American Airlines Special Assistance - 800-237-7976

Arrange the assistance you need for navigating the airport, security screening, location of gate, seat number, connecting flights, baggage claim and ground transportation.

Apple Accessibility Support Line - 877-204-3930

For users of Apple's iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, Apple Watch, or Mac. It is a special support line reserved for customers with vision, hearing, motor, and learning impairments. Senior AppleCare specialists are available 24/7 to help you get your Accessibility Settings right, answer your questions, and resolve your technical issues.

AT&T- National Center for Citizens with Disabilities
(NCCD)

866-241-6568

This is where wireless customers with vision loss get answers to questions about accessibility features and services available from AT&T.

Comcast Accessibility 866-668-6703

Direct line to a dedicated team, specially trained to support customers who rely on accessibility services including voice guidance and video description.

Google- Call an accessibility specialist at Google through the BeMyEyes app on a smartphone or tablet. Click the 'Service Directory tab' button on the app's home page, select Google in the Technical tab.

Google Technical Support: 855-971-9121 may (or may not) be able to help with accessibility questions, depends on the specialist you reach.

HP Accessibility Support - 888-259-5707

Technical support for customers with accessibility needs, pertaining to HP (Hewlett Packard) products, available from 6am to 9pm Mountain Time.

LinkedIn Disability Answer Desk - Call on Be My Eyes app

Contact an accessibility specialist at the LinkedIn Disability Answer Desk through the Be My Eyes app, on a smartphone or tablet; click the Specialized Help button on the apps home page, then select Technical to get to LinkedIn.

Microsoft Disability Answer Desk - 800-936-5900 or the Be My Eyes app

The features you need to make your PC 'vision friendly' are built right into Windows – unfortunately, many people don't know that. Microsoft recognized this as a significant problem and put in place a support team specialized in accessibility. So dial them up and get your computer set up to work for you. And, to make it even easier on yourself — allow them remote access to your PC and they can make the adjustments.

Peloton - The Accessibility Team at Peloton will answer your questions and give you a call, if you request it by email to: accessibility@onepeloton.com.

Samsung Accessibility - 972-761-7123

Contact the Accessibility Team at Samsung for answers to questions, large and small, about all Samsung products. Reach out by phone or email: to request a call back.

For general support in the U.S. contact Samsung at: 800-726-7864 by text or voice.

Spectrum Accessibility Support - 844-762-1301

Call this support line to learn about and take advantage of Spectrum cable accessibility accommodations.

Spotify - Call on Be My Eyes app

Get help from your smartphone or tablet with any questions you may have about Spotify, the world's largest music streaming service. Speak to a trained customer service specialist on BME; go to Specialized Help, Technical, then Spotify.

T-Mobile Accessibility - 833-428-1785

T-Mobile has an Accessibility Support web page. It says, "T-Mobile will provide accessible support for wireless network service and billing inquiries. Please contact our Accessibility Customer Care at 1-833-428-1785 if you have any questions or need special assistance. For additional support, please contact Customer Care.

United Airlines Accessibility Desk - 800-228-2744

Arrange the assistance you need for navigating the airport, security screening, location of gate, seat number, connecting flights, baggage claim and ground transportation.

Verizon Center for Customers with Disabilities - 800-974-6006

verizon.com/disabilities

Free 411 for your home phone and for your mobile phone. Get your bills in the format of your choice...large print or digital. They can help you with anything else pertaining to your home phone service.

Verizon Wireless National Accessibility Center - 888-262-1999

It can sometimes be challenging to get information about accessibility features that make your mobile phone, or tablet, work for you. Questions about enlarging text, using voice commands effectively, or using the screen reader, often remain unanswered when posed to your store representative. That should be the case no more – now there is a customer service and technical support center dedicated to helping people maximize the accessibility features built into all of Verizon's mobile devices. Let them help you get your device set just right for you, from 8am – 9pm EST, Monday – Friday.

Call on Be My Eyes app - Get help, on a smartphone or tablet, registering to vote, checking your registration status, and requesting a mail-in ballot. On BME, go to Specialized Help on the home page, then Civic Engagement, then select vote.org.

<https://ophthalmicedge.org/patient/accessibility-support-phone-lines-you-should-know/>

TAKE ACTION - RIDE-SHARE COMPANY DISCRIMINATION

Ride share companies have an obligation under Title III of the ADA not to discriminate against people with disabilities traveling with their guide dogs.

Ride share companies providing transport under contract with paratransit companies have an additional obligation under Title II not to discriminate.

Paratransit entities are funded by state and local governments. Paratransit entities, along with entities with whom they contract, such as taxi and ride sharing services, have an greater obligation under ADA Title II, not to discriminate against persons with disabilities using guide dogs (service animals).

****** If, in the past few months, you scheduled with paratransit and a paratransit driver or UBER driver or taxi driver or whatever then refused to transport you with your guide dog, please send an email to: Advocacy@acb.org.

Please include the following information:

Your name, address, email address, and phone number;

the name of the paratransit service, phone number and email address. For example, in this area it is WMATA Metro Access.

what type of vehicle (a van, an UBER, a taxi) did paratransit send?

date and approximate time you & your guide dog were denied transport;

What the driver said, if anything;

What happened next?

How were you further disadvantaged, e.g. did you miss an appointment?

Your email need not be long. Just send the facts.

Time is of the essence. If in doubt, send your summary to advocacy@acb.org. .

ACB is pursuing enforcement under Title II of the ADA.

BE MY EYES ACQUIRES APPLEVIS

Be My Eyes will acquire the website and brand, and a license to all content. Be My Eyes has also agreed to ensure complete editorial independence for the AppleVis team and contributors going forward. It will also add two paid staff positions and retain key AppleVis volunteers

under the new structure to ensure continuity and maintain its institutional knowledge. To retain the editorial authenticity for the blind and low vision community, the new AppleVis organization will report directly to Bryan Bashin, Vice Chairman of Be My Eyes. AppleVis is a must-have resource for people who are blind or have low vision. Their intra-community forum, technology reviews, guides, advice, awards, report cards, and active discussions, combined with Be My Eyes own giant user community, makes a powerful voice that is certainly greater than the sum of its parts. And like all Be My Eyes user features, AppleVis will continue to be free of charge for all of its users.

Comparing Meta AI, Be My AI, and Access AI

AI-powered accessibility tools like Meta AI, Be My AI, and Access AI from Aira are significantly enhancing how visually impaired users interact with the world. Each of these tools has distinct approaches, features, and benefits. Below, we compare these solutions in detail, including Aira's new AI initiatives that are shaping the future of accessible technology.

Meta AI

Meta AI is a broad, general-purpose AI assistant integrated into Meta's platforms, such as Facebook,

Instagram, and WhatsApp. It leverages advanced language models like Llama to offer generative AI capabilities, including text, image recognition, and chat-based assistance. Meta AI's strength lies in its powerful generative features and widespread integration, which makes it suitable for a wide range of everyday tasks beyond just accessibility. However, Meta AI is not specifically tailored to the needs of visually impaired users. It focuses on general interaction improvements, and while it offers high-level image descriptions, it lacks the accessibility-specific refinements that specialized tools provide. Meta is currently expanding its AI reach but faces regulatory delays in Europe due to privacy and data use concerns. As part of its commitment to responsible AI development, Meta AI allows users to control data usage and offers transparency about its data handling practices.

Be My AI

Be My AI is a feature within the Be My Eyes app that uses AI, powered by OpenAI's GPT-4 Vision model, to provide detailed descriptions of images. This tool complements the live assistance offered by sighted volunteers, allowing users to access quick and descriptive feedback on visual content. Be My AI's strength is in its conversational style, where users can ask follow-up questions to gain deeper context about what is being seen.

The focus of Be My AI is on providing accurate and responsive descriptions specifically for visually impaired users. It excels in making AI interactions feel personal and relevant, offering a straightforward, user-friendly experience tailored to individual needs. However, unlike Aira's Access AI, Be My AI does not offer human verification, which can be a critical feature for ensuring high trust in certain situations.

Access AI from Aira

Access AI is part of Aira's broader vision of integrating AI into its existing visual interpreting services. It allows users, known as Explorers, to capture or upload images and receive instant AI-generated descriptions. What sets Access AI apart is the optional human verification through Aira Verify, where a professional visual interpreter can review and confirm the AI's responses. This combination of AI and human input ensures that the service remains highly accurate, secure, and reliable.

Access AI also includes features like multi-photo upload, verbosity controls, and chat history, which enhance user interaction and personalization. Additionally, Aira's commitment to privacy means that no Access AI sessions are shared with third parties, safeguarding user data. Aira's new Build AI initiative further advances its AI capabilities by allowing users to contribute to AI development in a secure and controlled manner. This

program, available primarily in the US, collects real-world data to improve future AI features, enhancing Aira's service without compromising user privacy. The access AI is free now.

Each of these AI tools offers unique benefits, catering to different needs and preferences. Whether you're looking for a general-purpose AI assistant like Meta AI, a visually impaired-focused tool like Be My AI, or a hybrid solution with human verification like Access AI, there's a tool that can help enhance accessibility in your daily life.

<https://iaccessibility.net/comparing-meta-ai-be-my-ai-and-access-ai/>

United Airlines Inflight entertainment with a screen reader

United Airlines has been in the news recently about their accessibility features. One feature, which was introduced in 2019, is not often talked about, the screen reader on the Inflight Entertainment System. On a recent flight, I documented its features.

I plugged the earbuds in, I just tapped the screen three times with two fingers, and the screen reader started. From its behavior, I recognized that it was based on the Android TalkBack system, but it has a somewhat limited

functionality, and most features are identical between the Android and iPhone screen reader, so if one is familiar with any of them, they will easily find their way around the screen without much of a learning curve, though tutorial is available on the system. The first screen had some advertisement, and my seat number. After pressing continue, a language selection popped up. When I pressed continue again, I got to the main screen. First I explored the accessibility menu, where there were two major categories: Under vision, you can turn the text to speech on and off, read a tutorial, change the volume, speed and pitch of the voice. When text to speech is not running, you can also change the text size. Under hearing, you can enable closed captions and subtitles.

The entertainment screen has some interesting options, the seat number, flight number, next stop and weather. You can also get further flight information where you can read the speed, altitude, distance covered, and distance to the destination. The option for connecting flights will be available later. The entertainment options contained a nice list of podcasts and movies and it read if a title had audio description. The onboard dining menu listed all the options and instructed me to ask a flight attendant for ordering.

Navigating the screen is not too comfortable. While a sighted person would generally read the screen and tap what is of interest to them, a screen reader user would

swipe left and right to read each line, and it wasn't too comfortable to discover the entertainment options with a continuously stretched out arm, but it was definitely doable.

Such a feature could have been much more useful more than a decade ago. It is a great option, but it does not replace the convenience of traveling with a fully loaded mobile phone.

Full article: <https://evengrounds.com/united-airlines-inflight-entertainment-with-a-screen-reader/>

CloverBook Pro All-in-One Tablet Magnifier with OCR and Distance Viewing

The CloverBook Pro offers a 12.5-inch FHD screen with full-page text-to-speech scanning. All in a light, foldable, extremely portable unit, complete with an attractive, protective carry case. The CloverBook Pro is powerful but simple to use; with traditional (tactile) controls, like magnification and contrast knobs. It also has a touchscreen. The CloverBook Pro boasts unique features - a user-replaceable battery and a very discreet additional camera for distance and self-viewing. With CloverBook Pro, you have the option for split-screen, so you can view notes on your desk and see a presenter/instructor at the same time. Add the additional screen and you can view

both cameras on separate 12.5-inch screens, simultaneously.

The CloverBook Pro is the perfect solution for students and working professionals. The lightweight and compact design fits into a backpack or shoulder bag and allows the user to easily carry the unit between classes or meetings and quickly setup. By starting the included program, the integrated camera can be used as a video magnifier or perform text to speech function. The optional distance camera allows the user to see the front of the classroom or meeting room. For more information or for a demonstration of the product contact NorthState AT at 877-682-0452 or info@northstateat.com

www.NorthStateAT.com

SUBMITTING NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

I hope you've enjoyed reading this issue of the IVIE Motivator. Articles are due for the next issue by December 15, 2024. Please forward information you think other business owners might find useful. Our newsletters are more valuable when many members share resources. We welcome articles on technology particularly helpful for

business owners, starting a business, and growing a business. Please share your business experiences in a "member profile" article about you and your business. Include: your name, business name or why you joined IVIE. How did you start your business? How do you advertise or market your business? What technology do you use? What tips would you like to share with others starting their own business? Do you have other information of interest for other members. Please include any specials, new products, or new features of your business and add your best contact information. If you don't feel comfortable writing an article yourself, contact us and we'll give you a call.

We also welcome book reviews, technology reviews, online resources, or info about organizations or agencies you've found beneficial. Send any items for the newsletter to info@ivie-acb.org or abazyn@bazyncommunications.com.

Copyright ©, October 2024 Independent Visually Impaired Entrepreneurs