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National Federation of the Blind Settles Complaint Against Sacramento Public Library

Library Will Deploy Accessible E-readers to Blind and Print-disabled Patrons

Baltimore, Maryland (August 30, 2012): The National Federation of the Blind (NFB), the nation's leading advocate for access to information by the blind and other people with print disabilities, announced today that a complaint filed by the NFB with the United States Department of Justice, Office of Civil Rights, against the Sacramento Public Library Authority has been resolved. The NFB filed the complaint last fall because the library was lending NOOK e-readers preloaded with e-books to its patrons. Unlike some other e-reading devices, the NOOK, which is manufactured and sold by Barnes & Noble, [cannot be used by blind and print-disabled readers](#) because it does not have text-to-speech capability or the ability to send content to a Braille display.

The goal of the agreement is “to provide a library e-reader circulation program where library patrons, with and without vision disabilities, are able to access and use the same technology to the maximum extent possible.” Under the agreement, the library will “acquire only technology that does not exclude persons who are blind or others” who need accessibility features such as text-to-speech or Braille output and the ability to access the device's menus and controls independently. The library's commitment is also in line with a resolution passed in 2009 by the American Library Association entitled Purchasing of Accessible Electronic Resources, which urged “all libraries purchasing, procuring, using, maintaining and contracting for electronic resources and services” to “require vendors to guarantee that products and services comply with Section 508 regulations, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, or other applicable accessibility standards and guidelines.”

[Dr. Marc Maurer](#), President of the [National Federation of the Blind](#), said: “We are pleased that the Sacramento Public Library Authority is showing leadership by ensuring that the e-books that it lends will be accessible to all of its patrons, including those who are blind or have print disabilities. E-books represent an opportunity for the blind to have access to the same books at the same time as our sighted friends, family, and colleagues, but sadly most e-book vendors have not designed their technology so that it can be used by the blind, despite the fact that it is not difficult or costly to do so. Libraries, schools, and other institutions have a legal and moral obligation to make sure that the content they deploy is accessible to the blind and print-disabled. If they meet these obligations by demanding accessibility from their e-book vendors, then accessibility will happen.”

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About the National Federation of the Blind

With more than 50,000 members, the National Federation of the Blind is the largest and most influential membership organization of blind people in the United States. The NFB improves blind people's lives through advocacy, education, research, technology, and programs encouraging independence and self-confidence. It is the leading force in the blindness field today and the voice of the nation's blind. In January 2004 the NFB opened the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute, the first research and training center in the United States for the blind led by the blind.

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