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Government



It is essential to recognize the time at which the American's with Disabilities Act was established. Due to the creation of this act in 1990, there was no explicit reference to the extent of website accessibility because, the Internet was only emerging at this point. Over a fairly short period of time, it was clear to see that websites started to play an increasingly more important role in communication, social, and business atmospheres. For agencies, websites allowed interactivity, convenience, and speed of service. However, this did not hold true for the disabled community where for instance, blind members of society could not understand what a certain online picture was about, even with additional technology assisting them, such as screen readers. This led to several lawsuits, from people who argued that these sites did not provide equal access and therefore, discriminated against disabled people. I am at the stance, which argues that laws should be enacted, so that government and business websites follow standards, which make their sites accessible to a wide range of users, who may rely on their services.

Since the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) is analogous to a Civil rights law, one could determine that there are fundamentally negative rights involved. In other words, everyone has the ability to access the Internet at his or her own liberty. However, in some cases, positive rights must be applied when the Internet becomes inaccessible to some users, in this instance, people with disabilities. When a website is created without taking into consideration the span of their audience, it becomes a problem. The ADA forces one to comply with and, in many cases, to reformat a website according to a set of standards. Critics argue that the reconstruction of a website can be expensive for companies to implement. However, a simple

implementation of subtext next to a picture significantly helps one, who is blind, to understand a picture.

Additionally, business and the government must routinely update and reformat their websites on a regular basis, in order to be concurrent with new technology and software that is being used. Furthermore, at a minimum websites are already obligated to meet the Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility standards. To take into consideration the needs of one with disabilities while reformatting a website is an instance where expense does not present a major obstacle for which services can choose not to comply with standards. It is apparent that there are many easy fixes in creating a website more user friendly for all.

For example, clearly identifying what a link is supposed to do, instead of a "click here" button. Also, as of March 28th 2014, the Department of Justice increased the penalties for the Violation of the ADA to a maximum first offense of \$75,000 and a secondary offense of up to \$150,000. Clearly, it is better to follow guidelines in the creation and modification of websites. Also critics, who say that the ADA has established law without standards or regulations, are mistaken. The U. S. Department of Labor and several other federal agencies including, the U.

S Department of Justice, and the Federal Communications Commission, have a role in enforcing ADA. Also, the ADA has published a list of comprehensive standards that can be easily found online since June of 2003. Those who To conclude, I am at the stance that business and government websites should strive, to the best of their ability, to provide full access to disabled people.

There will certainly be no “ exact” equivalent as to how a disabled person may interact with a website’s services versus a non-disabled person. To take a more general view, there are difficulties even a non-disabled person may encounter while using a website.

However, if a set of alternatives can be found for these customers, then this will greatly reduce customer dissatisfaction and thus, law suits. It was reported, through the U. S consensus bureau that approximately 1 out of 5 people in the U. S have a disability. When put into this perspective, it is clearly in the service’s best financial interest and profit to appeal to this particular group of people, who compose a large chunk of society.