



January 16, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President-Elect of the United States of America  
Office of the President-Elect  
Washington, DC 20270

Dear Mr. President-Elect,

On behalf of the over 500 member companies of the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA), I am writing to congratulate you on your election to the Presidency. As you know, TIA is the leading trade association for the information and communications technology (“ICT”) industry, representing companies that manufacture or supply the products and services used in global communications across all technology platforms. TIA represents its members on the full range of public policy issues affecting the ICT industry and forges consensus on industry standards. Among their numerous lines of business, TIA member companies design, produce, and deploy a wide variety of devices with the goal of making technology accessible to all Americans – an objective we share with your Administration. Industry has worked voluntarily and productively with the disability community on a number of accessibility initiatives, outlined below, to achieve this goal. We look forward to working with your Administration to ensure that all consumers remain connected through their continued access to ICT products and services.

**TEITAC Participation:** The Telecommunications and Electronic and Information Technology Advisory Committee (TEITAC) was a temporary advisory committee established provide recommendations to the U.S. Access Board on how to refresh the Board’s guidelines regarding how federal agencies and private industry are expected to make existing and emerging electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. The committee included representatives from the disability community, standards-setting organizations, and industry, including TIA. The TEITAC process exemplifies the immense amount of progress that can be achieved through voluntary coordination of interested stakeholders on accessibility issues. TIA will continue to work with the Access Board and, as appropriate, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and other agencies to develop accessibility solutions.

**Accessible Technology Industry Fair:** With other high-tech trade associations, TIA co-hosted a Tech Fair on Capitol Hill in spring 2008. This gave policy-makers and consumers the opportunity to see first-hand the accessibility features and services that improve communications for all users, including those with disabilities. The over 30 companies represented at the Tech Fair showcased innovative devices and services that included voice-recognition and one-touch dialing for individuals with sight or mobility impairment; visual display and hearing aid compatibility for the deaf and hard of hearing; closed captioning capabilities on digital converter boxes and web-based video; and real-time Instant Messaging (IM) as an alternative to text telephony (TTY). Industry plans to host another Tech Fair in 2009 to demonstrate the exciting progress in this area.



**Clearinghouse:** TIA is working with other high-tech associations and the disability community to explore the possibility of developing an information clearinghouse of currently available technologies maintained on an accessible website. The clearinghouse would act as a tool for consumers to coordinate which devices and features can be used to facilitate communication based on an individual's particular needs. Further, the clearinghouse would be a communication bridge between the disability community and industry.

**Coordination with Other Industries:** In addition to its ongoing communication with other high-tech associations, TIA welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with partners outside of the communications sector. TIA has recently initiated discussion with the assistive technology (AT) industry and will be attending the Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) Leadership Forum 2009. This will provide the opportunity for members of both associations to identify how their products can work together to develop accessible solutions.

### **Accessibility Standards**

Below are some notable recent examples of TIA's efforts to forge industry consensus on accessibility technical standards:

- **TIA-1083:** As part of a collaborative effort with Gallaudet University, Etymotic Research and the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), TIA organized and supported research to determine the cause of interference on digital cordless phones experienced by users with hearing aids. The result was TIA-1083, a standard that significantly reduces interference problems on digital cordless phones. All major cordless phone manufacturers have voluntarily committed to making their products 100% TIA-1083 compliant by 2010. Further, TIA-1083 is in the process of being updated so that it can be used with newer technologies, such as Wi-Fi® and Bluetooth®.
- **TIA-1001:** This is a standard, developed by TIA, used to transmit TTY communications across the Internet Protocol (IP) portion of the public switched telephone network (PSTN), making it easier for TTY users to use modern communications systems.
- **C63.19:** In 2009 TIA will continue to serve as an organizational member of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Accredited Standards Committee (ASC) 63 Committee that develops standards related to electromagnetic compatibility. This Committee developed and published C63.19, a standard that specifies hearing aid compatibility requirements for cell phones.

These standards are examples of how open, consensus-driven standards processes will contribute significantly to ensuring that new products and services are accessible to people with disabilities.

Mr. President-Elect, thank you for your attention to these important issues. We applaud your message of hope and change and look forward to working with you as President to ensure that ICT remains accessible to all Americans.



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Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Grant E. Seiffert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Grant Seiffert  
TIA President