



Chicago RAAV Seminar
November 12, 2013
Presented by: Tim Mattice
Election Center

COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

"a disability that impacts an individual's ability to access, process, or remember information"

COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

READING, LINGUISTIC, AND VERBAL COMPREHENSION

For some people, reading text can be quite a challenge.

Be careful not to make things even harder by relying on non-literal communication and unstated assumptions.

COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

Tob eornot obe



COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

Developmental Disability

- ☐ Speak to the person in clear sentences
- ☐ Don't use baby talk or talk down to people
- ☐ The person is an adult and can make his/her own decisions
- ☐ Person may be anxious to please
- ☐ May be difficult to make a quick decision

COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

Traumatic (or acquired brain injury)

- ☐ May have loss of muscle control or mobility (that is not obvious)
- ☐ May have poor impulse control
- ☐ May be unable to follow directions due to poor short-term memory

Making Voting Accessible

Guidelines:

- ☐ Speak directly to the voter,
- ☐ Use words voters understand,
- ☐ Write in an active voice to help voters use the information,
- ☐ Avoid, or explain, election terminology

Making Voting Accessible

Some words voters may not understand or find confusing


- **Absentee ballot**
- **Canvassing board**
- **Contests**
- **Legislation**
- **MVA**
- **Primary election**
- **Provisional ballot**
- **Ranked choice voting**
- **Remedial**
- **Unaffiliated**
- **Voter notification card**
- **Affiliate with a party**
- **Designate an agent**
- **Change parties**
- **Close of registrations**
- **Request deadline**

Free Download: www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/DisabilityEtiquette.pdf


www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/DisabilityEtiquette.pdf

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Automatic Zoom



**United Spinal
Association**



**DISABILITY
ETIQUETTE**

Tips On Interacting With People With Disabilities

Windows taskbar icons: Internet Explorer, File Explorer, Media Center, Firefox, Word, Excel, Edge, Dreamweaver, PowerPoint, Chrome, Outlook, PowerPoint.

System tray: 2:12 PM, 10/30/2013

Making Voting Accessible

Scope of the literacy problem

- 23% of adults in the U.S. have low literacy competency skills
- 43% of adults in the U.S. read at the ? grade level
- Two out of every five older users read at the ? grade level

Making Voting Accessible

READERS WITH LOWER LITERACY SKILLS...

- Interpret words and visuals literally
- Read slowly, missing meaning
- Skip over hard words
- Miss the context – jump right in
- May have difficulty seeing principal features
- Tire quickly and may give up easily

MAKING VOTING ACCESSIBLE

exit → next

every → very

simple → smile

sprout → poured

van → have

roam → more

dim → made

years → yours

value → volume

afraid → after

include → locating

agree → argue

lord → rod

speed → sleep

cork → clock

text → next

MAKING VOTING ACCESSIBLE

READERS WITH HIGHER LITERACY SKILLS READING ON THE WEB...

- ☐ Prefer information that looks easy to read through
- ☐ Prefer information that gets to the point
- ☐ May skip over long blocks of text
- ☐ Are overloaded with information and may not take time to read lengthy text
- ☐ Appreciate having unfamiliar terms and concepts put into plain language

MAKING VOTING ACCESSIBLE

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT VOTING?

- ❑ Literacy issues affect preparation to vote, the act of voting, and confidence that the vote has been cast as intended
- ❑ Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF) <http://elections.itif.org>

[HTTP://ELECTIONS.ITIF.ORG](http://elections.itif.org)

50 IDEAS FOR MORE ACCESSIBLE ELECTIONS

October 2012



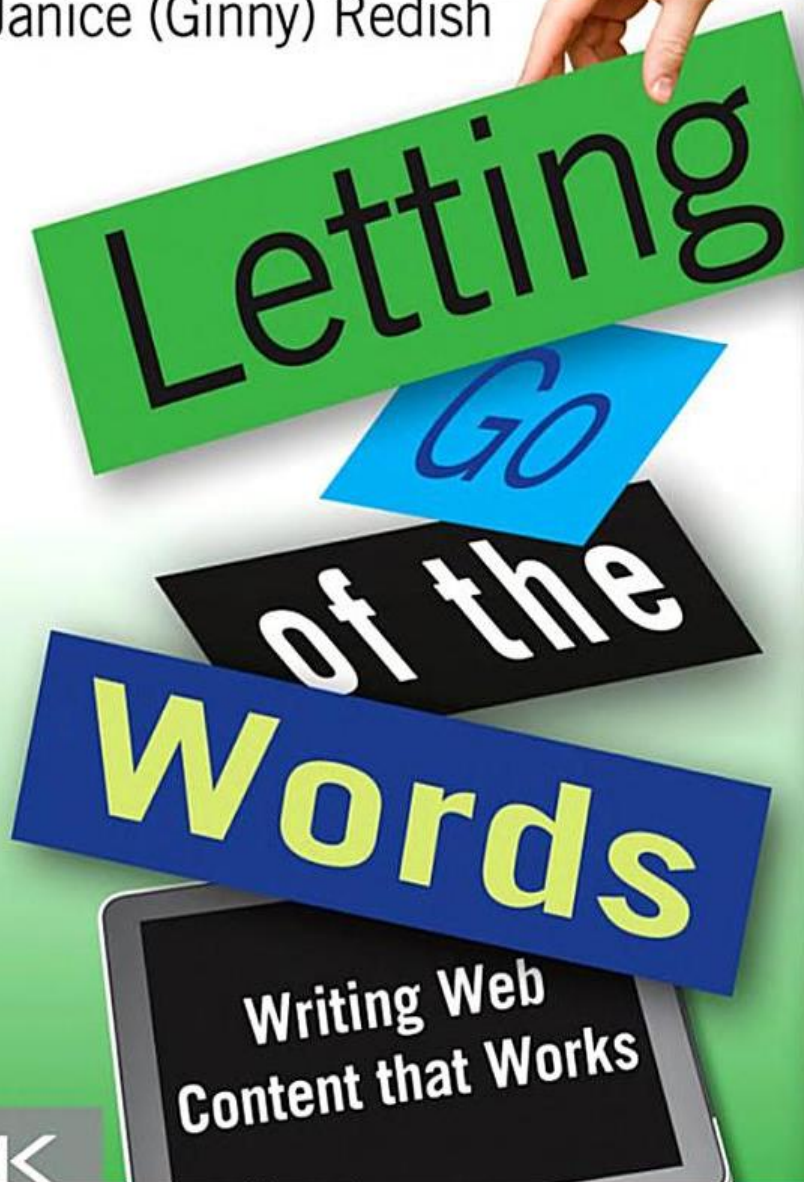
MAKING VOTING ACCESSIBLE

Ginny Redish and Dana Chisnell (2009) demonstrated the crucial role of plain language in ballot instructions for successful voting.

In their testing, they found that participants with lower literacy tended to *act on every single word*

Field Guides: civicdesigning.org/fieldguides

Janice (Ginny) Redish



Second Edition

MK

MAKING VOTING ACCESSIBLE

MAKING IT PLAIN: ELIMINATING AMBIGUOUS WORDS

✓ break

✓ cut

✓ run

✓ play

✓ make

✓ light

✓ set

✓ hold

✓ clear

✓ give

✓ draw

✓ take

✓ fall

✓ pass

✓ head

✓ call

✓ carry

✓ charge

✓ point

✓ duck

MAKING VOTING ACCESSIBLE

MAKING IT PLAIN

Language tweaks that impacted voter success:

- Reducing election jargon

Caucus

Electoral College

General Election

Political Action Committee

Primary Election

Write-in Candidate

Affiliation

Ballot

Candidate

Nomination

Poll

MAKING VOTING ACCESSIBLE

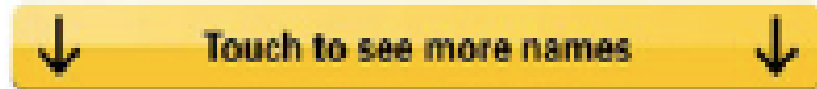
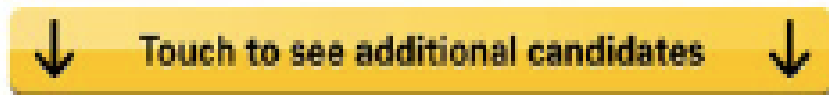
MAKING IT PLAIN

Language tweaks that impacted voter success:

- Reducing the amount of text on key screens

MAKING VOTING ACCESSIBLE

BUTTON TEXT



Several participants struggled with the “see additional candidates” button

To ease use

- Text was simplified
- Jargon was eliminated

MAKING VOTING ACCESSIBLE

REVIEW SCREEN TEXT

City Council

☒ Barbara Shry Yellow

☒ Carole Barker Yellow

You could have voted for 4 candidates, but you only voted for 2.
If you want to vote for more, touch here.

Water Commissioners

You did not vote in this race.
If you want to vote in this race, touch here.

After noting confusion from users, text on the review screen was changed:

“You could have voted for 4 candidates and you only voted for 2”

Became

“You voted for 2 people. You can vote for 2 more.”

City Council

☒ Barbara Shry Yellow

☒ Carole Barker Yellow

You voted for 2 people. You can vote for 2 more.
If you want to vote for more, touch here.

Water Commissioners

You did not vote for anyone.
If you want to vote, touch here.

The change

- reduced election jargon
- focused on actions
- moved from familiar to new

MAKING VOTING ACCESSIBLE

CAST YOUR BALLOT

Are you sure you have finished voting?

Note: Once you press the **Vote** button, you will not be able to make any more changes.

If you want to make changes, touch the **Return to ballot** button.

If you are ready to cast your ballot, touch the **Vote** button.



Are you finished?

If you want to make changes, touch the **Return to ballot** button.

If you are ready to cast your ballot, touch the **Vote** button.



Participants were confused and sometimes anxious about this page; they backed away from casting their vote.

Focusing the text on the message and the choice, rather than on the danger of making a mistake, allowed for easier processing and more confidence in voting.

MAKING VOTING ACCESSIBLE

PLAIN LANGUAGE FINDINGS

- Minimal text, short sentences
- Specific, concrete, familiar words
- No jargon
- Large type-size



Accessible voting is about more than voting machines, it includes :

- physical access,**
- integration with individual voters' assistive technology, and**
- information available in language and formats that meet the needs of all.**

www.Accessibleinfo.org



Center for Accessible Information

Accessible documents, accessible websites, accessible training

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 Welcome to the Center for Accessible Information

We live in the “information age”...

But finding and using the
information we need or want
can be challenging.



Getting information off the
Internet is like taking a
drink from a fire hydrant.

Mitchell Kapor



Mitchell Kapor | Photo by Will Lion, via [Flickr](#)

The Center for Accessible Information is here to help:

- i** We provide training and resources for people wanting to use the Internet, starting at the very beginning.
- i** We provide assistance with web design and web hosting, and with "clear and simple" content, people who want to share information with others.
- i** We create fully accessible digital documents.
- i** We provide comprehensive web assistance for non-profits serving people with information processing difficulties.
- i** We engage in research and service projects to enhance inclusion in community life.
- i** We maintain an extensive resource library to assist in accessibility of documents in print and on the Web.

Current Projects



Center for Accessible Information

Accessible documents, accessible websites, accessible training

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Current Projects

Research Alliance for Accessible Voting: [AccessibleVoting.org](#)

- Build and maintain project website
- Create information about accessible voting machines for voters
- Conduct research on translating plain language instructions to other languages

An Accessible On-Ramp to the Information Highway: [OnRampToTheWeb.org](#)

- On-line basic tutorial designed for people with disabilities or anyone who wants to start at the very beginning
- All tutorials have optional audio for all text
- Tutorials can be downloaded for use off line

Assistance to non-profits

- Site design and maintenance
- "Tech guru" and training for local staff
- Mailing lists
- Email support



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Welcome to the Research Alliance for Accessible Voting



The Goals of Accessible Voting

- ☒ Every voter can vote independently and privately, using the systems used by other voters.
- ☒ All voters must be able to get to, and move around inside, all polling places.
- ☒ Polling places must include voting machines or methods that work for all voters.



- ☒ For on-line voting, the website must be designed so that all voters can use it.

Latest news

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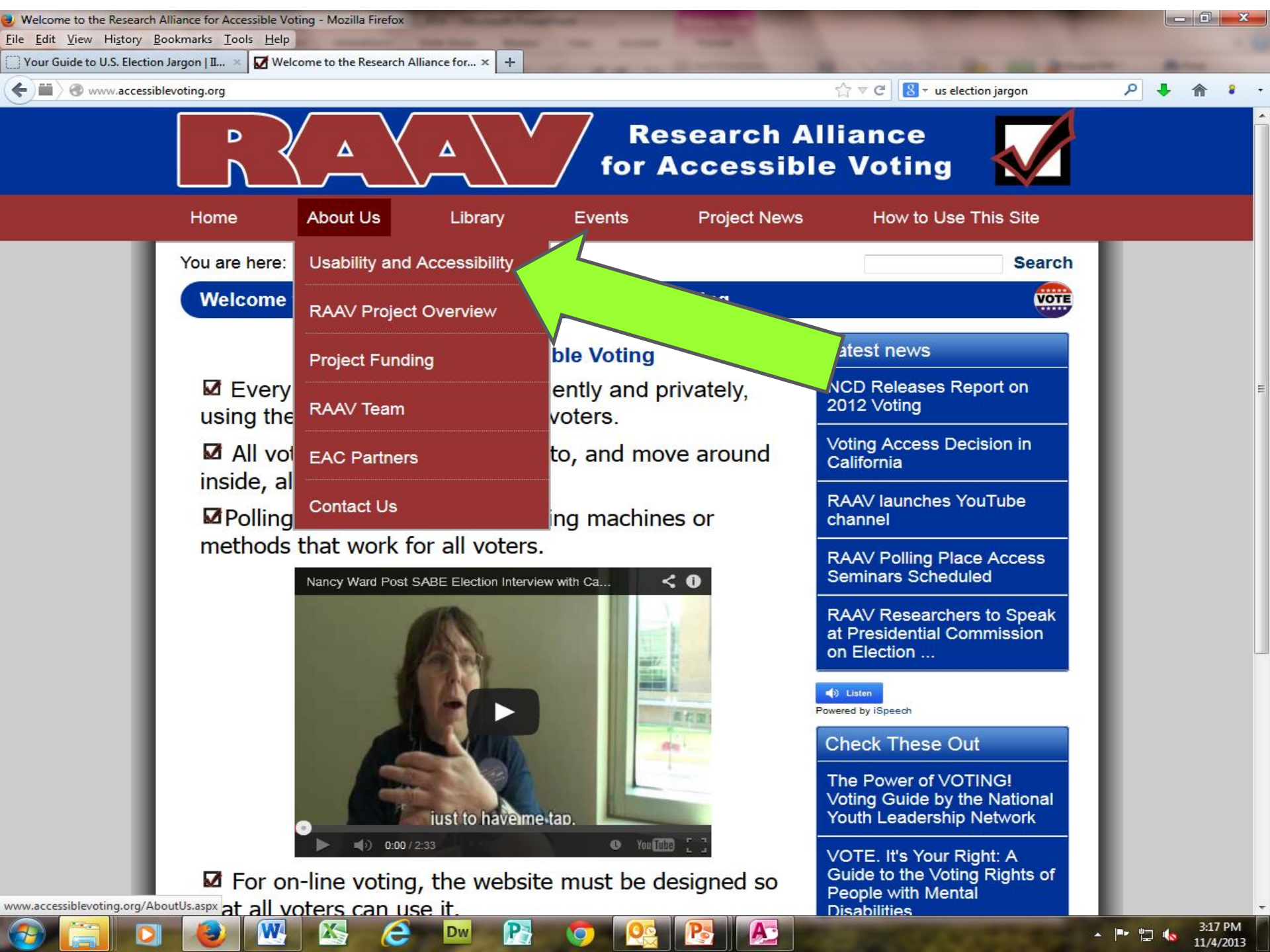
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Check These Out

[The Power of VOTING! Voting Guide by the National Youth Leadership Network](#)

[VOTE. It's Your Right: A Guide to the Voting Rights of People with Mental Disabilities](#)



USABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Built in several accessibility features:

- ☐ “Listen” buttons on every page,
- ☐ fairly large print, high contrast,
- ☐ all of the original text in clear and simple language,
- ☐ use the site without a mouse, using the keyboard or most assistive technology,
- ☐ Includes an icon-based search system
- ☐ Provides a short description of every item in clear and simple language.



Research Alliance
for Accessible Voting



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The Goals

- ☑ Every voter can vote using the systems used
- ☑ All voters must be able to vote inside, all polling places
- ☑ Polling places must use methods that work for

Nancy Ward Post SAE



- ☑ For on-line voting, the website must be designed so that all voters can use it.

All Resources

Advocate Resources

Candidate Resources

Election Official Resources

Person With a Disability Resources

Poll Worker Resources

Researcher Resources

Web Designer Resources

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Young Access Decision in California

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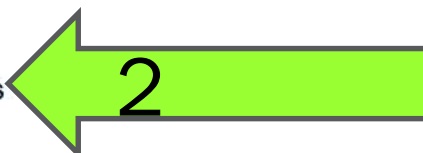
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Video



Polling Places



More Tips for 2012



Research



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Training



Creating Accessible Documents



Voting Technology



Creating Clear and Simple Language



Web and Ballot Design



All Terms

Matching Resources

Searching For: **document**

Documents related to Polling Places

Search here...

☐ All Terms

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Searching For: document **AND** polling places

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GAO Report on VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES: More Polling Places Had No Potential Impediments Than 2000 [PDF]

The General Accountability Office (the GAO) looked at the number of polling places that were accessible to voters with disabilities in the 2008 election. They found that 27% of polling places were fully accessible. This is more than the 16% of polling places that were accessible in 2000. Read the full report to learn about the supports and barriers for voters with disabilities that were found in polling places during the 2008 election.

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Vote Oregon! How to Assist Voters with Disabilities [PDF]

By the Oregon Secretary of State's Office, 2004. This short brochure covers the basics of helping people with disabilities to vote in Oregon. It talks about: providers' responsibilities, who can provide assistance, who cannot provide assistance, rules and guidelines, voting the ballot, providing a replacement ballot, and returning the ballot.

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GAO Full Report VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES: Access to Polling Places and Alternative Voting Methods [PDF]

October 2001. This 97 page report looks at state and local practices for making voting accessible, both at polling places and with voting accommodations. It also

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GoVote! Video

This website has links to legal resources and information about voting in Minnesota. A lot of the information is good for people in other states, too.

This video was produced by the Minnesota Disability Law Center and the Minnesota Secretary of State's Office.



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VOTE. It's Your Right: A Guide to the Voting Rights of People with Mental Disabilities [PDF]

By the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law and National Disability Rights Network, 2008. This 72 page Voting Guide explains the rights of voters with mental disabilities. It can be a resource for people with mental disabilities, advocates, family members, service providers, election officials, and others. The guide focuses on four areas: voter-competence requirements, state photo-ID laws, voter challenges and providing help to voters with disabilities. It includes a chart listing each state's voter-competence laws.



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Ohio Directive – Reasonable Accommodation for Disabled Absentee Voters who are Homebound

This court order affects all 88 county boards of elections in Ohio. They must provide an opportunity for voters with disabilities to correct errors on their absentee ballot



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Videos related to training

www.accessiblevoting.org/Default.aspx?tabID=249#resources

Search here... ☐ All Terms Search Clear All

Matching Resources

Searching For: video AND training

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Setting Up an Accessible Polling Place (Tip #3) [Video]

This video was created by the Department of Elections in San Francisco, CA . It offers a comprehensive view of accessibility issues. While some details may vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, the video should be useful everywhere in the country.

 Listen

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How to Use the Automark [Video]

This is a video intended to teach poll workers how to help voters use the Automark. The narrator is blind and the instructor takes her through the whole voting process. This video lets you hear what the audio ballot sounds like.

 Listen

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AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminal (Toronto) [Video]

This is an excellent video to show you how to use the Automark machine. It is also available in an [ASL \(American Sign Language\) version](#).

 Listen

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Voter Tests Automark - Part I [Video]

This video shows a blind voter learning to use the Automark. The audio is on speaker so you can hear exactly what she is hearing. She encounters some minor difficulties, which the poll worker helps her deal with.

workers who do not have much experience

www.accessiblevoting.org/LinkClick.aspx?link=http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWOd3tp2Zo&tabid=86&portalid=0&mid=562

2:44 PM 11/6/2013


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League of Women Voters Easy Voters Guide Oregon January 2010 [PDF]

This is an example of an easy to read, nonbiased voters guide produced by the League of Women Voters for two Oregon ballot measures.

This document is not accessible to screen readers at this time.



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Alternative Accessible Formats [PDF]

This 2 page guide was created by the [Catskill Center for Independence Project HAVA](#) in December 2008. It talks about the what, when, and why of accessible formats for voting forms and information, as well as examples of specific documents.



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Writing Clearly and Simply (Tip #1) [PDF]

These ideas were taken from a longer article on the [WebAIM.org](#) website. They tell you how to write material that is easy to read. There is a section on writing for people with reading difficulties and intellectual disabilities.



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- ☑ For on-line voting, the website must be designed so

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Guide to the Voting Rights of
People with Mental

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Translation Study



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Practical Applications Open Discussion:

**What Can We Do to Improve Accessibility
for Elections?**



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Swap Shop:

Exchange of Ideas from
Seminar Attendees

UPCOMING RAAV SEMINARS

San Francisco..... 1/30/2014

St. Louis2/13/2014

Seattle3/7/2014

Washington, DC3/18/2014

Minneapolis4/10/2014

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