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VISIONS

Canadian Council of the Blind Newsletter

December 2018

“A lack of sight is not a lack of vision”



President's Message++



1Louise Gillis - CCB National President

As many of us have experienced winter rather early this year it seems today happens to be a bright, sunny and slightly warmer day more typical of the season. I hope that this continues for everyone so that we can enjoy a bit of family time as we prepare for the holiday season.

We continue to be very busy in many areas with a variety of CCB programs. GTT has been posting a lot of great information to assist in mobility, new apps and some simple ideas to make life easier for those living with vision loss. Thank you to all the leaders working with GTT to

continue to make it a successful program.



This has been a busy month with the Accessible Canada Act which has now moved through the third reading unanimously and on to the Senate for consideration and hopefully approval. We have sent in a written submission to the Standing Committee as did

many other organizations of persons with disabilities. The Act, as it stands now does not give time lines and some other concerns expressed by varying organizations, for a fully accessible Canada by a specific date but what it has is standards for regulations for federally run agencies which will have to comply with the Act. You can check out on the "HUMA" website many of the submissions and the progress of Bill C-81.

<http://www.ourcommons.ca/Committees/en/HUMA/StudyActivity?studyActivityId=10268658>

The Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) is busy making changes to regulations for air, rail and ferry services under federal jurisdiction. For those who have computer access you can go on their website to follow what is transpiring. This is also taking place with CRTC as well for communications. The changes are being made to comply with the anticipated Accessible Canada Act. CCB has been involved in providing input and submissions to both agencies. Thank you to Kim Kilpatrick and Shelly Morris on their work with CRTC. Several CCB members have been working with rail, air and ferry services and thank you all for your input.



We have recently completed a submission to Canadian Agency on Drugs and Technology (CADTH) for a new treatment (eye drops) for Glaucoma. It is the first of its kind also there has not been any new drops in many years. What is CADTH? CADTH is an independent, not-for-profit organization responsible for providing Canada's health care decision-makers with objective evidence to help make informed decisions about the optimal use of drugs and medical devices in our health care system. Created in 1989 by Canada's federal, provincial, and territorial governments, CADTH was born from the idea that Canada needs a coordinated approach to assessing health technologies. The result was an organization that harnesses Canadian

expertise from every region and produces evidence-informed solutions that benefit patients in jurisdictions across the country.

CCB continues to work with Best Medicines Coalition, FFB, CNIB, and others to ensure that Canadians get the best care possible not only eye care but other disease processes that many of our members may be dealing with in their lives health promotion and illness prevention.

The Mobile Eye Clinic continues to check children in the Ottawa region schools. Results still show that approximately twenty five percent of children attending have previous undetected eye concerns needing further follow-up.

Our committees have been very active over the fall. It takes a lot of time and important work to complete items as we make our way through to ensure everything meets requirements that are set for compliance. Thank you for the work of the committee members for their great work and time commitment.

It is now time to enjoy holiday festivities with families and friends. As our country is made up of a vast number of nationalities I would like to wish everyone a time of enjoyment, relaxation, spending time with fellow workers or neighbours as we will soon will be moving into a new year with lots of hope for continued strength and growth. Best wishes for the holidays and Happy New Year to all.
Louise Gillis, National President



Announcements

'EXPERIENCE' EXPO 2019++:

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2 @ 4:00 PM
Miles Nadel Jewish Community Centre,
750 Spadina Avenue, Toronto ON

Your chance to participate in a panel discussion dedicated to bridging technology for Canadians who are blind or partially sighted and designed to achieve inclusive, progressive accessibility. Followed by a question and answer session.

Panel will include **Louise Gillis**, National President, Canadian Council of the Blind, **Chelsea Mohler**, M.Sc., Community Engagement Specialist at BALANCE for Blind Adults and a assistive technology educator and **Albert A. Ruel**, CCB's Get Together with Technology (GTT) Program Coordinator, Western Canada.

Space is limited to the first 75 reservations.
Please direct your RSVP to CCB Toronto Visionaries Voice Mail Line:
1-416-760-2163 or by email: info@ccbtorontovisionaries.ca

Thank-you!++

CCB would like to acknowledge and thank Ken Christie, from the Windsor Low Vision Chapter in Ontario for his many years of support and activity within the Council. Ken joined CCB in 2005, after having volunteered with CNIB for over 25 years. He was already quite active in the blind bowling community, and decided to bring his enthusiasm for bowling and community engagement to CCB. Ken pulled together the communities of Sarnia, Chatham and Windsor to bowl, and each May, he would organize a tournament followed by a banquet. He worked closely with the local Lions Club, who ended up cosponsoring the bowling tournament. Ken and the Windsor chapter could also always count on lots of support from his wife, Catherine, who volunteered to drive members to meetings and help organize fundraising activities. Ken will be turning 89 years old in January, and he has decided it's time to take a step back from his active role in the chapter and reflect on the wonderful times he spent with the chapter members in CCB.





Jim Tokos adds:

Ken was a mentor to me, as when I first joined the Ontario Board, Ken, along with Don Grant, Theresa Dupuis, Doug Ayers, to name a few, always encouraged me to move forward, and how can you not be motivated to succeed when you are surrounded by such wonderful and devoted persons."

I have also been fortunate enough to know Ken quite well over the past and upon request from Ken have spoken to the Windsor Low Vision Chapter on many occasions. Ken will certainly be missed as he touched a lot of hearts, and Ken and Kay, what more can the Council say but Thank You for your outstanding service to the CCB.

CCB Toronto Ski Hawks Ski Club Chapter at the Toronto Ski and Snowboard show.++:

In late October the Ski Hawks had an exhibit at the Ski and Snowboard show. This was the first time in many years that we have been at the show. Over the course of the 4 day show the booth was staffed, in rotating shifts, by 9 of our blind skiers and several volunteer ski guides. Many of the visitors to our booth were truly amazed that blind people actually ski downhill.



2CCB Toronto Ski Hawks Ski Club Chapter at the Toronto Ski and Snowboard Show.

Of particular interest was our short video that describes how we ski with a guide. At the very least it definitely raised awareness that people with low vision or no vision can be skiers.

One of our goals at the show was to recruit volunteers to be trained as guides and this was indeed a success! The other was to get some form of sponsorship from the ski industry, we are currently pursuing some leads from the show.



3 Kelsey Serwa posing with her Gold Medal

The highlight of the show for our blind skiers was when they had a visit with Kelsey Serwa winner of the gold medal in ladies ski cross at the 2018 winter Olympics in Pyeongchang. Not only did they have the opportunity to ask her questions but also got to hold her gold medal and discovered that the edge was inscribed in Braille.

Submitted by Chris Wyvill

The Situation of Blind and Partially Sighted Persons in Accessing their Human Rights – from the World Blind Union

Persistent cultural, social, legal, physical and institutional barriers pose restrictions to the full inclusion of visually impaired persons in society in all areas of private and public life, including education; employment; health care; cultural, recreational, sporting and leisure activities; and political participation. They face huge barriers to personal mobility owing to lack of accessibility. Poor access to justice limits their access to communications

and compounds their isolation and exclusion. Unemployment of persons with visual disabilities is a significant challenge and they remain the poorest of the poor, unable to compete with the labour market. Therefore, disaggregation of data by disability, sex and age is fundamental for understanding the situation of blind and partially sighted persons and informing policies to ensure their effective inclusion and the full realization of their human rights.



While significant progress has been made towards the inclusion of blind and partially sighted persons in the international human rights and development frameworks, concerted advocacy efforts are still needed to ensure that these commitments are translated into an enabling environment that mobilizes stakeholders, enhances participation of organizations of persons with disabilities and strengthen political will and the capacity of governments to implement to 2030 Agenda in line with all the UN International human rights instruments, together with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This requires constant attention to ensure that human rights mechanisms uphold the highest CRPD standards and facilitating interconnections and consistency of these mechanisms with normative development frameworks.



We further celebrate the adoption and ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty that calls upon researchers, publishers, and the academia in line with the intellectual property rights to ensure that persons with visual disabilities receive and access information in accessible formats of braille, large print, audio and electronic formats. We celebrate this achievement, but we call upon states to ratify this instrument and domesticate it into their legal framework to ensure that the obligations spelt under the treaty are met.

However, this is still a big challenge by many states, as this goal has not

been adequately implemented. This poses a barrier to our participation as blind and partially sighted persons on an equal basis with others.

We advocate for the availability of resources to accommodate the different needs for blind and partially sighted persons. We appeal to governments and international agencies to provide consistent statistical data for persons with visual disabilities to provide evidence during planning, budgeting, programming, policy development and implementation.

We further request governments and development partners to promote the full and effective participation of persons with visual disabilities by ensuring that their organizations and their representatives are permanently consulted on contentious issues and rights affecting them during development processes.



Canada accedes to the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

From: [Employment and Social Development Canada](#)

News release

December 3, 2018 **Ottawa, Ontario**

Employment and Social Development Canada

The Government of Canada is working to create a truly accessible Canada. Today, as part of these efforts, the Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, along with the ministers of Justice, Foreign Affairs and Canadian Heritage, announced that, with the support of all provinces and territories, Canada has acceded to the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Accession to the Optional Protocol means that Canadians will have additional recourse to make a complaint to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, if they believe their rights under the Convention have been violated.

Along with the proposed Accessible Canada Act, which was recently adopted by the House of Commons and is now before the Senate, today's announcement shows that the Government of Canada is taking

another step towards creating a barrier-free Canada.



Recently released data from Statistics Canada reinforce the importance of a more inclusive and accessible Canada.

The 2017 Canadian Survey on Disabilities shows that the

prevalence of disabilities among Canadians is greater than many realize, with 22% of Canadians identifying as having a disability. The new data will be used by the federal government to help build a more inclusive society that benefits all people in Canada – especially persons with disabilities – through the realization of a Canada without barriers.

Quick facts

- The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention) is an international human rights instrument that requires State Parties to the Convention to promote, protect and ensure the rights of persons with disabilities. Canada ratified the Convention in 2010.
- The Optional Protocol establishes two procedures. The first is a complaint procedure that allows individuals and groups to take complaints to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the case of an alleged violation of their rights under the Convention. The second is an inquiry procedure that allows the Committee to inquire into allegations of grave or systematic violations of the Convention by a State Party.

- The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a body of independent experts that monitors the implementation of the Convention by States Parties.
- As of November 2018, there are 177 States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with 93 States Parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention.
- Under Bill C-81, approximately \$290 million over six years would serve to further the objectives of the proposed legislation.
- One in five people—22 percent of the Canadian population aged 15 years and over, or about 6.2 million individuals—had one or more disabilities, according to the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disabilities.
- The survey also reports that people with severe disabilities aged 25 to 64 years are more likely to be living in poverty than their counterparts without disabilities (17 percent) or with milder disabilities (23 percent).



4The members of the UN CRPD Committee

Assistive Technology

Donna's Low Tech Tips++

Meet the Talking First Aid Kit

Carl Augusto of the American Foundation for the Blind Blog posted the following about this great product.

I think it's always important to keep safety in mind, so I thought I'd let you know about a new product from Intelligent First Aid, the First Aid "talking" Kit. The Kit includes nine injury-specific packs to help treat common injuries,

including Bleeding, Head & Spine Injury, and Shock. The packs are individually labeled and color-coded, which I love because it would help someone with low vision easily distinguish the packs. The best part, though, is that with the press of a button, the audio component attached to each card provides step-by-step instructions to manage the wound. Situations often become chaotic when a loved one, an acquaintance, or even you, experiences a minor injury.

With this tool, people with low vision can remain calm and have an idea of how to handle things without worrying about reading any print.

Check out the Intelligent First Aid website to purchase the product or get more information:

<http://www.intelligentfirstaid.com/index.php>

The site even allows you to listen to a sample of the audio component of the kit.

To contact Donna, send her an email at info@sterlingcreations.ca



In

the

News

Disability Advocates Criticize Lack of Teeth in New Manitoba Accessibility Regulations++

A new law is now in force for Manitoba businesses, but don't expect a bylaw officer to show up at your door any time soon.

As of Nov 1, businesses and organizations in Manitoba should be following the letter of the law when it comes to providing accessibility for Manitobans with disabilities.



The Customer Service Standard Regulation is the first of five areas to come into force under the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, which passed in December 2013, but at this point, officials are more interested in educating the public than imposing penalties on businesses.

"We would take concerns and educate and support those organizations into complying with legislation. Turning to the stiffer penalties would be more of a last resort for us," said Jay Rodgers, deputy minister for the Department of Families.

'Never a ramp'

That means that it could be a while before Megan Clarke can roll into one of her favourite restaurants in Winnipeg's Exchange District.

When the restaurant first showed up a few years ago, she was excited about trying it out, only to find that a small lip in the sidewalk created a barrier for her wheelchair. Clarke waited outside while her friend went into the restaurant to order and bring the matter to the owner's attention.

"[The owner] said 'We'll get a ramp made,' so for the course of the summer, we went back and there was never a ramp, never a ramp, and then one day

my friend went in to talk to him and his response was, 'Well, we don't have the ramp made yet, but she can have free dessert any time she comes,' and I was like, well, that's the last time I'm going to come to your place," said Clarke.

Under the Customer Service Standard Regulation, any business or organization with one or more employees in Manitoba must provide its goods and services in a barrier-free way.

The regulations cover everything from training staff to the built environment, but don't prescribe specific measures, such as the installation of ramps at doors with raised entryways.



"Our expectation, I think, would be that if the building is physically inaccessible that there might be other ways of offering the service to the customer, whether it means coming out and meeting someone at the front or doing business over the phone. Our point would be that the alternative ways of accessing the service need to be communicated broadly to the public," said Rodgers.

Documentation required

The regulations also require every business with 20 or more employees to document customer service policies and procedures, and either post them publicly or provide them on request, so those living with disabilities understand how the business is working toward eliminating barriers.

However, there are no clear guidelines for enforcing the standards, so businesses will be unlikely to comply, advocates say.

"Without effective enforcement, a law is a voluntary law, and a voluntary law is really not very much of a law at all," said David Lepofsky, a lawyer

and disability rights advocate who was highly influential in the creation of Ontario's accessibility laws.

Legislators in Manitoba looked at the Ontarians with Disabilities Act while creating Manitoba's legislation, but Lepofsky warns poor enforcement means Ontario's law has failed in many areas.



"We revealed through Freedom of Information Act applications and otherwise that [officials] were aware of rampant violations and yet deployed a paltry number of enforcement staff and a paltry number of audits and therefore did a really ineffective job of enforcing [the act]," Lepofsky said.

Slow rollout

Manitoba is considering using its existing bylaw enforcement officers, such as those operating under Workplace Safety and Health, to enforce the act, Rodgers said.

It's a step above what Ontario is doing, Lepofsky said, but he is critical of the lack of a solid plan for enforcement.

"This law was passed half a decade ago in Manitoba and half a decade is more than enough time to plan to get something like this set up," he said. "The Manitoba government has had ample opportunity to contact Ontario, find out what they've learned, get this designed, get it up and running. They shouldn't just be looking at it now."

Complaints and concerns

Bringing businesses into compliance with the act will take time, despite the November 1 deadline, Rodgers said. Complaints and concerns about

business compliance should be directed to the Disabilities Issues Office, he said. It is up to him as director to determine whether a complaint is reasonable or not.

Despite the slow rollout, Clarke remains optimistic about what the act could mean for her. Already she is seeing small changes in her neighbourhood, such as the addition of accessible buttons on an automatic door at her local Starbucks.



"Whether it's coffee or groceries or clothing or getting my hair cut, whatever service I'm going to, I'm going to be able to just go in and live my life. That's what it's all about. It's just access," she said.

By Kim Kaschor, CBC

Guide Dog Users, Inc. Publishes Handbook to Help People Who Are Blind Decide if the Guide Dog Lifestyle is Right for them++

Guide Dog Users, Inc. (GDUI), the largest membership and advocacy organization representing guide dog handlers in the United States, is

pleased to announce the recent publication of a revised handbook for prospective guide dog users which shares comprehensive information about acquiring and using a guide dog for safe and independent travel.

The guide, 90 pages in length, and available in e-book and print formats, "A Handbook for the Prospective Guide Dog Handler," 4th Edition, updates a GDUI publication, called "Making Impressions," which GDUI members wrote and published a quarter of a century ago. The original manual assisted countless guide dog users with applying for training with and adjusting to working with guide dogs. Many of those original readers are now working successfully with a third or fourth or even an eighth, or tenth guide dog. Realizing how well their original publication had served guide dog users all over the country and beyond, GDUI has spent the past several years updating the manual to reflect changes in guide dog training methodologies, growth in the community of guide dog users, changes in the number of schools now available to provide training and dogs, and evolving attitudes among the public concerning acceptance of guide dogs as reliable and respected aids for blind and visually impaired people who choose dogs for independent travel.



The informative handbook answers questions not only for the prospective guide dog team, but also for families of people who are blind, blindness rehabilitation professionals and educators, and the general public. Part One, Section One sets the stage with heartfelt accounts from many guide dog users who can speak with authority about the guide dog lifestyle which pairs humans and canines in a relationship, unlike few others, that involves a 24-hour daily bond between dogs and their owners. Then the handbook covers the whole process of deciding whether a guide dog is the right choice for mobility and safety, choosing and applying to a training program, learning to become a guide dog handler, returning home,

and spending the next several years bonding with a dog who is likely to become an indispensable assistant and treasured companion.



5Kim and her guide dog Tulia

The manual outlines the indispensable support that an organization like GDUI can provide to guide dog users during times when their partnership can pose uniquely stressful challenges, for example, when a guide dog team experiences denial of transit in a taxicab, or exclusion from a restaurant or other public venue, when a

treasured guide dog becomes ill or passes away, or when family or friends don't understand how the team functions safely and independently.

GDUI encourages readers and members to share the handbook with family, friends, colleagues, blindness and disability advocacy organizations, and other guide and service dog handlers. "A Handbook for the Prospective Guide Dog Handler" is available as an e-book and in print from Amazon.com, Smashwords, and other online sellers. Visit this link for further information and to explore options for purchase:

<http://www.dldbbooks.com/GDUIHandbook/>.

I live with Alexa, Google Assistant and Siri. Here's which one you should pick++

Sure, you could choose a smart speaker based on sound or price. The go-to gadget gift of the season is available from Amazon, Apple and Google with better acoustics, new touch screens and deep holiday discounts.

But you're not just buying a talking jukebox. Alexa, Siri and Google Assistant also want to adjust the thermostat, fill your picture frame or even

microwave your popcorn. Each artificial intelligence assistant has its own ways of running a home. You're choosing which tribe is yours.

I call it a tribe because each has a distinct culture — and demands loyalty. This decision will shape how you get information, what appliances you purchase, where you shop and how you protect your privacy. One in 10 Americans plan to buy a smart speaker this year, according to the Consumer Technology



Association. And Amazon says its Echo Dot is the bestselling speaker, ever.

The last time we had to choose a tech tribe like this was when smartphones arrived. Did you go iPhone, Android, or cling to a BlackBerry? A decade later, it's increasingly hard to fathom switching between iPhone and Android. (A recent Match.com survey found iPhone and Android people don't even like dating one another.)



Now imagine how hard it will be to change when you've literally wired stuff into your walls.

In my test lab — I mean, living room — an Amazon Echo, Google Home and Apple HomePod sit side by side, and the voice AIs battle it out to run my home like genies in high-tech bottles. Here's the shorthand I've learned: Alexa is for accessibility. Google Assistant is for brainpower. And Siri is for security.

Amazon's aggressive expansion makes Alexa the one I recommend, and use, the most. Google's Assistant is coming from behind, matching feature by feature — and Siri, the original voice assistant, feels held back by Apple's focus on privacy and its software shortcomings. (Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post, but I review all tech with the same critical eye.)

Smart speakers are building the smart home that you never knew you needed. Inside the audio equipment, they're home hub computers that work alongside smartphone apps to connect and control disparate devices and services. Now with a speaker and the right connected gizmo, you can walk into a room and turn on the lights without touching a button. Or control the TV without a remote. Amazon even sells an Alexa-operated microwave that cooks, tracks and reorders popcorn.

But home assistants can also be Trojan horses for a specific set of devices and services that favour one company over another.

My buddy Matt recently asked me to help him pick speakers and appliances for a big remodel.



He loves the Google Assistant on his Android phone, so selecting his tribe should be easy, right? Hardly: He wanted to put Sonos speakers all around the house, but they take voice commands directly via Alexa. (Sonos says Google Assistant support is coming, though it's been promising that for a year.)



Figuring out which connected doodads are compatible can be like solving a 10,000-piece puzzle. The best smart home gadgets (like Lutron Caseta and Philips Hue lights) work across all three tribes, but sometimes alliances and technical concerns make appliance makers take sides.

Each AI has its limitations. They're not all equally skilled at understanding accents — Southerners are misunderstood more with Google and Midwesterners with Alexa. The price of ownership with some is letting a company surveil what goes on in your house. You can try, like me, to live with more than one, but you're left with a patchwork that won't win you any favours with family.

How do you find your AI tribe? Here's how I differentiate them.

Alexa

Supported smart home devices: Over 20,000.

Who loves it: Families who buy lots through Amazon and experiment with new gizmos.

The good: Alexa knows how to operate the most stuff, thanks to Amazon's superior deal making. The only connected things it can't run in my house

are the app-operated garage door and some facets of my TV. Amazon also has been successful at spawning new connected gadgets: Alexa's voice and microphone are built into more than 100 non-Amazon devices. And Amazon recently announced plans to offer appliance makers a chip that lets Alexa users voice command inexpensive everyday things, from wall plugs to fans.

Alexa has also mastered some of the little details of home life. It will confirm a request to turn off the lights without repeating your command — super helpful when someone nearby is napping.

The bad: Alexa grows smarter by the week, but it can be a stickler about using specific syntax. It

also has the weakest relationship with your phone, the most important piece of technology for most people today. Amazon has bolstered a companion Alexa app for phones, making it better for communicating and setting up smart home routines, but I still find it the most confusing of the lot.



Amazon doesn't always show the highest concern for our privacy. This spring, when Alexa inadvertently recorded a family's private conversations and sent it to a contact, Amazon's response boiled down to 'whoopsie.' And it records and keeps every conversation you have with the AI — including every bag of popcorn it microwaves. (Amazon says it doesn't use our queries to sell us stuff beyond making recommendations based on song and product searches).

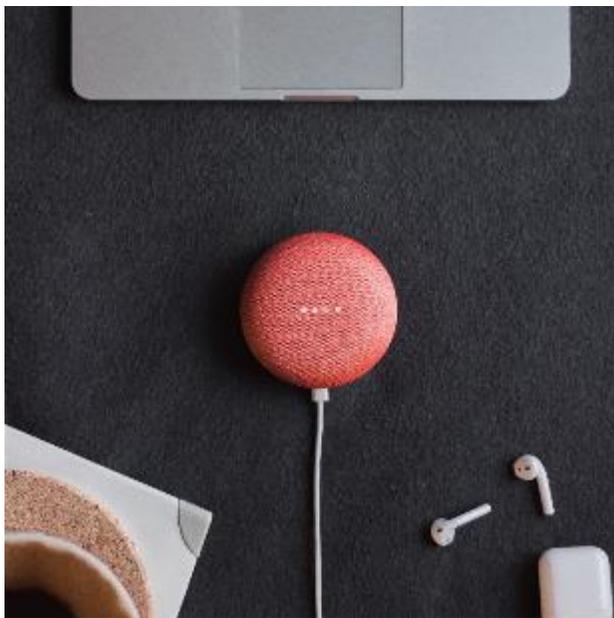
Some love Alexa's ability to order products by voice. But as long as Alexa runs your house, you'll always be stuck buying those goods from Amazon. (That microwave will only ever order popcorn from Amazon.) The coming generation of appliances built with the Alexa chip inside could similarly trap you forever into Amazon-land.

Google Assistant

Supported smart home devices: Over 10,000.

Who loves it: People who are deep into Google's services.

The good: Google Assistant comes the closest to having a conversation with an actual human helper. You don't have to use exact language to make things happen or get useful answers. Its intelligence can also be delightfully personal: It's pretty good at differentiating the voices of family members. And on the new Home Hub device with a screen, Assistant curates a highlights-only show from your Google Photos collection.



While Android phone owners are more likely to use lots of Assistant-friendly Google services, the Assistant doesn't particularly care what kind of phone you use — its simple companion apps work on iOS and Android.

And Google is neck and neck with Alexa on many of the nuances: Night mode reduces the volume of answers at night, and it can even require Junior to say "pretty please."

The bad: As a relative newcomer to the smart home, Google has been catching up fast. But in my house, it still can't fully control my Ring doorbell or send music to my Sonos speakers. And I'm not convinced that Google has Amazon's negotiating sway, or the influence to bring the next generation of connected things online.

The bigger problem is privacy. Google's endgame is always getting you to spend more time with its services, so it can gather more data to target ads at you. Like Alexa, Google Assistant keeps a recording of all your queries — every time you ask it to turn off the lights. Google treats this kind of like your

Web search history, and uses it to target ads elsewhere. (Thankfully, It still keeps data from its Nest thermostat and home security division separate.) The potential upside is that when Google discovers your habits in all that data, it might be able to better automate your home — like what time all the lights should be off.

Siri

Supported smart home devices: Hundreds.

Who loves it: Privacy buffs and all-Apple households.

The good: Apple means business on security and privacy. Any device that wants to connect to HomeKit, its smart home software that works with Siri on the HomePod and iPhone, requires special encryption.

What's more, your data is not attached to a personal profile, which aside from protecting your privacy also means that Apple is not using your home activity to sell or advertise things. (While other smart speakers keep recordings and transcriptions of what you say, Siri controls devices by making a request to its system through a random identifier, which cannot be tied to a specific user.)



And Apple is pretty good at keeping the smart home simple. Setting up a smart home device is mostly just scanning a special code. Even creating routines, in which multiple accessories work in combination with a single command, is easier in the Siri's companion Home app than with competitors.

The bad: You have to live in an all-Apple device world to reap these benefits. Siri's a pretty good DJ, but only if you subscribe to Apple Music. You're stuck with the HomePod as the one-size-fits-all smart speaker, and Siri still isn't as competent as her AI competitors.

And Apple's security-first approach has kept too many appliance makers from joining its ecosystem. Sure, it's quality not quantity, but Siri still can't interact with my Nest thermostat or Ring doorbell, just to name two. Apple did recently loosen up a tad: starting with Belkin Wemo's Mini Smart Plug and Dimmer, it no longer requires special hardware for authentication — that can now happen via software. The move should make it simpler to make new products

Siri compatible, and allow it access to existing ones.

By Geoffrey A. Fowler, The Washington Post



DON'T FORGET DONATIONS!++

Donations Received in the office in 2018 are the only ones that can be receipted for 2018. Remember to send those donations now if you want receipts for the current year.

Membership Madness++

Hi Everyone! Becky from the office here. All chapters should have received their membership packages. The rebate time has passed, but there is still time to get your chapters membership in for 2019!

All 2019 Memberships Due – December 28, 2018

WCW Orders and Insurance Requests Due – January 4, 2019

www.ccbnational.net

ccb@ccbnational.net

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