

Blindness groups, ASU settle suit over Kindle

January 11 2010

(AP) -- Two organizations representing the blind have settled a discrimination lawsuit against Arizona State University over its use of Amazon's Kindle e-reader device.

Arizona State is among several universities testing the \$489 Kindle DX, a large-screen model aimed at textbook and newspaper readers.

Last June, the National Federation of the Blind and the American Council of the Blind joined a blind ASU student in suing Arizona State, alleging that the Kindle's inaccessibility to blind students constituted a violation of federal law.

The blindness organizations and ASU announced the settlement on Monday. It does not involve payment of any damages or attorney's fees. Rather, the groups cited ASU's commitment to providing access to all of its programs for students with disabilities, and noted that the pilot program was already ending this spring.

The university, which denies the pilot program violates any law, agreed that if it does decide to use e-book readers in future classes over the next two years, "it will strive to use devices that are accessible to the blind," according to their joint statement.

Although the Kindle has a read-aloud feature that could help the blind and the visually impaired, turning it on requires navigating through screens of text menus. The federation has said the device should be able to speak the menu choices.

The blindness groups noted that another impetus for the settlement was the fact that Amazon.com Inc. and other companies were already working to improve the accessibility of e-book readers to blind and vision-impaired people.

In December, Amazon said it will add two features to make the Kindle more accessible. The company is working on audible menus, which would let the Kindle speak menu options out loud, and it is creating an extra-large font for people with impaired vision. Both should reach the [Kindle](#) next summer, Amazon said last month.

Amazon was not named in the lawsuit and did not immediately return an [e-mail](#) message Monday for comment.

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Citation: Blindness groups, ASU settle suit over Kindle (2010, January 11) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-01-groups-asu-kindle.html>

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