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MARTÍN J. GÓMEZ
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Via email and first-class mail

Eve L. Hill
On behalf of
The Reading Rights Coalition
1667 K St. NW, Suite 400
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(202) 296-2044
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INACCESSIBILITY OF ADOBE DIGITAL EDITIONS E-BOOKS TO THE VISUALLY AND PRINT IMPAIRED

Dear Ms. Hill:

Thank you for sharing your concerns on behalf of the Reading Rights Coalition regarding the inaccessibility of Adobe Digital Editions e-books to the visually and print impaired.

The Los Angeles Public Library offers e-books from 2 major vendors: NetLibrary & OverDrive. The library has provided NetLibrary e-books since June 2000. Over 9,000 NetLibrary e-books are accessible for viewing online. NetLibrary has assured us that these e-books have the text-to-speech (TTS) option. In July 2008 we added e-books in the Adobe PDF format from OverDrive to our collection. We currently have 773 titles. At the time we purchased the e-books from OverDrive, the Adobe eReader software had the TTS option. The library was unaware that there was an accessibility issue until your phone call.

The library immediately contacted OverDrive to investigate the issue with Adobe Digital Editions. We were informed that Adobe updated their e-book reader software and removed the TTS feature of e-books. Apparently, the Authors Guild opposes this as a built-in feature in every e-book. OverDrive was forced by Adobe to use the updated e-book reader software in March 2009. Please note that this was after we had purchased the collection. OverDrive, who has consistently supported accessibility for their digital products, reported that Adobe claims to be making this a priority. They are applying pressure to Adobe to restore the TTS feature, and are exploring options for developing their own software.



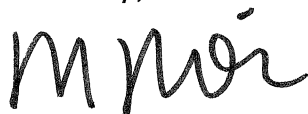
In the meantime, the Los Angeles Public Library has suspended all purchasing of Adobe Digital Editions e-books until the TTS option is restored.

As noted above, the library does provide over 9,000 NetLibrary e-books with the TTS option, as well as over 3,000 downloadable e-audiobooks accessible to the visually & print impaired. In addition, several of the ADE e-book titles are also available from the library in an e-audiobook format, which is accessible to the visually impaired.

The existing 773 Adobe Digital Editions (ADE) e-books from our collection were checked out and downloaded nearly 9,000 times in the past year, and there are over 500 pending holds on them. It would be a hardship to our patrons, as well as a waste of scarce funds during severe budget cutbacks, to pull these from the collection. Additionally, the staff resources to delete each record from the library's Catalog are not available at this time.

The Los Angeles Public Library fully supports the American Library Associations Resolution regarding Purchasing Accessible Electronic Resources, and will make every effort to apply pressure to our vendors by requiring verification of accessibility standards and making it clear that we will not purchase electronic resources that fail to meet accessibility standards.

Sincerely,



Martín J. Gómez
City Librarian

Cc: Daniel Goldstein, Brown Goldstein & Levy
Amy Robertson, Fox & Robertson PC
Betty Wilson, Los Angeles Department on Disability
Giovanna Mannino, Los Angeles Public Library