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Amazon.com and National Federation of the Blind Join Forces to Develop and Promote Web Accessibility

Baltimore, Maryland (March 28, 2007): The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) and Amazon.com announced today that they have agreed to work together to promote and improve technology that enables blind people to access and use the World Wide Web. In a cooperation agreement, Amazon.com pledged its commitment to continue improving the accessibility of its Web site platform, while the NFB committed to contribute its expertise in Web accessibility technologies to help further Amazon.com's efforts.

"Amazon has always looked for ways to provide the most convenient and easy-to-use shopping experience for all our customers, including those who use screen access software," said Patty Smith, director of corporate communications for Amazon.com. "By working directly with the NFB, which has a wealth of accessible technology experience, we'll be able to make more improvements for both our sighted customers and those customers who use screen access software to browse and shop the Internet."

Blind persons access Web sites by using keyboards in conjunction with screen access software, which vocalizes or translates into Braille the visual information displayed on a computer screen by Web browsers and other computer applications. If not designed properly, however, Web sites can present barriers that do not allow the information contained on them to be translated properly for blind users, and emerging Internet technologies are presenting new accessibility challenges.

"The National Federation of the Blind has long been a center of expertise in both developing and implementing access technology to provide the blind with the information and tools we need to integrate successfully into society," said Marc Maurer, President of the National Federation of the Blind. "We have developed technologies like the Kurzweil-National Federation of the Blind Reader and NFB-NEWSLINE[®] that provide the blind with unparalleled

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access to information, and the staff of our International Braille and Technology Center for the Blind has experience in making Web sites and other technologies more accessible to blind computer users. We look forward to working with the developers at Amazon.com, the leader in innovation in online retail, to perfect techniques and technologies that will make the Internet more accessible for users of assistive technology. We are pleased that an industry leader like Amazon.com is committed to full and equal access for the blind on its Web sites and throughout the e-commerce industry. This cooperation agreement demonstrates to the world that the blind are eager to work with leading Internet companies to improve the online experience for everyone, and also that access for the blind goes hand in hand with continued innovation in Internet technology.”

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About the National Federation of the Blind

With more than 50,000 members, the National Federation of the Blind is the largest and most influential membership organization of blind people in the United States. The NFB improves blind people’s lives through advocacy, education, research, technology, and programs encouraging independence and self-confidence. It is the leading force in the blindness field today and the voice of the nation's blind. In January 2004 the NFB opened the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute, the first research and training center in the United States for the blind led by the blind.