Standard announced for braille displays across different operating systems and hardware

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Credit: Microsoft

A new standard for braille displays has come on the scene, and it is backed by the giants in tech.

The standard is a good sign for people who have low vision or are blind,

as it is now to be easier for different operating systems and devices to include braille features.

Microsoft's Jeff Petty noted that we live in a modern world where "customers expect technology to work out of the box, across devices and platforms."

The May 31 announcement read, "USB Implementers Forum (USB-IF), the support organization for the advancement and adoption of USB technology, today announced a USB HID (Human Interface Device) standard for braille displays."

At *Gizmodo*, Jennings Brown wrote about why this matters for the blind. Those who depend on braille devices will not need to worry about different hardware and software.

Joseph Bruno, president and CEO of Helen Keller Services, said it will allow the people to "more seamlessly connect to their favorite devices, which is a major step in helping them connect to the world around them."

The standard, said reports, will enable plug and play support for braille displays. Chaim Gartenberg, *The Verge*, commented that "users will be able to simply use Braille readers as plug-and-play devices across a wide hardware ecosystem, much in the same way that users are able to simply plug in a USB mouse or keyboard."

The USB Implementers Forum [USB-IF), the support organization for the advancement and adoption of USB technology,] issued the announcement. They worked with big names like Microsoft, Apple, and Google to create the standard.

Microsoft's Jeff Petty talked about the tech collaboration. When it

comes to empowering people with disabilities, they recognize the need to work together, across the industry. For Petty, the move to collaborate was not a why but a why-not.

"The World Health Organization estimates that 253 million people have a form of visual impairment. Technology can play an important role in creating opportunities for people who are blind or have low vision, and we have the responsibility to help create a level playing field for everyone. "

When does the standard show its impact? "We anticipate support for the standard starting in 2019," said Petty. Chaim Gartenberg in *The Verge* had this to report: "With the finalized standard, [device](#) manufacturers and operating system providers will have to make new hardware and software updates to [support](#) it, which should start happening as early as next year."

With that many millions people coping with visual impairments, it may come as a surprise to you that this is 2018 and a standard has taken this long to come to life.

If you are surprised, you are not alone. Callum Booth in *The Next Web* commented, "I've got to say, I was shocked this wasn't already a thing. With computers being so central to the way society now operates, the previous lack of a standardized system is shameful."

Nonetheless, said Booth, it was good to see companies taking [accessibility](#) more seriously.

 More information: [www.usb.org/press/USB-IF_HID_p …](#) [ss_release_FINAL.pdf](#)

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