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National Federation of the Blind Files Suit Against Scribd

Burlington, Vermont (July 29, 2014): [The National Federation of the Blind](http://www.nfb.org), the nation's leading advocate for equal access by the blind to technology and electronic information, and Heidi Viens, a blind parent from Colchester, Vermont, have filed suit (case number: 2:14-CV-162) against Scribd, Inc. Scribd offers an Internet-based "personal digital library" that allows sighted subscribers to access a collection of over 40 million titles. For a monthly fee of \$8.99, sighted subscribers gain unlimited access to this large collection through its website and apps, as well as other services, such as publishing their own work by uploading it to the Scribd collection and participating in social media features. The case has been filed in the United States District Court for the District of Vermont and alleges violations of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The website and mobile applications that Scribd uses to provide its subscribers with access to electronic documents are not accessible to blind people. The blind use computers, smartphones, and tablets equipped with special software that allows the contents of websites, mobile applications, and documents to be read aloud or displayed in Braille on a connected Braille device. When websites, mobile applications, or documents are not properly coded, they cannot be accessed with the technology used by the blind.

Mark Riccobono, President of the National Federation of the Blind, said: "Access to electronic information is no longer a mere convenience; it is essential to success, productivity, and equal participation in society. Other technology companies have made electronic documents accessible to blind readers, and Scribd has a moral and legal obligation to do the same."

Ms. Viens said: “I have an active and curious three-year-old daughter, and I want to read to her just like any other parent. I would happily pay for a monthly subscription to Scribd to acquire books to read to my daughter if I could use its service. I hope that Scribd will quickly make its services available to me and to other blind people so that we are all invited into its vast digital library.”

The plaintiffs are represented in this matter by Laurence Paradis, Haben Girma, and Rebecca Rodgers of the firm Disability Rights Advocates; Daniel F. Goldstein and Gregory P. Care of the Baltimore firm Brown, Goldstein and Levy, LLP; and Emily J. Joselson of the Middlebury, Vermont firm Langrock Sperry & Wool, LLP.

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About the National Federation of the Blind

The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back.

National Federation of the Blind