In this Issue

- Who was Bessie Blount?
- Latest News from the Device Loan Program
- Assistive Technology Q&A
- New Column: InfoSphere by Melinda Townsend
- Tech Corner
- Spotlight on TTAP Demonstration Centers
- What’s on “TTAP” for Spring/Summer
- Just for Laughs

Who Was Bessie Blount?

(Photo of Ms. Blount and drawing of her invention) Bessie Blount was an African-American woman who led a life dedicated to helping those in need. She was a physical therapist and an inventor of an apparatus designed to help amputees who suffered permanent injuries in World War II. Bessie Blount has been called a "savior of the handicapped" for her invention that allowed World War II disabled veterans to feed themselves.

The electrical apparatus allowed a tube to deliver one mouthful of food at a time to a patient in a wheelchair or in a bed whenever the patient bit down on the tube. She later invented a portable receptacle support that was a simpler and smaller version of the same, designed to be worn around a patient's neck. The device was patented in 1951. Unfortunately, there was little interest in the United States and Bessie sold her patent to France in the mid-1950s.

Latest News from the Device Loan Program

Now available from the TTAP Loan Program:

- Lifestyle Candy Grip hand held CCTV
- SenseView Duo hand held CCTV
For more information, contact:

John Morris
Assistive Technology Coordinator
(512) 232-0753
jcmorris@austin.utexas.edu

**Assistive Technology Q&A**

Q: Can you use an iPad like a CCTV?

A: Theoretically you could by taking pictures and expanding them on the screen. You’ll need to take a picture of everything you want enlarged, a time consuming task. A new CCTV, E-bot, is due on the market in April. It will provide portable reading, writing, and distance video magnifier with OCR capabilities. It also works with Android tablets. For more information call 888-520-4467. The price is just under $3000.

**InfoSphere**

*By Melinda Townsend*

Welcome to InfoSphere from the Texas Technology Access Program (TTAP). InfoSphere is a new column to the TTAP Newsletter compiled by me, Melinda Townsel. I plan to review technology that is useful to people with disabilities in their homes, at work, and at play. I believe information is power and, therefore, I want each InfoSphere column to encourage, inform, and revitalize our interests, our passions, and efforts to make universal design a daily practice.

I welcome feedback, comments, and recommendation from all of the TTAP community. I welcome your comments and suggestions. Contact me at mtownsel@austincc.edu.

**Barrier Breakers:**

We are inundated with summaries of the best of this and the best of that at the end of every year. We have the list of AbleGamers accessibility award recipients of 2013.

The AbleGamers Foundation seeks to help people with disabilities through video gaming participation. AbleGamers is striving to literally level the playing field for individuals with disabilities by acknowledging those who are using assistive technology to make gaming much more accessible for everyone.

Here is the list of AbleGamers 2013 honorees.
FutureCast:

Microsoft to launch accessibility association in March 2014. Ability Magazine (abilitymagazine.org.uk) and Digital Journal (digitalJournal.com/business) recently reported that Microsoft and the International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP) have started an initiative to convert accessibility efforts IT and other professionals involved in technology for people with disabilities “into a globally recognized and respected profession.” [1]

IAAP was founded by Microsoft along with AbilityNet, Adobe Systems, Ai Squared, Avepoint, AT&T, IBM, Interactive Accessibility, Nomensa, SSB BART Group, and The Paciello Group. It’s mission is to “define, promote and improve the accessibility profession globally through networking, education and certification in order to enable the creation of accessible products, content and services.” [2]

The IAAP is the organization for any accessibility professionals or anyone interested in accessibility, especially as a career option. IAAP membership is available to both individuals and organizations. “Organizational memberships will include large corporations, small to medium sized businesses including accessibility consulting companies, not for profits, government agencies, and institutions of higher education. Membership is scheduled to be open in the first or second quarter of 2014.” [3]

You can sign up for the IAAP e-mail distribution list by sending your name, title, organization name, and e-mail address to: info@accessibilityassociation.org
**Tech Corner:**

**New app for struggling readers and writers:**

**IREADWRITE FOR THE IPAD**

iReadWrite is a support app that helps struggling readers and writers of all ages read and write, especially those with dyslexia, dysgraphia, or other learning difficulties. This app, which runs on an iPad, does not require Wi-Fi or 3G access. iReadWrite offers Text-to-speech, Phonetic Spell Checker, Homophone and Confusable Word Checker, Word Prediction, Dictionary, Picture Dictionary, customizable background, text colors and fonts, and a choice of voices. With the iReadWrite, users can import their documents from anywhere and share them with others via e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, or Messages.

Notes: Available for purchase in the Apple app store.


**New CCTV and OCR:**

**DAVINICI HD & OCR VIDEO MAGNIFIER**

The DaVinci HD & OCR Video Magnifier is a desktop video magnifier (CCTV), text-to-speech (OCR), and a 3-in-1 camera designed for use by individuals with low vision. It has a Sony HD camera, 24" high resolution HD LCD for best image quality, auto focus camera for self-viewing, reading or distance viewing (3-in-1 camera) Text-to-Speech (OCR) – reads aloud with Nuance software. DaVinci’s monitor can also be utilized as a display for computer. Features line Markers and window masking (horizontal positioning only) as well as sizable and position adjustable lines and windows. Also has column marker for text (OCR) placing. Special Features include: Word Highlight in text-to-speech mode, magnification up to 77x, 28 viewing modes to optimize contrast and brightness, and a slide mechanism provides flexibility for various camera arm positions. The LCD screen easily pivots vertically, true mirror image in self-viewing mode, and memory setting for each camera position. **WARRANTY:** 2 years.

Price: $2,995.00.
Electric Fishing Real

(Photo of fisherman in wheelchair, in the water picking up a fish, caption: Don’t tell me what I can’t do!) Power Fish’n Pro is a hybrid electric fishing reel designed for adults and children with upper extremity disabilities. The Power Fish’n Pro features a Shakespeare spinning reel fitted with an electric motor to facilitate the fishing experience. This gives the user the ability to manually hand crank the line in, or retrieve it automatically with the touch of a switch. The electric option allows users to fish longer without reaching fatigue. Operates on 4 AA Batteries. Instant Anti-Reverse Feature, Graphite Body, Smooth Multi-Disc Drag System, 1 Ball Bearing Spooled with 8 lb line. WEIGHT: 29.9 ounces. CAPACITY: 145 yards/8 pounds. GEAR RATIO: 5.2:1.

Price: $250.00.

Manufacturer: Rock Island Equipment Company
United States
Telephone: 309.755-1895.
Web: http://www.powerfishn.com
Email: info@powerfishn.com
Spotlight on Demonstration Centers

Paso Del Norte Children’s Development Center

1101 E. Schuster Ave.
El Paso, Texas 79902
Tel: (915) 544-8484
Fax: (915) 496-0751

http://www.pdnchildrens.org

Mission Statement:

The Paso Del Norte Children’s Development Center is dedicated to helping children with disabilities reach their fullest potential by providing comprehensive therapeutic, educational, and day care services.

Vision Statement:

To provide comprehensive and innovative high quality services for children with special health care needs designed to help children, and their families, in our community achieve their fullest potential.

Description:

We were established in 1948 to help children with disabilities in El Paso. We offer a variety of services to help children with disabilities achieve positive long term outcomes.

History:

The agency was established by a group of volunteers as the El Paso Chapter of the Texas Society for Crippled Children. The name has changed over the years, but the basic mission remains the same. We are located at 1101 E. Schuster with more than 90 full time employees. Last year we served more than 9,000 clients.
What’s on TTAP for Spring/Summer 2014

March 17 -22, 2014  29th Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference (CSUN)  
San Diego, CA  
Contact: CSUN Center on Disabilities  
18111 Nordhoff St.  
BH-110, Center on Disabilities.  
Northridge, CA.  
91330-8340  
Tel: (818) 677-2578  
Fax: (818) 677-4929

June 10-12, 2014  Texas Assistive Technology Network State Conference  
7145 West Tidwell  
Houston, TX 77092  
kbenke@esc4.net

June 26-29, 2014  Hearing Loss Association of America National Convention  
Austin, Texas

July 1-6, 2014  NFB National Convention  
Orlando, FL  
Contact: National Federation of the Blind  
200 East Wells Street at Jernigan Place  
Baltimore, MD 21230  
Tel: (410) 659-9314

July 11-19, 2014  American Council of the Blind Conference and Convention  
Las Vegas, NV  
Contact: 2200 Wilson Boulevard, Ste 650  
Arlington, VA 22201-3354  
Tel: (202) 467-5081, (800) 424-8666  
Fax: (703) 465-5085

Just for Laughs

(picture: “kitten hanging on to desk by his claws and appears to be screaming”)  
Caption: “Chester’s computer brought him many hours of enjoyment until one day he installed Windows 8”
Any suggestions, comments, or article you would like to have included in our newsletter, please contact us:

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(512) 232-0772/srthomas@austin.utexas.edu

Texas Technology Access Program
The University of Texas at Austin
Texas Center for Disability Studies
Commons Learning Center
10100 Burnet Road
Austin, Texas 78758-4445
http://techaccess.edb.utexas.edu

**TTAP Demonstration Centers**

- Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living, Bryan
- Paso Del Norte Children’s Development Center, El Paso
- Ability Connection, Dallas
- Goodwill Industries of Fort Worth
- Easter Seals of Greater Houston
- Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living, Corpus Christi
- RISE Center for Independent Living, Beaumont
- East Texas Center for Independent Living, Tyler
- Goodwill Industries of Central Texas, Austin
- Brazoria County Center for Independent Living, Angleton
- Helping Hands, Amarillo
- Disability in Action, Abilene
- REACH Center for Independent Living, Plano
- Houston Center for Independent Living, Houston
- Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center, Belton
- VAIL – Valley Association for Independent Living, McAllen