

TTAP, The Quarterly Journal of the Texas Technology Access Program  
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To the left: A picture of golden yellows and orange leaves blanketing a clearing in a forested area. Maple trees making a row down the left from close, to further, their branches of bright yellow leaves cascading, arching over and down, creating a glowing walk way.)

In this issue:

What's new? The latest news from the Device Loan Program. In the Art Lime Light. Infosphere. Tech corner. Spotlight on TTAP Demonstration Centers. Did you know? What's on "TTAP" coming up? Feedback from loan program clients. Just for laughs.

What's new?

We met with Austin Uber representatives to discuss accessible technology that could benefit their drivers and riders with disabilities. Uber in Austin is striving to be accessible for their contract drivers as well as their passengers. They even introduced a new App for Austin, Texas, that allows those needing an extra hand, or even access to wheelchair accessible vehicles, to request a safe and reliable ride at the tap of a button with "UberACCESS" from the App. There, a code enables the "ACCESS" ride option. Please note that this may not be available in your area. Next time you are in Austin and need accessible transportation, you may want to try the following: (see flyer information below).

(Flyer reads: Expanding Accessible Transportation Options. In a short period of time, Uber has evolved the way people move throughout Austin and more than 300 other cities around the world. Until recently, transportation options have been limited for those who may require a ramp or a lift for additional assistance. Uber Austin is introducing a new platform that allows those needed an extra hand or even access to wheelchair accessible vehicles to request safe and reliable rides at the tap of a button with UberACCESS. How it works: 1. Open the promotions section in your app. 2 Enter the code UberACCESSATX to enable the ACCESS ride option. 3 Toggle the slider over to ACCESS. 4. Set your location and request a ride. In small print: Drivers are specifically trained to assist riders who require wheelchair accessible vehicles.)

Latest news from the Device Loan Program

We have ordered a lot of new equipment for our centers and our loan program here at UT Austin such as the: Victor Reader Stream (New Generation), a handheld media player for the blind and visually impaired. Plays DAISY books, MP3, MP4, EPUB, and many other media formats. Records voice and media with built-in microphone or line-in. Two built-in, human-sounding voices for a pleasant text-to-speech experience. Built-in wireless networking capability. Weighs less than 4 ounces (110 grams).

(Picture of the Victor Stream device. Rectangular shaped device with rounded corners, buttons similar to a remote control)

## Art Lime Light

2015 NDEAM Poster, "The True Essence of Strength and Freedom" by Astrid Wienken

### Artist's Statement

My name is Astrid Wienken. I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 2003. Two years ago, I collapsed. I was paralyzed; I couldn't walk or move my right arm or hand. An MRI showed various lesions, some as big as tumors. I still experience body and muscle fatigue every day. My right hand and leg are still weak and in pain, and my memory is not as sharp as it was, but the option of giving up didn't exist then and never will. I've always seen myself as a strong and independent woman. Since I could no longer use my right hand, I focused on teaching my left hand to paint. Being able to pursue my artistic passion after all that I went through – and continue to go through – is to me the greatest gift of all. Painting is my therapy, my outlet, my inner savior, and I want to share it with others. With MS, it is a common thing to feel isolated; being able to share my art with others diminishes that feeling. I love horses, as they stand for freedom, power and strength. Being able to express myself through paintings is my savior. I even heard family and friends say that they actually love my left-handed paintings better than anything I had ever done with my right hand. In that statement alone, to me, comes peace and happiness. Always Believe in Yourself, Stand Tall and You Will Prevail.

(Picture of the poster with the painting of a light brown horse running through grass.)

### Description of Poster

At the top of the poster, just above the artist's painting, the text says National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2015 in white lettering on a blue background. Just below is the artist's artwork, a beautiful blonde horse with a white mane blowing in the wind, running and turning to the left as if to leap outside the frame. Behind the horse are deep green trees and sprinkles of yellow wildflowers. Below the artwork is the 2015 NDEAM theme in yellow lettering: "My disability is one part of who I am;" below that is the Artist's Statement next to a headshot photo of the artist, Astrid Wienken.

### Info Sphere

#### Using Accessible APPS for Conference Attendees

My last InfoSphere was about accessible makerspaces with emphasis on adult learning. In this issue, I want to look at how accessible apps could make a difference for conference attendees. I think conference program planners should consider developing an APP's gallery for all conference participants. Below are my four recommendations for free apps.

#### Audioboo:

Audioboo is an application for creating audio messages that conference attendees can then share on the web. It is available for both iPhone and Android cell phones. Conference goers can then share their recorded copies of business meeting minutes, highlights from speaker's sessions, and send conference

messages by posting them to Twitter and Facebook. Audioboo allows users to record, edit and upload their own content wherever they are. Visit <https://audioboom.com/> (picture of the app thumbnail)

#### Be My Eyes:

Be My Eyes allows sighted persons to literally be the eyes for the blind person. A blind user submits a request for help. The sighted user accepts the request and an audio-video connection between the two results. The blind person begins to point her phone at something which the sighted person can see and describe. Be My Eyes requires iOS 7.0 or later and compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. This app is optimized for iPhone 5, iPhone 6, and iPhone 6 Plus. An Android version is currently under development and potential users can sign up at [bemyeyes.org/android](http://www.bemyeyes.org/). Visit <http://www.bemyeyes.org/> (picture of the app thumbnail)

#### SitOrSquat Restroom Finder:

When you have got to go, you have got to go. ...even if you are in a strange city, SitorSquat, offered by the makers of Charmin bathroom tissue, is useful for conference participants needing to find a public restroom. The apps use GPS identification to find the best restrooms to "sit" or "squat." The app also provides some information about accessible restrooms. Visit <https://www.sitorsquat.com/> (picture of the app thumbnail)

#### Tout:

Tout is a microblogging service that allows you to send and view 15-second videos, known as "touts". However, the free account only includes mobile capture, simple stats, full social sharing. Users have the option of connecting through their Twitter or Facebook account. Visit <http://corp.tout.com/> (picture of the app thumbnail)

Below are other examples of Accessible Apps to offer Conference Go-ers!

(Pictures of thumbnails to apps for: Facetime, Verbally, Z One Stop, Caption Call, Evernote, Parking Mobility, Glide, and OtoSense.)

Melinda Townsel is the Accessibility Facilitator for Austin Community College's Library Services. She serves on ACC's College Accessibility Committee (CAC) and is the Project Coordinator for ACC's Project Enable program.

(1) source: <https://www.launch.umd.edu/project/54147e7e09206564a08078ef>

(2) source: <http://hr.nmsu.edu/osm/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2015/02/REVISED-DRAFT-Space-Guidelines-2.9.15.pdf>

#### Tech Corner

We now have in the Tobbi T7 in our loan program! Boasting a handy 7-inch screen and weighing in less than 1.3 lbs, the Tobii Dynavox T7 is the ultimate ultra-portable, ultra-light speech-generating device.

Along with its all-powerful thundering speakers, the T7 allows users to go and be heard, anywhere, anytime.

Go to our website to check out this device and see all the other technology we have in our loan program, too! The website link is:

<http://techaccess.edb.utexas.edu/products.php?scid=27>

(Two photos of two angles of the Tobbi T7)

Spotlight on TTAP Demonstration Centers:

Easter Seals Greater Houston

Easter Seals Greater Houston offers the following assistive technology resources and programs: Assistive Technology Mobile Devices Lab, Assistive Technology Evaluations, BridgingApps and ToyTech.

The lab includes a variety of touch-based mobile devices and works in conjunction with Easter Seals' existing assistive technology lab (a project of the Texas Project Access) and Easter Seals BridgingApps Project, which provides a bridge between technology and its users with a focus on disabilities.

Technology can help individuals with disabilities get connected. Come try out computers with modified devices and specialized software at our AT&T Assistive Technology lab. The lab is open to the public Monday-Thursday from 8:30am-4:30pm. To use the Lab, please schedule an appointment in advance.

Lab Locations:

Houston Lab (Bellaire)

Wednesdays, 9am-3pm

4500 Bissonnet, Suite 340 | Bellaire, TX 77401

Contact: Cristen Reat, [creat@eastersealshouston.org](mailto:creat@eastersealshouston.org) / 713.838.3050, ext. 383

The Woodlands Lab

Thursdays, 10am-3pm

1600 Lake Front Circle, Suite 231 | The Woodlands, TX 77380

Contact: Andi Fry, [afry@eastersealshouston.org](mailto:afry@eastersealshouston.org) / 281.705.9850

Did you know?

Social Security Disability Benefits in Texas

According to *Gerontologist*, up to 90 percent of older adults living with a disability in a retirement/eldercare/elderly community use some form of assistive technology. If you are disabled, there may be resources available. The Social Security Administration (SSA) offers monthly benefits for people of all ages with serious disabilities.

What types of benefits are available?

The SSA offers two forms of disability benefits: Social Security Disability Insurance (more at link: <http://www.ssa.gov/planners/disability/> ) (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (more at link: <http://www.ssa.gov/ssi/> ) (SSI). Both programs require that you be disabled for at least 12 months.

To qualify for SSDI, you must have worked throughout your life. The SSA will evaluate your job history based on a metric called Work Credits. (More at link: <http://www.disabilitybenefitscenter.org/glossary/social-security-disability-work-credit> ).

To qualify for SSI, you do not need to have worked, but you must have little income or assets. An SSI applicant cannot own more than \$2,000 in cash, stocks, bonds, or life insurance.

#### Health insurance and Social Security benefits

If an applicant qualifies for SSDI benefits, he or she will automatically be enrolled in Medicare after 24 months.

SSI applicants are not eligible for Medicare, but they can receive Medicaid. Medicaid is a state-run program. In Texas, anyone approved for SSI benefits will also automatically be approved for Medicaid.

Some assistive technologies that Medicare or Medicaid may cover are prosthetic devices, canes, crutches, walkers, and both powered and manual wheelchairs.

#### Additional assistive technology from the SSA

In addition to offering assistive technology coverage through health insurance, the SSA has two programs that allow recipients to pay for assistive technology.

The first program is called "Ticket to Work" (more at link: <http://www.ssa.gov/work/>). It allows SSDI or SSI recipients to work for at least 9 months without fear of losing their health insurance or Social Security benefits. The Ticket to Work program can be used to obtain vocational rehabilitation services or assistive technologies that make working easier for people with disabilities. These assistive technologies include computer software for the deaf, vans and other vehicles for transportation, wheelchairs, one-handed typewriters, and more.

The second program is called the Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS) (more at link: <https://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/pass.htm> ) and is only available for SSI recipients. PASS allows people on SSI to set aside any income outside of SSI payments for items that would help them perform work. The SSA will not pay for any assistive technologies an SSI recipient may wish to purchase, but saving money under the PASS program will not disqualify beneficiaries from SSI.

#### How to apply for benefits

Anyone who qualifies for SSDI benefits can complete the entire application online (more at link: <http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityssi/> ). SSI applications can be started online, but must be finished in-person at a local SSA office (more at link: <http://www.disabilitybenefitscenter.org/state-social-security-disability/texas> ). Texas currently has more than 70 SSA offices. Some of the main locations include:

Austin: 1029 Camino La Costa, Austin, TX 78752

Dallas: 10824 N. Central Pkwy, Dallas, TX 75231

El Paso: 11111 Gateway West, El Paso, TX 79935

Houston: 8989 Lakes At 610 Dr., Houston, TX 77054

San Antonio: 8020 Alamo Downs Pkwy, San Antonio, TX

What's coming up with TTAP?

Time is flying! Are you ready for ATIA 2016?! ATIA 2016 Orlando, exhibit dates are February 2<sup>nd</sup> through February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

The ATIA conference is the largest international conference showcasing the best in assistive technology tools and services. Attendees gather from across the world to hear from the biggest names in AT about the latest trends and methods, as well as view state-of-the-art AT tools and services in the ATIA Exhibit Hall. They also network with and learn from fellow professionals and peers.

Feedback from Clients, from Satisfaction Surveys for Loan Program:

"I was so excited to find this program. Communication is a challenge for our son. Hopefully, we will find the right approach and tools to get him closer to AAC, and more advanced methods in the future. I can't wait to get started!! Thank you so much!!!

"I learned that my son does understand and is able to make choices" (Gave us a Highly Satisfied)

"Good success – the patient highly motivated to use the technology"

"With the bed shaker, I was actually able to wake up on time for work. I really hope to be able to purchase one soon."

"Once again, I can't explain how wonderful it is to have a contact like yourself. You make the process so easy, thanks!"

Just for Laughs:

A color cartoon drawing of an old rotary home telephone (red color) and two cellphones drawn with arms and legs, walking into the room with the caption of the cell phones saying "Grandma" with arms open in the air to the large old rotary phone.