Coming Soon to the TTAP Lending Library: LiftVest

The LiftVest enables caregivers to provide wheelchair users with safer, more comfortable transfers with dignity. From the car ... to the bed... to the toilet ... to a chair, or when a family wants to take their loved one for lunch at a restaurant. LiftVest makes transfer assistance easier, faster, and safer for caregivers and family members.

How can the LiftVest help the caregiver and family member?

- Makes wheelchair transfers easier, faster, and safer
- Prevents back injuries as the vest spreads the center of gravity to the entire torso area
- Allows caregivers to find the best position for lifting - from any angle!
- Facilitates quick, effortless positioning (and re-positioning)
- Secure walking aid
- Essential for emergency evacuations
- Won't slip like a gait belt

News from the Loan Program, by John Morris

Great news! The TTAP Loan Program has added a variety of new AT devices to the inventory:

- MacBook Pro Notebook
- Dictate for Mac
- Quillsoft w/Word Q
- Reading Pen
- UbiDuo
- New Comtex
- Intellikeys
- WinZoom
- iCommunicator
Check out our new updated Web site for a complete list of AT available for loan.

For further information:
jcmorris1@mail.utexas.edu

Assistive Technology Q&A, by Darlene West

Q: Does Microsoft plan to put out a new version of MS Office in the near future?

A: Yes. It's available in Beta version now: MS Office Professional 2010. I haven’t heard a lot about the access features, but TTAP will keep you posted.

Spotlight on TTAP Demonstration Centers:

This quarter, the TTAP spotlight shines on the REACH of Plano Resource Center for Independent Living

720 E. Park Blvd., Suite 104
Plano, TX 75074-8844
(972) 398-1111
(972) 398-9649 FAX
e-mail: reachplano@reachcils.org

Services:

- Information and Referral
- Peer Counseling
- Individual and Systems Advocacy
- Independent Living Skills Training in Office and Online
- Computer Lab
- ADA Training & Technical Assistance
- Nursing Home to Community Living Relocation Assistance
- Peer Support Group Meetings

REACH Centers are located in:

Dallas
(214) 630-4796

Fort Worth
(817) 870-9082

Denton
(940) 383-1062

Plano
(972) 398-1111
Tech Corner:

The Adapted Digital Camera is a switch-adapted camera designed for use by individuals with upper extremity or severe physical disabilities. This kid-friendly camera is mounted on a power-drive platform that can tilt up/down and pan left/right to frame a picture before activating the switch for shooting. Prices range from $300 - $600 including camera. http://www.enablingdevices.com

BrainGate2 turning brain waves into action

The BrainGate2 is a device in a growing field called brain computer interface. Currently in a human clinical trial at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, the ultimate goal of this system is to help people with spinal cord injury, stroke, muscular dystrophy, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), limb loss or other conditions to restore their mobility and independence. BrainGate2 is an investigational technology being developed to detect brain signals and to use those signals to control assistive devices.

The system consists of a “sensor” (a device implanted in the brain that records signals directly related to imagined limb movement), a “decoder” (a set of computers and embedded software that turns the brain signals into a useful command for an external device) and an external device—which could be a standard computer desktop or other communication device, a powered wheelchair or a prosthetic or robotic limb. Together the system works miracles. For example, the user has a thought to move a cursor on a computer. The brain emits a signal which is captured by the implanted sensor. The sensor sends the signal to the decoder which translates it into a command for the computer to move the cursor. Preliminary results have demonstrated participants’ ability to use this investigational system to operate computer software, control robotic limbs and drive a wheelchair. For additional information about BrainGate2, including ongoing trial recruitment, visit www.braingate2.org. Inquires related to the research can be directed to clinicaltrials@braingate2.org.

This is only a taste of the exciting new technologies changing the way we live and interact with our environment. Not all technologies are appropriate for every condition. If you are considering the use of a device, we strongly recommend meeting with a trained medical professional to see if the device is appropriate for your situation. To learn more about these technologies, please visit www.NeurotechNetwork.org and go to the Education section.

Retinal Prosthesis provides artificial vision

Based in Sylmar, California, Second Sight is conducting clinical trials with participants who are blind to determine the feasibility of the revolutionary Argus II Retinal Stimulation System to provide artificial vision. The system consists of a tiny
camera and transmitter mounted in eyeglasses, an implanted receiver and an electrode-studded array that is implanted into the participant’s eye, along with a wireless microprocessor and battery pack worn on the belt. The participant wears glasses with the camera, which captures an image and sends the information to the video processor. This image is converted to an electronic signal that is sent to the transmitter on the glasses. The implanted receiver wirelessly receives this data and sends the signals through a tiny cable to the electrode array, stimulating it to emit electrical pulses. The pulses stimulate responses in the retina that travel through the optic nerve to the brain, which perceives patterns of light and dark spots. Participants learn to interpret the visual patterns produced into meaningful images.

To learn more about the system, visit www.2-sight.com. For clinical trial information, visit www.clinicaltrials.gov, key search word Argus II.

**What’s on TTAP for Spring**

**March 22-27**  
International Conference on Assistive Technology and Persons with Disabilities  
San Diego, CA (818) 677-1200  
Sponsor: California State University at Northridge (CSUN)  
www.csunconference.org

**June 15-18**  
Save the Date!  
Texas Assistive Technology Network Conference  
San Antonio  
www.texasat.net

**August 27-29**  
Abilities Expo  
Reliant Park Expo Center  
Houston, TX  

**Just for Laughs - Cartoon**

Boss talking to employee who is sitting in front of his computer: “you should check your emails more often. I fired you three months ago!”

Texas Technology Access Program  
Texas Center for Disability Studies  
The University of Texas at Austin, L4000  
10100 Burnet Road  
Austin, Texas 78758-4445  
techaccess.edb.utexas.edu
TTAP values your input. If you have any suggestions, comments, or would like to have an article included in the newsletter, please contact:

(512) 232-0751/rogerlevy@mail.utexas.edu
(512) 232-0753/jcmorris1@mail.utexas.edu
(512) 232-0750/DWEST@mail.utexas.edu