DakotaLink

Summer News 2024

Technology Solutions for Life's Limitations

Greetings!

Welcome to the Summer Edition of the Assistive Technology Newsletter!

As the warm days of summer bring us into a new season, we are excited to share the latest innovations, resources, and stories in the world of assistive technology (AT). This quarter, we have seen remarkable advancements and inspiring stories that highlight the positive impact of AT on people's lives. Read on for the latest updates, product highlights, community stories, and upcoming events in the field.

Spotlight on Innovation

Smart Home Integration for Accessibility

Smart home technology continues to evolve, and this summer, we've seen significant strides in making smart home devices more accessible for individuals with disabilities. New updates to popular platforms like Amazon Alexa and Google Home now include enhanced voice commands and compatibility with a wider range of assistive devices. These updates enable greater independence and ease of use for individuals with mobility and sensory impairments.

Wearable Technology Enhancements

Wearable technology is becoming more sophisticated and inclusive. The latest generation of smart glasses and watches offer features such as real-time captioning for the deaf and hard of hearing, navigation assistance for individuals with visual impairments, and health monitoring tools for those with chronic conditions. These wearables not only provide functional support but also help users stay connected and informed.

Product Highlights

The Read&Write Toolbar: This popular literacy software has introduced new features designed to support students with learning disabilities. The updated toolbar includes text prediction, speech-to-text capabilities, and a simplified user interface to enhance the learning experience.

The JAWS Screen Reader: JAWS has released an update that improves compatibility with the latest web technologies and offers more customization options for users. These enhancements make it easier for individuals with visual impairments to navigate the digital world efficiently.

Community Stories

Empowering Students with AT

This summer, we highlight the story of a high school student with dyslexia, who has excelled academically with the help of assistive technology. Using text-to-speech software and digital note-taking tools, she has improved her reading comprehension and writing skills, paving the way for her to achieve her goal of attending college.

AT in the Workplace

John Doe is a software developer who is visually impaired. With the aid of screen readers and magnification software, John has not only succeeded in his career but also advocates for greater accessibility in the tech industry. His efforts have led to more inclusive practices within his company, benefiting many employees with disabilities.

Upcoming Events

Closing the Gap: A few of us will be heading up to Minneapolis for the annual Closing the Gap conference in October, where the latest products

and innovations will be showcased. This is a great opportunity to network with industry professionals, attend informative workshops, and explore the future of AT. https://www.closingthegap.com/conference/

Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind (AER): Also in October is the annual AER conference in Aberdeen, SD. This conference aims to serve and empower professionals to deliver standards-based practices that lead to improved educational and rehabilitative outcomes for individuals with visual impairment and blindness. https://sdsbvi.org/

Resources and Support

AT Funding: We also want to remind everyone of our low-interest loan program. The loans are designed to fit your budget and we will work with you to create affordable payback payments. We will also help you fill out the application if you have any concerns with that process. The application is on our website, but here is the direct link: https://www.dakotalink.net/dakotalink-at-fund/

Community Forums: Connect with other AT users and professionals through our online forums. Share your experiences, ask questions, and find support from a community that understands the unique challenges and opportunities of living with a disability. We continue our efforts in social networking getting a great deal of traffic on Facebook and share posts with ATAP, AT3, ILC, DHS, and DSS. More resource information on our website: https://www.dakotalink.net/at-partners/

Closing Thoughts

As we move through the summer, we remain committed to advancing the field of assistive technology and supporting the diverse needs of our community. We hope this newsletter provides valuable insights and inspiration. Thank you for being a part of our journey towards greater accessibility and inclusion.

DakotaLink strives to maintain its professionalism by earning a RESNA ATP certification. (ATP – Assistive Technology Professional). We currently have 3 staff with their ATP certification and will continue to help the newer employees gain that status. To maintain these credentials, we must complete a specific amount of CEU's (Continuing Education Credits) on a biennial basis. We have been doing that mostly through webinars that ATAP provides through an agreement with ATIA.

Remember, we are on Facebook! So, be sure to "like" us to see what we are up to daily:

https://www.facebook.com/DakotaLinkAT/

Stay cool and stay connected!

Best,

Page K Hudson

DakotaLink

Program Manager

phudson@dakotalink.net

605-977-1779

DakotaLink

1161 Deadwood Ave, Suite #5

Rapid City, South Dakota 57702

Phone: 605-394-6742

Toll Free: 1-800-645-0673

Fax: 605-394-6744

Email: atinfo@dakotalink.net

Web: www.dakotalink.net

DakotaLink is the South Dakota Assistive Technology Program

Our mission is to assist individuals with functional limitations; due to a disability, illness, injury, or the effects of aging; maximize their potential whether at home or in the community, at school, at work, or at play through the use of Assistive Technology.

An assistive technology device is any equipment or tool that helps individuals overcome limitations in daily activities.

Assistive technology services assist individuals to acquire, use, modify or maintain an assistive technology device.