DakotaLink

Fall News 2024

Technology Solutions for Life's Limitations

Greetings!

Welcome to the Fall Edition of the Assistive Technology Newsletter!

As the crisp air and colorful leaves of fall arrive, we're excited to bring you the latest advancements, resources, and stories in the world of assistive technology (AT). This season, we're highlighting remarkable developments and inspiring stories that show the power of AT to support independence and enrich lives. Read on for updates, product highlights, community stories, and details about upcoming events in the field.

Spotlight on Innovation

Smart Home Integration for Accessibility

Smart home technology continues to evolve, and this Fall, we've seen exciting strides in making devices even more accessible for individuals with disabilities. Recent updates to platforms like Amazon Alexa and Google Home offer enhanced voice commands and compatibility with a broader range of assistive devices. These changes bring greater independence and convenience to individuals with mobility and sensory impairments, supporting a smoother transition into colder months.

Wearable Technology Advancements

Wearable technology is more inclusive and capable than ever. The latest generation of smart glasses and watches includes real-time captioning for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, navigation assistance for those with visual impairments, and health-monitoring tools for managing chronic conditions. These wearables offer valuable support while keeping users connected and engaged, which can be especially helpful as routines shift in Fall.

Product Highlights

The Read&Write Toolbar

This essential literacy software has rolled out new features to support students with learning disabilities. The updated toolbar now includes enhanced text prediction, speech-to-text capabilities, and a simplified interface that aims to make learning more accessible and engaging, just in time for the school year.

JAWS Screen Reader

JAWS has released an update with improved compatibility with the latest web technologies and added customization options. These enhancements help individuals with visual impairments navigate the digital world more efficiently, ensuring that online accessibility keeps pace with user needs.

Community Stories

Empowering Students with AT

This Fall, we're inspired by the story of a high school student with dyslexia who has excelled academically with the help of assistive technology. Through text-to-speech software and digital note-taking tools, she has significantly improved her reading comprehension and writing skills, bringing her closer to her dream of attending college.

AT in the Workplace

A software developer with visual impairments, continues to break new ground. Using screen readers and magnification software, he's not only

excelled in his career but has become an advocate for greater accessibility in the tech industry. His efforts are paving the way for more inclusive practices at his company, positively impacting employees with disabilities.

Upcoming Events

Closing the Gap

Join us in October in Minneapolis for the annual Closing the Gap conference, where the latest AT products and innovations will be showcased. This conference is a fantastic opportunity to network with industry professionals, attend workshops, and explore the future of assistive technology. https://www.closingthegap.com/conference/

Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind (AER)

Also in October, the AER conference in Aberdeen, SD, aims to empower professionals working with individuals with visual impairments and blindness. This event offers resources, education, and networking opportunities for those dedicated to improving rehabilitative outcomes.

https://www.facebook.com/DakotasAER

Resources and Support

AT Funding

Don't forget about our low-interest loan program! The program is designed to fit your budget, and we'll work with you to create affordable payment options. If you have any concerns with the application process, we're here to help. Apply Now: https://www.dakotalink.net/dakotalink-at-fund/

Community Forums

Connect with other AT users and professionals through our online forums. Share experiences, ask questions, and find support from a community that understands the unique challenges and opportunities of living with a disability. We're continuing to grow our online presence and sharing resources through Facebook, ATAP, AT3, ILC, DHS, and DSS. https://www.dakotalink.net/at-partners/

Closing Thoughts

As we embrace the beauty of Fall, we remain dedicated to advancing the field of assistive technology and supporting the needs of our community. We hope this newsletter provides you with valuable insights and inspiration. Thank you for being part of our journey toward greater accessibility and inclusion.

DakotaLink strives to maintain its professionalism through RESNA ATP certification.

We currently have three certified staff members, and we continue to support our team in obtaining this credential. To keep our skills current, we complete CEUs (Continuing Education Credits) biannually, often through webinars provided by ATAP in partnership with ATIA.

Remember to follow us on Facebook for daily updates and insights on our work: https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=dakotalink

Stay cozy and stay connected! https://www.dakotalink.net/

Best,

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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.