



# DIRECTIONS

*Technology in Special Education*

Vol. 3, No. 9

April 1997

## Software for Special Ed Teachers

### DEVELOPING INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS

By Janet Hosmer

All teachers who have children with special needs as their students know what an Individualized Education Plan/Program (IEP) is, or those of you who don't, here is a brief description.

An IEP is a written statement of the educational program that is designed to meet a child's unique needs. Two purposes of the IEP are:

- \*to establish learning goals for the child; and
- \*to state the services that the school district will provide.

The law requires that every child receiving special education services have an IEP (Section 300.342). The IEP must include statements about:

- \*The child's current levels of educational performance. This may include information concerning his or her: academic achievement, social adaptation, prevocational and vocational skills, sensory and motor skills, self-help skills, and speech and language skills;
- \*The specific special education and related services to be provided and the extent to which the child will be able to participate in regular educational programs
- \*Annual goals, including short-term instructional objectives (individual steps which make up the annual goals);
- \*When services are expected to begin and how long they are expected to last;
- \*How the school district will determine (at least on an annual basis) whether the short-term instructional objectives are being achieved. (Section 300.346)

Developing a student's IEP is not a trivial task. It is time consuming, and

*Please see IEPs on Page 6*



## SPRING BREAK

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My Dear Friends,

4/97

In past issues of *DIRECTIONS*, we have tried very hard to provide you with information about useful software in the Special Education classroom and home environment. This month, however, we are taking a look at software that can benefit students by assisting their Special Education teachers in the development of the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

When you mention IEPs to some teachers their eyes glaze over and they start muttering some unintelligible words under their breath. Although the IEP is critical to the effectiveness of a child's educational program, (and is required by law), developing one, and maintaining it so that it accurately reflects a student's progress and goals is quite a task! Luckily, technology again has come to the rescue! Two IEP preparation packages, one from K-12 MicroMedia Publishing and the other from Analysis & Simulation, Inc. are featured. This month, we also feature Edmark's KidDesk, a security and menuing program that is a must for any computer that has kids accessing it.

"Systems change" is the focus of this month's ATFSCP article. We all know that advocacy and change in some form needs to occur in order to be able to exploit technology to its fullest potential. You'll find some great ideas in Steve Mendelsohn's piece.

Be sure to take a look at page 3 for information on the software and hardware that Technology for Language and Learning has available! And, Disability Resources has just released an extensive resource guide designed to help librarians, educators, parents and other service providers identify publications and audiovisual materials that will help them understand, plan and implement inclusive programs!

All in all, I think there's quite a bit of information to be found this month in *DIRECTIONS*. Enjoy!

Kind Regards,

Janet

# DIRECTIONS

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Vendors - We welcome product news. Please include pricing and contact name with press releases.

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# New Public Domain Programs from TLL

Technology for Language and Learning announces the availability of its new collection of Educational Public Domain/Shareware for the Macintosh computer.

The *MacPac I* contains seven disks of over 70 programs which add fun, learning and function to a Macintosh computer. All programs require System 7 or higher on LC computers and better.

Some of the main categories of programs are: *Early Learning* (errorless, exploratory play, cause/effect, mouse training); *Education* (letters, numbers, shapes, colors, math, science, reading, language); *Games* (action games, word games, concentration, hangman); *Utilities* (Speech & sound utilities, icons and

icon maker, CNSay, Window Shade); *Extensions* (Bigfoot, Eyeballs, Randomizer, Screen Saver, Copy program); *Control Panels* (menu-bardock, virus detection, compression); *Fonts*; *Sounds*; and *Graphics*.

*Special Features:* Oscar The Grouch will sing "I Love Trash" every time you empty the trash; all programs that work with the mouse will work with the Touch Window; games can easily be adapted to work with single switch for cooperative play.

The entire package is available for \$75.00 plus \$4.50 postage and handling from Technology for Language and Learning, P.O. Box 327, East Rockaway, NY 11518, (516) 625-4550, Fax (516) 621-3321,

or send E-Mail to: ForTLL@aol.com.

Technology for Language and Learning conducts workshops and in-service training programs. TLL also offers a consultation service to professionals and parents seeking detailed information on technology use with children and adults with disabilities.

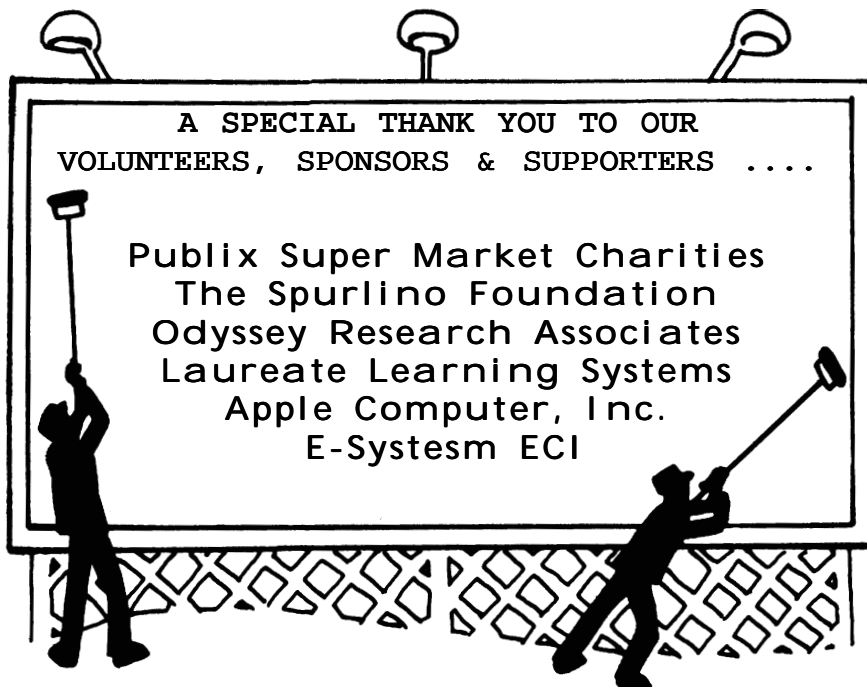
## Hardware and Software Sale

Does your school or agency still use an Apple IIe/IIGS? Do you still have an IBM/compatible computer with a 5.25" disk drive? Could you use a Covox, a Muppets Learning Keys or an Echo Speech Synthesizer? Would you like to find more software at minimal cost?

Technology for Language and Learning, a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the use of technology with children and adults with Special Needs, has a large supply of computer hardware and commercial children's software (Apple IIe 5.25" disks, IIGS 3.5" disks, and DOS 5.25" disks) that it is interested in selling at minimal cost.

In addition, as of January 1, 1997, TLL will no longer sell Apple II public domain software. As of that date, it will be selling its inventory of Apple IIe and IIGS public domain disks at greatly reduced prices.

Send a stamped self-addressed envelope to TLL, P.O. Box 327, East Rockaway, NY 11518 for list of items and prices, call 516-625-4550, or e-mail to: ForTLL@aol.com. Everything will be sold on a first come, first serve basis. §



# ATFSCP Notes

## The Assistive Technology Funding and Systems Change Project

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### New Strategies for System Change

By Steve Mendelsohn, Esq., September 1996

“Systems change” is a term of art in the advocacy arena. While the words have definitive meaning, the meaning and importance often changes according to the situation in which the term is being used. Technology represents perhaps the most important key to “systems change”, and to the full integration of people with disabilities into society in the future. However, monumental levels of systems change remain to be accomplished.

Each individual advocate must determine where change needs to occur and how that change can be accomplished. The individual needs to find his or her own answer to this question, based on an assessment of personal skills, opportunities, and the situation confronting them. However, an individual’s potential to make a contribution is great - whether at the national, state, or local level - to change laws and attitudes. This paper suggests some approaches that may be useful based on an analysis of some approaches that successful systems change advocates have adopted in the struggle for technology access and civil rights over the past two decades.

#### Attitudinal Change

Attitudinal change is regarded as key to the status of people with disabilities. It includes not only the attitudes upon which others in society act, but also includes the attitudes that people with disabilities hold. Profound attitudinal change is thought to have occurred over the past 25 years. This change can be witnessed in many ways: (1) the

rise of the disability rights movement; (2) the enactment of major civil rights laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); (3) greater consciousness of disability and people with disabilities in the planning and activities of many institutions; and, (4) greater visibility of people with disabilities in many sectors of society.

What have these changes meant in terms of quality of life? How have these changes improved access to education and employment, economic and social equality? High levels of unemployment among people with disabilities still exist. The income of persons with disabilities still lags behind the incomes of their non-disabled peers. The media still stereotypes persons with disabilities. A backlash against the gains made by persons with disabilities is evidenced in Congressional attempts to roll back rights and services through the ADA and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. All of this suggests that attitudinal changes may not have brought the structural changes that many had hoped for.

#### Technology as the Vehicle for Change

Technology may be the way to create positive attitudinal change - creating economic and social progress in today’s environment. Technology is the one of the most important instruments for meeting the goal of equal access. Technology’s role in reducing environmental barriers has had a profound influence in the integration of persons with disabilities in society.

However, some barriers still remain. An historical illustration, drawn from the integration of African-Americans into Major League baseball, may help to clarify why this is so. Many people who supported integration did so based on considerations of equity and justice. However, the more powerful engine of change appears to have been the desire of fans, players, and team executives to have the largest pool of talent available, and to see competition between the best players in the sport. Using the largest possible pool of talented players, the National League dominated the all-star game over the American League in the years following Jackie Robinson’s (the first African-American who played in the Major Leagues) emergence on the scene. Because the American League was slow to accept African-American players, that League operated at a significant competitive disadvantage through - out the 1950’s.

Attitudes count for less as performance proves capacity and excellence. Access to technology will give people with disabilities the opportunity to perform on the larger playing field of society. Their performance will help to change negative attitudes and stereotypes.

#### Technology in Education

The increasing emphasis placed on the use of technology in the education of children illustrates how attitudes can be changed through technology. The crucial role of technology in today’s educational environment comes from the belief that technology will be the

key to economic success for America's youth in the global economy of the 21st century. Major efforts are now underway to ensure that technology is available to the majority of schools and students in our country. However, this opportunity should be as accessible to students with disabilities as it is to students without disabilities.

At a time when various physical or sensory skills (e.g., mobility, vision) were required to perform most job tasks, neither technology nor attitude could be relied upon to open doors to people with disabilities. Even when attitudes about persons with disabilities were positive, this was sometimes not enough. Access to technology can level the playing field when other skills (e.g., analytical, intellectual, or "value-added") decide the value of an individual seeking a job. Many practical distinctions between people with and without disabilities no longer exist.

Many barriers and uncertainties remain to be overcome before that day is reached when individuals with disabilities enjoy total equality. However, the opportunities are greater today than they were in the past.

### **What Needs to be Changed?**

If "systems" change efforts are required to bring about access to technology, in what efforts should we be engaged? What would be the outcome of our efforts? First, the entire range of technologies used in society must be accessible to and usable by all persons - with or without disabilities. Second, the cost of achieving this accessibility must be met in a way that broadens the payment base. This means that many people (e.g., personal computer customers) pay for the accessibility in

the cost of the product (e.g., a personal computer). In this way, individuals with disabilities have access to the products because the cost of accessibility is borne by many people.

People with disabilities generally do not have the money needed to give them access to assistive technology. However, their ideas about product design are needed so that the range of technologies can be fully and effectively used to address the needs of all individuals. This will lower the costs of access, including specialized software and adaptive peripherals by spreading the cost to all users.

There is no great promise in using programs for people with disabilities to meet these costs, since it is not necessarily to people with disabilities that the required resources must be directed. Nor is there any value in placing the burden on selected corporations or institutions. This would create resentment and distort the complex competitive, resource allocation and other balances that define much of our economy.

### **Are There Examples for the Types of System Change Required?**

Arguably, tremendous progress has been made in increasing the accessibility of the physical or built environment to people who use wheelchairs. Therefore, it is worth studying how this has happened, who has paid for the progress, and what lessons can be learned.

Laws have obviously played a major role in causing this progress. However, it may be difficult to decide if these laws cause change, or are the result of other changes, or both. To the extent that landmark legislation results from some combination of forces, what lessons for advocacy can be learned from looking at the factors that brought these laws about?

One can read the law and the congressional committee reports, testimony, debates, and related legislative history of laws going back to the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 - without coming to definite conclusions on these points. The Architectural Barriers Act required compliance with accessibility guidelines in the construction and renovations of buildings and facilities for which federal funds were used.

The documents give the various reasons why supporters thought these laws were desirable. However, there is no clear reason that, among all the good things that might have been done in society, these measures were appropriate and timely. Did economic necessity cause these legal changes? Were the laws passed because of a sense of fairness? Was it effective advocacy that led to these changes?

Also, what factors account for the laws aimed at opening the nation's telecommunications system to people with hearing impairments or who are deaf? A variety of laws, at the federal and state level, have resulted in greatly increased availability of, and mandates for, relay services, provision of TDDs, incorporation of amplification devices into telephones, and other provisions. What lessons can be learned from the systems change efforts that led to the enactment of these laws?

It will be left to historians to decide why these legal changes came about, and why they occurred when they did. However, it is the responsibility of those of us living

*Please see ATFSCP on Page 10*

*IEPs Continued from Page 1*

requires that all involved are aware of the student's needs. Technology however, has provided an easier and more efficient way to tackle the IEP task! Many software developers have created software applications that assist the IEP developer in his/her task. There are many packages available, but we'll only take a brief look at two here.

**IEP Works Pro**

*K-12 MicroMedia Publishing*

*16 McGee Drive*

*Mahwah, NJ 07430*

*800-292-1997*

*E-mail: [k12mmp@aol.com](mailto:k12mmp@aol.com)*

**Apple II & Macintosh**

An authoring system to facilitate the writing of IEPs by utilizing and enhancing the abilities of Apple Works/ClarWorks. IEP Works Pro automates much of the IEP writing process from within AppleWorks/ClarWorks while leaving great flexibility in IEP format. All IEPs, goals, and objective files are standard AppleWorks files and are immediately accessible for review and editing in the AppleWorks/ClarWorks word processor. The teacher can create or customize a library of similar annual goals and objectives while IEP Works Pro does the work of putting it together and provides both automatic and manual customization for each student. Sample goal and objectives files are included on the disk. Includes a workbook that provides concrete examples of how to use AppleWorks/ClarWorks for IEP writing. Requires Apple Works version 2.0 or greater for the Apple IIe and ClarWorks for the Macintosh (not included). Apple version comes with a free K-12 site license allowing unrestricted use within a building. Macintosh version comes with a free site license for either grades K-8 or

grades 7-12 allowing unrestricted use within a building. Network versions require school to own network version of a associated data base software.

**Macintosh, Windows 3.1 & 95**

New version for Windows 95 and Macintosh has over 1300 modifiable goals and objectives. Using the power of FileMaker Pro for Macintosh or Windows, IEP WorksPro tackles the task of automatically cutting selected items from the database of goals and objectives and pasting them into your current IEP document. The new IEP is then saved for modification and updating. IEP WorksPro can automate your entire IEP function without making you give up control of the document. It allows you to create your own database of objectives and modify them on the fly. Perhaps the best feature is that IEPs can be modified during parent conferences so parents and teachers can go away with the new IEP document at the end of a meeting. Purchase of this program includes a site license allowing unrestricted use within a building. Run-time version of FileMaker Pro is included.

**EPLAN IEP Planning Tool & TPLAN Transition Planning**

*Analysis and Simulation, Inc.*

*172 Holtz Road*

*Buffalo, NY 14225*

*800-632-0172*

**Macintosh & Windows**

EPLAN & TPLAN are interactive computer-based Systems which provide the environment for development of the IEP and the transition component of the IEP, respectively. EPLAN & TPLAN can run either independently or together as one complete system. They consist of menus and buttons of functional options. To provide access to options, the systems use a windows-based visual

interface to display mouse-selectable choices to the user. The Basic Student Information window is the first operational window to appear in either system. In addition to having edit fields for entering basic student data, it also serves as the control window for navigating through the IEP (or Transition component) development process. Both systems use a rule-based advisory management approach to assist in developing a preliminary plan which the user can individualize.

The input management of this system consists of a set of windows for collecting and recording Basic Student Information consisting of personal student data, Relevant School Program Information, PLEP (Present Level of Educational Performance) Information, and Related Services Information.

Based upon information entered (independent of transition issues), the expert system of the IEP Planner will assess the information and provide a preliminary set of goal statements. Within each category the user selects the goal statements from a list box of system recommended statements. The user may choose to disregard the goals recommended by the system and add their own goals and objectives, build them from a series of phrases, or simply modify what the system produces. §

## References:

EPlan & TPlan IEP & Transition Planning Tools, Analysis & Simulation, Inc., 800-632-0172

1996 Catalog, Educational Software Institute Inc., 800-955-5570, <http://www.edsoft.com/esi>

1995 Resource Guide, Exceptional Parent Magazine, 617-730-5800

1997 Resource Directory, Closing the Gap, 507-248-3294,

<http://www.closingthegap.com>

# Resource Guide on Inclusion and Parent Advocacy Now Available

What are the most effective methods of including children with disabilities in pre-school programs? How can I advocate for my child's right to attend a neighborhood school? Where can I find information about model programs and training kits for planning and implementing school-wide inclusion? What strategies can I use to make inclusion work in my classroom?

As an understanding of the benefits and laws regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular education and community settings grows, more and more educators, service providers, and parents are asking questions like these.

*Inclusion & Parent Advocacy: A Resource Guide* is an extensive, annotated resource guide designed to help librarians, educators, parents, and other service providers identify publications and audiovisual materials that will help them understand, plan, and implement inclusive programs. The 135-page spiral-bound guide describes 265 books, pamphlets, videotapes, curriculum kits, and sources of free and inexpensive information.

The guide includes nine sections: Welcome to Inclusion; An Early Start; Inclusion in School; Social Aspects of

Inclusion; Facilitating Inclusion; Other Perspectives; Legal Rights and Parent Advocacy; Selected Sources of Free and Inexpensive Materials; and Selected Bibliographies. Each entry includes detailed bibliographic data, a description of the item's focus or contents, and current purchasing information.

Produced by the nonprofit organization Disability Resources, inc. with support from the N.Y.S. Developmental Disabilities Planning Council as a buying guide for public library systems in New York State, this information-packed publication is now available to schools, libraries, parent and teacher resource centers, community programs, and parents outside New York.

To order *Inclusion & Parent Advocacy: A Resource Guide*, send a check or institutional purchase order for \$15 (for printing, postage & handling) to Disability Resources, inc., Four Clatter Lane, Centereach, NY 11720-1032. Outside the U.S., add \$5, and send payment in U.S. funds or on a U.S. bank check or international money order. For further information, call (516) 585-0290, or send an E-mail to: [jklauber@suffolk.lib.ny.us](mailto:jklauber@suffolk.lib.ny.us), or Web address: <http://www.geocities.com/~drm.> §

## 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Closing the Gap Conference

October 23-25, 1997  
Minneapolis, MN  
P.O. Box 68

Henderson, MN 56044  
507-248-3294 \* [info@closingthegap.com](mailto:info@closingthegap.com)  
<http://www.closingthegap.com>

## DIRECTIONS

Technology in Special Education

### Back Issues Available

- January '95- Assistive Tech Intro -Part I
- February '95- Assistive Tech Intro -Part II
- March '95- Assistive Tech Intro -Part III
- April '95 -What is a Conference?
- May '95 -Adaptive Output Devices
- June July '95 -Augmentative Communication
- August '95 -Hearing & Vision Aids
- September '95 -Assistive Tech Potpourri
- October '95- Funding Assistive Technology
- November '95- Special Toys
- December '95 -World Wide Web
- January '96 -Adapted Keyboards
- February '96- Voice I/O and Software
- March '96 Communications
- April '96 -Transition
- May '96 -Using Switches
- June July '96 -The Year in Review
- August '96- Technology in the Classroom
- September '96 -Communication Devices
- October '96- Adapting Toys & Games

Each issue is filled with valuable assistive technology information and tips, along with product information and news. Please send \$2.50 (check, PO, Visa or MasterCard) for each issue requested along with your name and address to:

*DIRECTIONS* Back Issues  
DREAMMS for Kids, Inc.  
273 Ringwood Road  
Freeville, NY 13068-9618  
Voice/FAX: 607-539-3027  
E-Mail: [DREAMMS@aol.com](mailto:DREAMMS@aol.com)  
Web: <http://users.aol.com/dreamms/>

# Reauthorizing IDEA - Take Action!

The 104th Congress has convened. The things you should do when Congress reconvenes include:

Keep informed about the latest events in Washington using multiple sources of information. Some sources you may wish to consider include: your Senator or Congressman's local office; the state or local chapter of a parent or consumer organization in which you are involved (e.g., UCP, the Arc, Parent Training and Information Center, or online resources).

Evaluate the information you receive carefully. If something does not make sense to you, do further research.

If students are being denied services to which they are entitled by law, use the

media to let the public know what is happening.

Educate and update your organization's members and others about current activity.

If your Senator or Congressman is a member of the Senate Labor and Human Resources, call and ask for a copy of the bill. The number is (202) 224-5024. To get a bill number or obtain a copy of the House of Representatives version of the bill, call the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities at (202) 225-4521.

Ask questions about specific sections of the bill in which you are interested. Below are some examples of questions

you may want to ask:

\*Has the section referring to assistive technology devices and services been modified?

\*Do parents have any rights to recover attorney fees?

\*Can the school district change my child's placement without a hearing?

This is an important time in the life of IDEA – stay interested and involved!

The opinions expressed by the ATFSCP do not necessarily reflect the position or the policy of the U.S. Dept. of Education, and no official endorsement of the opinions expressed herein should be inferred. §

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## KidDesk from Edmark

*KidDesk* is a must for every computer! This hard disk security and menuing program protects teachers' programs and files and makes it easy for students to use the computer independently. From personalized desktops, students can easily launch their favorite programs - but only the ones their teacher has selected! *KidDesk* is the only desktop security program that turns the computer into a student communication center. Each desktop can be furnished with up to 11 optional desk accessories including electronic mail, voice mail, a monthly calendar and a talking clock - that provide additional learning opportunities for students. Individual desktops can be password protected.

*KidDesk* Desktop Accessories Include: Electronic mail, Voice mail, 13-month perpetual calendar, Address card file, Calculator, Note pad, Talking clock, Picture frame.

Product Awards: Software Publishers Association's Code Award for Best Educational Tool Program, The National Parenting Center Seal of Approval, All Star Software Award, Children's Software Revue.

Contact Edmark at: 6727 185th Ave., NE, P.O. Box 97021, Redmond, WA 98073-9721, Phone: 800-426-0856, FAX: 206-556-8430, or TDD: 206-556-8402 for more information. §



**THE DREAM GOES ON!**  
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Sheraton World Resort  
Orlando, Florida

## CONFERENCES & EVENTS

**Date:** April 22 -23, 1997

**Event:** Fifth Regional Symposium and Exposition for Persons with Disabilities

**Location:** Virginia Beach, VA

**Information:** 757-497-0692

**Date:** May 15 -17, 1997

**Event:** National Association of Rehabilitation Agencies (NARA) Annual Spring Conference

**Location:** Washington, DC

**Information:** 703-437-4377

**Date:** May 21' 1997

**Event:** Assistive Technology '97

**Location:** Boston, MA

**Information:** 617-355-7820

**Date:** May 22, 1997

**Event:** 5th Annual Conference on Serving Adults with Learning Disabilities

**Location:** Farmington, CT

**Information:** 860-486-0273

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*ATFSCP Continued from Page 5*

now to ensure that they continue. Therefore, looking closely at the factors that caused change is necessary.

### **Physical Accessibility**

One factor that may have made physical accessibility easier to obtain than other forms of access is that the measures required to make buildings or telephones accessible are not difficult to understand. There is much uncertainty and misinformation about the exact requirements and compliance costs of the ADA and other laws about ramps, doorway widths, telephone amplifiers and TDDs.

However, these measures and devices are not complex. One can readily visualize a ramp and understand its function. One can readily grasp what a relay operator would do. Anyone who has had experience with a teletype machine can grasp the function of a TDD.

A braille writer (a braille typewriter) can be straightforwardly understood. If braille typewriters were the technology needed by persons who are blind today, we might be discussing the progress they have made as well. However, the conceptual issues involved in making computer operating systems accessible to persons who are blind, or making train timetables accessible to persons with learning disabilities, are a lot more complex and subtle. Even when one wants to achieve the goal, the methods for achieving it are not always obvious or clear. Knowing exactly what to ask for becomes more difficult.

In the previous advocacy successes, the access issues were clear. However, persistent advocacy efforts

were required for their acceptance and accomplishment. Without the advocacy of a generation of activists, clear ideas would have counted for little. The lesson is that clear policy goals and effective strategy must be combined to obtain meaningful systems change results.

However, we find less agreement on objectives and less certainty about how policy goals are to be achieved in the disability community today. The developing complexity of technology helps to explain this. This can be understood if one considers some differences between the issues faced in assistive technology access a decade ago compared with AT access today.

The technology for building ramps or for providing relay service existed in mature form. There were many design, materials, cost and bureaucratic issues surrounding these technologies. However, nothing had to be invented in order for these technologies to be carried out or mandated. No one can credibly say that they cannot imagine how a ramp would be placed at the door to a building, or how one would go about lowering the height of an elevator button panel. There may be resistance to doing it, but there is no fundamental mystery about how it is done.

The way in which AT related public policy goals have been achieved is by enforcement of the new laws and/or regulations that carry out the law. This is important because without them, new injustices and distortion in the economy might have resulted. Suppose that businesses were not required to install ramps or widen

display aisles to accommodate wheelchairs in stores. Those establishments that chose to become accessible would incur costs that inaccessible businesses would not.

For example, a store that widens its aisles may sacrifice display space. If one store did this, but its competitor did not, the competitor might, in the short-run, gain some economic advantage. However, the store or restaurant that made itself accessible would profit in the end, because it would gain new customers from people with disabilities, their families, and friends. The costs of making an establishment accessible are often up-front costs. It cannot be assumed that the merchant or restaurateur would be aware of the best way for advertising the measures it had taken. They might not be aware of the potential business coming from this sector of the community.

The best illustration of the role of mandates can be seen in the Television Decoder Circuitry Act of 1990. That law required the incorporation of a decoder chip, used for closed-captioning, in all televisions with 13-inch or larger screens manufactured or sold in this country after July 1, 1993.

The chip increased the cost of a new television set by an estimated \$2 to \$5 per set. The fact that all manufacturers were required to install it prevented the competitive warp in the economy that might have resulted if it had been left to the manufacturer to install the chip voluntarily. Probably, none would have done so on its own. No mechanism existed for an industry-wide, voluntary agreement to do so. However, with the mandate, no one

noticed the difference. Even the most fanatical proponents of the backlash against disability rights have not contended that the decoder chip has injured consumers.

As this example suggests, the most successful advocacy efforts often focus on strategies that would be essentially transparent to the economy. They would allocate the costs in a way that makes them practically invisible and that would result in the broadest possible payment base.

The electronics industry was not adamantly opposed to the legislation that became the Decoder Act. What they were being called upon to do was simple. There were no major design implications that would affect the reactions of the general consumer to their products. Then, as now, strong opposition of major industry players is likely to signal the death knell for any accessibility mandates in the technology area.

Another important point here is that the mandates (e.g., ADA) fell as heavily on the government as they did upon the private sector. Advocates have not had to fight the allegation that it places burdens on the private sector that government did not have to bear. Absent from the anti-ADA backlash has been the contention that the law imposes mandates on the private sector that government chooses not to impose upon itself.

The loudest cries of protest against the ADA as an "unfunded mandate" now come from local government officials who are angry about the allegedly high costs of curb-cuts, para-transit and other required measures. Ironically, the widespread hostility toward government in contemporary society may have resulted in these protests

receiving less sympathy than would otherwise have been the case. When local officials, and increasingly when school systems who oppose the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), draw a linkage between their problems and higher taxes or reduced services, their complaints take on much more serious implications.

### **Other Advocacy Efforts**

Other precedents for advocacy are worth noting, some because they have been successful, others because we can learn through their failure. Therefore, attention must be paid to the programs and service systems that have been the chief sources of public-sector funding for AT. These sources are vocational rehabilitation (VR), special education and Medicaid. Though all are major sources of AT funding, none has come close to reaching its full potential. However, it is worth assessing how and why advocacy efforts have improved or failed to improve AT access under these programs. Such an analysis will prove useful, whatever new forms these programs take. The fundamental issue surrounding these programs as sources of AT funding relate to what may be called the structuring and management of discretion. This means that these programs may provide AT if the state and local officials decide that they can. When operating rules for programs are formulated and needs of the program participants are evaluated, access to AT needs to be established as a benefit of that program.

### **Conclusion**

The past cannot predict the future. The challenges faced by advocates in the coming years will be unlike any met before. Meeting these challenges will require strategy, community

mobilization, and expertise in a broad range of subject areas and technologies. History may reveal that successful systems change efforts display a number of common elements. However, it will be up to the advocates of our day to determine how to apply those lessons in their advocacy and work.

The important points to remember are:

- \*choose your issues and forums wisely, from the standpoint of where you can have the greatest impact and where your particular resources can be most effectively used;

- \*educate consumers about the importance of the issues; and make proposals that hold promise of breaking down barriers in ways that do not create resentment or equity issues in connection with the new responsibilities or new costs involved.

If, these goals are kept uppermost in mind, the prospects for successfully applying yesterday's lessons to today's needs are excellent.

To secure general information on the project, contact: Assistive Technology Funding & Systems Change Project, 1660 L Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036 Tel: (202) 776-0406 Fax: (202) 776-0414 Email: atfscp@aol.com. To secure information & individual assistance on AT funding issues, contact: 1-800-827-0093 (voice) 1-800-833-8272 (TDD), or (404) 919-8305 (fax)

The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of the opinions expressed herein should be inferred. §

## New Upgrade Gives Liberator More Power

Wooster, OH- Prentke Romich Company announces the 1st major upgrade of its flagship communication device, *Liberator*. Named *Liberator II*, its new features offer greater efficiency to the clinician and device operator alike.

For the 1st time, PRC is offering a word prediction system to enhance its *Minspeak* language coding system. While *Minspeak* has been shown over and over again to be the most efficient method of recalling core vocabulary, many device operators spell infrequently used fringe vocabulary. Word prediction has been shown to be faster than spelling for longer fringe vocabulary words. Combining the two systems in one device makes it a more effective tool. *Liberator II* now incorporates the text editing functions that have made computers such powerful writing tools. These include copy, cut, paste, search, and replace. Themes are no longer limited to the 1st one or two icons in a sequence.

*Prentke Romich Company*  
1022 Heyl Road  
Wooster, OH 44691  
800-262-1933



## MINDPLAY Launches Special Education Resource Area

*MINDPLAY* Educational Software is pleased to announce the new Special Education Resource Area at our WWW site: <http://www.mindplay.com>

Since its founding in 1986, *MINDPLAY* has focused on special needs children. Now, we are turning our web site into an on-line resource for teachers, special educators, and parents. We invite you to participate at: <http://www.mindplay.com/resource.html>

In this area you'll find TEACHING TOOLS, an on-line newsletter with articles written by educators about their experiences with special needs students.

*MINDPLAY*  
800-221-7911  
[mindplay@rtd.com](mailto:mindplay@rtd.com)  
<http://mindplay.com>

## AbleNet Award

Minneapolis, MN, To recognize today's leaders in breaking down barriers to inclusion for persons with disabilities, AbleNet, Inc. presents an annual inclusion award. Each year, a team of people, who demonstrate vision and innovation in creating opportunities for full participation of people with severe disabilities using simple technology is chosen for special recognition. This year's award was presented to a team of teachers from Brandon Elementary School in Brandon, SD. The group, led by first grade teacher Ann Beesley, was chosen for its leadership and innovation in using simple technology to include first grader Megan in the typical activities of her classroom. Megan, a student with severe disabilities, is now able to do things such as lead the pledge of allegiance, give the weekly spelling test and recite a poem at a school-wide program. The winning team received a \$500 gift certificate for AbleNet products and a \$500 cash award to defray the cost of coming to the Closing the Gap Conference to accept the award.

*AbleNet, Inc.,*  
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