



ANCOR Links

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Columns

CEO Perspective: A Brave New World

Renee L. Pietrangelo, PhD

Technology opens up new avenues and possibilities, changing the landscape for direct service providers.



To say that technology is challenging our organizations today is blatantly obvious. That fact was clearly demonstrated at the recent University of Colorado Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities Conference and ANCOR Technology Summit, November 2nd and 3rd.

Bill Coleman shared his global view, noting that the winds of technological change are blowing hard and fast and as we speak we are undergoing a massive transformation of society equal to the invention of language and the printed word. The Web will transform all aspects of life, providing each of us, regardless of ability, with a fully interactive dashboard for life that places our world fully in our control.

Within 30 years, we'll be able to mentally interact with the Web. Within the next five to ten years all digital controls will be ubiquitous. We'll be able to fully control our environment based on needs and wants; a veritable prosthesis for life. Rather than the current focus of technology on remediation, future digital interfaces will be context aware, focused on augmenting and enhancing our abilities.

All of this will be possible in large part thanks to "the cloud." However, concomitant with it will be an extensive disruptive innovation—something we're seeing already. Disruptive innovation poses a major challenge to us as we adapt to significant transformation in how people with disabilities are supported.

We should be thinking and dialoguing today about how traditional support/supervision of people served will transform through these technological innovations. That's exactly what was illustrated and open for discussion at the ANCOR Technology Summit

Another critical issue that was raised at the Coleman Technology Summit was technology access and digital literacy. It's an issue of grave import and ramification---shouldn't technology access and digital literacy be included as a defined outcome in all individual plans and reimbursed by Medicaid?

The Coleman Summit conveners raised the prospect of crafting a technology imperative statement modeled after the Community Imperative of 1979. A task force group formed from the invitees of a special Coleman Institute Summit pre-conference session, which includes ANCOR, has been charged with the task of drafting a "Declaration of a Right to Technology and Information Access." You'll hear more about this work as it continues to coalesce. ANCOR is enthusiastic and proud to be part of this important deliberative process.

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State Association View: Five Ideas To Change the World For the Better

Diane McComb

Technology, accessible and affordable healthcare, green energy, equality and justice are the cornerstones for future success.



In a recent article published by Time (10/01/2012), Bill Clinton spoke of five ideas that are changing the world for the better. The title of the article caught my attention – The Case for Optimism. In this time of painfully slow economic recovery, abrasive politics and uncertainties about every critical system supporting people with disabilities, I zoomed right in on The Case for Optimism. The article emphasized we can never again consider ourselves an island. We are a global community sharing a future with a wealth of ideas yet fraught with all the peril of a tension-filled world.

I could not help but correlate ANCOR's current activities and focus with this article. The five ideas Clinton speaks of are technology, health, the economy, equality and justice. These five ideas came alive as he explored the ways in which our world is rapidly changing and how advances in these areas show significant promise for eradicating the inequities disenfranchised people face.

First - technology. Phones mean freedom. Clinton discusses the ways in which cell phones give people in the poorest countries access to the Internet and the explosive information it provides. Cell phones provide access to banking, financial opportunities and charitable giving. Social Networking sites are credited with providing the backdrop to recent revolutionary uprisings in Africa and the Middle East. For people with disabilities, Smartphones provide cueing capabilities through text and voice, GPS tracking and Internet access and sites like FaceBook and Twitter routinely connect

people who previously struggled to stay in touch with friends and family.

His second premise – healthy communities prosper. We need look no further than the information coming forward with this country's health reform efforts. Forty nine-percent of personal bankruptcies in the US are the result of medical catastrophe caused by people lacking health insurance, reaching their lifetime limits, coverage denials for pre-existing conditions and limits on coverage. Most of us in the disabilities field understand the connection between poverty and people with disabilities well. Clinton talked about how building lasting health systems in the poorest of countries creates a productive society. Health innovations can equalize the economic playing field across the socioeconomic strata. Data for Medicaid Buy-In programs funded under CMS MIG grants correlate lower Medicaid claims for individuals working as opposed to when they weren't working.

His third good idea – Green energy equals good business. Our current economy demands attention in reducing the consumption of resources (energy and people) which will ultimately benefit the economy by thwarting the effects of a warming climate, saving energy and precious natural resources. As costs for doing business climb, ANCOR members are finding that green technology is saving precious dollars at the gas pumps, electricity bills and more. We are learning that remote monitoring holds huge promise, not only in saving money in lowering staff hours but also in promoting privacy in people's lives. Independence has its own reward as people with disabilities once thought to need supervision 24/7 are able to assume more typical lives without the intrusiveness of paid staff intervening at every turn.

Equality is the fourth area Clinton discusses and while his focus is on women his arguments could just as easily apply to people with disabilities achieving equality throughout the world. His premise is that no society can truly flourish if it stifles the dreams and productivity of a significant portion of its population. Carried forward, the same can be said of people with disabilities. When the people we support are able to gain social and economic power, all society will benefit. We struggle today with how to move our system forward to better accomplish this goal, yet we know many people with disabilities talk about having real jobs that are integrated in our communities. Our task is to be engaged in this dialogue, complicated though it seems, to reach the other side with better wages and more integrated work opportunities.

The fight for the future is now, Clinton asserts, and justice is his fifth focus to change the world. While civilizations have fought for equality for generations, this battle looms as never before around the globe. Inequality is pervasive and it breeds instability and conflict. Again, this resonates within the disability community – within our community. Our advocacy to advance the rights and opportunities for all people with disabilities to achieve their personal and professional goals in communities where they live is paramount to the work we do. We know that given the right opportunities, accommodations and training people with disabilities can do anything.

In this day of political and economic turmoil these five ideas resonate. ANCOR members are actively engaged in technology, health, the economy, equality and justice.

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Public Policy: Bob Dole Honored for Lifetime of Advocacy on Behalf of People with Disabilities

Barbara Merrill

For his lifetime work in advocacy for persons with disabilities, retired Senator Bob Dole was honored by the U.S. International Council on Disabilities. The ceremony took place mere hours before the Convention on the Rights for People with Disabilities was defeated.



Last month I had the incredible honor of being in the same room with many of the giants of the disability movement as we gathered to pay tribute to Bob Dole. The occasion was more bitter than sweet. The event, co-sponsored by ANCOR, was strategically scheduled an hour before the Convention on the Rights for People with Disabilities was brought to the floor for a vote. ANCOR has supported the CRPD from the beginning, and many of our members took the time to personally call their senators to express our collective support for passage of the treaty that extends the rights the ADA gives Americans to people throughout the world.

The mood in the Dirksen Office Building room was somber. Although many of the speakers voiced optimism the outcome would be positive, it was clear at that point the vote would fail. The former senator from Kansas, Republican presidential nominee and champion of the ADA, entered the room to a standing ovation and then sat quietly, slightly slumped, with his

famous white Stetson on the desk in front of him as senator after senator honored his contributions to people with disabilities. Senator Dole, now 89 and using a wheelchair, had been working furiously to persuade Republican senators to reject the arguments made by the far right that the treaty would compromise US sovereignty and the rights of parents.

For someone like me, a life long political junkie, it was truly a star-studded tribute and I was deeply honored to be there on behalf of ANCOR's membership. The event was emceed by Tony Coelho, the former congressman and House champion of the ADA, who has remained deeply active in the disability movement since his retirement from elected office. Mr. Dole was praised for his remarkable commitment to people with disabilities, including our nation's wounded warrior veterans. With fellow war heroes John McCain and John Kerry taking the lead, the speakers shared Senate insider jokes, told personal anecdotes and vowed to continue the fight for ratification into the next session of Congress. As a native Mainer, I was particularly pleased that both Republican senators from Maine attended the tribute, with Senator Collins taking the microphone to express her support for the treaty.

In addition to his contributions to people with disabilities, Senator Dole's role in stopping the genocide in Bosnia was honored, expressed most poignantly by President Obama's Special Assistant Samantha Powers who shared that she was living in Bosnia as the bombs rained down, and thanked him on behalf of the many who "do not have a voice." The senator's wife Elizabeth, a celebrity in her own right, shared how years ago he bonded with a woman with a disability who went on to become one of his staunchest campaign supporters and, just two days after losing the presidential election, worried about how she was feeling and gave her a personal call to buoy her spirits.

Marca Bristo, President and CEO of Access Living and President of the United States Council on Disabilities, shared a story that summed up how dismayed all of us were that the vote was likely minutes away from failure. She shared how when she called Mr. Dole to ask for his support in assuring passage, he asked her who would be against it. As she related the story her voice broke, sharing that her answer was clearly wrong – she told him "no one."

How could she, or any of us for that matter, have foreseen how the fringe right would summon forces to prevent the United

States of America, this great nation that has led the world in securing the rights for people with disabilities, from ratifying the treaty that has already been signed by over 125 countries. Massachusetts Senator John Kerry called the vote one of the saddest in his 28 years in the Senate, "a wakeup call about a broken institution that's letting down the American people."

We are all equally shocked and saddened. But we will not give up this fight, and we will prevail in the next session of Congress. It is important that our country stand with the rest of the world in assuring people with disabilities are accorded the same respect, dignity and rights as people without disabilities. I am proud that ANCOR has been a leader in this movement, I am proud of all of you who answered our call to flood your senators with messages of support, and I am proud that so many of our ANCOR members have taken this calling beyond our shores to support people with disabilities worldwide.

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Wage and Hour: Bank Pays More Than \$1 Million for Misclassifying Workers as Exempt from Overtime Pay

Joni Fritz

Misclassifying employees as exempt from over-time pay can cost companies millions. Here's how to avoid this costly mistake.



Employees in five states received more than \$1 million in overtime back wages as a result of an investigation by the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division. The employer, a bank, wrongly classified 392 employees as exempt from overtime, resulting in violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act's (FLSA) overtime and record-keeping provisions.

Investigators found the bank failed to consider the FLSA's criteria that allow certain administrative and professional employees to be exempt from receiving overtime pay. In fact, the employees were entitled to overtime compensation at one-half times their regular rates for hours worked over 40 in a week. Additionally, the bank failed to include bonus payments in nonexempt employees' regular rates of pay when computing overtime compensation, in violation of the Act. Record-keeping violations resulted from the employer's failure to record the number of hours worked by the misclassified employees.

"It is essential that employers take the time to carefully assess the FLSA classification of their workforce," said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. "As this investigation demonstrates, improper classification results in improper wages and causes workers real economic harm." The bank paid the back wages in full.

Criteria for Exemption as an Administrative Employee

The administrative exemption is perhaps the most difficult to verify. As with the other exemptions, an exempt administrator must be paid on a salary or fee basis of at least \$455 per week, exclusive of board, lodging or other facilities. More importantly, however, an administrator must perform office or non-manual work directly related to the management or general business operations of the employer; and the employee's primary duty must include the exercise of discretion and independent judgment with respect to matters of significance.

A simple title of Administrator or Administrative Assistant is totally inadequate. The work performed must be directly related to assisting with the running or servicing of the business – the management operations – as distinguished from working on a manufacturing production line, selling a product in a retail or service establishment, or assisting a CEO in a business office. The kinds of work performed by an exempt administrator includes such things as finance, accounting, budgeting, quality control, purchasing, marketing, safety and health, personnel management, human relations and similar activities. It is an exemption sometimes used for a department head who may work alone in that department or may supervise just one other employee like a Financial Manager or Personnel Director in a small business.

"Discretion and independent judgment" involves the comparison and evaluation of possible courses of conduct and acting or making a decision after the various possibilities have been considered. "Matters of significance" refers to the level of importance or consequence of the work performed. The list of factors to include in determining whether these two requirements have been met implies the employee must have authority to make an independent choice free from immediate direction or supervision. (Their decisions or recommendations may be reviewed at a higher level, however.)

It is important to carefully review the entire federal rule at 29 CFR Section 541 before exempting workers as Administrative employees. These rules have been in place since 2004.

A future LINKS article will discuss the inclusion of bonuses in overtime pay for non-exempt employees.

Joni Fritz is a Labor Standards Specialist whose guidance is free to ANCOR members and to those who attend a Wage and Hour Workshop or participate in a teleconference she has conducted. Any ANCOR member who wishes to make arrangements for consultation or workshops with Joni must first contact Barbara Merrill, ANCOR Vice President for Public Policy, for a referral at (703)535-785, ext. 103 or bmerrill@ancor.org.



President's Corner: What's In Your Toolbox

Dave Toeniskoetter

Technological advances have broadened caregiver's abilities to provide services. As budget woes and regulations continue to challenge, accessing and utilizing all the tools technology brings will be essential for success in the coming years.

As I write this column, 2013 is nearly upon us. What opportunities and challenges will the New Year bring for ANCOR members, and the services we provide to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities?

It's not hard to enumerate the challenges we face: a continuing pattern of funding and payment rate reductions despite the fact that the Great Recession is officially over, runaway inflation in the cost of providing health insurance for our employees, the prospect that costs will further increase when the Affordable Care Act is fully implemented in 2014 and a great deal of uncertainty about the future of the Medicaid program.

Is there any reason to be optimistic? Are there opportunities on the horizon? What tools do we have in our toolboxes to continue to provide quality services in an era of declining resources?

I believe there is always opportunity in a crisis. Let's consider a lesson from the recession of 1981-82. One of the outcomes of that recession was the birth of the Medicaid Home and Community Based Services waiver authority. Before the recession, ICF/MR services were widely viewed as the best community integration environment for people with developmental disabilities. Under pressure of the recession, funders and policymakers needed to consider alternatives to ICF/MR, and the Medicaid HCBS



waiver authority resulted. Although the HCBS waiver was adopted as a cost-saving measure, the result was new supports and services that weren't just less expensive, but also have provided more avenues for independence and flexible community living arrangements.

As we face the coming financial challenges, are there options to simultaneously reduce the costs of supporting people with disabilities, and provide new services that will be more attractive to individuals and their families? I believe we will find such options, and many of them can be accomplished through the use of emerging information technologies.

The explosion of information technologies in the hands of ordinary people is surely one of the most significant developments of the last generation. The combination of the Internet, intelligent software systems, smartphones and global positioning (GPS) technologies are opening up some amazing tools for people with disabilities, and for the providers and families who support them. Are you following the capabilities of smartphones and similar GPS-enabled mobile devices to support the independence of people with disabilities to navigate in the community? Are you following the capabilities of "smart home" technologies to provide supports and

supervision to people with disabilities, without necessarily having staff present in their homes at all times? Are you following the capability of web-based documentation and communication tools to allow "real time" sharing of information with families and others involved in the support of people with disabilities?

One obstacle to the use of technology in human services is our fear of loss of privacy and human dignity. Many of us were raised on George Orwell's 1984, and the fear that "big brother is watching." I hope those concerns don't prevent people with intellectual and developmental disabilities from sharing in the same benefits of technology that the rest of us are enjoying in the 21st Century. In my experience people with disabilities and their families typically have far fewer concerns about the use of assistive technologies than providers and regulatory agencies have expected.

Information technology is evolving very rapidly. Providers find it increasingly difficult to keep pace with changes in technology and need a trusted source of information about technology options in our field. ANCOR has responded by partnering with the Coleman Institute on Cognitive Disabilities to offer an annual technology summit in conjunction with Coleman's annual conference. In four years, participation in ANCOR's technology summit has quadrupled. Planning for the 2013 technology summit (October 3-4 in Denver) includes a technology showcase event, in which ANCOR members will have the opportunity to directly hear from and interact with information technology vendors in our field. I hope you will mark your calendar and join me in Denver in October.

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DSP Chronicles - Leona Sawyer

Peter Schilling

DSP Leona Sawyer authored a book that enabled a man to keep his job.

Featured DSP: Leona Sawyer

Age: 50

Home: Topeka, KS

Position: Employment Support Specialist

Where: TARC (Topeka Area Retarded Citizens)



Flexibility and imagination are assets in any job, but Direct Support Professional (DSP) Leona Sawyer took those strengths to a new level, going so far as to write a book for one of her clients. In a moment of inspiration, Leona

created "Byron's Book", helping a man keep his job at a department store and empowering him to become more independent.

Leona lives in Kansas and has been with Topeka Area Retarded Citizens, Inc. (TARC) since 2003. Prior to that she worked for over two decades as a certified nurse's aide. Tired of the same routine, she decided to try something more challenging and interesting. Her stepdaughter worked at TARC and suggested Leona follow suit.

"It sounded like fun!" Leona said, and she continues to enjoy the work today.

TARC has its own warehouse and places people with developmental disabilities at various positions there, including printing and shredding work, as well as in hotels, restaurants, department stores and other businesses around the Topeka area. As an Employment Support Specialist, Leona works both on and off-site in the local community. Leona's been in her current position since 2008, mentoring new hires, coordinating clients with potential employers and helping TARC's many job coaches.

Leona is extremely valuable in the field.

"We want her out in the community," Daniel Hermreck, Human Resources Training Coordinator at TARC said. He pointed out there have been numerous times when one of TARC's clients was hired because the employer trusted Leona.

"When you're a DSP, you're constantly hit with crises," Daniel noted. "Leona doesn't lose focus on the long-term goal of independence, but helps people overcome the day-to-day challenges."

He points out that employers like to know that there's someone like Leona who has the creativity and intelligence to overcome the many challenges facing TARC hires.

Perhaps the best example of this is a situation involving Byron, one of the people with disabilities that TARC serves. On one job site, he was having trouble staying on task. Byron is in his 40s, and had difficulty holding down past janitorial jobs. He has a hard time reading, making instruction even more challenging.

"I had other people down there as well, and I couldn't just stay with Byron to make sure he remained on task," Leona said. Instead, she created "Byron's Book", a picture book that detailed the work he was supposed to do down to the minute detail.

"Byron's Book" has the day's chores spelled out in photographs. For instance, on one page there is a picture of a table and then a photo of what chemical to use to clean that table. In another section there's not only a photo of a floor, and one of which chemical to use, but diagrams on how to mop the floor to keep Byron from literally backing himself into a corner.

To create the book Leona had to sit down and determine Byron's tasks for each day, how to perform these tasks, how to coordinating them with other work being done in the store, and to find the best time for him to clean.

"It took about a week for me to get it done, but as soon as he saw the book he knew exactly what to do," Leona said.

As an added benefit, the book also helps his various job coaches, often new hires, understand immediately what Byron is supposed to be doing every minute of the day.

When Leona was promoted to Employment Support Specialist in 2008 she was required to become DSP-Certified through the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP), becoming one of the first three people in the United States to attain such status. To become credentialed, Leona relied on the DirectCourse/College of Direct Support College (CDS) online curriculum for much of her training.

According to Daniel the CDS helped inspire "Byron's Book", which Leona also used as part of her work portfolio necessary for credentialing.

Leona continually refers to her CDS training in her everyday work.

"At first, you may not think you're going to use this information," she recalled. "But as you go on in your career, you find yourself referring to it all the time."

"I love this job," Leona said. "It's rewarding and helping people is what makes it so great."



Author LINK: Peter Schilling works at DirectCourse. For more information about the DirectCourse/College of Direct Support curriculum call 1-888-526-8756 or email directcourse@elsevier.com.





This Month's Focus: Technology

Technology-Enabled Supports Enable Independence

Mark Davis

Technology-enabled supports will bring better services and will help providers conquer challenges the future brings, as well as provide means to more independent living.



Do you remember the time before UPC's, when each item in the grocery store had a price sticker or the cashier had to call for a price check? Have you used a bank's ATM lately? Do you have a cell phone or a smart phone? Do you have an email or Facebook account? Take a minute to think about how technology has infiltrated your life and enhanced the quality of your life, think about how this has changed over the past 10 to 20 years. We've come a long way since the Jetson's!

How many individuals you serve have a smart phone, email account or are on Facebook? How has technology impacted the quality of life for individuals you support? Should people with disabilities have less opportunity to benefit from technology?

Technology-enabled supports improve access to community living, enabling independence and integration. There is a growing movement that believes individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have a fundamental right to access technology in order to improve the quality of their lives. It may be the next civil rights issue for individuals with disabilities. Several states are working on adding technology-enabled supports to their Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver. One goal of these states is to decrease cost by reducing the individual's dependence on direct support staff. Regardless of the impetus for the movement to technology-enabled supports, this movement will change the face of how services are designed and delivered. Providers need to ask themselves whether they want to actively participate in bringing technology to the people they support or wait until others do this.

Our current system is unsustainable. Fundamental reform is coming to your state soon, if it isn't already in the works. The reasons are commonly known:

- States, providers and local government absorbed tremendous cuts
- The "fiscal cliff"
- Even though some states have projected surpluses, they are questioning what to do, tax cuts or invest in human services, infrastructure, education
- Local government/county financial challenges
- Long waiting lists and increased demand for services
- Direct support professional turnover
- Salaries at poverty level
- Staff on public assistance
- Regulation heavy environment
- Inflation in the cost of providing services without any increases in provider rates

Technology-enabled supports are a tool for sustainable system reform that also enables individuals to achieve independence in the community. We need to ask ourselves the question posed by Theodore Levitt in his article *Marketing Myopia*, Harvard Business Review, 1960 "What business are we in?" Are we in the homemaker/personal care business, or are we in the business of helping individuals with disabilities realize their hopes, dreams and potential? Levitt gave kudos to Corning, saying "It is constant watchfulness for opportunities to apply their technical know-how to the creation of customer-satisfying uses that accounts for their prodigious output of successful new products." To see a present day example of this approach go [here](#).

So, if you're convinced that a customer-driven approach to services is best and that technology fits this approach, what guidelines are recommended for developing, implementing and evaluating technology-enabled supports for people with disabilities?

Technology-enabled supports should:

- Be useful
- Be affordable
- Be accessible
- Be easy to operate for end users
- Add value to individual's lives and the system of care

- Be a Medicaid service (if possible, a CMS approved waiver service and within residential habilitation rather than a stand-alone service)
- Provide efficiency dividends for the state, counties, people on waiting lists and providers
- Reduce paid staff support
- Ensure health and safety of the individual served



Rest Assured Individual and Camera Monitoring Equipment

Technology-enabled supports are an effective tool for individuals with disabilities to actively participate in life. Technology removes barriers to opportunities and relationships for all people. We must work together to develop systems for making technology available for people that are viable for providers also. Currently, if the technology is a stand-alone service any efficiency dividends accrue to the funders. The provider is responsible for funding the transition to technology (technology assessment, service planning, contingency planning, equipment purchase/lease, staff and individual training, technology installation) without any way of recouping most of these expenses. The implementation of technology usually means the elimination of staff supports and therefore a reduction in the provider's revenue. Therefore, the provider's expenses are increased while their revenue is decreased. Without an equitable distribution of the efficiency dividends, a stand-alone model for technology is not economically viable for providers. We need to work with our state and local funding partners to make technology work for everybody!

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Bringing Technology to the Forefront

Tony Yu

Tony Yu, ANCOR's Director of Web and Information Technology, spells out his vision of where we're going tech-wise in the coming year.

The dust has settled from another successful Technology Summit, the fourth annual event bringing innovative solutions to community providers. Many thanks to our partners the Coleman Institute, AAIDD, National Council and OPRA, our sponsors CareWorks and MediSked, and of course all of our wonderful volunteers without whom this program would not be possible.

As ANCOR's technology director I keep my ear close to the ground and listen for the rumblings in the tech world. Some fads come and go (my Pets.com order still hasn't shipped yet?), but the fads that stick become trends, and those trends have a way of shaping the way we use technology. As your association, ANCOR's job is to identify the important trends for our field, and work with you to use these solutions to streamline service delivery and promote community inclusiveness.

With those answers naturally come more questions. Which of those solutions fits best for me? How do I train my staff on these new technologies to improve efficiency? How do I secure private information from prying eyes? What innovations in the consumer market can improve the lives of the people we serve? What must I do to keep the lights on in the event of a disaster? How do I pay for all of this stuff?

To that end we have much in store for 2013, including expanding the breath of the Technology Summit and creating an ANCOR technology website to bring solution providers and service providers together. You as members can help shape the direction of ANCOR's initiative going forward. If you are interested in sharing your expertise and volunteering your efforts please contact me at tyu@ancor.org.

So save the date for the 2013 ANCOR Technology Summit at the Omni Interlocken Resort in Broomfield, Colorado on October 3, following the Coleman Institute's Conference on Cognitive Disability and Technology on October 2. We hope to see you there.

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The Digital Literacy and Accessibility Imperative

Ari Ne'eman

Promoting digital literacy is essential for people with disabilities. Technology and the ability to access and understand it needs to be a priority.

Digital literacy has become increasingly important across all facets of society as information migrates online and people turn to digital communication to conduct business, develop relationships and engage communities. As digital literacy becomes a basic requirement for modern life, the need to understand effective modes of navigating, synthesizing and creating information using digital technology has spurred schools and businesses to implement digital literacy curricula and skill development. Yet despite

the increasingly essential nature of digital literacy skills across all major activities of daily living and despite the enormous gifts digital literacy offers for community development and engagement for many disabled people, people with intellectual disabilities have frequently been left behind.

Much scholarly information and critical discussion is not made available in accessible language or cognitively accessible formats. Information about support services and resources for disabled people is often difficult to find on government agency and private provider websites and is frequently replete with jargon and highly technical terms that make the information even more inaccessible, preventing people in need from accessing help or advocating effectively for themselves. Additionally, efforts focused on educating people to develop digital literacy skills largely ignore the cognitive access needs of people with intellectual disabilities, further excluding those with intellectual disabilities from emerging trends in technology and digital communication.

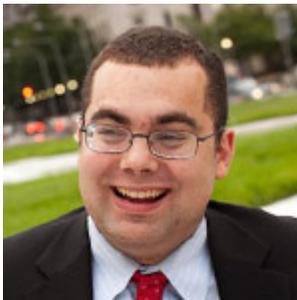
Digital communication has been and continues to be essential to the formation of the autistic community and culture. The autistic community first found its roots online through list-servs and online forums, blogs and discussion boards. As many autistic people find it easier and more accessible to communicate through text mediums or not in real time, the advent of email and the Internet—and the subsequent growth in digital communication technologies—was a significant factor in the development of the autistic community and continues to spur the development of a uniquely autistic culture and aesthetic. But many autistic people also have intellectual disabilities, and when digital literacy skills largely ignore the cognitive access needs of people with intellectual disabilities, this population is been cut off from their own community and culture.

One of the many celebrations in the autistic culture, Autistics Speaking Day, began in 2010 when two autistic women decided to respond to a misguided autism awareness campaign by gathering and promoting writings, videos and other content created by autistic people from across the Internet. Technology has leveled the playing field in many ways for autistic people by enabling voices that are often silenced or erased from mainstream discussions to be heard in the same way and at the same speed as the voices of non-autistic people. Yet while the self-advocacy movement was largely begun by people with intellectual disabilities, their access to and participation in this event was limited.

Today, Internet usage is an instrumental activity of daily living (IADL) due to the increasing reliance of corporations, government entities and individuals on digital tools. We need to develop and disseminate accessible digital literacy training to people with intellectual disabilities in order to promote skills-building and provide opportunities for community engagement. It is imperative that advocates and service providers recognize the role that access to digital technology can play in fostering social inclusion for people with all kinds of developmental disabilities.

When educators develop digital literacy curriculum, the ways in which people with intellectual disabilities think, process, and communicate must be incorporated into the curriculum in order to be accessible and inclusive. Ensuring that people with intellectual disabilities know how to navigate and use digital information is imperative to ensuring that people with intellectual disabilities will have the competencies necessary to be successful in the digital age.

Service providers and educators must emphasize digital literacy skills as goals for people with intellectual disabilities in order to develop the full range of skills and abilities necessary to successfully navigate an increasingly digital world. Digital literacy plays a critical role in the formation of contemporary organizations and communities, and in connecting people with other people, resources, and information. It is imperative that all people have access to this means of spreading information, connecting to resources, and engaging other people.



Ari Ne'eman is President of the Autistic Self Advocacy Network, the leading advocacy group run by and for autistic adults.



Highlights from the 12th Annual Coleman Institute Conference on Cognitive Disability and Technology

Enid M. Ablowitz

Highlights from ANCOR's Technology Leadership Summit include State of the State, cloud computing and technology access for all.

For the fourth consecutive year, ANCOR's Technology Leadership Summit was held in conjunction with the Coleman Institute on Cognitive Disability and Technology Conference on November 2, 2012 in Colorado.

The conference focus was on "The State of the States in Cognitive Disability and Technology: 2012." Speakers addressed the intersection of the state of the economy, disability policy and effects of technology on the quality of life of people with cognitive disabilities. Conference attendees included participants from 39 states, with a large and growing contingent of ANCOR members.

Conference speakers discussed many mounting challenges we face in the US, including the fundamental role federal and state governments play that has direct implications for supports and services to people with cognitive disabilities and their families. Several speakers focused on the growing digital divide in light of our increasing reliance on technology and the Internet for transactions of all kinds.

Of special interest to ANCOR members were three keynote sessions:

- "THE STATE OF THE STATES IN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES 2012: Impact of the Great Recession and its Aftermath" by David Braddock, PhD; Chair of Conference, Associate Vice President, University of Colorado and Executive Director of the Coleman Institute
- "CLOUD COMPUTING FOR PEOPLE WITH COGNITIVE DISABILITIES" by Bill Coleman, founding donor; partner, Alsop-Louie Partners, San Francisco, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Resilient Networks
- "ESTABLISHING THE RIGHT TO TECHNOLOGY ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH COGNITIVE DISABILITIES" by Peter Blanck, PhD, JD; Chairman, Burton Blatt Institute, Syracuse University

Virtually all presentation materials and videos of the conference presentations are posted on the Institute's website at www.colemaninstitute.org.

David Braddock's presentation provided a preview of the recently released preliminary data collection and analysis of the State of the States Project. In addition to viewing his presentation video and PowerPoint, you can also check out the State of the States website at www.stateofthestates.org where you can see longitudinal data for your state and even create charts based on state-by-state comparisons. In addition to data on intellectual/developmental disabilities, you can also reference mental health, and physical and sensory disabilities. If you would like a copy of the 2013 monograph, please request it by emailing stateofthestates@cu.edu.

Bill Coleman gave the participants a glimpse of the future of technology and what life might look like thirty years from now. He spoke of the "disruptive innovations" occurring in information technology and about exponential changes in digital communication, including how the "cloud" will become ubiquitous in our interactions.

Understanding the wide prevalence of cognitive disability in our society, the funding challenges ahead and the technological changes we face established the underpinnings of Peter Blanck's presentation on establishing the right to technology access for people with cognitive disabilities. The right to technology access was first posed as a question at the 2010 Coleman Institute conference. Now, the Coleman Institute, in collaboration with Peter Blanck, Renee Pietrangelo of ANCOR, and others, is working to articulate such a right. Watch for future announcements about this initiative.

The Coleman Institute invites you to spend some time on our website. It offers a treasure trove of presentations, posters, videos, whitepapers and links that have been assembled since the Institute's inception in 2001. There's also a Cognitive Technology Literature Database for those of you who are interested.

One more thing: don't forget to Save the Date for our 2013 conference on October 2nd at the Omni Interlocken Hotel, Broomfield, Colorado. The ANCOR Summit follows in the same location on the next day, October 3rd. We hope to see you there.



Enid Ablowitz is the Associate Director for the Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities. She can be reached at Enid.Ablowitz@cu.edu.





Tech Prep for Disasters: Servers Surviving Sandy

Laurie Dale

As Superstorm Sandy bore down on the East Coast this past fall, Ability Beyond Disability grappled with ways to protect their equipment.

Imagine seven commercial offices and over one hundred remote residential sites, seventy-five of which are connected through a central network. Imagine 1,200 users using a variety of equipment: laptops, iPhones, iPads and desktops, and over 30 virtual and physical servers. Now imagine a full Cisco backend that includes a Voice over IP phone system and an IT department right in the middle of a new backup and disaster recovery implementation all about to confront the storm of the century -- Sandy.

As Superstorm Sandy reared its ugly head at us this past October, we faced the tough decision of how to best manage and support our network in our current environment. We have a battery backup system that provides power for all of our network equipment in house. The system can support the entire network for approximately 90 minutes; barely enough time to shut devices down in an emergency situation. Like most non-profits we have continued to add network equipment as possible, without the continuous ability to add additional backup battery power.

Over the last few years our backup and disaster recovery process has all been in house. It was a mismatch of SAN (storage area network) devices, external hard drives, a fire-proof safe located at a separate office and a bank safety deposit box.

Not knowing whether our main office would lose power, or for how long, we made the hard decision to shut down the network completely for approximately 18 hours. In hindsight this turned out to be the right decision. Our building lost power a handful of times throughout the night and as anyone with computer equipment knows an abrupt power failure can mean the death of a router, switch or even server.

Even though turning the power off allowed us to survive Sandy, we knew we didn't want to continue to turn off the network as a solution. In November we completed and went live with Phase One -- Cloud Backup -- of our two Phase Backup/Disaster Recovery Project (Phase Two -- Disaster Recovery -- will be completed in January 2013.)

How did we end up in the cloud? First we reviewed our needs as an agency; more backup storage space, an efficient and easy way to restore backup data, a HIPAA compliant system, the ability to easily and quickly restore data right down to an individual email and, finally, we needed to ensure contingency plans could be put into place to keep our network up and running 24/7/365.

Based on our needs we determined a hosted solution in the cloud made the most sense for our agency. It would allow us the ability to have complete server recovery in a few minutes, automate all the backups off-site, provide hardware independent recovery (the ability to restore a server to any physical or virtual server), allow us to host a server virtually on or off-site and restore data (even a single email) within 30 minutes.

To support our backup battery needs, we have moved our main network firewall and email server to a collocation site. This provides us with complete generator support and four backup Internet connections in a secure location.

This new and improved system has provided a truly cost efficient solution. We are saving money on spare equipment as well as actual backup equipment and staff time and resources. Moreover we do not need to find money in the budget for generators or backup Internet connections. Our equipment and backups are monitored around the clock every day of the year without the need to add additional staff. The combination of the hosted backup/disaster recovery plan with the collocation of our network gateway and email server means we can keep the lights on for all users, regardless of their location or ours.

Laurie Dale is the Director of Information Technology for Ability Beyond Disability. She can be reached at laurie.dale@AbilityBeyondDisability.org.





Imagining a Future with Uber Self-Advocates

Barbara Merrill

Technology is harnessing and empowering self-advocacy.

Remember the headlines last August when an American Airlines flight attendant nearly forced a young woman that uses an iPad for communication to power down during take-off?

The airline soon learned that they messed with the wrong person – the 17 year-old with autism was a celebrity even before this event. Carly Fleischmann had been featured on ABC News, CNN and The Ellen DeGeneres Show. According to Disability Scoop, she also had 42,000 fans on Facebook and some 26,000 Twitter followers. Many of them were quick to respond, flooding American Airlines' Facebook page to demand answers.

Wow. Forty-two thousand Facebook fans and 26,000 followers on Twitter - that's worth repeating. It is powerful. Although the focus of the media attention was appropriately on the substance of the incident, this story provides an extraordinary (albeit ironic) example about how technology can be harnessed to empower people with disabilities to become uber-advocates. And it raises two important questions -- how can we help to fast forward this important development for self-advocates, and how can we as providers use technology to generate that level of engagement with all of our constituencies?

The ANCOR Government Relations team is working in coalition with a number of other organizations to advocate for responsible federal policy that recognizes people with disabilities should have the opportunity to benefit from accessible technology and technology enabled supports to maintain independent lives and maximize health options. These technologies, including commercial off-the-shelf products, should be readily available from a variety of program funding sources and can help to make services more cost-effective. We will be urging the 113th Congress to facilitate access to new technology from all sources to support the independence, inclusion and community participation of people with disabilities.

ANCOR leverages technology at every opportunity, but we have not yet harnessed the kind of power Carly demonstrated. We use several web platforms and social media to communicate with our members and others in the disability community. Our communications and government relations team works hard to leverage the most effective technology. We tweet, we post to Facebook, we leverage LinkedIn, the legislative action alerts we send out link you to our web-based grassroots advocacy tool. ANCOR's Connected Community has become a powerful forum for information sharing. It has become a virtual "state share" and powerful member networking vehicle. But we all can do better, and Carly's story shows us that it can be done.

Imagine the possibilities.



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Top Ten Guidelines for Adopting New Technology

Rodney Bell

A step-by-step guide to managing new technology

Have you ever spent a bundle on technology that didn't pan out? There are many emerging products and services to help providers and consumers: remote monitoring and supervision, simplified Internet, social media, IT use in the field, smart phones and tablets, communication apps, task prompters, scheduling tools, memory aids, way-finders and more. Do you like the promise, but are you afraid to take the leap? I invite you to consider these guidelines for successful technology adoption.

1. **The user is king.** Keep the interests of users at the fore – more so, the end-beneficiary, our consumers. Stakeholders are many and not all interests align. Paramount is a positive outcome for consumers and a stronger organization. “User-centered” from start to finish is the approach to follow.
2. **It's the process!** Have one and follow it. A systematic, repeatable process gets results. The bigger the adoption project, the more process (the converse is also true). Typical phases are needs assessment, solution options, feasibility study, selection and acquisition, implementation (installation, training and change management), support and continuous improvement. Iterative, incremental approaches help manage risks in adopting larger, more pervasive systems.
3. **Who's in charge?** Without a project leader, things fall through the cracks or slide. Each phase might have a different person in charge but the leading stakeholder ought to manage end-to-end. With differences and resistance inevitable, a key to effective leadership is getting all the team to pull together.
4. **Where does it hurt?** What are your organization's pain points? What does your staff need to work better; your consumer, to live better? Start with needs, not solutions. Envision the outcome of satisfying those needs. A needs assessment should be thorough but prioritize needs where solutions will do the most good.
5. **Get the best.** First identify a short list of products or services that seem to satisfy your needs. Then assess their feasibility in three areas. Is the technology market-ready? Do the finances work out? Can your organization make the solution work? Verify these results in each phase of adoption.
6. **Try it first.** The bigger the system, the more important this is. Evaluation at each stage of adoption helps verify that you're on track. Demos and trials help show feasibility. Pilot tests reveal how things will work and what changes are needed for full implementation. Phased roll-outs shelter later users from the problems of those going first.
7. **Manage change.** The whole point of new technology is to do things better. This means changing how your organization works but not too fast. Jobs, roles, practices and processes can all be affected. Some practical issues can arise: training, resistance, job change and new hires. The more people a technology engages, the bigger and slower the changes will be. To guide change management, describe or model how things will work after adopting the new technology.
8. **Reduce risks.** Cutting edge technologies pose more risk than those with a user base. Pick a solution that matches your risk tolerance: early adopter or follow the crowd. Conduct a frank risk assessment and manage big risks with action to reduce likelihood and consequences. One way to mitigate risks is to get help. For big tasks, partners; for funding, grants; direction, an advisory board; critical skills, contractors.
9. **Accept Failure.** This might seem counterintuitive, but nothing always works the way we expect or need. Look out for problems and opposition. Be prepared to recover from them when it arises. Like the Marines, the resilient organization can “adapt and overcome.”
10. **Continuous improvement.** Implementing new technology is the start not end of getting benefits. Technology and its host organization co-evolve endlessly. If you measure the benefits of new technology, you can improve how your organization and technology work together for good.

Applying guidelines like these can help your organization get the most from new technology. In turn, staff will work more effectively and make a difference in consumers' lives.

Rodney Bell is a consultant with ASSET Consulting LLC. Working in conjunction with the Coleman Institute, Bell advises disability organizations on how to adopt, market or develop emerging technologies. He can be reached at assetcon@easystreet.net.



Using Technology to Improve Service Delivery

Michael R. Lardiere, LCSW

Technology and personal assistance go hand-in-hand.

I recently had the honor and pleasure of presenting at the Coleman Institute Conference and ANCOR Technology Summit. The presentations over those two days provided some valuable insight into the use of technology and convergence between the mental health/substance use and cognitive disability fields.

Providers serving clients with cognitive disabilities are in many ways far more advanced in their use of technology than their mental health/substance use provider counterparts. This is clearly evident in their use of remote monitoring and other assisted devices for their clients. The use of personal assistant devices that can monitor a person's activity at home was especially enlightening. One session provided a real world example where the father of a man in his mid-20s was able to monitor his son's movements during the day, without the invasion of a video feed. He was able to track in real time through sensors placed strategically in the young man's apartment that the young man got up in the morning, used the bathroom and opened his medicine cabinet, that he went to the refrigerator several times and ultimately used the front door to leave. With no other movement being generated in the home the father was fairly secure in the knowledge that his son took care of himself and was able to get to his place of employment. The use of bio sensor technology provided enough support and monitoring without the intrusion of a live video feed. The young man had enough assistance to live independently. Without these services he would have had to live in a group home or other congregate care setting to receive the level of support necessary and would not be able to live independently. It was reported that the cost of the technology was less than the cost of providing a group home setting.

These same types of services are applicable to the many mental health/substance use clients that are not quite capable of living independently due to their illness. The difference at this time is the technology is secured and financed for the cognitively disabled but these services are not a covered benefit under Medicaid and Medicare for people with mental illness or substance use disorders. These services are also very applicable for many geriatric patients striving to live independently as well. As the caregiver for my 86 year-old mother, I could have used these same devices to ensure she was doing well during the day without having the intrusion of video. Although I had asked her about it she flatly refused to have a video feed in the home.

Mental health and substance use providers, however, are far more advanced in the use of electronic health records and sharing information than their cognitive disability counterparts. Few of the cognitive disability providers share information electronically with their treatment partners or are aware of Meaningful Use criteria. This is not surprising given that most cognitive disability providers are not eligible for Meaningful Use Incentive Payments. Only physicians and, in some cases nurse practitioners, would be eligible. However, when I queried the audience about this most of the cognitive disability providers do not employ these practitioners.

So why would Meaningful Use -- and its goals of capturing information in a structured format, using the information to track key clinical conditions, communicating the information for care coordination purposes, implementing clinical decision support tools to facilitate disease and medication management and using EHRs to engage patients and families -- be important to cognitive disability providers? If we focus on providing the best quality care for the people we serve, the use of technology and the goals above begin to make sense. Capturing information in a structured format, using the information to track key clinical indicators (such as generating a list of all clients across the organization that may have missed their follow up appointment and providing clinical decision support prompting all of the providers involved in a client's treatment to perform the correct intervention at the correct time) can only improve quality care. Communicating with the other providers involved in a client's care is yet another major aspect of providing quality care to your clients.

With the many demands on organizations and limited resources, where should a provider start? In my opinion, providers should start by establishing the ability to electronically communicate in a secure manner with the client's treatment providers. Direct Secure Messaging is the standard for point to point secure provider communication. Begin to communicate with the rest of the treatment providers. Your clients will benefit immensely. Then look to build the rest of your systems depending on what you have in place now and where your organization and the rest of the provider community are in the technology continuum.

You are not alone in this. The National Council provides services specifically targeted to help providers adopt or enhance their technology including on-boarding to obtain a Direct Secure address and implement other technology solutions.

Michael R. Lardiere, LCSW is the Vice President Health Information Technology and Strategic Development at the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare which provides a consulting service targeted to assist the mental health/substance use and cognitive disability communities.



AbleLink Opens Doors

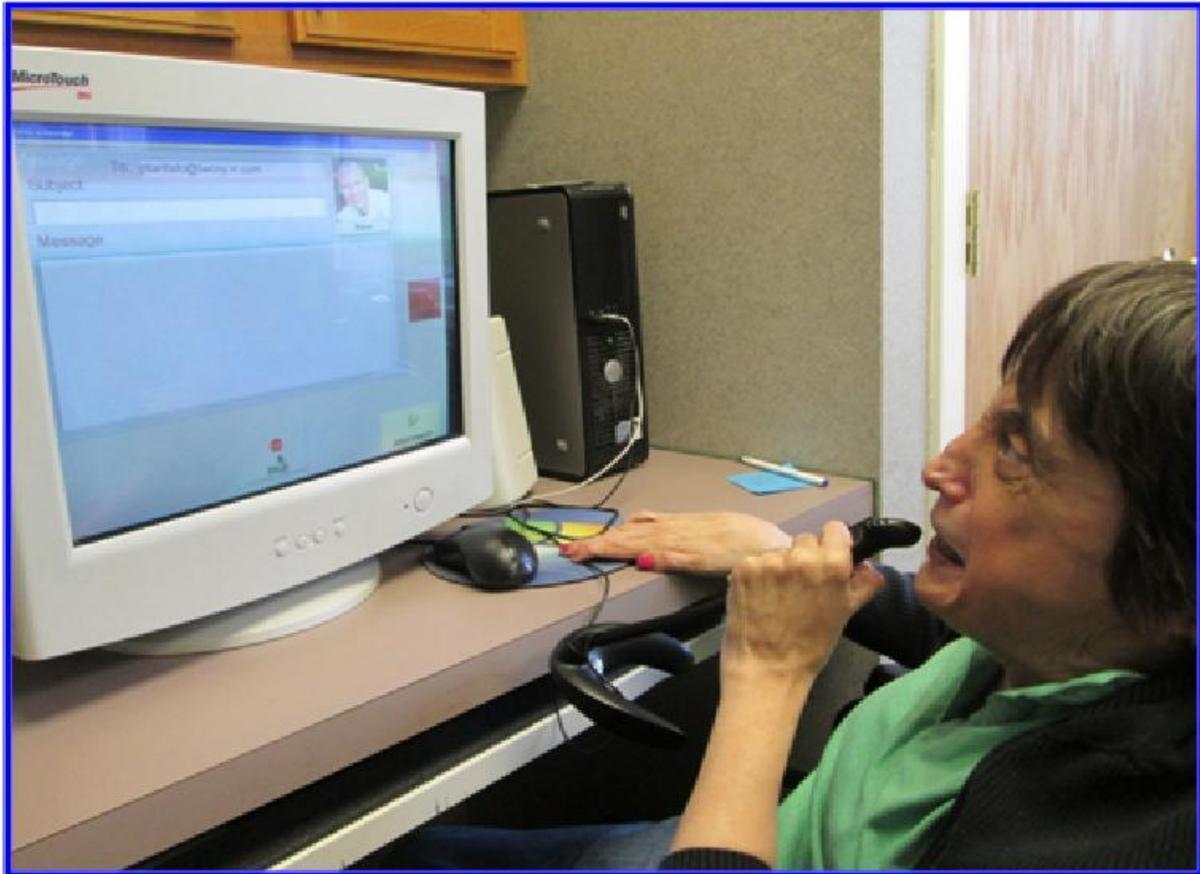
Sarah Reddy

Abel Link software enables people with disabilities access to technology.

My first exposure to the AbleLink Technologies was during an assistive technology conference in 2005, where they presented the accessible Desktop Solutions Voyager Suite which was written specifically to meet the needs of people with intellectual disabilities. As a special educator serving within the Heritage Christian Services day program, I was thrilled at the opportunity for the individuals I support to improve their literacy and communication skills using mainstream technology. The vision for "lifelong learning in a dignified manner" has been the driving force behind our accessible technology achievements. All Heritage Christian day habilitation programs have universally designed technology such as computers, touch screen monitors, visually enhanced keyboards, switch activated software and the Voyager Suite from AbleLink Technologies.

Before Voyager Suite was introduced, individuals depended on staff to log in, open desired software and to read and/or send emails. A whole new world opened when we started using the software from AbleLink. Since then, AbleLink has created a wide variety of software products for the PC, tablet, PDA and iPad. Each product is precisely written to be adapted and adjusted per the needs and cognitive abilities of the people we support. Since using these software products, I have seen a tremendous impact for individuals served within our programs, such as greater computer independence, improved communication with family members and friends as well as the ability to participate in typical activities of the business world like emailing and Internet search -- all because of the specialized software.

AbleLink software has already opened Internet doors for many.



Nancy uses the Web Trek Connect emailing system. She has a large family who are located around the country. She thoroughly enjoys sending them emails using the picture address book and microphone. She initiates the process to log-in, open the email program and recipient selection using the touch screen monitor. When she receives an email from a member of her address book, she can see their picture and hear the computer read the email aloud. Without these special features of Web Trek Connect, Nancy would need assistance from her support staff to communicate through email.



Mary is a very gregarious lady with many friends. Due to her cognitive impairments, she cannot use the computer or traditional

email accounts independently. With Voyager Suite, Mary can open her individualized desktop, use educational software shortcut buttons displayed on her desktop, search the Internet using her favorites page on Web Trek, and send and receive emails using Web Trek Connect. She chooses who she would like to email by selecting the picture in her address book. She enjoys receiving mail from friends and family.

Accessible and adaptive educational products such as ones from AbleLink Technologies have changed the “playing field” and addressed the disparity between typical learners and those with intellectual disabilities.

Sarah Reddy is an educator with Heritage Christian Services. She can be reached at sreddy@heritagechristianservices.org.



Designing a Home for All of Us

Nicole Cadovius, MBA, LNHA, CTRS

Green technology is at the forefront of renewable and technology assisted buildings, ideal for persons with disabilities.

“What does it take to create the best living environments for individuals with special needs, particularly as they age and their needs evolve”?

Ability Beyond Disability is a private, non-profit agency serving individuals with disabilities in Connecticut and New York since 1953. Currently, 1500 individuals receive Service Coordination, Community Collaboration support, Residential, Clinical, Educational, Vocational, Transitional, and Transportation Services.

Consistent with Ability Beyond Disability’s vision and growth plans, a comprehensive Reconfiguration Project Team was developed – including agency employees and external experts in the fields of universal design, landscape and building architecture, and technology – to research, evaluate and design the future of Residential Services, encompassing environmental and program design.

The Reconfiguration project evolved from our own quest to provide the highest quality services for individuals with disabilities by designing programs in which they could age in place. The goal was to explore and define optimal environments that allow and enhance the type of programs which enable an individual with disabilities to grow and live a life of meaning and independence to the best of that individual’s ability.

Current service delivery was evaluated and gaps in services examined, while exploring new developments, alternate programs, and environments across the country. National and local trends such as the changing economic landscape, competition for resources both monetary and human resources, increased complex care needs in the community, and advances in building design and technological enhancements were considerations in designing the ultimate flexible residential environment

Beyond the environment, approaches to caring for an individual throughout the life span through community integrated programs, advocacy, and the six dimensions of wellness (Dr. Bill Hettler, 1976) -- emotional, physical, spiritual, social, intellectual, and vocational -- were developed by the team.

The key elements in designing the best environment for individuals as they age are universal design, green technology, maintenance free materials, smart home and assistive technology. While these are more expensive than conventional building approaches, there is a large return on investment through more efficient operations, staffing related cost reductions, and most importantly increased quality of life.

Universal Design is the concept that every aspect of the built environment is designed to be inherently accessible to all. Every home should look and feel like a home to the greatest extent possible and practical, while incorporating accommodations to assure the home is universally accessible.

Green technology and maintenance free materials allow for longevity and efficiency. Green technology encompasses a continuously evolving group of methods and materials, from techniques for generating energy to non-toxic cleaning products. (Learn more at the Center for Sustainable Business and Technology at greentechnology.org) Maintenance free materials are those which have a more durable composition and require relatively little care.

Assistive and smart home technologies reduce barriers allowing individuals to participate more actively within the six dimensions of wellness. As individuals age they may experience functional limitations associated with disabilities. Assistive technologies help persons with disabilities perform daily tasks by making up for physical, sensory, and cognitive impairments, and by promoting self management and independence. Electronic medical and service records provide essential support for the coordination of care in all aspects of health, functional independence and daily living.

While there is no substitute for open communication with direct care professionals and individuals with disabilities themselves, designing an environment with components of universal design, green building, maintenance free products, and technology allows for a better quality of life. These components promote function, independence, and well being through individual programming in environments which provide efficiencies in operations such as energy costs, staffing related costs and maintenance. A well designed facility supported by individualized programs optimizes the potential for empowering independence and growth within the six dimensions of wellness.

Nicole Cadovius is the director of CT Licensed Facilities at Ability Beyond Disability.



Quality CRM Software to Better Serve

Maurizio Pittau

Customer Relationship Management software eases the challenges providers can run into, while establishing better care for their clients.

Good software systems for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is essential. The direct support professional's primary role is to provide care for persons served and the community, so any way to improve their level of service should be embraced. CRM software systems that use the latest in customer service technology can help achieve this.

The best CRM software allows direct support professionals to have successful interactions with persons served and other departments, prioritize and organize their schedules and measure and evaluate the effectiveness of their customer service – all within an intuitive and flexible platform with an easy-to-use interface.

The key considerations when choosing a CRM system should be:

- The quality and efficiency of the software and its relative usability
- The cost effectiveness of the system and its long-term profitability
- How the software can improve client satisfaction and care standards in the community.

There are two kinds of direct support professionals' software currently available in the U.S. The first kind is the one that most are already familiar with, the traditional proprietary systems that have been widely used for decades. Expensive, cumbersome and at times unreliable, these systems demand that direct support professionals be present at their desks for long periods of time while they update client records and write up reports.

The second type of software is one that is changing the way we work for the better. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems which utilize cloud-based computing networks allow for much greater working behaviors. This new technology connects CRM platforms with a Software as a Service (SaaS) model accessible via the Internet from any laptop, PC or mobile device. This method of working allows direct support professionals to manage their case loads, update their client records and file their reports in a way that works with, rather than against, their busy schedules.

High quality CRM software can benefit in the following ways:

- Improving the overall level of customer service
- Increasing operational efficiency and expediency

- Increasing compliance and accountability
- Delivering better standards of care
- Creating collaborative working and shared services
- Improving staff productivity and satisfaction

If you're seeking the most up-to-date technology to run your CRM systems it's time to take the leap into the next era of care services software.

CareWork's CareDirector CRM software provides direct care professionals with a highly adaptive and responsive IT system which allows them to record, report and analyse information and anticipate future needs. A suite of integrated applications including calendar, email and spreadsheets enable direct support professionals to manage caseloads, interact with persons served and conduct evaluations in a much more flexible way.

CareDirector uses a proven, tested and industry recognized IT platform from Microsoft Dynamics. The cloud-based software is certified with 'Microsoft Dynamics CRM quality accreditation' which means it has passed rigorous independent testing.

The CareDirector CRM social care software provides direct support professionals and the community with easier access to services and information for care users which means greater engagement and participation between them and persons served. This increased sense of collaboration between local government authorities and the people they represent results in greater Customer Relationship Management.

To learn more about how CareDirector's CRM social work tool is helping to revolutionize social care in our communities visit www.careworkssoftware.com.

Maurizio Pittau is the Marketing Manager for CareWorks, one of the sponsors of ANCOR's Tech Summit in October. He can be reached at mpittau@careworks.ie or (202) 470 0914.



In Other News

The Future of Staff Training

Sherry Beamer, MSW

E-learning and other Internet-based training tools have become all the rage. These tools enable employers to train and keep their employees up-to-date with the latest information at a minimum expense.

As many research studies by think tanks such as Gartner and entries to current online blogs emphasize, the future of staff training most definitely includes web based approaches. As organizations that support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities provide more individualized services in remote locations and are in constant need of cost efficient administrative structures, web based training adoption is increasing. Below are highlights of the web based staff training value:

- E-learning programs are quick starts: A library subscription service provides cost savings in research and development and fast deployment of staff curriculum.
- Increase in knowledge based cultures: As learners can self pace and access E-learning modules as their schedules accommodate, work cultures become knowledge based.
- Support for constantly shifting roles: E-learning programs allow for quick distribution of new skill and critical improvement content without the lag time of classroom or retreat based training.
- Affordable high quality content: Renowned practitioners are repurposing content for wide distribution on affordable platforms.
- Quality content for all: Small organizations can now affordably access the same caliber of content that often in the past only large organizations with human resources and training budgets could afford.

- Wireless technology reaches remote locations: With constantly improving wireless options, remote staff can now easily access E-learning portals to maintain skills and best practices without traveling to urban centers for live training.

Essential Learning partners with ANCOR to provide members with discounted online learning solutions. Members may contact Essential Learning for more information and to set up online demonstrations of service offerings by calling 1-800-729-9198 x212 or emailing InfoDD@EssentialLearning.com. Essential Learning offers a comprehensive library of accredited online training developed with national experts, as well as subscription services to its Learning Management System (LMS). Essential Learning customers use the LMS and courses to meet compliance and accreditation requirements and ongoing staff development, as well as continuing education credit for many types of licensed professional staff who work with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



Change of Leadership at Indiana State Provider Association

Jim Hammond announces retirement, Kim Opsahl appointed as his replacement.



Jim Hammond, President/CEO of INARF, is retiring after 34 years. An active ANCOR member, Jim has always been very involved in government relations, particularly in regard to employment issues and ANCOR's State Association Executive Forum.

Kim Opsahl, current Vice President and COO of INARF, will assume Jim's role as President/CEO. Kim also is a fixture at ANCOR Government Relations and State Association Executives meetings. We'll certainly miss Jim's good counsel but we are fortunate that INARF will continue to be so well represented by Kim.

Recently, Jim sat down with The Arc of Indiana for a short interview. You can view the video of that conversation [here](#).





Did You Know

U.S. Bank's AccelaPay Card

Did you know U.S. Bank's AccelaPay[®] Card can be used for expense reimbursements, bonuses, and incentives? Find details [here](#).



Did you know U.S. Bank's AccelaPay[®] Card can be used for expense reimbursements, bonuses, and incentives? Find details [here](#).

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