Spinal Cord Injuries and Assistive Technology

A brief list of assistive technology that may be beneficial for individuals whom have suffered a spinal cord injury.

*Special thanks to Paint the Streets 5K in memory of Carlene Hall for helping to provide equipment for demo and loan.

Please contact T.A.S.C. for free informational sessions, to schedule an evaluation, to borrow a device or software, or for additional training.

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- **Computer Access**
  - Microsoft Accessibility Wizard
    - On all Windows computers there is an easy Accessibility Wizard to help identify tools within the operating system to make it easier to use.
    - Start>All Programs>Accessories>Accessibility>Accessibility Wizard
  - Voice Activation
    - *Dragon Naturally Speaking
    - Windows Operating System
  - Alternative Mouse
    - Clicking Utility- http://www.polital.com/pnc/
    - Trackball/Marble mouse—mouse stays stationary, move ball around. Can be used with other body parts like the foot, elbow, chin, etc.
    - Touch Pad—Standard with most laptops, can be purchased as USB.
    - Foot Mouse-Mouse operated by pushing pedals with the foot.
    - Head Mouse—Infrared dot used on head, nose, chin, etc. and camera on computer tracks the movement of the dot.
      (Free utility: http://www.cameramouse.org/)
    - *Joystick Mouse-Control computer with joystick.
    - Switch Access Mouse Utility—Software program that provides menu for person to use switch to select which way mouse moves.
      - Cross Scanner-- http://www.imgpresents.com
        http://www.rjcooper.com
      - Scan Buddy- http://www.ahf-net.com
    - *Wireless Computer Access Switch
    - *Impulse Bluetooth Switch
    - Eye Gaze—Mouse controlled by eye movement.
  - Alternative Keyboards
    - One handed typing-http://www.aboutonehandtyping.com/
    - On-screen keyboard-provides a way to type using an application that runs within most Windows' program.
      - Windows free version in Accessories Folder
      - Click-N-Type - http://www.lakefolks.org/cnt/
  - E-Books- access to books in electronic format
    - Bookshare.org; Kindle; Ebooks.com ; iPad

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- **Environmental Control**
  - Capabilities Switches
    - *Wireless Ultimate
    - *Tilt Switch
    - *Button Click Switch
    - *Possum Chin Switch
    - *Big Red Twist Switch
    - * String Switch
    - * Impulse Switch
    - *Microlight
    - * Impulse Switch
    - *Pillow Switch
    - Sip N Puff
  - Switch Activated
    - *Powerlink
    - *Relax
    - *Switch Adapted MP 3 Player
    - *Click-On
  - Infrared Controlled light switches (X-10; Z-Wave)
  - Voice Activated Environmental Control
    - *IntelaPlug
    - *Acenda Voice Control for iPod
    - Invoca TV remote
    - *SiCare
  - Simple Solutions
    - As Seen On TV
      - Light with String
      - Light Switch Anywhere
    - Oversized TV Remote
      - *Wireless Doorbell (call button)
  - Vendors of Home Adaptation
    - http://www.broadenedhorizons.com/
    - http://www.saje-tech.com/
    - http://www.breakboundaries.com/
    - http://www.smarthome.com
- **IPad**
  - Communication Apps
    - *Predictable
    - Speak It
  - Switch Access
    - *Bluetooth Super-Switch
    - *Bluetooth Switch Interface
  - Mounts
    - *SeaSucker

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- **Communication**
  - Low Tech Solutions
    - Voice Amplification
    - Eye Gaze Frame
    - Flip Communication Book
    - Yes/No Switch
  - High Tech/Dynamic Communication Devices
    - Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices (AAC) enable a person to communicate using pre-programmed messages as well as create new messages through typing. (Also known as Speech Generating Devices (SGD) or Augmentative Communication Devices (ACD))
    - AAC devices vary greatly and it is important to have the opportunity to try several devices prior to making a decision.
      - Dynavox-- http://www.dynavoxtech.com
      - FRS- http://www.frs-solutions.com/
      - Prentke Romich -- http://www.prentrom.com/
      - Words+ -- http://www.words-plus.com/
    - The High Tech/Dynamic AAC devices are basically computers and many have the ability to learn infrared in order to control the environment like the television or stereo.
    - Individuals can access or use the devices in different ways:
      - Typing
      - Mouse/Joystick
      - Direct Selecting on Touch Screen
      - Head Mouse
      - Switches and Scanning
      - Eye Gaze (Move eyes, move cursor)
    - Funding an AAC device
      - Medicare and most private insurance will fund AAC devices but there are specific requirements that must be met:
        - AAC Evaluation by a Speech Therapist who has continuing education in AAC
        - Individual must not currently be served in a skill nursing care facility or hospice
        - Insurance will only fund a device every 5-7 years, so it important to chose a device that will work for many years.
        - Insurance will fund the purchase of switches, head mouse, eye gaze, or mounting devices if there is a change in medical condition making it impossible to continue to use an AAC device.
        - Federal Blue Cross/Blue Shield only provides very limited funding for AAC devices (June 2011).

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- **Where to find AT support:**
  - Employer
    - Must provide accommodations in workplace
    - Federal Employees have access to CAP (Computer/Electronics Accommodations Program). http://www.tricare.mil/CAP/index.cfm
    - Job Accommodation Network (http://www.jan.wvu.edu/)
  - Alabama Head Injury Foundation
    - http://www.ahif.org/
  - Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
    - Vocational Rehabilitation
    - SAIL (State of Alabama Independent Living/Homebound Service)
    - 1-800-441-7607
    - http://www.rehab.state.al.us
  - Technology Assistance for Special Consumers (T.A.S.C.)
    - Free demonstrations & information
    - Lending library
    - Training
    - Assistive Technology Evaluations (Identify what tools may best assist in doing a specific evaluation)
    - Communication Evaluations (How to communicate if voice is unintelligible; may be referred as AAC, ACD, or SGD)
    - www.ucptasc.org
    - (256) 859-8300
  - STAR centers (Alabama's Assistive Technology Resource)
    - Centers throughout the state
    - Provide reutilization of durable medical equipment at no cost (walkers, lifts, shower chairs)
    - Alternative Finance Program (loan program for helping finance AT)
    - http://www.rehab.state.al.us
  - Assistive Technology Websites
    - http://www.ataccess.org/
    - http://www.microsoft.com/enable/
    - http://www.abledata.com/
    - http://www.christopherreeve.org

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