



ELSEVIER

Technology and Disability 7 (1997) 131–132

Technology
and Disability

Introduction

This issue marks the initiation of a new feature for *Technology and Disability*: inclusion of winning submissions of design competitions. The American Society on Aging hosts an annual competition in which inventors and companies submit what they consider products that meet the needs of older consumers. We describe and provide pictures for the 1997 winners of the ASA design competition in this issue. In the final issue of 1998, we plan to include winners of other design competitions, such as those held at the RESNA conference and the Maddock competition held at the American Occupational Therapy Conference.

While our past issues have each had a theme, this issue includes primarily unsolicited submissions, encompassing service delivery, assistive devices and a perspective on disability policy.

Andrew Brule provides a detailed description of the development of an assistive technology service delivery program 'on wheels' — in fact, on the wheels supporting a 34-foot truck. This 'truck' provides rehabilitation engineering services in British Columbia, Canada.

Kathryn Woodcock discusses automatic speech recognition (ASR) and provides an analysis of the type of environment needed for its successful use by persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. The interface of user, environment and device are explored in the context of the current state of the art with ASR technology.

Debra Sheets, Jim Emerman and Dennis LaBuda report on their national survey of State

Units on Aging and Area Agencies on Aging, in which they explored services related to assistive technology and home modifications for older persons. Their results suggest a need for improved services at the local level.

Courtney Burke conducted a survey of programs that 'recycle' assistive technology. She reports differences in how these programs operate, the types of equipment they recycle and their funding base. For agencies considering the establishment of an assistive technology recycling program, this article should prove very valuable.

Older persons often face multiple impairments. For an individual who has difficulty walking and also limited movement and pain in the hands, it may be difficult to use a cane with a traditional handle. Chia-Yang Chung reports on a study he conducted evaluating the design of five cane handles, all of which were developed for persons with pain in their hands but who require a cane for mobility.

We live in the information age, but many people, including those with disabilities, have difficulty accessing important information. Gregg Vanderheiden provides a vision of a consumer-friendly and consumer-responsive information system in his paper: A Cooperative, Distributed, Single Entry Information System. This system could be assembled with existing resources. While drawing heavily on resources associated with the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilita-

tion Research, this envisioned system could die in virtually all disability information sources.

Disability policy often relates to funding and often involves difficult choices. The recent discussions prompted by Christopher Reeve's injury and disability are analyzed by Rory Cooper. In a very frank 'Perspectives' article, Cooper discusses pol-

icy directed toward finding cures vs. policy directed at finding ways to live successfully with disability.

William C. Mann