

## Introduction to the Assistive Technology Section

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Assistive technology holds the promise for persons with disabilities to obtain and maintain gainful employment. The Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988 (reauthorized as the Assistive Technology Act of 1998) and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 provided access to evaluation services and devices in employment. Technology solutions are one of the reasonable accommodations available to persons with disabilities that assure an opportunity to use their skills in gainful employment. Solutions can include low technology such as adapted aids and rearrangement of workstations and high technology such as electronic devices and systems. Technology solutions consist of assistive technology devices and systems and individuals using the devices and systems within the workplace. Over the years, progress has been made in increasing awareness of the benefits and availability of assistive technology. However, implementation of services and access to appropriate devices remain concerns of practitioners, employers, and employees. This special section of *Work: A Journal of Prevention, Assessment & Rehabilitation* provides examples of research exploring the questions of outcomes and activities that make participation in employment possible and case examples of evaluation and implementation of technology solutions in employment.

The Job Accommodation Network has been assisting employers and persons with disabilities in finding appropriate technology solutions. Shoshana Shamberg describes in detail the evaluation and selection process for two case studies. In her article, Ms. Shamberg provides a cogent example of best practices an occupational therapy practitioner can provide in the work place.

To develop a successful technology solution requires the provision and coordination of assistive technology services: evaluation, matching and selecting devices and systems, and reevaluation or follow-up. The outcome of use in the work place is poorly understood or documented. Todd Schwanke and Roger O. Smith describe the exploratory work of the ATOMS Project in identifying existing data that may assist us in documenting the effectiveness of technology solutions in the work place. All of the articles provide us with clear examples in improving first-rate technology solutions in the work place for person with disabilities.

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