

Technology and Disability Policy Highlights

September 2017

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Overview

“Disasters Don’t Plan Ahead. You Can.” was the theme of September 2017’s National Preparedness Month. Though the annual awareness month has come to an end, remember to stay ready. For emergency preparedness and planning tips for individuals with disabilities/access and functional needs, please visit <http://ready.ga.gov/make-a-plan/georgians-with-access-functional-needs/>. The nation’s Emergency Alert System (EAS) was tested on September 27, 2017, to evaluate and ensure its readiness in the event of a presidential emergency message. The Wireless RERC took the nationwide test as an opportunity to [gather data](https://gatech.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e5JxLNplapRYJvf) on the accessibility of the visual and audio elements of the EAS test message. Findings will be reported to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and other relevant agencies and industries. These will be recommendations on improving access to emergency information specifically, and design considerations in general, when captions and audio are incorporated into apps or other media.

The FCC’s Chairman, Ajit Pai, continued the public safety theme with his announcement [Urg[ing] Apple To Activate FM Chips To Promote Public Safety](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/index.do?document=346949). The wireless industry has long resisted this move, but over the years, more and more phone models have activated the FM chip which allows the user to listen to the radio via their cell phone. In another effort regarding mobile phones, the FCC is expected to release, in early October, rule changes to hearing aid compatibility (HAC) regulations. It will address, among other things, moving towards a requirement to steadily increase the amount of wireless handsets required to be HAC compliant, and application of volume control rules to mobile phones to enhance the quality of the sound for individual user needs.

In Wireless RERC News, we launched our latest Survey of User Needs (SUN). The SUN is the Wireless RERC's cornerstone survey on wireless technology use by people with disabilities. It has been completed by over 7,500 consumers with disabilities since it was first launched in 2001. This latest version represents the 6th version of the survey, which is updated periodically in response to changes in technology. In addition to questions about cell phone and tablet use, this latest version of the SUN collects information about wearables, "smart" home technologies, and other next-generation wirelessly connected devices. User responses will help designers and engineers make new wireless devices and services for people with disabilities. Data from the SUN also provides important information to the wireless industry, government regulators, and other researchers to help them make wireless technology more accessible and more useful to people with all types of disabilities.

The survey is available at<http://b.gatech.edu/2yvCHnz>. If you have a disability, please consider taking this survey. If you know someone who has a disability, please forward the survey to them.

This issue also includes news about the ADA legislation, Nation Disability Employment Awareness Months, smart homes, accessible travel, wearables, artificial intelligence, and more.

**Click the headings below to link directly to a particular section.**

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Legislative Activities

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Education and Reform Act of 2017**

September 7, 2017 - Introduced to the House of Representatives in January 2017, the *ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017* [**H.R.620**] was advanced by the House Judiciary Committee vote to report the bill (Yeas and Nays: 15 – 9). It can now be considered outside of the Committee by the full House. H.R. 620 proposes to require a person or persons with a disability alleging ADA violations first to notify the entity in writing, allowing them the opportunity to remedy alleged ADA violations. This step is intended to precede and potentially prevent the need to file a complaint with Department of Justice (DoJ) or to pursue a private civil lawsuit. Additionally, the bill proposes that the DoJ, property owners, and people with disabilities “develop a program to educate State and local governments and property owners…on access to public accommodations for persons with a disability.” The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) and Coalition Partners oppose H.R. 620, stating that it “would create significant obstacles for people with disabilities to enforce their rights under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).”

#### Additional Information:

[*ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017* [**H.R. 620**]](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/620/text)

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/620/text>

[Letter of Opposition to H.R. 620 - Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) and Coalition Partners](http://www.advocacymonitor.com/add-your-organization-as-a-signatory-to-ccds-letter-of-opposition-to-the-ada-education-and-reform-act-of-2017/)

<http://www.advocacymonitor.com/add-your-organization-as-a-signatory-to-ccds-letter-of-opposition-to-the-ada-education-and-reform-act-of-2017/>

Regulatory Activities

**October 2017 is National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

The contributions and achievements of people with disabilities are recognized and celebrated during October’s National Disability Employment Awareness (NDEAM).  The Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) announced the 2017 theme for NDEAM, “Inclusion Drives Innovation.” U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta stated, “Americans of all abilities must have access to good, safe jobs… Smart employers know that including different perspectives in problem-solving situations leads to better solutions. Hiring employees with diverse abilities strengthens their business, increases competition, and drives innovation.” Look for the release of the 2017 NDEAM poster.

#### Additional Information:

[Read the news release](https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/odep/odep20170802)

[<https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/odep/odep20170802>]

[You can learn more about NDEAM history, obtain planning tools, and get materials at the link below.](https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/)

[<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/>]

**Chairman Pai in Favor of FM Chips Activation on Mobile Phones**

September 28, 2017 – FCC Chairman Ajit Pai has put enabling the FM chip in mobile phones back on the table. The wireless industry has long resisted this move, but over the years, more and more phone models have activated the FM chip which allows the user to listen to the radio via their cell phone. Chairman Pai asserts that enabling the FM Chip capability would allow for access to emergency broadcasts and other pertinent emergency information during power outages as a result of weather or other large-scale disaster events. He stated, “In recent years, I’ve repeatedly called on the wireless industry to activate the FM chips that are already installed in almost all smartphones sold in the United States. And I’ve specifically pointed out the public safety benefits of doing so. When wireless networks go down during a natural disaster, smartphones with activated FM chips can allow Americans to get vital lifesaving information.” The Wireless RERC concurs, and further points out that radio access via a mobile device, could provide a lifeline to emergency information for people with vision loss. On the radio phone numbers, web addresses, and other details are read out loud for the listeners, compared to television reports which often direct viewers to look at the screen for the web address, weather map, or evacuation route, etc.

#### Additional Information

[Chairman Pai Urges Apple To Activate FM Chips To Promote Public Safety](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/index.do?document=346949)

Word: [DOC-346949A1.docx](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-346949A1.docx)

PDF: [DOC-346949A1.pdf](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-346949A1.pdf)

Text: [DOC-346949A1.txt](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-346949A1.txt)

**Nationwide Test of the Emergency Alert System**

September 27, 2017 - The FCC and the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau conducted a nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) on September 27, 2017, at 2:20 P.M. EDT. The EAS test was used to assess the reliability of the national emergency communications system in the event of a disaster. The Public Notice [**PS Docket No. 15-94**] announcing the test stated that the EAS test message should have a variety of audiovisual components, including an auditory attention signal, an audio announcement in English and Spanish, a text-crawl of the audio information, and an end of message marker. The test must also clearly state that it is only a test.

#### Additional Information:

[FCC Public Notice on National EAS 2017 Test](https://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2017/db0814/DA-17-767A1.pdf)

[<https://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2017/db0814/DA-17-767A1.pdf>]

**Pending Hearing Aid Compatibility (HAC) Regulatory Updates**

September 26, 2017 – A *Report & Order and Order on Reconsideration* is expected to be released in early October concerning rule changes to hearing aid compatibility (HAC) regulations. It will address, among other things, moving towards a requirement to steadily increase the amount of wireless handsets required to be HAC compliant and application of volume control rules to mobile phones to enhance the quality of the sound for individual user needs. In February 2016, the Wireless RERC filed comments in the HAC Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. The comments, in large part, were informed by analyses of data collected via the Wireless RERC’s hearing aid compatibility (HAC) survey research. More details will follow in the October issue of the TDPH regarding the new HAC rules and if the research informed regulatory decisions.

#### Additional Information:

News Release: [Docx](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-346894A1.docx) [Pdf](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-346894A1.pdf) [Txt](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-346894A1.txt)

[<https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-proposes-ease-hac-reporting-regs-small-wireless-carriers>]

[FCC Announces Tentative Agenda for October Open Meeting](http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2017/db1003/DOC-347041A1.pdf)

[<http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2017/db1003/DOC-347041A1.pdf>]

**FCC Seeking Input on Formal Complaint Procedures**

September 18, 2017 – The FCC released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) *In the Matter of Amendment of Procedural Rules Governing Formal Complaint Proceedings Delegated to the Enforcement Bureau* [**17­245**]. The NPRM proposes to make the formal complaint procedures uniform across complaints filed under Section 208 of the Communications Act of 1934, pole attachment complaints (Section 244), and disability access complaints (Sections 255, 716, and 718). Regarding the latter, the proposal would, among other things:

* Maintain disability access complainants’ exclusion from the “Accelerated Docket treatment,”
* Include a pre-complaint meeting to align with procedures for Section 208,
* Add a new rule allowing parties to request mediation after the formal complaint has been filed, and
* Make all filing and response periods the same across all Sections (208, 244, 255, 716, and 718).

An answer to a complaint regarding disability access rules would move from 20 to 30 days, and reply to the answer would move from three to ten days. The proposed rules are intended to streamline the procedures and allow for adequate time to find and review facts and documents related to the complaint and “provide parties with greater certainty regarding this important discovery mechanism.” Once the NPRM is published in the Federal Register (FR) initial comments to the proposal will be due 30 days from publication date and reply comments will be 45 days after publication in the FR. Comments should be filed using the FCC’s Electronic Comments Filing System: <https://www.fcc.gove/ecfs/>.

#### Additional Information:

Notice of Proposed Rulemaking: [Doc](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-17-115A1.doc) [Pdf](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-17-115A1.pdf) [Txt](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-17-115A1.txt)

<http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2017/db0918/FCC-17-115A1.pdf>

Wireless RERC Updates

**Wireless RERC Launches Latest Survey of User Needs!**

The Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Wireless Inclusive Technologies (Wireless RERC) announces the launch of its updated Survey of User Needs (SUN). The SUN is the Wireless RERC's cornerstone survey on wireless technology use by people with disabilities. It has been completed by over 7,500 consumers with disabilities since it was first launched in 2001.

This latest version represents the 6th version of the survey, which is updated periodically in response to changes in technology. In addition to questions about cell phone and tablet use, this latest version of the SUN collects information about wearables, "smart" home technologies, and other next-generation wirelessly connected devices. User responses will help designers and engineers make new wireless devices and services for people with disabilities. Data from the SUN also provides important information to the wireless industry, government regulators, and other researchers to help them make wireless technology more accessible and more useful to people with all types of disabilities.

**The survey is available at** <http://b.gatech.edu/2yvCHnz>

If you have a disability, please consider taking this survey. If you know someone who has a disability, please forward the survey to them. Thank you!

#### Additional Information:

[Take the Survey](http://b.gatech.edu/2yvCHnz)

[<http://b.gatech.edu/2yvCHnz>]

[Share the Survey](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/wireless-rerc-launches-latest-survey-user-needs)

[http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/wireless-rerc-launches-latest-survey-user-needs]

**Design of Wearables and Wirelessly Connected Devices**

September 29, 2017 - Wireless RERC researchers have conducted a review of representative applications and examples of currently available wearable and connected technologies. The research brief, [*Accessibility, Usability, and the Design of Wearables and Wirelessly Connected Devices*](pdf_wit_rerc_wearables_research_brief_9.29.17.pdf),explores the potential impact of inclusive design principles on future device development for users with disabilities – a critical approach to ensuring that these technologies truly meet the needs of this target population. Inclusively designed technologies can: 1) enhance accessibility, 2) increase independence and community participation, and 3) support a more inclusive society, a trend which we anticipate will become increasingly the norm in the future.

#### Additional Information:

[WIT RERC Wearables Research Brief](http://www.cacp.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/docs/WIT%20RERC%20Wearables%20Research%20Brief%209.29.17.pdf)

[[pdf\_wit\_rerc\_wearables\_research\_brief\_9.29.17.pdf](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/pdf_wit_rerc_wearables_research_brief_9.29.17.pdf)]

**Wireless RERC Survey - 2017 Nationwide EAS Test**

September 27, 2017 - On September 27, 2017, at 2:20 pm EST there was a nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS). The Wireless RERC conducted a survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the visual and audio elements of the 2017 EAS test message.  For comparative analyses of similarities and differences in access needs, the survey was open to people with and without disabilities. Survey results will be shared with federal agencies in efforts to inform policymakers with empirical research about the access experiences and expectations of people with disabilities.

The survey will close this Saturday, October 7th, 2017. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey at the following link:  [Wireless RERC Survey - 2017 Nationwide EAS Test](https://gatech.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e5JxLNplapRYJvf), and share this call for participation with other organizations, listservs, and social networks.

Other Items of Interest

**2018 Summer Internship Program Looking for Students with Disabilities**

For fifteen years the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) has worked to connect and empower young workers with disabilities in their annual Summer Internship Program. The initiative places college and graduate students with all types of disabilities in Congressional offices, federal agencies, and non-governmental agencies (NGOs) in Washington, D.C. Each candidate receives a stipend as well as fully-accessible housing and is matched with a mentor to help develop their career goals.

The AAPD is currently looking for interns for its upcoming 2018 program, to which any undergraduate student, graduate student, or even recent graduate with a disability is welcome to apply. Past internship placements include the American Bar Association, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Institute for Educational Leadership, U.S. Department of Labor, and many offices of senators and representatives.

The deadline for submissions is 5:00 PM ET on Monday, November 6, 2017. Finalists will be contacted by February 2017. For more information, please contact AAPD at internships@aapd.com or at (202) 521-4316.

#### Additional Information

[Summer Internship Program](http://www.aapd.com/summer-internship-program/)

[<http://www.aapd.com/summer-internship-program/>]

**New On-line Disability Training Program Aims to Increase Employment**

September 26, 2017 - Human Solutions LLC, a California-based innovation and workforce development company, has launched its new Access for All On-line Disability Training program. A staff development tool, the program was designed to address the concerns of prospective employees and employers alike in hiring people with disabilities. Designed in tandem with Workplace Innovation and Opportunity Act providers and partners, the eight interactive learning modules provide real-world scenarios and job training on any Internet-enabled computer.

Lisa Jordan, President and CEO of Human Solutions LLC, wrote in a press release, “With this new program, we are fulfilling a long-standing need for convenient and cost-effective training for professional organizations and agencies that serve job seekers with disabilities. We believe the Access for All Online Disability Training program will bring providers even closer to ensuring that each and every customer will receive the highest level of service."

Human Solutions LCC's Access for All program is one of a growing number of online services and resources that address people with disabilities’ access to employment. Source: Human Solutions LLC.

#### Additional Information

[Access for All Program Changes the Future of Online Disability Training](http://www.pr.com/press-release/730868)

[<http://www.pr.com/press-release/730868>]

**Georgia Tech's Aware Home Showcases Smart Home Technology for Maintaining Independence as We Age**

September 25, 2017 - A stove at the Aware Home can sense when it has been left on and alert the user with colored lights by the stove as well as the front door, or even on a wearable device. Brian Jones, senior research engineer at the Interactive Media Technology Center and director of the Aware Home Research Initiative (AHRI) said to CNN the main two aging in place concerns were associated with cooking and running water. "One of the concerns they had were around unattended cooking. [Also,] If you forget that you have turned on the water to draw a bath or to wash the dishes, that can cause significant damage in the home."

Smart home devices can learn and adapt to the user and can provide customized reminders for important events such as times to take medication and doctor appointments. Elizabeth Mynatt, a professor and executive director of the Institute for People and Technology wrote, "They will learn more about your habits, your likes, your dislikes, your routines, when you're most likely to forget to take your medication, what are the aspects of your health that need the most attention. They will become as personalized to you that you just can't even imagine living without them."

These devices can be powerful tools in maintaining independent living and helping caregivers and loved-ones care for an aging adult. In addition to tracking activity, smart home devices can also detect changes in ability, such as gait pattern. According to Mr. Jones, these early alerts "might also help in informing a family when someone may need a caregiver," and ensure they receive the care they need in a more timely manner.

Georgia Tech's Smart Home devices are a few of a growing number of tools available to assist the aging population in maintaining their health, independence, and happiness. Source: Jacqueline Howard, CNN.

#### Additional Information

[Using technology to help older adults keep their independence](http://www.cnn.com/2017/09/25/health/older-adults-home-safety-technology/index.html)

[<http://www.cnn.com/2017/09/25/health/older-adults-home-safety-technology/index.html>]

**Europe’s Airbnb, Accomable, Coming to U.S. for Travelers with Disabilities**

September 19, 2017 - Thousands of travelers with disabilities have found themselves in situations where finding accessible places to stay can be a challenge. To address this issue, Accomable works to connect users with disabilities with accessible travel accommodations. Accomable, the brain-child of Srin Madlipalli, came to him from his own need to find accessible accommodations while traveling as a person with spinal muscular atrophy. As CEO and its co-founder, Madlipalli works to see that the diverse needs of all travelers are met. Speaking of his own experiences traveling, he said, “I was constantly turning up to hotels and finding out they weren’t accessible, even if they had said they were.” Accomable employs a similar model to Airbnb, and all potential hosts must provide thorough documentation of all accessibility features in their homes and surroundings.

Within Europe, the majority of Accomable’s listings are homes, though they also boast a network of about 300 hotels. With their current planned expansion to the U.S., travelers with disabilities will soon be able to experience the commitment of Accomable to have their unique needs in consideration. Companies in the U.S. that provide millions of people services daily like Uber and Lyft have made recent gains in accessibility and inclusion. Rather than wait for negative feedback from guests with disabilities staying at inaccessible homes, Airbnb hopes to proactively identify issues and work to provide accommodations and a safe place to stay for all. Airbnb’s recent initiatives to promote accessibility for all guests and greater transparency, for example, has included providing educational materials to interested hosts and customer service training on disability topics.

Accomable joins a growing list of services that work to provide travelers with disabilities safe and accessible housing. Source: Carolyn Said, San Francisco Chronicle

#### Additional Information

[Accomable creates vacation-rental market for people with disabilities](http://www.sfchronicle.com/business/article/Accomable-creates-vacation-rental-market-for-12168289.php)

[<http://www.sfchronicle.com/business/article/Accomable-creates-vacation-rental-market-for-12168289.php>]

**Google Glass App Works as Communication Assistant for Children on the Autism Spectrum**

September 16, 2017 - Researchers at the Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering at the University of Toronto are developing a Google Glass app to help children with disabilities socialize and communicate. Communication for children on the autism spectrum can often-times be challenging, and many children are drawn to technology at an early age. The software, still in prototype phase, can be used with a Google Glass headset to increase communication and comfort with social interactions.

The app can help the user identify conversation prompts and suggest appropriate responses. One of the main goals of Azadeh Kushki, Assistant Professor at the Institute and Scientist at the Bloorview Research Institute, was not to promote social isolation with the software but rather promote social integration. Speaking of the app, he said, “We developed software for a wearable system that helps coach children with autism in everyday social interactions. In this study, we show that children are able to use this new technology and they enjoy interacting with it.”

The app has been used with 15 children along the spectrum, and the team consistently found that children could follow the prompts and carry a more fluid and comfortable conversation. Professor Kuski wrote, “The interesting thing about our new technology is that we are not trying to replace human-to-human interactions; instead, we use this app to coach children who are communicating with people in real-world situations. Children can practice their skills outside of their normal therapy sessions, and it can provide them with increased independence in everyday interactions.”

The team will continue to work on finalizing the app and customizing it to the unique need of each child. Professor Kushki is hopeful the app could help children on the spectrum in a variety of environments, such as home and school, as well as act as a therapeutic aid. Source: Global Accessibility News

#### Additional Information

[Google Glass app helps children with disabilities with social interactions](http://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2017/09/16/google-glass-app-helps-children-with-disabilities-with-social-interactions/)

[<http://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2017/09/16/google-glass-app-helps-children-with-disabilities-with-social-interactions/>]

**Breakthrough in Sensor Range and Power Consumption for Wearables**

September 13, 2017 - Researchers at the University of Washington (UW) presented their work on long-range communication for interconnected devices. Their novel long-range backscatter system uses reflected radio waves and provides power and cost-efficient, long-range communication with sensors that use one thousand times less power than previous technologies. The research team has created prototype contact lenses and epidermal patches that have achieved information transfer across a 3300-square-foot atrium. This is significant as most current smart contact lenses have a three-foot range. The epidermal patch prototypes can wirelessly collect and transmit useful medical data over similarly large areas with compact and power efficient, flexible designs.

The system is comprised of three main components: a radio signal emitter, a sensor to code information, and a low-cost receiver to decode the information. The device can be powered by extremely thin and flexible batteries, or be adapted to receive power from the environment. This in itself is not new. Unlike previous technology, the innovation comes from the team’s creation and implementation of chirp spread spectrum, a new type of radio modulation, which allows the long-range communication through large spaces and physical barriers which traditionally have dampened or greatly inhibited signal range. With this modulation, the team has broken the long-held barrier that prevented interconnected devices of communicating over greater distances with even less power usage. CTO of Jeeve Wireless, Vamsi Talla, said, “People have been talking about embedding connectivity into everyday objects such as laundry detergent, paper towels and coffee cups for years, but the problem is the cost and power consumption to achieve this. This is the first wireless system that can inject connectivity into any device with very minimal cost.”

The research team projects that sensors made with this process could cost ten to twenty cents each, and could be used in a variety of ways. For example, flexible patches could monitor biometric data or incorporated into other wearable assistive technologies and could be adapted for home sensing and smart city integration.

#### Additional Information

Journal Article: [LoRa Backscatter: Enabling The Vision of Ubiquitous Connectivity](http://longrange.cs.washington.edu/files/loRaBackscatter.pdf)

[<http://longrange.cs.washington.edu/files/loRaBackscatter.pdf>]

News Story: [UW team shatters long-range communication barrier for devices that consume almost no power](https://www.washington.edu/news/2017/09/13/uw-team-shatters-long-range-communication-barrier-for-devices-that-consume-almost-no-power/)

[<https://www.washington.edu/news/2017/09/13/uw-team-shatters-long-range-communication-barrier-for-devices-that-consume-almost-no-power/>]

**AI Incorporates Cognitive Processes Typical of People with Autism**

September 11, 2017 - Vanderbilt University has been working to create an artificial intelligence (AI) system that incorporates the cognitive processes of people with autism into the code. The research informs both development of a robust AI and enhanced understanding of the cognitive processes of people on the autism spectrum. The system replicates models of human cognition and is trained to solve many cognitive tests to improve its problem-solving abilities. Assistant professor of computer science Maithilee Kunda said, “One of the big mysteries we have right now is there is so much variability among different people on the spectrum and how they think. By trying to pin down these visual reasoning processes more carefully, we’re hoping we can start to divide up that spectrum into people who reason in particular ways and support them more effectively.”

The AI can be useful to autism studies as it learns and refines its tools that are not neurotypical, and therefore draw from varied sources to achieve the task. Reflecting on the problem-solving capabilities of the AI, Kunda said, “Most of us think in a combination of lots of different things. We think in words, we think in pictures, we think in smells and feelings. What we see in some people with autism is that they’re very much on the visual side.”  Source: Global Accessibility News

#### Additional Information

[Artificial intelligence thinks like people with autism used to develop educational tools](http://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2017/09/11/artificial-intelligence-thinks-like-people-with-autism-used-to-develop-educational-tools/)

[http://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2017/09/11/artificial-intelligence-thinks-like-people-with-autism-used-to-develop-educational-tools/]

**Smartphones and Apps Quickly Connecting People with First-Responders**

September 8, 2017 - As we have seen through the recent massive damage caused by hurricanes Harvey and Irma, existing first responder networks may not always have the capacity to serve everyone’s needs during a crisis. This uncertainty has brought about a variety of smartphone applications and platforms that should be considered in an emergency situation. Nextdoor, an app which describes itself as a private social network for your neighborhood, was used to assist one stranded family in Houston. Within an hour of a help message through the application, a neighbor with a boat was able to take the family to safety. Nextdoor and other social networking apps like it, have been used as crisis response applications; connecting people in need with appropriate resources such as medical supplies and food, and assisting with emergency response by providing more rapid, localized assessments of damage. Another recent example is Facebook’s use of Safety Check, a mechanism for users to check in as "safe" during or after an emergency event. Other applications such as Waze, provide real-time updates of road conditions by users’ self-reporting through the app and by monitoring their GPS.

The recent hurricanes have proven that fundamental communications systems can be disabled and transportation routes can be blocked, leading to many being unable to reach first responders and vice-versa. Neighborhoods and communities can be the first line of defense in case of an emergency, and smartphone applications help connect neighbor with neighbor in time of need. Source: [Daniel P. Aldrich](https://www.salon.com/writer/daniel-p-aldrich), [Courtney M. Page](https://www.salon.com/writer/courtney-m-page), Salon.com

#### Additional Information

[Why social media apps should be in your disaster kit](http://www.salon.com/2017/09/08/why-social-media-apps-should-be-in-your-disaster-kit_partner/)

[<https://www.salon.com/2017/09/08/why-social-media-apps-should-be-in-your-disaster-kit_partner/>]

Upcoming Events

**Accessibility Innovations Expo**

The FCC’s Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau and Connect2HealthFCC Task Force will convene the Accessibility Innovations Expo on Monday, October 23, 2017, from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M., at the Pepco Edison Place Gallery at 702 8th St, N.W., Washington, D.C. Open to the public, the event is a unique showcase for pioneering technology solutions for improved quality of daily living in general, and health outcomes, specifically.

#### Additional Information:

[FCC Public Notice Regarding the Expo](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-346119A1.txt)

[<https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-346119A1.txt>]

**2017 Online knowledge Translation (KT) Conference**

The Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research will convene their annual online KT Conference, on the afternoons of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (October 30th, November 1st, and November 3rd respectively). The conference theme is *KT Outcome Measurement* and will address outreach, mobilizing your stakeholder community, and technology transfer.

#### Additional Information:

[Draft Agenda](ktdrr.org/conference2017/agenda.html)

[[ktdrr.org/conference2017/agenda.html](https://cts.vrmailer1.com/click?sk=al4sB2JgWjBIwUXpUAOkF5IfD09ipEYOldsussdEtiEA=/aHR0cDovL3d3dy5rdGRyci5vcmcvY29uZmVyZW5jZTIwMTcvYWdlbmRhLmh0bWw=/OjN5L0OKtnvw4wrUrCXuKA==&merge_field_type=(?x-mi:(?%3C=href=)%5b%5Cs%5d*%5b'%22%5d(?%3Curl%3E%5b%5E%7B'%22%5d.+?)%5b'%22%5d)&href_id_source=vr2-href-id-source-14)]  
[More Information](ktdrr.org/conference)

[[ktdrr.org/conference](https://cts.vrmailer1.com/click?sk=al4sB2JgWjBIwUXpUAOkF5IfD09ipEYOldsussdEtiEA=/aHR0cDovL3d3dy5rdGRyci5vcmcvY29uZmVyZW5jZTIwMTcv/E1wb7cMOt_vEedqoWlq7Kg==&merge_field_type=(?x-mi:(?%3C=href=)%5b%5Cs%5d*%5b'%22%5d(?%3Curl%3E%5b%5E%7B'%22%5d.+?)%5b'%22%5d)&href_id_source=vr2-href-id-source-15)]  
[Register now](http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3638096/Register-KTDRR-2017-KT-Conference)

[[www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3638096/Register-KTDRR-2017-KT-Conference](https://cts.vrmailer1.com/click?sk=al4sB2JgWjBIwUXpUAOkF5IfD09ipEYOldsussdEtiEA=/aHR0cDovL3d3dy5zdXJ2ZXlnaXptby5jb20vczMvMzYzODA5Ni9SZWdpc3Rlci1LVERSUi0yMDE3LUtULUNvbmZlcmVuY2U=/XFY8XauQzzNxgl2d1gUC9g==&merge_field_type=(?x-mi:(?%3C=href=)%5b%5Cs%5d*%5b'%22%5d(?%3Curl%3E%5b%5E%7B'%22%5d.+?)%5b'%22%5d)&href_id_source=vr2-href-id-source-16)]

**2018 CSUN Conference**

The *33rd CSUN Assistive Technology Conference* will convene March 19 to March 23, 2018, in San Diego, California. CSUN is the largest international conference addressing topics regarding people with disabilities and assistive and accessible technologies. Conference topics typically pertain to the domains of education, employment and workplace, entertainment, independent living, law and policy, and transportation.

#### Additional Information:

[Conference Web Page](http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference)

[<http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference>]

**Technology and Disability Policy Highlights,** September 2017

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The Technology and Disability Policy Highlights (TDPH) is a monthly newsletter that reports on national public policy events and tracks emerging issues of interest to individuals with disabilities, researchers, policymakers, industry, and advocacy professionals. The Wireless RERC is a research center that promotes universal access to wireless technologies and explores their innovative applications in addressing the needs of people with disabilities. For more information on the Wireless RERC, please visit our website at [<http://www.wirelessrerc.org>]. For further information on items summarized in this report, or if you have items of interest that you would like included in future editions, please contact this edition’s editors Kenneth Goughnour [[kenneth@cacp.gatech.edu](mailto:kenneth@cacp.gatech.edu)] or Salimah LaForce [[salimah@cacp.gatech.edu](file:///C:\Users\salimah\OneDrive%20-%20Georgia%20Institute%20of%20Technology\wiRERC_2016%20-%202021\TDPH\April%202017\salimah@cacp.gatech.edu)].

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