Technology and Disability Policy Highlights

October 2016

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# Overview

We are pleased to announce that we have received funding from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) to continue our work in advancing access to wireless technologies. The Wireless RERC will conduct research and development on wireless devices and technologies for a transformative future where individuals with disabilities achieve improved quality of life and enhanced community inclusion. The award is the fourth consecutive five-year grant given to the team. In this cycle, partnerships are expanded to include other research universities including Georgia State University’s Center for Leadership in Disability (CLD), and the University of Texas Arlington (UTA), School of Social Work. “Our public policy initiatives to facilitate inclusion of people with disabilities in the wireless space will continue to be a critical component of the Wireless RERC. Over the years, we have submitted more than 60 filings for proposed rulemakings before the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and other regulatory agencies about issues of telecommunications access and emergency communications. Our filings have been referenced or cited more than 170 times in ongoing rulemakings, including final rules and orders regarding advanced technologies and accessible mobile alerts,” said Dr. Helena Mitchell.

Hitting the ground running, in October two filings were submitted to two separate federal regulatory agencies. First, comments were filed in response to the FCC’s Public Notice, Request for Comment on the Commission’s Policies and Practices to Ensure Compliance with Sections 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 **[CG Docket No. 10-162].**  Wireless RERC comments asserted that baseline accessibility issues consistently impact access to customer service and print and electronic materials furnished by industry and policymakers alike. To improve access to programs and services, we recommended addressing fundamental issues of awareness and accessible formats. Another filing was submitted in response to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) request for public comments to inform the development of a *National Broadband Research Agenda* **[Docket No. 160831803–6803–01**]. Our comments suggested several avenues of research to ensure that development and deployment of broadband connectivity and applications are accessible to and usable by people with disabilities.

Many interesting and informative actions were taken in October by the FCC, the U.S. Department of Justice, and industry regarding parity of access to communications products and services and what said access affords. The Wireless RERC is keen to continue our work with stakeholders to inform national policy and technology development.

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# Regulatory Activities

**Justice Department to Settle Disability Discrimination Lawsuit Against Miami University**

October 17, 2016 — The U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) filed a proposed consent decree resulting from its investigation and findings regarding Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.  Initially, a lawsuit was filed by one student in Dudley v. Miami University.  However, the DOJ sought comprehensive relief under Title II of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) for all students with a disability at Miami University.  Inaccessible web content, software, curricular materials and technologies used throughout the University’s activities, programs, and services were in the list of alleged violations.  According to the DoJ, these alleged violations of inaccessibility had a negative impact on current and former students who experienced vision, hearing or learning disabilities.  Remedies outlined in the decree, pending court approval, include making significant improvements to technologies campus-wide, compensation of $25,000.00 to individuals with disabilities, and ensuring web content and learning management systems conform with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 AA standards (WCAG 2.0).  “The courage of the students who participated in the United States’ investigation led to this broad agreement that touches the lives of Miami University students with disabilities,” said U.S. Attorney Benjamin C. Glassman of the Southern District of Ohio.  “This agreement between the Justice Department and Miami University will ensure full access to technology that is crucial to academic success.”

#### Additional Information:

[News Release](https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/miami-university-agrees-overhaul-critical-technologies-settle-disability-discrimination)

[<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/miami-university-agrees-overhaul-critical-technologies-settle-disability-discrimination>]

**FCC Report to Congress on State of Advanced Communications Accessibility**

October 7, 2017 - As required by the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) of 2010, the FCC adopted and released the Biennial Report to Congress.  The report presents information and assessments regarding advanced communications services (ACS) and equipment for ACS, accessibility of telecommunication services and equipment, Internet browsers built into mobile phones, and a summary of actions taken by the FCC related to the CVAA of 2010.  The CVAA amends the Communications Act of 1934.  The 2010 amendments were to help ensure people with disabilities have full access to telecommunications devices and services including video.  The FCC has found that people with disabilities are a part of the digital divide, and technologies have not been universally inclusive to address user needs.  For example, people who are blind, have limited access to phone features at work such as conference calling and Caller ID.  Also, the FCC reported that not much progress had been made in accessible telecommunications for people who are visually impaired that use basic phones.  These findings coincide with the number of complaints arising from the lack of accessible phones from providers in the FCC’s Lifeline program. Likewise, people with a hearing impairment have limited options for phones that are compatible with hearing aids.  The FCC is required to report to Congress every two years on their progress implementing the CVAA.  The 2016 report is the third of such reports.  The report covers several sections including 255, 716, 717, and 718 and lists

1. Barriers that still exist,
2. Number of complaints received under section 717(a) of the Act,
3. Descriptions of actions taken to resolve the complaints, and length of time for FCC to secure resolution,
4. Number of appeals filed, and
5. Assessment of recordkeeping, and track of development and deployment of new technologies.

New technologies include alternatives to text alerts for those with hearing impairments and apps that enable text-to-refreshable Braille to facilitate communication between a person who is deaf-blind and a person with sight.  Smartphones now feature audio reminders and simplified dialing for people who may experience a cognitive disability.  For more information on what the FCC is doing, and what industry is doing to enable people with disabilities to gain more access to telecommunications technology, select the link for additional information.

#### Additional Information:

[Biennial Report to Congress Regarding Implementation of the CVAA](http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2016/db1007/DA-16-1161A1.pdf)

<http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2016/db1007/DA-16-1161A1.pdf>

**White Paper on Individuals with Cognitive Disabilities & Accessible ICT**

October 6, 2016 – The Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a white paper entitled *Individuals with Cognitive Disabilities: Barriers to and Solutions for Accessible Information and Communication Technologies*.  The paper details barriers to information and communications technologies (ICT) experienced by individuals with cognitive disabilities, recommendations, and resources. As referenced in the paper, in 2015, more than 9% of children and adults in the U.S. had a cognitive disability.  Cognitive disability as a category is vast and diverse, however generally, it can be understood to mean that an individual may experience limitations or differences in how they process or understand information.  There are an estimated sixteen different types of learning disabilities. Other examples of cognitive disabilities include Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) or Parkinson’s Disease.  Some cognitive tasks that may present challenges include making a phone call, navigating in a shopping mall, organizing daily tasks, or remembering how to change settings on your mobile device.  Identified barriers include (a) misunderstanding of the disability and how it impacts each individual differently, (b) industry not including people with disabilities in their design and testing phases of products and services, and (c) social and economic factors.  This white paper explains, with numerous examples, why people with disabilities need full access.  Solutions include, among other things, incorporating the principles of universal design.  Relative legislation including the Communications Act of 1934 and 1996 are also covered in the paper.  Other resources in the paper included:

* The FCC’s Disability Advisory Committee’s (DAC) newly adopted *Best Practices to Promote Effective Access to and Usability of ICT Products and Services for Americans with Cognitive Disabilities*.
* A link to the [FCC Accessibility Clearinghouse](https://ach.fcc.gov/) of information on the availability of accessible products and services and accessibility solutions.
* Information about ways to receive assistance from the FCC regarding accessibility issues with companies.

The paper addresses current challenges and solutions but is also forward looking. “As new technologies emerge, we need to ensure that people with cognitive disabilities are not left behind…We must ensure that the ability to access ICT increases, rather than diminishes, as technologies advance.”  More details about individuals with cognitive disabilities in aspects of education, employment, housing, independent living, social inclusion, transportation, functional needs, and accessible solutions.

#### Additional Information:

[[PDF] Individuals with Cognitive Disabilities: Barriers to and Solutions for Accessible Information and Communication Technologies](http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2016/db1006/DOC-341628A1.pdf)

[<http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2016/db1006/DOC-341628A1.pdf>]

**Lifeline/Linkup Reform Order Became Effective and Enforceable**

October 3, 2016 - The Lifeline/Linkup Reform Order [**WC Docket No.11-42**], signed in the spring, took a variety of actions to create an affordable Lifeline broadband program.  The Order discusses the minimum service standards for Lifeline Services, asserting that functional Internet access is essential to allow consumers to participate in society fully. The FCC also approved a real-time text proposal to ensure that people with disabilities who rely on text messaging to communicate will have accessible and effective telephone access. In October, the final rule was published in the Federal Register detailing a number of implementation measures.  Between October 3, 2016, and January 1, 2017, measures will take effect, including a three-year period to collect information regarding provisions related to the Order and rule amendments that will become effective on January 1, 2017.

#### Additional Information:

[Final Rule](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/10/03/2016-23450/lifeline-and-link-up-reform-and-modernization-telecommunications-carriers-eligible-for-universal)

[<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/10/03/2016-23450/lifeline-and-link-up-reform-and-modernization-telecommunications-carriers-eligible-for-universal>]

# Wireless RERC Updates

**Wireless RERC Funded to Advance Wireless Accessibility and Inclusion**

October 2016 - Georgia Institute of Technology’s Center for Advanced Communications Policy (CACP) has been awarded a $4.625 million, five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living’s (ACL) National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). The grant funds the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Wireless Inclusive Technologies (Wireless RERC). The center will create research and development of wireless devices and technologies for a transformative future where individuals with disabilities achieve improved quality of life and enhanced community inclusion. The award is the fourth consecutive five-year grant given to the team of researchers and engineers. In this cycle, CACP has expanded its partnerships with other research universities including Georgia State University’s Center for Leadership in Disability (CLD), and the University of Texas Arlington (UTA), School of Social Work.

The goal of the Wireless RERC and its advisory board is to accelerate access and promote inclusion to the wireless ecosystem with disability stakeholders, the wireless industry, and government agencies. The grant begins a new era of innovation built on 15 years of expertise in making wireless technologies accessible. “This funding will allow us to move into next-generation technologies with the intent to be both forward thinking as well as cognizant of legacy services utilized by many people with disabilities,” said Helena Mitchell, CACP executive director and principal investigator of the Wireless RERC. “Building on strong partnerships will yield advancements that improve access to wireless products and services. Engaging with new partners will open avenues to accessible solutions for an inclusive, wirelessly connected future for all.”

Georgia State’s Andrew Roach, the associate director of the CLD, said the research team plans to focus on user-focused research that will expand understanding of the utility of wireless technologies in supporting competitive integrated employment, social connection, and community involvement for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. “Leveraging emerging technologies to facilitate the independence and inclusion of individuals with disabilities aligns with the CLD’s mission, vision, and values,” Roach said. “In particular, we think our work, in concert with the efforts of the rest of the Wireless RERC team, has the potential to positively impact services and supports for individuals in Georgia and across the nation.”

Research endeavors will focus on the user experience to directly inform the Wireless RERC efforts in development. Employment and workforce preparation research will focus on the use of wireless technologies to facilitate social connectedness of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Socially assistive robotics will be studied for their ability to increase capabilities of people with disabilities in varied environments. Internet-of-Things design factors and augmented reality design elements will round out research into social and cultural research elements. “Creating an inclusive environment advances our goal of achieving a just society by removing barriers to societal participation,” said John Bricout, UTA project leader. “A transdisciplinary approach to problem solving, made possible by our forward-thinking partners, allows us to innovatively engage 21st-century technologies in the service of people with disabilities.”

The Wireless RERC expansion of its emergency lifelines activities will create devices to ensure systems are timely and responsive across a wide range of platforms. New development work on wearable devices and connectivity will lead to the design of accessible and facilitative wearable devices usable in a variety of social and personal environments. Advanced auditory interfaces are posed to support gesture and audio pairing through next-generation technology. Under the new grant, the Wireless RERC outreach to consumers and training on the usability of wireless products reaches new audiences.

“Our public policy initiatives to facilitate inclusion of people with disabilities in the wireless space will continue to be a critical component of the Wireless RERC. Over the years, we have submitted more than 60 filings for proposed rulemakings before the FCC and other regulatory agencies about issues of telecommunications access and emergency communications. Our filings have been referenced or cited more than 170 times in ongoing rulemakings, including final rules and orders regarding advanced technologies and accessible mobile alerts,” said Mitchell.

The Wireless RERC is one of approximately 15 RERCs in the United States. Other RERCs are devoted to fields such as aging, visual impairment, public transportation, and information technology access.

Georgia Tech participants in the Wireless RERC are led by the Ivan Allen College School of Public Policy and also include the Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access, College of Design, College of Computing, College of Sciences School of Psychology, Interactive Media Technology Center, and the Wearable Computing Center.

#### Additional Information:

[Wireless RERC Website](http://www.wirelessrerc.org/content/about-us)

[<http://www.wirelessrerc.org/content/about-us>]

[CACP Website](http://www.cacp.gatech.edu/)

[<http://www.cacp.gatech.edu/>]

**Wireless RERC on the Record – Broadband Research Agenda**

October 10, 2016 – The Wireless RERC, in collaboration with Georgia Tech’s Center for Advanced Communications Policy (CACP), submitted comments in response to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) request for public comments to inform the development of a National Broadband Research Agenda. Comments suggested several avenues of research to ensure that development and deployment of broadband connectivity and applications are accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. Some of the Wireless RERC and CACP suggestions for the national research agenda include:

* The collection of evidence-based statistical user needs data and conduct of summative research to understand not only technological but social, cultural and usage barriers to deployment and access for all citizens.
* Undertaking deep-dive research to examine the optimal speed of broadband transmission and deployment of broadband equipment, software, and content, and front-end consultation and testing with consumers is critical to improvements in both expanding broadband infrastructure as well as for accessible end products and services.
* Identify technological barriers to using these technologies as well as develop device prototypes and processes for inclusive technologies.
* Explore: 1) technology driven collaborative practices, 2) interoperability barriers, and 3) translation barriers between federally funded research, manufacturers and services providers.

The CACP and the Wireless RERC emphasized the importance of including accessibility for people with disabilities to the greatest extent possible as part of the conceptualization and articulation of the research agenda. We urged that 1) accessibility implications of future connected technologies be a high‐level consideration when planning federal level technology development strategies and policy, and 2) stakeholders proactively consult people with disabilities throughout the development and implementation of the National Broadband Research Agenda.

#### Additional Information:

[Wireless RERC/CACP Comments [Word]](http://www.cacp.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/docs/CACP%20Wireless%20RERC%20Oct%202016%20NTIA%20NSF.docx), [[PDF]](http://www.cacp.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/docs/CACP%20Wireless%20RERC%20Oct%202016%20NTIA%20NSF.pdf)

[<http://www.cacp.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/docs/CACP%20Wireless%20RERC%20Oct%202016%20NTIA%20NSF.pdf>]

**Envisioning Inclusive Futures Journal Paper Available Online**

October 10, 2016 - The *Envisioning Inclusive FUTURES Summit* journal paper, [*Learning with Mixed Sentience*](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016328716302154), was published online in the [Futures](http://www.journals.elsevier.com/futures/recent-articles) journal. Highlights from the paper are listed below:

* People with disabilities have benefited from the use of assistive technologies that compensate for or augment functioning.
* Socially assistive robots (SAR) both assist with functioning and engage users socially, often as service, co- robots and companions.
* Trends in networked learning communities suggest that membership and rules of exchange will define function, engagement, and experiences.
* Future communities will likely be characterized by high degrees of interdependence within and varying degrees of openness to outside exchanges.
* The ethics of human-robot exchanges within mixed learning communities are undergirded by respect for the interdependence of robots and humans.

The Summit focused on 1) key social, economic, political and technological forces at play in the migration from legacy, analog technologies to mobile, digital technologies, and 2) the consequential futures for people with disabilities.

#### Additional Information:

[Learning with Mixed Sentience](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016328716302154)

[<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016328716302154>]

**Wireless RERC on the Record: FCC’s Section 504 Compliance**

October 3, 2016 - Georgia Tech’s Center for Advanced Communications Policy (CACP), in collaboration with the Wireless RERC, submitted comments to the Public Notice, Request for Comment on the Commission’s Policies and Practices to Ensure Compliance with Sections 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 **[CG Docket No. 10-162].**  Section 504 requires that federal agencies make their programs and activities accessible to people with disabilities. The FCC sought public input on their programmatic access. Wireless RERC comments asserted that baseline accessibility is consistently impacted by access to customer service and print and electronic materials furnished by industry and policymakers alike.  To improve access to programs and services, we recommended addressing fundamental issues of awareness and accessible formats. The FCC’s American Sign Language (ASL) Consumer Support Line, launched to provide programmatic access to consumers who are deaf and hard of hearing whose primary language is ASL, was commended as a great step forward in providing parity of access.  The support line enables the caller to make inquiries about disability-specific communications issues, as well as, obtain information that could impact any consumer, using their primary language. However, work remains to expand access to the rulemaking process.  One part of the FCC’s Section 504 Handbook stipulated that the Commission will not transcribe or translate comments submitted in alternative formats.  The Wireless RERC urged the Commission to reconsider this position.  As it stands, the requirement that comments be filed in written English excludes people who rely on ASL from participating in the rulemaking process.  Other comments addressed:

* Ensuring the [Accessibility Clearinghouse](https://ach.fcc.gov/) is prominently displayed on the website and its contents are reflective of consumer expectations and the evolution of technologies.
* Adding a statement about relating to the person-first and using person-first language in written and verbal communications to the Section 504 Handbook’s Basic Principles of Access section.
* Providing more detailed guidance on accessible print and electronic documents to improve FCC personnel’s awareness about and capability to deliver, accessible formats.

#### Additional Information:

[10.3.2016 – Comments of the Wireless RERC-Sec 504 Compliance](https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filing/100378122088/document/100378122088c228)

[<https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filing/100378122088/document/100378122088c228>]

# Publications/Reports

**Accessibility Tools Useful for Students with and without Disabilities**

October 2016 – Oregon State University and 3PlayMedia published a report, *Student Uses and Perceptions of Closed Captions and Transcripts: Results from a National Study*, that found that students with and without disabilities alike utilize captions and transcripts while studying. Researchers conducted a national survey of 2,124 students from 15 universities throughout the United States to determine awareness and use of captions and transcripts for course content. Respondents included students with hearing difficulties (19%), students with vision difficulties (37%), and students not reporting a disability. Results indicated only a small size and magnitude difference in use of captions and transcripts between students with and those without disabilities. Surprisingly, 70% of respondents without hearing difficulties used closed captions. Some reasons for the use of captions by respondents without hearing difficulty included: helps me focus, helps me retain information, difficult vocabulary, a professor with an accent, environment (e.g., the library), and English is my second language. Other key findings include:

* 71% of respondents with a hearing difficulty found captions extremely or very helpful.
* 66% of English-as-a-second-language (ESL) respondents found captions extremely or very helpful.
* 64% of respondents with a vision difficulty found captions extremely or very helpful.
* 61% of respondents with learning disabilities found captions helpful.

Despite the nearly universal appeal of captions and transcripts, the provision of these tools in online learning environments is limited. More than 25% of respondents did not know if closed captions were available for videos shown in their course. This study provides evidentiary support for the standard use of captions and transcripts as not only accessibility tools, but learning tools, as well. The researchers stated that these findings are just a beginning and more research is needed to determine, among other things, if modality of delivery and provision of interactive transcripts impact student learning.

#### Additional Information:

[Student Uses and Perceptions of Closed Captions and Transcripts: Results from a National Study](http://www.3playmedia.com/resources/research-studies/student-uses-of-closed-captions-and-transcripts/)

[<http://www.3playmedia.com/resources/research-studies/student-uses-of-closed-captions-and-transcripts/>]

[**National Disability Policy: A Progress Report**](http://www.ncd.gov/progressreport/2016/progress-report-october-2016)

October 7, 2016 - The National Council on Disability (NCD) published its annual report to Congress and the President. The 2016 report, [*National Disability Policy: A Progress Report*](http://www.ncd.gov/progressreport/2016/progress-report-october-2016), called on Congress to establish a Technology Bill of Rights for Americans with Disabilities. They assert that information and communications access is a civil rights issue. That access to today’s and future technologies is synonymous with access to civic engagement and economic opportunity. “Accessible technology is not limited to what we can conceive of today. It also sets the stage for what we will achieve tomorrow,” said Clyde Terry, NCD Chair. “Regulations, legal frameworks and professional standards are important foundations, but they begin a process, they don’t end it. In today’s world, technological equality for persons with disabilities is a social justice issue. To be truly accessible, technological inclusion must be built in, from the ground up, with every user in mind.  Anything else is a step backwards. Anything less creates second class citizens.”

#### Additional Information:

[National Disability Policy: A Progress Report](http://www.ncd.gov/progressreport/2016/progress-report-october-2016)

[<http://www.ncd.gov/progressreport/2016/progress-report-october-2016>]

[Press Release](http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/2016/national-council-disability-calls-%E2%80%9Ctechnology-bill-rights%E2%80%9D-57-million-americans)

[<http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/2016/national-council-disability-calls-%E2%80%9Ctechnology-bill-rights%E2%80%9D-57-million-americans>]

# Other Items of Interest

**Blackboard, Inc. to Improve Delivery of Accessible Course Content**

October 26, 2016 - Blackboard, Inc., an enterprise technology solution for learning, announced the acquisition of U.K.-based Fronteer, including their accessibility product, Ally. Blackboard, Inc. plans to increase the accessibility of content delivered over their online learning platform. Educators and institutions with Ally, will have the ability to check for accessibility issues in posted class content and generate files in alternative formats such as Semantic HTML, Tagged PDF, ePub, and electronic Braille.  The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 has been in place for more than 43 years, and the Americans with Disabilities Act became law over 25 years ago.  These laws mandated that course content, facilities, and activities be accessible to and inclusive of learners with disabilities.  Challenges to providing accessible content continue to exist for primary and secondary schools and online learning institutions.  Chairman, CEO, and President of Blackboard, Bill Ballhaus intends to bring more resources to educators and learners.  He stated, "We're pleased to continue investing in technology and people that understand our vision to provide product experiences that enable greater accessibility. We both recognize the close connection between accessibility and the quality and usability of course content, and the benefits accessibility can bring to all learners."

#### Additional Information:

Press Release

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/blackboard-announces-acquisition-of-uk-based-fronteer-300350680.html>

[Blackboard, Inc.](http://www.blackboard.com/)

[<http://www.blackboard.com/>]

**NIDILRR Awards Grant to Advance Community Participation of People with Disabilities**

October 19, 2016 - A $4.375 million grant from the [National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research](http://www.acl.gov/programs/NIDILRR/) (NDILRR) has been awarded to the University of Kansas Research and Training Center on Independent Living (RTC/IL) to promote community participation for adults with physical disabilities. The project also includes collaboration with the University of Montana.  Glen White, director of the RTC/IL, co-director on the grant, and professor of applied behavioral science stated, “People with disabilities want to participate fully in their communities…This grant gives us an opportunity to further build on our earlier successes and increase the scale and validity of our research and outcomes.”  The grant will study two interventions, Home Base and Out and About.  The former tracks how home modifications improve the quality of life and independence for a person with a disability. The latter, Out and About, will continue to study transportation options, access to healthcare services, and use of social media and apps to connect with friends, family, and the community.

#### Additional Information:

[Press Release](http://news.ku.edu/2016/10/19/grant-set-improve-community-participation-people-disabilities)

<http://news.ku.edu/2016/10/19/grant-set-improve-community-participation-people-disabilities>

[Research & Training Center on Independent Living](http://rtcil.org/)

**[**[**http://rtcil.org/**](http://rtcil.org/)**]**

**Celebrating the formation of the Centers for Inclusive Design Innovation**

October 13, 2016 - AMAC Accessibility Solutions and the Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (CATEA) held an open house and celebration.  AMAC’s move from the University of Georgia six years ago and CATEA’s relocation on Georgia Institute of Technology’s (Georgia Tech) campus a few months ago has led to the formation of the Centers for Inclusive Design Innovation (CIDI) in the College of Design at Georgia Tech. Visitors had an opportunity to view the space, product demonstrations, current and past research projects, and engage with Centers’ Directors and staff.  AMAC celebrated ten years of providing products and services to people with disabilities.  CATEA celebrated over 30 years in the research realm on universally designed and accessible technologies and environments.  Center Director, Jon Sanford, commented, “CATEA has expertise in research, particularly related to technology and the environment. AMAC has expertise in training and service provision, particularly related to information technology and assistive technology. These complementary programs can strengthen each other…CIDI provides an umbrella to show one face to the outside world without losing the identities and name recognition of either center.”

#### Additional Information:

[GT News](http://urbaninnovation.gatech.edu/news/item/582392)

[<http://urbaninnovation.gatech.edu/news/item/582392>]

[AMAC](http://amacusg.org/)

[<http://amacusg.org/>]

[CATEA](http://www.catea.gatech.edu/)

[<http://www.catea.gatech.edu/>]

# Upcoming Events

**7th Annual ARC Conference**

The Seventh Annual Advancing & Redefining Communities for Emergency Management (ARC) Conference will convene from December 13th to 14th, 2016 in Washington, D.C. The ARC Conference supports evidence-based practices in emergency management and shares these practices and tools with professionals with interest in disaster preparedness and response. The ARC promotes advances in emergency management that help ensure timely, high-quality care for communities during disasters.

#### Additional Information:

[Conference Website](http://www.arc4em.org/)

**[**<http://www.arc4em.org/>**]**

**Technology and Disability Policy Highlights,** October 2016

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The Technology and Disability Policy Highlights (TDPH) reports on national public policy events and tracks emerging issues of interest to individuals with disabilities, researchers, policymakers, industry, and advocacy professionals. The TDPH is published monthly by the Wireless RERC. 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 Synge Tyson [synge@cacp.gatech.edu], or Salimah LaForce [salimah@cacp.gatech.edu].

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