Connecting consumers of all ages and abilities to the research, development and outreach activities of the Wireless RERC.

Welcome!

With the unofficial start of Summer beginning soon, I thought I would give you a quick update on a few of the Wireless RERC's activities. Here's a quick rundown of we've been up to, with full story details below:

- SUNspots are back! We have two new SUN data analyses to share with you.
- AT&T, Smart Cities for All & G3ict launch a new Smart Cities playbook
- Contexts of Connectivity Leadership Luncheon Recap
- Presentation on "Nontradional" Job Experiences Among Persons with Disabilities
- Upcoming events:
    - **IDEAS 2019 Conference** - June 4-7, 2019 in St. Simons Island, GA
    - **M-Enabling Summit** - June 17-19, 2019 in Washington, DC
    - **Save the Date! The Wireless RERC's State of Technology Conference -** May 21-22, 2020 in Atlanta, GA

This newsletter is intended to keep you abreast of some of the latest activities in our research, development, and training projects; share upcoming dates to events and conferences we'll be attending; and serve as an invitation to all of our readers to participate in surveys, workshops, focus groups or user testing projects we have underway.

Visiting our **website**, subscribing to our **LinkedIn** and **Twitter** feeds, and becoming friends with us on **Facebook** are other great ways to stay informed of our progress!

We welcome you as a reader and hope you enjoy the newsletter! If you are not currently a *Re:Wireless* reader and were forwarded this newsletter, you can join our mailing list below or text WIRELESSRERC to 22828.

If you enjoy reading about governmental affairs related to wireless technlogy and accessibility, please email me so that I can subscribe you to our *Technology and Disability Policy Highlights (TDPH)* newsletter.

Thank you for reading and enjoy the articles below!

Sincerely,

Ben Lippincott (Managing Editor)

Two New SUNspots are available!

We created SUNspots to share easily digestible data points from the Wireless RERC's cornerstone survey, the Survey of User Needs (SUN). The SUN tracks the use and usability of wireless technology by people with disabilities. Data collection for this version of the SUN started in 2017. And data collection ended in 2018. We are currently in the process of analyzing the data and will be sharing it periodically with you through these SUNspots, and through a larger report in the future.

The data collected from the SUN is used by RERC staff to inform R&D directions for our own projects and outreach activities, to support our regulatory filings, and by industry to improve the accessibility of their products and services. We also made a commitment to you, by being a member of our Consumer Advisory Network, to share what we've learned from the SUN data. Please find links to the two new SUNspots below to see how wireless technology is being used by people with disabilities.

SUNspot 01: Use of Mobile Phones by Individuals with Disabilities (2017-2018) presents key findings regarding mobile phone use and satisfaction by consumers with disabilities.

SUNspot 02: Use of Wireless Technology Features and Wireless Device Activities by Individuals with Disabilities (2017-2018) presents key findings regarding the use of wireless technology features by SUN respondents, including real-time-text, intelligent assistants, and visual and audio display options. We also discuss the use of wireless devices by individuals with disabilities for a variety of activities. Whereas SUNspot 1 focused on the devices themselves, this report focuses primarily on the capabilities built into those devices and their relationship to users' reported functional limitations and difficulties.

Smart Cities for All Collaborates with AT&T to Launch New Inclusive Innovation Playbook

Smart Cities for All, a global initiative of G3ict in partnership with World Enabled, announced the launch of its new **Inclusive Innovation Playbook**. The tool, developed with support of AT&T, lays out specific steps that cities and their partners can take to infuse the urban innovation ecosystem with a greater focus on accessibility and a commitment to persons with disabilities. According to a **Smart Cities for All survey,** 60% of global experts say Smart Cities are failing persons with disabilities today. Just 18% of experts report that the Smart City initiatives familiar to them use international standards for ICT accessibility. Today's innovation ecosystems are not well prepared to improve on the existing digital divide for persons with disabilities and are likely making it worse. In developing the new Playbook, Smart Cities for All surveyed more than 175 entrepreneurs in technology incubators worldwide. Less than half, just 43%, of entrepreneurs had a strong understanding of accessibility and inclusion in their own product development and user experience (UX) design processes. Fully a third of the entrepreneurs surveyed worldwide were not sure if persons with disabilities could even use the technology products and solutions they are currently developing.

The Smart Cities for All Inclusive Innovation Playbook lays out five "plays" and related actions that cities can take to infuse incubators, accelerators, and the innovation process with a commitment to inclusion and accessibility. The five urban innovation inclusion plays focus on a city's people, economic assets, infrastructure, networking, and enabling public policies. The Playbook draws from successful practices and insights from the private sector, government, and civil society. Cities that want to ensure their innovation ecosystem is inclusive and results in products, services, and solutions that are more accessible and work for everyone can draw from among all five of the inclusive innovation "plays".

On the occasion of the launch of the Inclusive Innovation Playbook, Suzanne Montgomery, Chief Accessibility Officer at AT&T, said "Smart Cities technology can transform urban environments to be a better place for all people to live, work and play. It's critical that we work in unison to foster an entrepreneurial ecosystem that develops technology that's inclusive and accessible to all. It's an honor for us at AT&T to offer this resource to cities. We strive to be a catalyst in making inclusive urban environments a reality."

Contexts of Connectivity Leadership Luncheon Recap

On April 25, 2019, the Wireless RERC hosted a Leadership Luncheon titled Contexts of Connectivity. The luncheon topic focused on how smart connected devices enhance access to public and private environments and support the independent living of people with disabilities.

Presenters included:

- Maribeth G. Coleman, Associate Director Interactive Media, Institute for People and Technology (IPaT)
- Liz Persaud, Training and Outreach Coordinator, Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation
- Douglas Guthrie, Senior Vice President, Comcast - Big South Region
- Ben Jacobs, Accommodations Specialist, Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation.

Gandy's presentation, Fostering Awareness, Understanding, and Trust in Smart Environments via Personal Context-aware Tools, addressed optimizing the value of IoT systems to people with disabilities through design that fosters a trusting relationship between the user and the technology. Gandy asserted that "The overall goal of those technologies is to provide this just in time service or information. Anticipating what you need and then engaging with you at the right time and right way such that it helps you rather than distracts, annoys, or impedes you." Examples included augmented and mixed reality overlays in the physical environment that support users at different stages of engagement.

Persaud's presentation, Technology, Teamwork, and Tenacity, shared her personal and professional journey and the role of assistive and accessible technologies in achieving her goals. "Assistive technology has been absolutely part of my life. Technology is changing. It's removing social barriers, physical barriers helping me make my journey become endless while fighting the overall obstacle of independence every day," said Persaud. "If you can control your computer, you can control your environment," she continued and detailed many of the technologies she uses in the home and office to attach documents to emails, type, adjust lighting, open doors, and so on.

Guthrie's presentation, Comcast: Commitment to Accessibility, detailed the ways Comcast has risen to the accessibility challenge, particularly for bringing non-visual access to media with their voice remote, and environmental controls via Xfinity Home's voice commands for

lights, thermostat, home security (arm/disarm), and cameras. Guthrie noted that at Comcast, accessibility is considered in the creation of new products so that customers can fully experience offerings. Guthrie stated that "One-third of our households have a disability. We have 1 in 5 people over 65. 29% of Americans are a caregiver. 2 million X1 customers have voice control in their homes. That was over a billion voice commands last year. So, it's amazing how these are coming together. We think of accessibility as being at the forefront of creation, listening to our customers."

The program closed with Ben Jacobs' demonstration of the Tools for Life Environmental Controls Lab. Jacobs demonstrated lights with voice controls (Amazon Echo, Google Home), Philips Smart Hue bulbs, Fire TV cube, smart security, video doorbell, smart thermostats, and smart outlets. Jacobs discussed how these devices, though many not designed specifically for people with disabilities, are nonetheless quite helpful, more affordable than specialized devices and equipment, and more easily attainable being that they are mainstream consumer technologies. "A lot of times the consumer technology is more affordable than your medical solutions which you may have to go through insurance for. It's more accessible walking down to Target or Walmart and bringing the solution home. Another reason why I look at consumer technology is that a lot of times they tend to be just as effective or more effective than a lot of the medical solutions available," said Jacobs.

Attendees had many questions for all of the speakers but were particularly enthralled with the technology demonstration. However, a central concern was the perceived privacy and security of smart devices, with one attendee stating that she found it exceedingly difficult to get some of her clients that are veterans with disabilities to accept these new technologies. Trust, as Gandy pointed out in the opening presentation, being the barrier to adoption.

We intend to make the presentations available on our website as soon as they have been vetted for accessibility.

Presentation: "Nontraditional" Job Experiences Among Persons with Disabilities

Wireless RERC researcher, Nathan Moon, and Fran Harris, from Georgia Tech's Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation, recently gave an invited presentation at the State of the Science Conference for the University of New Hampshire's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Employment Policy and Measurement (EPM-RRTC). The conference was held at the National Academy of Sciences Building in Washington, D.C., on February 12, 2019. The presentation, titled **"Contingent Employment of Individuals with Disabilities: Key Issues and Challenges,"** shared preliminary findings from Year 1 of their Field Initiated Project on Contingent Employment of Individuals with Disabilities (FIP-CE).

Additional Information:
Read their Presentation: "Contingent Employment of Individuals with Disabilities: Key Issues and Challenges"
[http://www.wirelessrerc.org/sites/default/files/final_moon_and_harris_contingent_employment_of_individuals_with_disabilties.pdf]

Save the date!

Upcoming conferences for research staff include:

IDEAS Conference
June 4-7, 2019 in St. Simons Island, GA.
http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/IDEAS/IDEAS-Conference.aspx
[http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/IDEAS/IDEAS-Conference.aspx]

M-Enabling Summit 2019
June 17-19, 2019 in Washington, DC
https://m-enabling.com
[https://m-enabling.com]

Wireless RERC's State of Technology Conference
May 21-22, 2020 in Atlanta, GA
Save the Date!

STAY CONNECTED WITH US!

The Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Wireless Inclusive Technologies (Wireless