

TECHNOLOGY TODAY

ODP Technology Taskforce Newsletter

Happy Summer! It's time to soak up the sun and the fifth edition of the ODP Tech Taskforce's newsletter: *Technology Today*. Below you'll find new tools, apps, events, a heartwarming personal story, and more insights into the assistive technology world.

Call for Personal Stories

Our Taskforce is always looking for more individuals with disabilities to provide personal stories. We want to know how assistive technology has made a positive impact on people's lives. These personal stories can be in the form of videos, blogs, or written essays. They will be highlighted in our future newsletters.

If you're interested or want to know more, reach out to: ra-PWODP_Outreach@pa.gov

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The Ins and Outs of Universal Design

You may have heard the term “universal design” before, but do you really know what it means? Universal design is when products, buildings, public spaces, and even learning materials are designed in a way that make them accessible to people with a wide range of abilities. Basically, its inclusive design practices that minimizes the need for assistive technology and makes things more usable by everyone!

[Click here to learn more.](#)

Mobile Application Resources



ShowMe!: This free app allows you to turn you iPad into an interactive whiteboard. ShowMe allows users to record voice over tutorials and share them, to import documents and pictures, and so much more. The app is free and is available for download for iOS users. [Click here](#) to learn more.

NotNav GPS Accessibility: NotNav is a free app that uses GPS navigation to assist blind users with walking by announcing direction, street address, and nearby cross streets. “Designed by the blind for the blind,” this app uses Google Maps and is free and available for download for android devices in the google play store. [Click here](#) to learn more.

TouchAutism: This program is a compilation of apps used by individuals on the autism spectrum. The apps are placed into categories, such as early learners, promoting independence, and teachers. The apps are reviewed so that users can find what they need to help enhance their lives. The app is free and available for iOS systems. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Personal Story

In 2021, this Pennsylvanian family took a leap of faith and finally made a big decision regarding their daughter. Demi is 28 years old with Down syndrome and currently residing with her parents in their family home. However, she is living quite the independent life. During the winter months, Demi's parents travel out West to soak up the sun while she happily remains here in Pennsylvania all by herself.



This decision was not made overnight but started out as a gradual change. Demi's parents started taking trips for four days at time which eventually turned into weeks and now several months-long trips away from home once they were comfortable enough. This decision to stay in a different state for whole season was made entirely possible due to easily accessible and affordable assistive technology. Not to mention the

unwavering trust they have for their daughter and the amazing support they receive from local family and friends! [Click here to read more.](#)

TechOWL CATS

The Pennsylvania TechOWL program has lots of tools to offer, one of them being CATS. CATS, or the Consider Assistive Technology Solutions tool, was created to help individuals find ideas and other AT tools that are related to their specific needs and goals. This tool can be accessed by answering a few questions about oneself directly on their website. Once they know what you're looking for, a few personal suggestions will appear. If you're interested in finding more tools or connecting with someone from TechOWL, you'll be prompted to fill out another simple form. [Click here to learn more.](#)

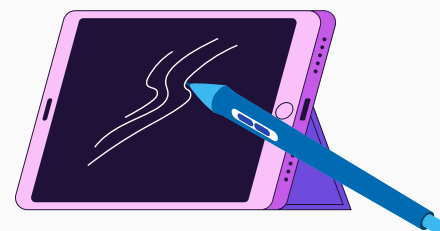




Libraries Are for Everyone

During this year's National Library Week, the Dauphin County Library systems celebrated by adding new assistive technology into some of their libraries. They unveiled new high-tech reading equipment for the blind and visually impaired. This allows more individuals to have access to the printed word and other library materials. [Click here to read more.](#)

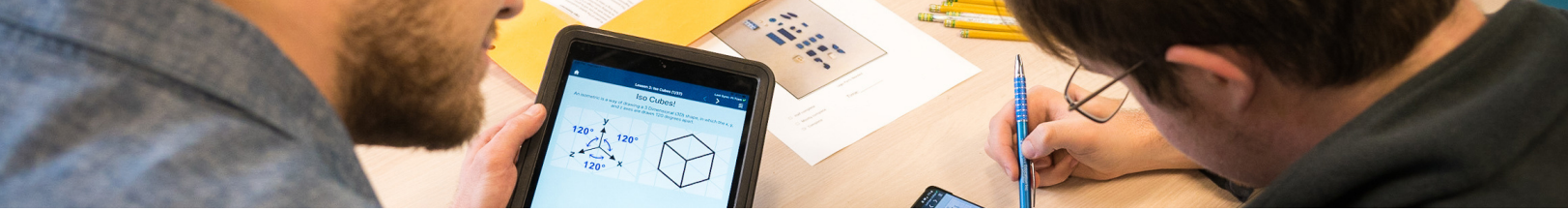
TECH CORNER: IPAD ACCESSIBILITY



Using phones, tablets, and other devices is completely intertwined into most of our lives. We're constantly using them to communicate, shop, learn new information, and so much more. However, in order to tap, swipe, scroll and use these devices it requires precise eye-hand coordination and muscle control. For some, those motions come easily. However, for individuals with limited dexterity and/or other disabilities it can become almost impossible to operate a smart device. That's why it's so important that there are tools and features that allow them to be more accessible.

There are two different variations of a stylus that do just that and provide a new sense of independence. The [Head Mounted Stylus](#) allows for easy swiping and tapping and is a good fit for those with limited hand-use but have head movement. The [Easy Flex Stylus](#) is also great for those with limited hand used as it's easily adjustable for any hand position.

Aside from some form of physical touch needed to use smart devices, there's also the need to see, hear, and speak for some of their features. Again, for some individuals that comes easily. For others that are hard of seeing or blind, hard of hearing or deaf, and/or non-verbal or have limited vocal use, that can be a challenge. With Apple's upcoming iOS 17 release, there will be new accessibility features such as Assistive Access, Personal Voice and Live Speech, and more to help in those areas. [Click here to learn more.](#)



Past and Upcoming Events

Virtual Tech Summit

What: This free virtual technology summit provided discussions on a range of technology topics for people with ID/DD, family members, allies, advocates, professionals, and tech experts.

Keynote Speaker: Shea Tanis, PhD [Link to Presentation](#)

Panel Discussion: Gregg Kelinson, Nathan Gerhard, Season Jackson, Christina Lawley, and Jason Ray [Link to Presentation](#)

PA Community of Practice Transition Conference

When: August 9 - August 10, 2023

Where: *The Penn Stater Conference Center*

215 Innovation Blvd State College, PA
16803 United States

- [In-Person Registration](#)
- [Virtual Registration](#)

North Carolina Assistive Technology Program (NCATP): Annual Expo

When: October 5, 2023 - 9:00 AM

- [Virtual Registration](#)



Technology for All: Training Series

When: Weekly, begins September 26, 2023 - 10:30AM or 1:30PM (choose preferred time)

Where: Virtual

- [Sign Up Here for More Information](#)

Want to get involved?

For more information about the Taskforce, to get involved, or to submit a question please contact: ra-PWODP_Outreach@pa.gov