



Connecticut Tech Act Project

Achievement Through Technology

CTTAP NEWS

Winter 2019

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Introduction

Dear Subscribers,

Please enjoy the **Winter Edition of the CTTAP News**. I hope you find it interesting and informative. We are working diligently to make our upcoming **Achievement Through Assistive Technology Conference on March 29th** a big success. We have 30 exhibitors, 20 breakout sessions and our attendee numbers keep growing!

Don't miss out. There is still time to register.
For more information visit www.CTtechact.com/conference.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Sincerely,

Arlene Lugo
Program Director
Connecticut Tech Act Project

Our conference hashtag is **#ATinCT19** - follow us on Twitter: **@Cttechact**

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Nicole Feeney

**Connecticut's Nicole Feeney Honored at
Assistive Technology Conference of New England**

Nicole Feeney was honored at the Assistive Technology Conference of New England in Rhode Island on Friday, November 30, 2018, with the Elizabeth M. Dalton Assistive Technology Award. The Elizabeth M. Dalton Award was established in 2010. It is the Rhode Island Assistive Technology Access Partnership's (ATAP) award, recognizing the outstanding commitment by an individual to improve the access to and acquisition of assistive technology for individuals with disabilities. Nominees for this award are distinguished by their innovative actions, which have impacted the lives of individuals with disabilities in the area of assistive technology and/or universal design for life and learning. CONGRATS, NICOLE!

Editor's Note: Didn't get a chance to see Nicole at the RI Conference? Come and hear Nicole's presentations at Connecticut's own Achievement Through Assistive Technology Conference on March 29, 2019, at the Hartford Hilton. Nicole will present *Hot Trends in Assistive Technology: Its Impact on EVERYONE!* She will also be co-presenting *Utilizing Smart Technology to Combat Social Isolation* with her colleague, **Kristopher Thomson**.

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Double Robots Go for a Dress Rehearsal

By EASTCONN's Carol Magliocco, Ph.D., PT, ATP
& Amy Norton, M.Ed., ATP, CAPS



Double Robot

On a recent Friday afternoon, **EASTCONN's Double Robots** went to the Hartford Hilton for a dress rehearsal. Double Robots can be used for telepresence in schools, employment settings, meetings, etc. Users can log into the robot using their own computer, tablet or even their smartphone. Instead of just participating from a static location, they can move around the environment and interact with others.

The first Double Robot was tested to ensure that its debut at the March Conference would be a success. The Double Robot will connect Conference attendees with our keynote speaker, Liz Persaud, who will address the crowd from her home in Georgia. She is the Training

and Outreach Coordinator, Tools for Life - Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program, AMAC Accessibility, Georgia Institute of Technology. Technical specifications were reviewed to project the image from the Double Robot onto two large screens with an accompanying sound system that will bring Liz "up close and personal" for the keynote address, *Teamwork, Technology and Tenacity: Reflections on a Journey of a Lifetime*, to kick off the Conference day. Liz will be able to move her robot around the stage area to better interact with Conference

attendees. Later in the morning, Liz will again use the Double Robot when she and her husband, Benjamin Jacobs, present *Accessing Your World: Exploring Environmental Control Technologies*. The robots will allow Conference attendees to talk in "real time" with Liz and Ben, and to comment and ask questions. For more information on Liz's presentation, you can view the Summer 2018 newsletter archived on the CT Tech Act website at www.CTtechact.com/newsletter.

The second Double Robot, which also had a dress rehearsal, which will enable an off-site attendee to virtually attend the Conference. Patti Clay, the former Bureau Chief at the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, who now resides out of state, took just a few minutes to learn how to walk her robot from presentation room to room so she could experience what it will be like to attend a session using the robot. Patti notes, "I think the robot is a 'game changer.' It allows someone who cannot physically be in a specific location to not only see and hear what is going on but to be able to contribute. It also allows the person to participate in multiple areas and it was easy to move around with my laptop!"

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Connecticut's Achievement Through Assistive Technology Conference March 29, 2019: Spotlight on Presenters

by EASTCONN's Amy Norton, M.Ed., ATP, CAPS
& Stacey Fulton, OTR/L, ATP, CAPS



Mike Marotta, left, and Bob Cunningham, right, during their session,
iPad vs. Chromebook: The 10 Round Main Event! at ATIA 2019

For those of you unable to make it to ATIA this year, Connecticut's Achievement Through Assistive Technology Conference provides a great opportunity for you to learn from present and past ATIA presenters. Mike Marotta, Director of the Richard West Assistive Technology Advocacy Center at Disability Rights New Jersey, is one such presenter who was a strong presence at ATIA and will be bringing his expertise to Connecticut.

At ATIA, Mike co-presented with Bob Cunningham and led a lively and entertaining discussion - ***iPad vs. Chromebook: The 10 Round Main Event!*** Each presenter engaged in a head-to-head bout of the Chromebook versus the iPad. Session participants voted on which tool won each round. Participants were able to chime in and join the battle and share their own solutions and knowledge. Rounds included document sharing/collaborating, speech recognition, built-in text-to-speech features, making paper documents accessible, note taking, AAC, etc.

For Connecticut's Achievement Through Assistive Technology Conference, Mike will provide two breakout sessions. One will focus on ***Assistive Technology to Support Executive Function*** and the other on ***Using AT to Support Inclusive Employment Practices***.



Liz Persaud during her session, *Increasing Assistive Technology Service Delivery Through Partnerships* at ATIA 2019.

Our keynote speaker, Liz Persaud, Training and Outreach Coordinator, Tools for Life - Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program, was also at ATIA and presented several sessions. She and her colleagues, Samantha Peters and Rachel Wilson, shared their expertise on the development of partnerships to establish and support assistive technology labs, addressing challenges and budgets, creating toolkits and marketing events. In another session, Liz and colleague Jessi Wright provided participants with strategies for increasing assistive technology service delivery through partnerships. In both sessions, Liz and her colleagues provided participants with a wealth of information and ideas to assist them within their own states.



Liz will be presenting to us via a telepresence Double Robot on March 29th. In addition to her keynote ***Teamwork, Technology and Tenacity: Reflections on a Journey of a Lifetime***, she will also be presenting a breakout session, ***Accessing Your World: Exploring Environmental Control Technologies*** with husband Benjamin Jacobs, Accommodations Specialist, Tools for Life - Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program.

Be sure to register to reserve your seat for these and other dynamic speakers at this year's Achievement Through Assistive Technology Conference!

Four New Access Methods Showcased at ATIA

by EASTCONN's Stacey Fulton, OTR/L, ATP, CAPS

Didn't get a chance to go to ATIA? Here are four new, exciting access methods that were showcased at ATIA Orlando this past January:



Sesame Enable: This app for any Android device offers touch-free control. Once activated, the cursor follows head movements to tap or swipe, eliminating the need for touch control. Use your voice to turn your phone off or on. Available by subscription.

AMAneo BTi - Bluetooth Assistive Mouse Adapter for iPad and iPhone:

AMAneoBTi allows users to control their iOS devices with any assistive or ergonomic mouse.



The AMAneo Assistive Mouse USB Adapter:

This helps people who have hand tremors control a computer mouse more easily by filtering out the trembling movements of the hand. It can be adjusted to compensate for tremors of varying intensities.

Smile Mouse:

This controls your computer, hands-free and voice-free. It works through the webcam of your computer and provides mouse and switch access using facial

gestures.



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New Products at ATIA: **TAP Wearable Keyboard and Mouse**

By: Carolann Cormier, MS, CAGS, CCC-SLP

A new product shown at ATIA in Orlando, Florida, this year, was the **TAP**, a one-handed keyboard, mouse and controller that uses gentle finger taps to transmit commands to any Bluetooth enabled device. This keyboard can be used in any position and on any surface and allows you to input letters, numbers, symbols and macros. The TAP is available for \$199.00 (though right now there is a \$25.00-off sale on the website at <https://www.tapwithus.com/>).



The TAP's six modes -- keyboard, mouse, game, music, controller and custom mode (see image below) -- allows someone with limited mobility or with vision issues to control their computer, phone, tablet, games, smart televisions and virtual reality/augmented reality.



The TAP

The TAP is composed of five rings that slip on the fingers and thumb of your left or right hand. Your thumb works as your mouse and is just like your desktop mouse. You glide your thumb to move the cursor, and tap your fingers to click. Your fingers tap to type the letters, with the vowels being a single tap of a finger or your thumb. It requires you to learn specific finger taps and combinations for each letters and other keys on the keyboard. Some

key inputs require you to tap multiple fingers at the same time; for example, a space

requires a single tap of all five fingers. You can remap the keyboard to your own finger-tap combination. Users can tap anywhere, on anything, with no need to see the screen or their fingers. Taps become text and swipes of the hand move your cursor.

The TAP comes in two sizes and its battery lasts for 8 hours of use. According to the website, it ships with a suite of free mobile (iOS/Android) TAP apps and games, a battery and MicroUSB cable. It works with any USB adapters. It weighs 10.8 ounces and is compatible with IOS 9+, ANDROID 5+, OS X YOSEMITE+, WINDOWS 8.1+ and LINUX UBUNTU.

I found the TAP easy to use with the alphabet game and it required just a slight tap of each finger, which made me think that it could be wonderful for individuals with limited finger movements. However, you did need to be able to move each finger separately from the others. I was able to tap on multiple surfaces, including flat on a table, upright on the side of the table, and flat and upright on my body with all activations working to input letters. I felt this versatility could be helpful for individuals that are in multiple positions. Since you don't need a keyboard or the ability to see the keys, it could also be used for those who are blind or have low vision. As you have to learn new movements for each letter, there would be a definite learning curve, just as there is a learning curve for keyboarding. The reviews on Amazon and other sites were mixed and reported issues including taps being misread. It does appear that improvements have been made since the TAP came out last spring and as those continue, I think the TAP is worth further exploration and could be a wonderful tool for many individuals.

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Introducing Skoog - Where You Can Unleash Your Inner Rock Star

by Shannon Taber, ATP, United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Eastern Connecticut

Skoog makes a musical instrument that everyone can play. And they really do mean everyone! Skoog works with your iPad, so you can play, jam and create music like a rock star. Just choose a song you love and get playing!

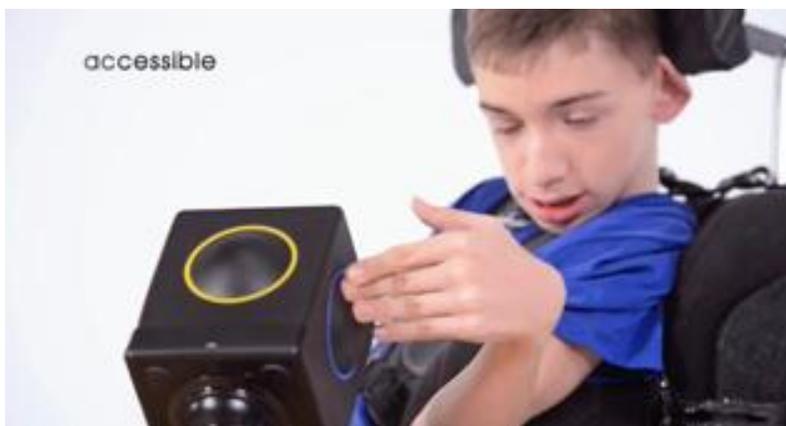
There are five sides on your Skoog: red, blue, yellow, green and orange. Each side plays a different note.

You can also press within the colored circles or squeeze Skoog anywhere on its sides, edges or corners. Skoog works great when played with your hands, but it can be played with any part of your body.



Skoog

This is a new kind of inclusive musical instrument that maximizes the educational and health benefits of the creative arts. All users, young and old, can benefit from music. Skoog enables people of all ages with a wide range of disabilities to have access and expressive control of sound.



But what else can you do with Skoog?

- Adjust the sensitivity. Tap light, tap anywhere on the side.
- Link with other music apps on your iOS device such as GarageBand or Spotify.
- Use Skoog with or without a mount for wheelchair users or desktops.
- Learn to code and change the way you play. The Skoog lets you change the code, write code and create the music you want to hear.
- Adjust the notes and scales.
- Find teacher and therapy resources from the Skoog Support Blog with lesson plans, videos and activity sheets.

Skoog music products don't require any previous musical skills or abilities. The user-friendly design makes it fun, inspiring and easy to use. So, parents, teachers and children will really get to express themselves - including those with disabilities. We are looking forward to adding a Skoog and a Skoog Skwitch to our inventory so we can share it with our users. The Skoog Skwitch is for another day. We can't wait to share it with you!

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Have an event of interest to persons with disabilities, their family members or caretakers and those who work with them to support their development and maximize independence?

If you would like that event to be included in the **CT Tech Act Newsletter**, please send a notice and contact information to Carol Magliocco at cmagliocco@eastconn.org or call 860-228-3483.

CTTAP MISSION: Increasing independence and improving the lives of individuals with disabilities through increased access to Assistive Technology for work, school and community living.

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