

A publication of the National
Alliance for Direct Support Professionals

Frontline Initiative

Volume 9 • Number 2 • 2011

DSPs and Technology
Frontline Initiative

What's
Inside

Contents

- Frontline notes • p. 2
- NADSP update • p. 3
- The right to communicate:
DSPs, communications, and
technology • p. 4
- New career options in remote
supports • p. 5
- Remote monitoring works,
but not for everyone • p. 6
- Technology etiquette: Think
before you speak, email, Tweet,
post, text, blog • p. 7
- Direct support competencies and
technology toward better lives • p. 8
- Using computers and the Internet
to connect and speak out • p. 11
- Providing the right amount
of support • p. 12
- NADSP member organizations, state
chapters, and contacts • p. 13
- Frontline resources • p. 14

Riding the technology wave

By Rodney Bell

Like ocean waves, technology keeps coming. Technology is inherent to society, a constant presence for millennia. We can ride it or get swept away. If you're afraid of new technology, there's likely a good reason. Using a new technology is often difficult at first, but by providing feedback, we can be a part of making it better.

DSPs using technology at work can help change it to better meet the needs of people with disabilities. Devices that are difficult to use, fail frequently, or do things we don't intend can make one hesitant and apprehensive. But over

time technology improves and soon the best technology, like phones, seem second nature to us. Good technology can be customized. Soon, some technology, like SmartHomes, will adapt to us rather than us adapting to it.

It's up to us to make technology right. Feedback into the development of technology happens from how we use it, informing developers what's wrong, or by not using it. As we change technology, it also changes how we work and live. Technology and society co-evolve and have been for ages; nowadays the pace is ever faster. The only way to ride these waves is to get on board.

Continued on page 16



Frontline notes



Follow us
on Facebook

Editorial information

Editor · **Lori Sedlezky**
Assistant editor · **Rachael Sarto**
Managing editor · **Amy Hewitt**
Graphic design · **Connie Burkhart**
Web · **www.nadsp.org**

NADSP Staff

Joseph Macbeth, Executive Director
John Sauer, Workforce Development Coordinator
Rachael Sarto, Administrator

NADSP Board of Directors

Lisa Burck, President
Don Carrick, Vice President
Susan Copeland
Jeanne Desjardins
David Liscomb
Jay Mackey
Stephanie Marsh
Jerri McCandless
James Meadours
Julie Price

NADSP Foundation Board of Directors

John Rose
Tony Thomas
Regis Obijiski

Education, Training, and Workforce Development Committee

Carol Britton, Co-Chair
Julie Price, Co-Chair
Elvin Alvarez
Jennifer Cottingham
Valarie Dorsey-Oresto
Judy Duncan
Colleen McLaughlin
Diane Potts

Contacts and Chapters Committee

Don Carrick, Co-Chair
Jay Mackey, Co-Chair
State contacts and chapter leaders
This committee is welcoming new members

Legislation and Policy Advocacy Committee

Stephanie Marsh, Chair
This committee is welcoming new members

Communications Committee

This committee is welcoming new members

Contribute to Frontline Initiative

If you are interested in contributing to *Frontline Initiative* or reprinting an article, please contact —

Lori Sedlezky
Research & Training Center on Community Living
sedl0003@umn.edu

Welcome to our *Frontline Initiative* on technology and direct support. We hope you will use this issue to start thinking about how technology can help us as DSPs do our jobs better. When we do our jobs well, the people we support have better lives. This means people have more options and gain more skills. People have the tools they need to communicate, to learn and work, and to participate actively in their communities.

Technology can promote connection and inclusion. In this issue, Katie McDermott talks with us about her work with a self-advocacy Computer Club. People are learning new skills together to speak up and connect. Jolene Hyppa-Martin, a speech and language pathologist, talks about the role direct support professionals (DSPs) can play in helping people to use communication devices.

Some organizations are using technology to allow DSPs to provide in-home supports from a distance. DSP Denise Cady and Dustin Wright describe how “tele-care” (or remote support) works. They suggest that it can offer DSPs new and satisfying jobs. With current DSP shortages, these authors say that tele-care can help people get the support they need. Abby Anderson gives her perspective on remote supports based on her recent practical experiences. This new technology is still controver-

sial. We hope these articles will get you thinking about it.

Nowadays, being an effective professional requires learning about technology. In an overview of technology in direct support, Rachael Sarto discusses how technology relates to becoming a more competent DSP. She explores the connection between technology and the NADSP competencies and Code of Ethics. Susan O’Neill gives some tips on personal technology etiquette, from Tweets to texts to blogs.

This issue of *Frontline Initiative* has a long Frontline Resources section. The organizations and tools listed here are just a beginning. We are not endorsing any one technology or company, but rather are introducing the many resources available. We hope you will enjoy this issue as you learn more about technology in direct support.

To quote NADSP President Lisa Burck, “Technology will help us get the job done. Technology is cool. Bring it on!”

~ The editors

Frontline Initiative is supported through a cooperative agreement between the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, U.S. Department of Education (#H133B080005) and the Research and Training Center on Community Living (RTC) at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the RTC, Institute, University of Minnesota, or their funding sources.

Frontline Initiative is available in alternate formats upon request.

NADSP update

By Joseph Macbeth, Executive Director

After more than ten years of hard work by volunteers, I am honored to be NADSP's first Executive Director. I'm proud to represent NADSP and advance its mission. Here are some highlights of our recent work.

We know health insurance is a major concern for many direct support professionals (DSPs) and for their employers. To help our members access health insurance, NADSP set up a preferred provider relationship with Irwin Siegel Agency, Inc. NADSP now offers a Limited Benefit Health Insurance Program for employees of NADSP member organizations. Irwin Siegel will work directly with organizations that want to offer this service.

We have been keeping in touch with members through regular E-Flashes. Look for news about DSPs and those we support in

these email updates. We'll share news about policies that affect you, accredited training programs, credentialing, apprenticeship, and state chapter activities. If you are not getting E-Flashes, email jmacbeth@nadsp.org. We will gladly add you to the list.

We work with other national disability-related organizations that share our values. One new partnership is with the National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities at the University of Delaware. NADSP is also a founding member of the Alliance for Full Participation (AFP). We will be part of the November 2011 AFP Employment Summit. The Summit will focus on making fully integrated employment a reality for all people with disabilities.

We continue to partner with ANCOR and the National Advocacy Campaign. This June, NADSP's annual meeting was held in Wash-

ington, DC, on June 7th, along with the ANCOR Conference and DSPs-to-DC, an annual advocacy event.

NADSP members also conducted a Direct Support Workforce workshop on June 9th at the annual conference of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

NADSP remains committed to promoting the DSP Code of Ethics. We are working to advance our national DSP credential, and make it accessible for all DSPs. I hope you will join us as we grow and continue to "make a world of difference in people's lives."

Joseph Macbeth is the Executive Director of NADSP. He lives and works in New York state. He can be reached at jmacbeth@nadsp.org or 518-449-7551.

Celebrate
National DSP Recognition Week
September 11-17, 2011
www.youneedtoknowme.org

The right to communicate

DSPs, communications, and technology

By Jolene Hyppa-Martin

As a speech and language pathologist (SLP), I work with people who have communication disorders. I evaluate their communication abilities and provide interventions to help them communicate. I work with people of all ages and varieties of conditions. Some people have intellectual or developmental disabilities. Others have conditions that develop later in life. In my role as a speech and language pathologist, I can help people with expressive communication and receptive communication.

The SLP code of ethics tells us to find ways to meet the needs within our communities. I work at an outreach clinic. It serves people with complex communication needs who receive services in their homes. We do thorough evaluations and learn what communication abilities people have. Then we work with people to build on these abilities, or give them new options for communication. This often includes using what we call “augmentative and alternative communication technology” or AAC.

We connect people with AAC to help them to express and understand language. It ranges from pen-and-paper strategies and eye gaze boards, all the way to very high-tech speech-generating computers. Our clinic is known for our eye gaze devices. These are computers that generate speech and are operated by the user’s eye movement. They are very helpful for people with ALS (also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease), spinal



cord injuries, and other disabilities such as cerebral palsy.

Communication is inherently social. It involves the many people in a person’s life. So when someone has complex communica-

**Communication
is a human right.**

tion needs, we work with them and their care partners, or other people in their life. These may be DSPs or PCAs, family members, social workers, or nurses. We can help the support staff learn how to be good communication partners. This can include learning how to use high- or low-tech AAC technology. Whatever the technology, being a good communication partner is necessary to the person being supported.

Communication is a human right. All DSPs can be effective in supporting people with complex communication needs. All people have the right to communication, regardless of the extent of their communication disabilities.

Through communication, people can affect the conditions of their existence. As a DSP, you can make sure that all people are treated according to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association bill of rights (http://www.asha.org/NJC/bill_of_rights.htm). This includes “be[ing] spoken to with respect and courtesy, be[ing] spoken to directly and not be[ing] spoken for or talked about in the third person while present, and hav[ing] clear, meaningful... communications.” For people with complex communication needs, AAC technology can be very empowering.

Technology has changed a lot in the last several years. If you work with a person with complex communication needs, check to find out if they have had an AAC evaluation recently. There may be new tools available to support his or her communication.

Jolene Hyppa-Martin, MA, CCC-SLP, practices Speech Language Pathology at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. She can be reached at jhyppama@d.umn.edu.

New career options in remote supports

By Denise Cady and Dustin Wright

The demand for DSPs is growing much faster than the numbers of people entering the field. According to the latest *The State of the States in Developmental Disabilities*, published by the University of Colorado, more than 4.6 million people with disabilities in the United States need direct support. The vast majority of these individuals live with their families. Only about 500,000 receive services through government programs. Of the 4 million remaining, more than 700,000 live with family caregivers who are over 60 years old. Tens of thousands are on waiting lists for services. As our population ages, even more DSPs will be needed.

Some new technology may help to address the DSP shortage. Devices similar to smart phones, for example, can allow greater independence by giving automatic reminders about activities of daily living. Some technologies can take the DSP out of the picture. However, much new technology continues to depend on the human touch. Tele-care is one example of technology that requires skilled and knowledgeable DSPs.

Remote supports or “tele-care” means in-home supports provided from a distance using technology. In tele-care, a variety of devices are installed in a person’s home. The system is customized to the meet each person’s unique support needs. It links the person to experienced, trained DSPs off-site. To ensure privacy, cameras are only in public areas. Outside those areas, tele-caregiver DSPs get

sensor alerts to track specific activities. They can interact with the people they are supporting face-to-face through two-way audio and video devices. They do many things an on-site DSP would do (prompting, reminding, coaching, socializing, etc.). Of course, they cannot do the hands-on support work (bathing, grooming, physical assistance, etc.). When hands-on supports are needed, a back-up DSP is called to make an in-person visit.

Remote supports are in-home supports provided from a distance using technology.

This new technology requires experienced, trained professionals. Like any job, being a tele-caregiver has its positives and negatives. Tele-caregivers enjoy supporting several people at one time. They enjoy seeing the independence a person feels being able to be in his or her own home without a DSP physically present. They like forming relationships with the people they support, even though they may never meet face-to-face. A good tele-caregiver is flexible and can quickly adapt to changes and improvements in the tele-care technology.

Being a tele-caregiver can also have its drawbacks. Some tele-caregivers report they miss provid-

ing hands-on support. They feel frustrated when physical aid is needed and the people receiving support have to wait for back-up direct support staff to arrive. They also feel limited by the tele-care system of cameras and sensors. Bottom line, they miss being in the home with the person they are supporting.

This new model of support also creates a new “DSP on demand” position. These back-up staff must be highly skilled DSPs that have the ability to respond to multiple peoples’ hands-on care needs. They must know about each person they are supporting and be able to respond quickly as needed.

Technology will never replace people, especially in the human services. But it can be used to help DSPs provide better care. It can also provide more independence and allow more options for people who receive direct support.

Denise Cady is a Tele-Caregiver DSP at Rest Assured. Dustin Wright is the HR Director at Rest Assured.

Remote monitoring works, but not for everyone

By Abby Anderson

I work for a program called Semi-Independent Living Services (SILS). In this program some people receive just a few hours a week of support, and other people receive support during most waking hours. Unlike a group home, none of the people receiving our services have in-person support twenty-four hours per day. However, support staff from our program is always available for emergencies. Even at night, awake staff is available to field emergency phone calls.

When we added remote monitoring technology a couple years ago, it improved our ability to support three roommates (Gary, Warren, and Dale) during the hours when no support staff is at their home. However, Joe (name changed) tried using remote monitoring technology in his home, and it did not seem to be as helpful. I'll describe the specific experiences my coworkers have had with this new technology.

Gary, Warren, and Dale's story: Safer and healthier because of remote monitoring

Gary, Warren and Dale are roommates who live together and receive support through the SILS program at Opportunity Partners. They use remote monitoring technology in their home. We had seen that these roommates did not always call our awake staff in the evenings when problems developed. Gary, Warren, and Dale agreed to try remote monitoring



technology to improve their safety and address medical concerns. Together, we developed a plan, and the technology was installed

Supports are never
one-size-fits-all.

and activated.

Emergencies

Warren, Gary and Dale have several kinds of technology in their home. Emergency pendants hang on the wall in the living room and in the downstairs bathroom. When pressed, these pendants activate a customized calling tree. The calling tree calls Opportunity Partners' emergency on-call number first. If there is no answer, the call automatically rolls through a list of other emergency contacts until someone answers. This makes emergency calls as easy as the touch of a button.

Medical needs

Sometimes one of the roommates will not remember to tell direct support staff important health information. To address this, Gary, Warren and Dale had bedroom and bathroom door sensors installed. The sensors are programmed to come on during the hours they are typically asleep. These sensors automatically let DSPs know if there are many trips to the bathroom in the night, which can be a sign of illness. There is also a sensor on the bathroom light. This sensor tells us if the light is on for a long time during the night, another possible sign of illness. The DSPs who support Warren, Gary, and Dale can then ask the questions to learn more about each person's health right away, before an illness becomes more serious.

Safety

Gary, Warren, and Dale all agree that these technologies make

Continued on page 9

Technology etiquette

Think before you speak, email, Tweet, post, text, blog

By Susan O'Neill

Today's world provides more ways to communicate than ever. But it also provides us more ways to be distracted and misunderstood. In this brave new world, technology and communication gaps between workers and with employers can lead to mixed signals, inefficiencies, and conflict. Unfortunately, the rules of this new world haven't been sorted out yet. And new changes keep coming.

Use the right technology for the job

It's important to keep current in technology. You don't have to be on the leading edge of every technological advancement. However, people today no longer use smoke signals, stone tablets, and the Pony Express. Regardless of your age or background, staying current in communication technology is part of staying viable in the work world. Take a class, insist your employer help you, have your neighbor or grand kids show you, but get it done.

From the range of ways in which you can communicate, consider what is best for the job. Each format has strengths and weakness. Texts are quick, discreet and good for sharing a small bit of information. A face-to-face meeting may be needed if dialogue and non-verbal communication are critical. Tweets, blogs, and fan pages may help connect employees to each other or the company. Email memos can be tracked more easily than paper. Help your employer know which formats are



the most efficient and effective in communicating with you.

Being a professional
doesn't stop when we
leave work.

Keep boundaries between work and private life

With new ways of communicating, boundaries are blurring. Keeping work and personal life separate can prevent communication overload and reduce mishaps. Consider the following —

- Define for yourself (within employer policies) when and how you communicate about work when home and about home when at work. Make your boundaries clear.
- If people from work are on your social networking sites everything you post has to be “work

appropriate.” Would you share it at a staff meeting? If not, don't share it here.

- Don't keep information regarding people supported on your personal computer unless you have employer approval and can meet HIPAA standards.
- Don't use a work computer for personal business or Web-surfing unless you have approval. If you have approval remember the following —
 - » These activities are not private. Your passwords, emails, Web histories, etc. may all be available to your employer.
 - » Never visit questionable Web sites (religious/political, gaming, or “adult entertainment”).
 - » Never download anything onto a work computer that isn't specifically for work and preapproved. (You may introduce viruses.)

Continued on page 10

Direct support competencies and technology toward better lives

By Rachael Sarto

The right technology, used well, can improve the quality of the lives of people with disabilities. The NADSP Competencies and Code of Ethics can help DSPs use technology to support individuals in achieving their life goals.

Assistive and adaptive technologies

Assistive technology may be very high tech, or simply a good idea that allows someone to do the same activities as other people. Communication, hearing, and vision devices allow expression and connection. Various aids can support daily living, for example electronic aids like a switch that operates appliances. Devices like wheel chairs, walkers, or prosthetics can help someone get around. Adaptations like hand cycles can increase options for recreation. Seating and positioning systems can improve stability or increase comfort. Transportation and driving modifications can allow a person to drive or ride. As you can see, many types of adaptations can be empowering to a person with disabilities.

“Universal design” is the idea that technologies and systems can and should work better for everyone, including people with disabilities and people without disabilities. One recent example is smart phones and other mobile devices. Some universally

beneficial applications include “Pill Time,” which tells you when to take your medications. “Music for Users,” can act as an “alarm” to help with managing time and planning tasks. “LocateMeNow” tells you where you are, making travel easier. “Ring Finger” can speed dial a pre-programmed number at a pre-set time. These

tools can make life easier for all of us.

As DSPs, we are responsible to learn about what is available. It is our role to advocate for someone who wants to try or purchase a new device.

Internet and social networking

Do you use email, social networking, or the Internet to learn about world events and connect with other people? How about the people you support? In general, people with disabilities have less access to comput-

ers and the Internet than those without disabilities. One reason is that computers and Web sites are harder to use than they could be. But also, a person with disabilities may not get a chance to learn about using computers.



Computer and Internet use are part of inclusion in the wider community. When people with disabilities can email or Skype with friends, coworkers, or family, participate in social networks, and read or write blogs, they are more connected to others and their community. This also means that they have a more visible role in their community and can be recognized for the value they bring. As DSPs support people to build and maintain relationships, access to computers and the Internet is key. DSPs can also teach skills that promote safety on the Internet. DSPs can help people to participate in online communities in empowering and safe ways.

Participant empowerment

Friendships & Relationships

Direct support competencies and technology toward better lives
continued from page 8

Documentation technology

Many agencies are adopting documentation systems that let DSPs

document quickly and efficiently from com-

Documentation

munity locations. These systems also enable managers to better oversee and organize records. The goal is to reduce the time spent coordinating paper records. This can give DSPs more face-to-face time with those we support.

Technology, competencies, and ethics

New technology will continue to be developed. As DSPs, we are responsible to advocate for technology to be used in ways that enhance life opportunities for the people we support. Questions to ask ourselves can include the following: Does this technology use promote inclusion? Does it support self-determination and privacy? Is it based in person-centered practices? These questions can help DSPs use technology in the most responsible and ethical way and in adherence to the NADSP Code of Ethics.

Rachael Sarto has worked as a DSP and is currently NADSP's Administrator. She can be reached at rsarto@nadsp.org.

Remote monitoring works, but not for everyone
continued from page 6

them feel safer than before they had it. Gary said, "Yes. It's much better around here. If someone really got hurt, I would feel safe." Warren added, "I feel that it is good, safe and reliable. Everybody could use it." They like the sensors on their front and back doors best. They are glad that staff would know right away if an intruder entered. DSPs who support Gary, Dale, and Warren generally agree that the system is working for these men.

Joe's story: Remote monitoring is not for everyone

DSPs in the Opportunity Partners SILS program have also tried to use remote monitoring to support Joe, another person who also lives in his own apartment. They think the technology is a headache. Stacy, who coordinates this

man's supports, says the technology doesn't work. Joe has gait problems and is at risk of falls. Recently, bed sensors were put in to notify staff when he gets out of bed. However, the sensors only worked some of the time. Thus, she is not confident that he would get help if he fell. She feels it has done little to improve his safety and well-being.

Conclusion

Each person has different needs and abilities, and supports are never one-size-fits-all. Technology is not one-size-fits-all, either. We are glad that remote monitoring technology is helpful for some people we support, but it is only one of the many ways we can support people's independence, safety, and health.

Abby Anderson is an assistant program manager and DSP at Opportunity Partners, Inc. She can be reached at aanderson@opportunities.org.

Research & Training Center on Community Living

Self-Advocacy Online

selfadvocacyonline.org

Supported in part by the NEC Foundation and The MacArthur Foundation

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Driven to DiscoverSM

Technology etiquette: Think before you speak, email, Tweet, post, text, blog
continued from page 7

- » Never leave a work computer in a parked car or unsupervised in a public place (library, etc).

Know when to turn it off (or at least put it on vibrate)

We've gotten used to constant connection. However, there are times when people deserve our undivided attention. Consider the space, privacy and feelings of the person you are physically with at the time. Excuse yourself to take a call or return a text.

Recognize there is no privacy in the electronic world

Modern communication can feel very anonymous. However, very little of it actually is. In fact it's more difficult to have a private life than ever. Blogging, texting, email, and social networking sites are only semi-private in the best of cases. Once you've "published" a photo, a comment or other media, you no longer have control. Even if it's on your personal time, your behavior may become "public" and affect your work life.

You want to make sure you don't cross a legal or ethical line

or face questions about your behavior. Some things in particular you will want to avoid are comments about people supported or their habits and lives. You also will want to avoid negative comments about your profession, co-workers or your employer. Even if you are posting in ways you think is private or no names are shared, it is not OK. Being a professional doesn't stop when we leave work.

Susan O'Neil has 17 years experience in services to people with developmental disabilities as a DSP and in other roles. She has worked at the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota since 1995.

You want to be the best!

Together, the College of Direct Support and NADSP will make you a pro.

The College of Direct Support is an approved curriculum for NADSP's national credentialing program.

With more than 50,000 learners in 25 states, this multimedia, interactive, web-based curriculum is your answer to having a satisfying career in community human services.

Call toll free, 1.877.353.2767
or visit our web site:

collegeofdirectsupport.com



Building Careers,
Supporting Lives



Using computers and the Internet to connect and speak out



Frontline Initiative interviewed Katie McDermott to learn more about her work using computers and the Internet to connect with and empower other self advocates. Katie is a leader in the self-advocacy movement. She serves on the Board of Advocating Change Together (ACT), and has been a Self Advocates Minnesota (SAM) Representative from the Twin Cities for two years. She has completed self-advocacy training through

ACT, Merrick, Inc., and Partners in Policy Making at the Minnesota DD Council. Creative, fun, and engaging, Katie is a skilled leader with a passion for connecting people with the self-advocacy movement.

What happens in the Computer Club at Advocating Change Together (ACT)?

Katie McDermott: We get together in a room in the ACT office. We invite self advocates and people who don't really know a lot about computers, and teach them how to make a Facebook and email account. We show them the government Internet pages, and we get Internet savvy. I don't know too much about the Internet, but I'm learning as well.

The Computer Club is still kind of new, and we're trying to reach out to new advocates. We're also looking for advocates to join the ACT Board and SAM (Self Advocates Minnesota). We're trying to reach people, and sometimes we use Facebook. That's why we came up with Self Advocates in Computers, so we can connect with advocates from anywhere and communicate. There's a Facebook group you can join. There are about 59 advocates on there right now.

We can connect with advocates from anywhere and communicate.

What kinds of things do people talk about on Self Advocates in Computers?

Katie: We talk about things like the self-advocacy conference. People post about what is going on with their self-advocacy meetings. It's a place for advocates to communicate together when they are on Facebook.

Do you think people who are not involved with self-advocacy get chances to use computers and the Internet?

Katie: I think people do get chances to use computers. They may have their own computer in their room, or a shared one in their group home. They get to use the Internet, but I'm not sure whether they learn how to use Facebook or other things like that.

Is there anything Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) can do to help people learn about computers and the Internet?

Katie: DSPs can help people get involved. And if they really want to know about people with disabilities, or the history, I would recommend taking the class Partners in Policy (offered through Developmental Disabilities Councils in many states). A direct staff person and advocate could take that together, or join a self-advocacy group like the ACT Board where we all work together as a team. If they want to get involved, they are more than welcome.

When did you first start learning about computers?

Katie: When we were in school, we used them, but I didn't have my own computer at home till I was 26. Usually I would go to the library and stuff, but now that I have one at home I'm a Facebook junky! I check my email first, but then I have to check Facebook to see who's on.

Who have you connected with on Facebook?

Katie: I connected with a lot of new friends on Facebook, and self-advocates I knew from Mankato and South Dakota, and even some people from Kansas and Oklahoma have Facebooked me, so I get connected all over. It's nice to talk to them, because you don't see them all the time.

Providing the right amount of support

By Lisa Burck

More and more, direct support professionals (DSPs) are not leaving technology at the door when they go to work. Likewise, the people that we support are using technology to enhance and promote independence and self-determination.

The success or failure of technology for people who have a disability depends highly on direct support professionals. On the surface it may seem that advances in technology could reduce or replace the need for direct support. I believe nothing could be further from the truth. As people gather to help individuals plan for their lives, the most important question is always “Who will do this?” Plans aren’t anything more than words on a paper. Likewise, technology isn’t anything but a tool. Plans are brought to life and tools have value through the hands of a DSP.

I recently saw a video about a day in the life of a man who uses a lot of technology. His house reminded him to turn off the stove, let him know if the door is locked, or told his dog to get off the bed. His family and others were able to communicate with him by video email. His smart phone guided him through the bus routes. His bank made funds available through voice and thumbprint. The DSPs who support him realize that these tools enhance his self-determination and quality of life. They program the technology; they are the people he calls for help; they provide the assurance



and assistance. They have a necessary role in his life.

**Tools have value
through the hands
of a DSP.**

As DSPs, we don’t need to safeguard jobs. Believe me, there is plenty of work for everyone! Ongoing staffing shortages and continued movement to community-based services means that our jobs may look a little different,

but the need will always be there. When was the last time you had two days in a row that looked the same?

We know how hard it can be to provide enough support, but Dr. John Agosta from the Human Services Research Institute also warns against “over-supporting” people. Give people what they need, no more and no less. Our job in direct support is determining just how much support people need and what that support looks like.

Lisa Burck is the President of the NADSP Board of Directors, and Project Director at the Arc of Mississippi.

Sign up for E-Flash
Stay in the loop with NADSP’s monthly email!
Contact jmacbeth@nadsp.org

NADSP member organizations, state chapters, and contacts

We would like to acknowledge the NADSP Supporting Organization members for their generosity and ongoing dedication to the goals and mission of the NADSP.

Sponsoring organizations \$2000 level

- ANCOR
- Crystal Run Village, Inc.
- Research & Training Center on Community Living, University of Minnesota

Supporting organizations \$500 level

- Apple Patch Community, Inc
- Beyond Abilities, LLC
- Bost, Inc.
- Cardinal McClosky Services
- Catholic Charities Disabilities Services
- Cerebral Palsy Association of NY State
- DSP Association of TN (DSPAT)
- Eggleston Services
- Greystone Programs, Inc.
- Hawaii Waiver Providers Association
- Heartshare Human Services of New York
- Hillside Children's Center
- ICES, Inc.
- Jefferson Rehabilitation Center
- John Raffaele Educational Support for DSPs
- Koinonia Homes, Inc.
- Larry McKinstry Services, LLC
- Mercy Home
- Missoula Developmental Service Corporation
- New Horizons Resources, Inc.
- NYSARC, Inc.
- NYSARC, Inc.--Orange County Chapter (OCAHRC)
- Opportunity Enterprises, Inc.
- Outreach MRDD Services
- Pathfinder Services
- Residential Resources, Inc.
- RHC - The Resident Home
- SECOH
- Special People in Northeast, Inc. (SPIN, Inc.)

- Stone Belt Arc, Inc.
- The Adirondack Arc
- The Arc of Rensselaer County
- The Arc of Schuyler
- The Arc of Schuyler County
- The Arc Otsego
- The Center for Family Support
- The Resource Center
- Welcome House, Inc.

Affiliate organizations \$200 level

- Advocating Change Together, Inc.
- ARC Broward
- Community Residences, Inc.
- Community Support Services Inc
- Connections of Moorhead
- Delta Projects, Inc.
- Developmental Disability Institute
- Epilepsy Foundation of Long Island
- Innovative Learning, LLC
- Irwin Siegel Agency
- Job Path, Inc.
- John Raffaele Educational Support for DSPs
- Life's WORC
- Miami Cerebral Palsy Residential Service Inc.
- NYSACRA
- Opportunities Unlimited
- Outcomes, Inc.
- Parent to Parent of NYS
- Passages Inc
- Rainbow of Challenges, Inc.
- Self-Advocacy Association of New York State
- Seven County Services, Inc.
- The Emmaus Community of Pittsburg
- Spaulding Support Services
- SPEAK
- The Arc of Somerset County
- The Arc of Steuben
- Western New York Training Consortium
- WestSide Support Services LLC

State chapters and contacts

As a membership organization, NADSP requires the involvement of its members to share information on DSP issues, achievements and directions. Chapters and contacts do this important work in concert with NADSP. We encourage the involvement and participation of DSPs in leadership roles at both the local and national levels.

Arizona

DSPs of Arizona
Michelle Noe
dsp@dsparizona.com
602.680.7950
www.dsparizona.org

Arkansas

Vanessa Smith
SmithVanessaL@uams.edu
501.526.5962

Connecticut

Kristine E. Foss
kfoss@abilitybeyonddisability.org
203.775.4700 ext. 3066

Florida

Florida Alliance for DSPs
cswilley@floridaarf.org
850.877.4816 ext. 114

Georgia

Georgia Alliance of DSPs
Joy Eason Hopkins
joyeasonhopkins@gmail.com
www.gadsp.com

Illinois

Illinois DSPs
Dawn Kellogg, President
idsprotim@idspros.org
www.idspros.org

Indiana

DSPIN
Shannon Gilbert
sgilbert.mail@gmail.com

Kansas

Kathy Stiffler
KLStiffler@rsskansas.org
785.228.9443

Kentucky

SPEAK
Beth Richardson
brichardson@councilondd.org
502.584.1239 ext 207

Louisiana

Nancy Robertson
504.942.8289

Maine

MEDSP
Jenifer Adams
207.989.4007 ext 210
finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/MEDSP/

Maryland

Gina McDonald
Gmcdonald@nhssi.org
301.249.0206 x104

Massachusetts

Marianne Taylor
mtaylor@nadsp.org
508.678.2811 ext. 2977

Michigan

Michigan Alliance of DSPs (MADSP)
Michael Bray, Research Assistant
mikebray@wayne.edu
313.577.6684
http://www.ddi.wayne.edu/michigan_alliance.php

Minnesota

DSP Association of Minnesota (DSPAM)
Donald Krutsinger, President
minnesotaDSPAM@yahoo.com
651.895.7210

Mississippi

Support Professionals Advocating for Real Quality of Life for Everyone (SPARQLE)

Lisa Burck, Project Director
lburck@nadsp.org
866.497.1035

Missouri

DSPs of Missouri
Don Carrick
dcarrick@nadsp.org
660.582.7113

Nebraska

NDSPN
Mary Lawson
Nebraskadsp@gmail.com
308.284.2075 ext. 4469
Find us on Facebook, too!

New Hampshire

Robin Carlson
carlet@metrocast.net
603.330.0134

New Jersey

Colleen McLaughlin
Colleen.mclaughlin@umdnj.edu
732.235.9313

New Mexico

www.nmdirectsupport.org

New York

DSP Alliance of New York State (DYSPANY)
Michael Tuggey, President
tuggeyadk@yahoo.com
518.449.7551
directsupportprofessional.org

Ohio

Ohio Alliance of DSPs (OADSP)
Scott Osterfeld, Operations Administrator
sosterfeld@cinci.rr.com
513.300.7038
www.oadsp.org

Oklahoma

DSPs of Oklahoma (DSP-OK)
Patricia Rost
prost@epmi.org
405-650-4246
Co-contact: Diane Potts,
dpotts@tulsacc.edu, 918.595.7416

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Alliance for DSPs (PADSP)
Ernest Gibson, DSP
egibson72@yahoo.com
215.485.2276
padsp@gmail.com

Tennessee

DSPs of Tennessee
Susan Jakoblew, Director
The Arc of Tennessee
sjakoblew@hearctn.org
615.248.5878
www.dspat.org

Virginia

Amanda Panuline
panuline.amanda@egglestonsservices.org
757.487.6062

Frontline resources

Assistive technology and access to technology

Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities, Cognitive Technology Literature Database

www.colemaninstitute.org

The Cognitive Technology Literature Database is designed to provide a comprehensive, searchable bibliography of journal articles summarizing research on cognitive technologies for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

PACER Simon Technology Center

www.pacer.org/stc

The Simon Technology Center (STC) is dedicated to making the benefits of technology more accessible to children and adults with disabilities.

Freedom Machines

Documentary, Jamie Stoble and Janet Cole, filmmakers, 2004
www.freedommachines.com

Freedom Machines, a movie and national outreach campaign, looks at our beliefs about disability through the lens of assistive technology. Freedom Machines shows what is now possible, what will soon be possible, and why those who could and should benefit are not doing so.

Working Together: People with Disabilities and Computer Technology

Video, 2007, 12:59 minutes
www.washington.edu/doi/Video/index.php?vid=33

Netsmartz

www.netsmartz.org

Originally designed for young people and parents, Netsmartz offers DSPs a useful overview of safety and privacy topics regarding social networking and the Internet.

Self Advocacy Coalition of Kansas

www.sackonline.org/SACK_Training_Modules.html

The Self Advocacy Coalition of Kansas (SACK) offers accessible online training modules on topics including Making a Facebook Account, What is Self Advocacy, Rights and Responsibilities, Starting a Self Advocacy Group, The Role of Advisor: Facilitating Self Advocacy, and Self Direction.

Augmentative and alternative communication technology

- American Speech Language Hearing Association, www.asha.org/slp/clinical/aac.htm
- DynaVox, www.dynavoxtech.com
- Lingraphica, www.aphasia.com
- Prentke Romich Company, www.prentrom.com
- Tobii Technology, www.tobiiati.com

Web resources to enhance inclusion and quality of life

Best Buddies

www.bestbuddies.org

Best Buddies is a national program that links college and high school students, as well as adult professionals, with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Inclusion Network

inclusionnetwork.ning.com

This site offers information on inclusion efforts, workshops, events, and policy issues across the world. Features SharingPlace where community members can post blogs and share information.

Life Pages

www.lifepages.org

Life Pages is an example of a site intended to provide information on recreation and other community resources, assisting DSPs to find ideas for new experiences in which those they support may be interested.

Quality Mall

qualitymall.org

Quality Mall offers information on the best and latest programs, services, products, and ideas in person-centered services. Topics range from health care to employment to sexuality, in over 80 different departments.

Self Advocacy Online

www.selfadvocacyonline.org

Self-Advocacy Online is an educational and networking Web site for those involved in making change for people with disabilities.

Remote support technology and "smart homes"

The companies listed below offer a variety of customizable in-home remote supports —

- Caresse, www.homeforlifesolutions.com
- Homelink Support Technologies, homelinkst.com
- Night Owl, www.nightowlsupportsystems.com
- Rest Assured, restassuredsystem.com
- Sengistix, www.sengistix.com
- Simply Home, www.simplyhome-cmi.com

Documentation technology

Therap Services, L.L.C.

www.therapservices.net

Therap Services is a web-based service organization that provides an integrated solution for documentation and communication needs of agencies providing support to people with disabilities.

CareTracker by Resource Systems

www.discovercaretracker.com or www.resourcesystems.net/DevelopmentalDisabilities/CareTracker.aspx

CareTracker helps providers of direct support to people with developmental disabilities eliminate the undesirable effects of paper documentation.

Intuition by Vertex Systems

www.vertexsystems.com/intuition_by_vertex.html

Intuition by Vertex allows providers of support to efficiently record timely and accurate documentation.

NADSP membership form

Individual memberships* \$20

**If your state has a NADSP chapter, you will receive dual membership in the state chapter and NADSP.*

Includes one subscription to *Frontline Initiative*, Code of Ethics card, and NADSP membership card.

- DSP:** DSP Frontline Supervisor
- Associate:** Self-Advocate Family Member
- Other professionals:**

For professionals working in community human services, such as social workers, administrators, and healthcare professionals

What is your profession? _____

Other memberships

Sponsoring organization membership \$2000

For national or multi-state organizations, associations, businesses and stakeholder groups that are dedicated to advancing the goals of NADSP and can help influence others. Includes certificate of membership, ten subscriptions to *Frontline Initiative*, logo on NADSP Web site, listing as an NADSP Sponsoring Organization in NADSP newsletters and electronic mailings, participation on NADSP Steering Committee.

Supporting organization membership \$500

For agencies and organizations dedicated to advancing the interests of DSPs and the people they support at a national level. Includes certificate of membership, four subscriptions to *Frontline Initiative*, and a listing as a NADSP Supporting Organization in NADSP communications.

Affiliate membership \$200

For individuals, agencies, providers, associations, and NADSP state chapters who wish to demonstrate a commitment to support the efforts of DSPs. Includes certificate of membership, two subscriptions to *Frontline Initiative*.

Make checks payable to NADSP. To pay by credit card, visit www.nadsp.org/membership

Mail membership form and payment to:

NADSP, P.O. Box 9369, St. Paul, MN 55109

Name

Organization

Address

City State Zip

(_____) _____ - _____
Phone

Email

Total enclosed \$ _____

Riding the technology wave continued from page 1

Choices: To tech or not to tech

DSPs are key to making choices about technology — whether it is a monitoring system to alert you, a communication device for a person with disabilities, or a documentation tool for your organization. DSPs generally know what is needed to support a person's independence in life. Choosing the technology, and determining whether it works for the person being supported, is the next step.

Once you've picked your wave, the challenge is to get on it. When a tech wave is coming — say, remote supervision — start moving ahead of it. Learn about it, try it out, and figure out if it is right for you and those you support. Then you'll better know whether to go with it or catch an easier one.

Like catching a wave, timing your technology uptake is critical to success. If you adopt a new system too early, you can get pounded as by a breaking wave. An expensive, comprehensive software system can soak up precious resources. But, wait too long for the perfect wave, and technology passes you by.

Fit: Riding the wave

Once we get on the wave, we want a great ride. But a technology wave doesn't do all the work. Just like a surfer maneuvers the wave, DSPs make technology work. Like having the right surfboard, training, technical support, and assessment tools provide DSPs a solid foundation. Mentors, buddies, and coaches can also help along the way.

Like a surfer maneuvers the wave, DSPs make technology work.

Adjusting position on a surfboard is the difference between falling off and a good ride. Fitting a device to the individual needs of the person being supported can make all the difference in how well it works for the person. A PC can be a diverse and liberating support, but DSPs must set up simple applications for the people they support. They also provide continual support and training to help people stay on their wave.

Good surfing takes some trial and error. If a technology doesn't

seem to work at first, try a different approach. Monitoring systems are a case-in-point. Sensors set to detect risky conditions give DSPs an extra set of eyes. But, too many false alerts or a few missed emergencies would erode confidence. By working with the system, DSPs can discover how to best support each person.

Practice: The endless summer

Like the surfing summer, technology keeps going. Like the ardent surfer, the best service providers make a standard practice of riding new technology. DSPs and innovative service providers play a key role in realizing the potential of new technology. What is used today will soon be replaced by something new and better. As technology continues to improve, so does the quality of life of people with disabilities who use these technologies. DSPs and the people they support will help make that happen.

Author Rodney Bell is a technology consultant for the Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities at the University of Colorado. He thanks DSPs Chris B. and Tyler W. with Imagine!Colorado for their keen insights that informed this article.