



**DISABILITY  
RESOURCE  
DIGEST**

**Volume 9 Issue 1 January 2009**

# CONTENTS

## FOCUSSED COVERAGE

<u>UNITED NATIONS</u> .....	Page 2
-----------------------------	--------

## SELECTED TOPICS

<u>ACCESSIBILITY</u> .....	Page 3
<u>ADVOCACY</u> .....	Page 5
<u>EDUCATION</u> .....	Page 7
<u>EMPLOYMENT</u> .....	Page 7
<u>GENERAL INTEREST</u> .....	Page 9
<u>GOVERNMENT</u> .....	Page 9
<u>HEALTH/WELLNESS</u> .....	Page 10
<u>LEGAL</u> .....	Page 10
<u>MEDIA</u> .....	Page 12
<u>MEDICAL</u> .....	Page 13
<u>POLICY/RESEARCH</u> .....	Page 13
<u>REHABILITATION</u> .....	Page 15
<u>SELF-HELP</u> .....	Page 16
<u>SPORTS/RECREATION</u> .....	Page 17
<u>TECHNOLOGY</u> .....	Page 18
<u>CONFERENCES</u> .....	Page 20

The Disability Resource Digest (DRD) is a special project of SMD Alliance. SMD Alliance is based in Manitoba, Canada and provides strategic vision and policy direction to four SMD corporations: SMD Clearinghouse; SMD Foundation; SMD Ventures; and SMD Services.

The vision shared among the corporations is of a "community that supports the independence, participation, and empowerment of persons of all abilities." Each SMD corporation pursues a complementary mandate in working toward this vision.

The DRD is prepared primarily as an informational resource for consumers, professionals and publics interested in remaining current in disability related issues. An archive of past editions of the DRD is maintained on SMD's web site (<http://www.smd.mb.ca>).

Published monthly (with a single summer edition for July and August), the DRD presents summaries of, and URL addresses for, notable disability-related content on the world-wide web (WWW). The DRD focuses on recently posted content but also includes coverage of other web pages of interest. The URL addresses cited in the DRD are current at the time of publication, but as content on the web is continually revised, the addresses in the DRD may not remain current.

The DRD is prepared for SMD Alliance by The Project Group (TPG) Consulting Cooperative Ltd., a Winnipeg-based consulting firm. Neither SMD nor TPG are responsible for the accuracy or reliability of the content cited in the DRD.

Readers interested in learning more about SMD Alliance are invited to visit: <http://www.smd.mb.ca> or to contact the agency by e-mail at [info@smd.mb.ca](mailto:info@smd.mb.ca). Readers are also invited to send comments and suggestions regarding the DRD to this same e-mail address.

## FOCUSSED COVERAGE

**Canada Celebrates International Day of Persons With Disabilities** – "The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, marked International Day of Persons with Disabilities by asking Canadians to join her in celebrating this important day. The observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, proclaimed by the United Nations in 1992, helps to promote and support the rights and issues of people with disabilities globally. This year's theme is 'Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Dignity and justice for all of us.' Today also marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

<http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story/Canada-Celebrates-International-Day-Persons/story.aspx?quid={0D92118A-7882-4489-8EE5-FDB22774994D}>

**Disability Rights Fund Makes Grants to 33 Organizations in 7 Countries** – "The Disability Rights Fund (DRF) a groundbreaking collaborative to support the human rights of people with disabilities around the world– today announced funding decisions from its first request for proposals. A total of \$800,000 will be gifted to 33 organizations in seven countries. The grants will support work to raise awareness about the rights of people with disabilities, build coalitions and networks, and develop advocacy and monitoring activities, in connection with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities."

[http://www.disabilityrightsfund.org/documents/DRF\\_Press%20release\\_Grantees\\_Final.pdf](http://www.disabilityrightsfund.org/documents/DRF_Press%20release_Grantees_Final.pdf)

**Happy 60th anniversary - Universal Declaration of Human Rights** – by Michael Shapcott (*Wellesley Institute*). "Today (December 10) marks the 60th anniversary of the United Nation's [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). Human rights form the cornerstone of national and global economic, political and social policy. Every person, instead of being reduced to pleading for special favours, is recognized to have universal rights - and governments are obliged to also recognize those rights. . . . While every part of the Universal Declaration is important, here at the Wellesley Institute we are particularly interested in article 25, which reads:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."

<http://wellesleyinstitute.com/happy-60th-anniversary-universal-declaration-human-rights>

**International Day of Persons with Disabilities - 3 December** – "Dignity and justice for all of us is the theme of this year's International Day for Persons with Disabilities, as well as for the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Dignity and justice for all persons are established universal principles. Since its inception, the United Nations has recognized that the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family are the foundations of freedom, justice and peace in the world. . . . 2008 is a significant year in the international human rights movement given the entry into force on 3 May of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, legally binding instruments which set out the legal obligations of States to promote and protect

the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)."

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=109>

**People with disabilities must play key role in development, says Ban** – "Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has marked the International Day of Persons with Disabilities today by stressing that people with disabilities – the vast majority of whom live in poor countries – have a fundamental role to play in development processes. The Day falls a week before the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and both occasions are being commemorated with the theme, 'Dignity and justice for all of us.' Mr. Ban pointed out that the General Assembly has underscored the need to include people with disabilities in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight anti-poverty targets, by their 2015 deadline. 'With 80 per cent of persons with disabilities – more than 400 million people – living in poor countries, we need to do much more to break the cycle of poverty and disability,' he said. Noting that the international disability community's slogan is 'Nothing about us without us,' the Secretary-General called on governments and others to guarantee that persons with disabilities are an integral part of all development processes."

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29168&Cr=Disab&Cr1=Human+rights>

**More than 2,000 children killed daily in avoidable accidents, says UN** – "Over 2,000 children are killed daily from injuries sustained in preventable accidents and every year tens of millions more suffer injuries that often leave them with lifelong disabilities, according to a new United Nations report. At least 1,000 children's lives could be saved every day if proven prevention measures – including laws on child-appropriate seatbelts and helmets and hot tap water temperature regulations – are adopted everywhere, concluded a joint UN World Health Organization (WHO) and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) report released yesterday. 'In addition to the 830,000 deaths every year, millions of children suffer non-fatal injuries that often require long-term hospitalization and rehabilitation,' said WHO Director-General Margaret Chan. She warned that treatment costs could drive families into poverty. 'Children in poorer families and communities are at increased risk of injury because they are less likely to benefit from prevention programmes and high quality health services'."

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29244&Cr=Child&Cr1=Who>

**Vatican stands up against further UN resolutions** – by Richard Owen (*Times Online*).

"Following the Vatican's controversial opposition this week to a UN declaration calling for an end to discrimination against homosexuals, Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the Vatican envoy to the UN, has confirmed that the Holy See also refused to sign a UN document last May on the rights of the disabled because it did not condemn abortion or assert the rights of foetuses with birth defects."

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article5279114.ece>

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## ACCESSIBILITY

**Are You Ready for the ADA Amendments Act of 2008?** – by Tina M. Maiolo (*Workforce.com*).

"Anyone reading the recently passed ADA Amendments Act might be tempted to ask, who

isn't covered? Created with the intent to restore the protections that were originally laid out in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, but which have been steadily eroded since by the courts, the new amendments are so expansive and cover so many individuals and impairments, they might as well be called the 'Americans Accommodation Act.' Kidding aside, employers need to be aware that the standard for what is classified as a disability has been altered significantly. There could be an initial wave of litigation aimed at companies to test the new boundaries of the amendments, so it's critical that employers are prompt and thorough in managing employment processes and are fully educated on the new compliance requirements. The ADA Amendments Act becomes effective January 1, 2009. Previously under the ADA, individuals were denied protection if their condition could be treated with medication or was in remission. A main change under the ADA Amendments Act is that an impairment now qualifies as a disability if, when active, it would substantially limit a major life activity, such as hearing, walking or communicating."

<http://www.workforce.com/section/03/feature/25/99/86/>

**Committee on Emergency Transportable Housing Presents Report** – "The Board's Advisory Committee on Emergency Transportable Housing presented its report at a meeting of the Board on November 18th. The Board organized this committee in 2007 to develop recommendations on access to temporary emergency housing provided in response to natural disasters and emergencies. Housing made available by FEMA in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita exposed significant accessibility issues. The committee, which included representatives from disability groups, industry and code groups, and government agencies, reviewed the Board's ADA and ABA Accessibility Guidelines and assessed the impact of site constraints and other limitations on units, particularly those located on private property. Since they are designed and manufactured for transport over roadways, these housing units have a smaller footprint than other types of housing. The committee examined design factors that pose challenges to accessibility, including size and space limitations, and identified relevant provisions in the Board's facility guidelines that should be revised for specific application to emergency transportable housing. The committee's report provides recommendations on how potential conflicts can be mediated and how access to units can be improved."

<http://www.access-board.gov/news/eth-report.htm>

**People on the Move: Using All Transportation Options (ADA and beyond...) – Presented as a distance learning series in 2008-09** – "Based on Easter Seals Project ACTION's popular introductory in-person training of the same name, this distance learning event is a series of free 'train-the-trainer' audio conferences and Webinars designed to increase accessible transportation in your community. Participants in the People on the Move distance learning series will receive free training, support materials and resources on a variety of topics related to increasing accessible transportation options."

[http://projectaction.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ESPA\\_people\\_move&s\\_education=tc](http://projectaction.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ESPA_people_move&s_education=tc)

**Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0** – "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 covers a wide range of recommendations for making Web content more accessible. Following these guidelines will make content accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities, including blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, learning disabilities, cognitive limitations, limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity and

combinations of these. Following these guidelines will also often make your Web content more usable to users in general. WCAG 2.0 success criteria are written as testable statements that are not technology-specific. Guidance about satisfying the success criteria in specific technologies, as well as general information about interpreting the success criteria, is provided in separate documents. See [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) Overview](#) for an introduction and links to WCAG technical and educational material."

<http://www.w3.org/TR/2008/REC-WCAG20-20081211/>

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## ADVOCACY

**Coalition Responds to Poverty Reduction Strategy** – (*ODSP Action Coalition*). "Members of the ODSP Action Coalition were disappointed in the lack of concrete measures to help lift people with disabilities out of poverty to be found in the Ontario government's Poverty Reduction Strategy, released on December 4, 2009. The government has targets and measurements related to child poverty, but does not seem interested in any action on the needs of people with disabilities or other adults without dependent children. However, they have committed to review Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program, to get rid of 'stupid rules' that create barriers to independence. Our Coalition will have a lot to contribute to show what changes should be made to allow people with disabilities to participate more--not just in employment, but to live with dignity in society."

<http://www.odspaction.ca/story/coalition-responds-poverty-reduction-strategy#attachments>

<http://www.odspaction.ca/sites/odspaction.ca/files/CoalitionPovReductionPressReleaseDec08.doc> (Press Release)

<http://www.odspaction.ca/sites/odspaction.ca/files/ODSPACKeyMessagesPovertyReduction.doc> (ODSP Message).

**Disability Reform Brings Higher Ratings** – by Tom Philpott (*Kitsap Sun*). "The pilot for a new, jointly-developed Department of Defense-VA disability evaluation system (DES), set to expand from five to 22 military bases by May, does much of what proponents hoped it would. It allows more injured or ill service members to win higher disability ratings, to see VA payments start faster and, through greater transparency in the process, to feel they have been treated more fairly by government."

<http://www.kitsapsun.com/news/2008/dec/13/tom-philpott-disability-reform-brings-higher/>

**DFG changes get cautious welcome** – by Cathy Reay (*Disability Now*). "Leading disabled campaigners have urged the government to provide a cohesive independent living support plan for more vulnerable disabled groups following a government announcement on changes to the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). [United Kingdom] Housing minister Baroness Andrews announced last week that the Disabled Facilities Grant given to local authorities between 2009 and 2010 will be £157 million, an £11 million increase from £146 million the previous year. The grant supports disabled and elderly people to live independently through the provision of adaptations needed in their own homes. Under the grant disabled people can receive up to £30,000 towards adaptation costs including stair lifts, hoists and downstairs bathrooms. Sue Bott (pictured), director of the National Centre for Independent Living, supports the increase in funding but says the government must provide a clear policy covering independent living: 'There is a big problem with social housing, particularly accessible housing. The government

needs a comprehensive housing policy that enables disabled people to live on their own in areas they choose. Everything up to now has been too piecemeal,' she said."

<http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk/latest-news2/dfg-changes-get-cautious-welcome>

**National Federation of the Blind to Light Up Times Square** – "The National Federation of the Blind, the oldest and largest organization of blind people in the United States, will premiere a video promoting Braille Literacy in Times Square in New York City beginning today. The video will appear once an hour for ten days, airing on a large screen on 42nd Street between 7th and 8th Avenues. Dr. Marc Maurer, President of the National Federation of the Blind, said: 'We are pleased to show a video of such importance in one of the largest venues in the world. There can be no doubt that the ability to read and write Braille competently and efficiently is the key to education, employment, and success for the blind. Despite the undisputed value of Braille, only about 10 percent of blind children in the United States are currently learning it. This video will announce the need for equal opportunities in education and employment for the entire nation's blind to a countless number of people over the next ten days and will work toward our ultimate goal of reversing the downward trend in Braille literacy'."

<http://www.nfb.org/nfb/NewsBot.asp?MODE=VIEW&ID=395&SnID=1398038303>

**Proving a disability is about to get much easier** – (*tennessean.com*). "Effective Jan. 1, the Americans With Disabilities Act will be amended to make important changes in the definition of the word 'disability.' The amendments retain the basic definition of disability as: (1) an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) a record of such an impairment; or (3) being regarded as having such an impairment. But the amendments change the way these statutory terms will be interpreted in some significant ways. . . . The amendments expand the definition of 'major life activities' by providing two nonexhaustive lists: The first list includes many activities that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has recognized, such as walking, as well as activities that the EEOC hadn't recognized, such as reading, bending and communicating. The second list includes major body functions, such as functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine and reproductive functions. The amendments lower the bar for ADA coverage and instruct the EEOC to issue regulations that redefine the term 'disability' more broadly."

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20081202/BUSINESS01/812020318/1003/RSS6004>

**State Failed Girl That Died From Restraint, And May Still Fail Others, Says Watchdog** - by Dave Reynolds (*Inclusion Daily Express*). "Two and a half years after 7-year-old Angellika 'Angie' Arndt's prone restraint death, the state still has not done enough to prevent similar tragedies, according to a report released by Disability Rights Wisconsin. Angie, who had diagnoses of reactive attachment disorder, mood disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder, died on May 26, 2006, one day after being restrained facedown for 30 minutes in a 'control hold' at the Rice Lake Day Treatment Center. A medical examiner later ruled Angie's death a homicide due to 'complications from chest compression asphyxiation'. Documents showed that during the 23 days she was at the program, staff had restrained Angellika on her stomach nine times for such things as standing up fast, turning quickly in an aggressive manner, throwing herself back in her chair, refusing to move, refusing to sit as told, putting her hands down the front of her pants, and kicking her shoe off her foot and across the room. Two of those times she was restrained for more than

an hour and a half. On the day of her fatal restraint, she was reportedly restrained as a punishment for gargling milk."

<http://www.inclusiondaily.com/news/2008/12/08/120808wiarndt.htm>

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## EDUCATION

**Ill-prepared to help LD students** – by Janet Steffenhagen (*VancouverSun*). "Teachers and psychologists have little information about learning disabilities when they enter their professions and have no guidelines to help them in their work with LD students. That's the conclusion of a study released today by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, which found that no province or territory requires teachers or psychologists working with children to take even a single course on learning disabilities. Furthermore, there are no regulations to ensure consistent and informed practice in identifying and working with LD children, it says. 'The findings of this study underscore the need for enhanced professional knowledge, especially in light of the shift towards inclusive classrooms,' the association says in a release. 'Given Canada's increasingly mobile and diverse population, the time has come for a national understanding of Learning Disabilities and of the processes to accommodate these students,' adds Mildred Cahill, an education professor at Memorial University who conducted the study with her colleague David Philpott, an associate professor of special education. There are more than three million Canadians with learning disabilities, the release says."

<http://communities.canada.com/vancouver/blogs/reportcard/archive/2008/12/08/ill-prepared-to-help-lid-students.aspx>

**Universities, colleges see students with disabilities as a growth market** – by Joanne Laucius (*ottawacitizen.com*). "A couple of decades ago, Will Parkinson would not have been a candidate for a university education. Although he had no problem with reading, his spelling and grammar were poor and he struggled to put his thoughts on paper. by the time he left high school, he was doing well in math and science, but his writing was at a Grade 8 or 9 level. Students like Mr. Parkinson are one of the fast-growing segments of the university and college demographic. Two decades ago, about 90 per cent of Carleton University's 200 or 300 disabled students had visible disabilities such as mobility problems. The number of disabled students has grown to about 1,300, but now more than half have invisible problems, like learning disabilities. The numbers are growing for a several reasons. Legislation, including the Humans Rights Code and the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, require post-secondary institutions to make accommodations for disabled students, and the province provides the funding."

<http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=09d03b44-fc1c-42ab-a1c2-4522b7d9aa27>

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## EMPLOYMENT

**Disability: An Overlooked Threat to Retirement** – (*NewsUSA*). "The Council for Disability Awareness (CDA) paper 'Worker Disability: A Growing Risk to Retirement Security' addresses

people's widespread unawareness about the growing incidence of disability and the financial risks an unexpected accident or illness can have on workers' retirement savings. 'The responsibility for retirement funding has essentially shifted to the individual,' says Robert Taylor, president of the CDA. 'Unfortunately, most Americans just don't understand that their chances of becoming disabled are on the rise, putting their -; and their families -; current and future financial lifestyle at risk. Most employees don't realize that if their income stops, so do contributions to their 401(k) plan.' Studies predict that three in 10 workers entering the workforce today will experience a serious income-stopping disability before retirement."

[http://www.fosterfollynews.com/news/2008Dec2DisabilityAnOverlookedThreattoRetirement.ph  
p](http://www.fosterfollynews.com/news/2008Dec2DisabilityAnOverlookedThreattoRetirement.php)

**Education on disability may ease friction** – by Liz Reyer (Special to the *Star Tribune*). "I suffer from hemiplegic migraines, an 'invisible disability' that is covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). However, management and co-workers seem to question my requests for accommodation. I feel like the poster child for 'difficult' employees. Without getting on a soapbox, how can I make them aware that my condition is entitled to the same consideration as more visible disabilities?"

[http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/yourmoney/35230804.html?elr=KArks:DCiU1PciUoaEYY  
4PcUU](http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/yourmoney/35230804.html?elr=KArks:DCiU1PciUoaEYY4PcUU)

**National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy: setting the direction** – "After fifteen years of economic growth, Australia still has the seventh lowest employment rate for people with disability, including mental illness, in the OECD. Attempts by previous governments to encourage people with disability into employment, including via Welfare to Work, have failed. This paper, developed as a result of consultations with more than 700 interested people and around 300 submissions, sets the direction for a new National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy to be released in 2009. The directions are intended to closely reflect the priorities of the community."

[http://www.apo.org.au/linkboard/results.chtml?filename\\_num=253969](http://www.apo.org.au/linkboard/results.chtml?filename_num=253969)

**UCLA Anderson Executive Education Forges Alliance with U.S. Department of Labor to Promote Career Advancement of Managers with Disabilities** – "The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and The Regents of the University of California, on behalf of UCLA Anderson School of Management Executive Education Programs (EEP), today announced an Alliance Agreement that will provide EEP participants and sponsoring organizations with information, guidance and access to resources to help advance employment opportunities for managers with disabilities. The Alliance Agreement was signed by UCLA Anderson Dean Judy Olian, Assistant Secretary of Labor for ODEP Neil Romano, and UCLA Anderson Executive Education Assistant Dean Kelly Bean, in a ceremony held on the school's campus. In attendance were several founding organizations of UCLA Anderson's Leadership Institute for Managers with Disabilities, including AT&T, IBM, Microsoft, PepsiCo and the US Business Leadership Network."

<http://www.anderson.ucla.edu/x21775.xml>

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## GENERAL INTEREST

**Abraham Nemeth to Serve as National Ambassador for Braille Literacy** – "The National Federation of the Blind (NFB), the nation's leading advocate for Braille literacy, announced today that Dr. Abraham Nemeth, professor emeritus of mathematics at the University of Detroit Mercy and inventor of the Nemeth Braille Code for Mathematics and Scientific Notation, will serve as a National Ambassador for Braille literacy. As an ambassador, Dr. Nemeth will help advance the NFB's Braille Readers are Leaders campaign, a national initiative to promote the importance of reading and writing Braille for blind children and adults. The Braille Readers are Leaders campaign kicked off in July of 2008 with the unveiling of the design of a commemorative coin to be minted in 2009 in recognition of the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille (1809–1852), the inventor of the reading and writing code for the blind that bears his name."  
<http://www.nfb.org/nfb/NewsBot.asp?MODE=VIEW&ID=394&SnID=1398038303>

**It's Toted** – by Mike Ervin (*New Mobility*). "In his memoir, *Moving Violations*, gimp journalist John Hockenberry writes about the fine sunny day he was merrily rolling along the streets of downtown Chicago, and then he attempted to cross the hectic intersection of Wacker and Michigan. Just as he entered the street, a bus turned the corner and one of its front wheels was coming directly at him. Hockenberry managed to jump free of his wheelchair and with his gloved hands pull himself on the pavement out of the way of the oncoming wheel: 'There were two sharp popping sounds as the bus tire crushed and destroyed the wheelchair. My thin high-pressured tires exploded as the bus came to a complete stop. The chair was directly under the right front tire of the bus. I was sitting on the pavement a few feet back. 'An ambulance arrived. Two paramedics ran over to me and asked if I had been hit by the bus. 'Yes,' I said. 'Can you walk?' they asked. 'No,' I said. 'Get the stretcher,' one yelled. 'Can you feel your legs?' he asked. There didn't seem to be a way into this conversation. 'Look, I'm a paraplegic. ...' 'Not necessarily, son,' the paramedic said hopefully'."  
<http://www.newmobility.com/articleView.cfm?id=11311>

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## GOVERNMENT

### CANADA

**Advancing the Inclusion of People with Disabilities** – (*HRSDC*). "The Government of Canada supports numerous programs and initiatives with the aim of promoting the inclusion and full participation of people with disabilities in Canadian society. *Advancing the Inclusion of People with Disabilities 2008* is the sixth annual federal progress report on disability. It provides an overview of key initiatives that federal departments have implemented, individually or in collaboration, or are in the course of implementing in 2007/08 and beyond."  
[http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability\\_issues/reports/fdr/2008/page00.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability_issues/reports/fdr/2008/page00.shtml) (HTML)  
[http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability\\_issues/reports/fdr/2008/fdr\\_2008.pdf](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability_issues/reports/fdr/2008/fdr_2008.pdf) (PDF)

**Government of Canada's Office For Disability Issues Opens Doors to Accessibility** – "The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, officially

opened the Government of Canada's Office for Disability Issues' new accessible workplace today. The new facility has been renovated to be a model of accessibility, offering a safe, user-friendly work environment that promotes equal opportunity and the participation of all employees, including those with disabilities. 'Our government is committed to breaking down the numerous barriers faced by persons with disabilities through various initiatives,' said Minister Finley. 'I am proud to highlight this new facility as a model of accessibility and a stellar example of what can be done to meet the needs of Canadians with disabilities in a workplace'."

<http://www.accessibilitynewsinternational.com/?p=129#more-129>

**Registered Disability Savings Plan: important** – "The Government of Canada has extended the application period for the 2008 RDSP Grant and Bond through March 2, 2009 to provide people with disabilities and their families more time to access the 2008 matching Grant and income-tested Bond. Contributions made on or before March 2, 2009 will be considered for 2008 Grants. These Grants will not be included in 2009 Grant limits. Bond applications made on or before March 2, 2009 will be considered for Bonds in 2008, 2009, and in future years."  
[http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability\\_issues/disability\\_savings/index.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability_issues/disability_savings/index.shtml)

**Manitobans with Disabilities to Employers: "See what I can do, Not what I can't"** – The province is launching an awareness campaign to promote the skills and potential of hard-working Manitobans with disabilities, Family Services and Housing Minister Gord Mackintosh, minister responsible for persons with disabilities, announced today. The province is also introducing new funding for communications technology, an incentive for volunteering, more support to help people get jobs, stronger government information and service standards, and is removing barriers to family supports.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2008-12-01&item=4896>

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## HEALTH/WELLNESS

**Transcendental Meditation reduces ADHD symptoms among students: New study** – "The Transcendental Meditation technique may be an effective and safe non-pharmaceutical aid for treating ADHD, according to a promising new study published this month in the peer-reviewed online journal Current Issues in Education. The pilot study followed a group of middle school students with ADHD who were meditating twice a day in school. After three months, researchers found over 50 percent reduction in stress and anxiety and improvements in ADHD symptoms."

[http://www.eurekaalert.org/pub\\_releases/2008-12/muom-tmr122408.php](http://www.eurekaalert.org/pub_releases/2008-12/muom-tmr122408.php)

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## LEGAL

**Disability and Equality Law in Britain: The Role of Reasonable Adjustment** - by Anna Lawson. "The concept of reasonable adjustment (alternatively known as reasonable accommodation) is rapidly gaining significance for countries throughout Europe and beyond. Directive 2000/78 required all EU Member States to ensure that, by the end of 2006 at the latest, reasonable accommodation obligations would operate to protect disabled people from

unequal treatment in the context of employment. The new United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will require ratifying States to impose such obligations in a broad range of situations. This book provides a detailed and critical analysis of the current and potential role of reasonable adjustment duties in British law. It explores the notion of the anticipatory reasonable adjustment duty - a notion which is, in many respects, distinctively British. It probes the relationship between reasonable adjustment and other concepts, including indirect discrimination and positive discrimination"

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Disability-Equality-Law-Britain-Reasonable/dp/1841138282>

**Injured vets still await disability appeal process** – by Kevin Maurer (*Associated Press*). "There was nothing dramatic about how Spc. Cristopher Zuetlau's career in the Army came to an end: he stepped in a hole. But the damage to the tank crewman's wrenched back was so brutal he can barely walk. The Army agreed he was no longer fit to serve, but in doing so determined his disability was not severe enough to warrant long-term care by the military. . . . Thousands of similar stories caused veterans advocates to protest that the military was manipulating disability ratings to save money, and Congress last year ordered the Pentagon to accept appeals from wounded and injured troops. So far, officials have yet to examine a single case." <http://news.moneycentral.msn.com/provider/providerarticle.aspx?feed=AP&date=20081210&id=9442077>

**Judge rejects bid to force quicker VA payments** – by Hope Yen (*Associated Press*). "A federal judge on Wednesday rejected a bid by veterans groups to force the Veterans Affairs Department to speed up handling of its disability claims, saying it was not the court's role to impose quicker deadlines. Vietnam Veterans of America and Veterans of Modern Warfare, which represent roughly 60,000 military veterans, had filed the lawsuit asking the VA process initial disability claims within 90 days and resolve appeals within 180 days. If the VA failed to do so, the two groups were seeking interim payments of roughly \$350 a month. At a court hearing Wednesday, U.S. District Judge Reggie Walton said he was sympathetic to the plight of disabled veterans, many of whom he acknowledged might face unemployment and homelessness in a tightening economy. But Walton said that setting a blanket rule of 90 days for processing claims was a role for Congress and the VA secretary to decide." <http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D954LCOO0.htm>

**Quadriplegic spared prison in child porn case** – by Dan Herbeck (*BuffaloNews*). "When federal agents and prosecutors first learned about Wayne Schifelbine and his child pornography crimes, their inclination was to put him in prison for a long time. But then agents discovered something else about the 43-year-old Allegany County man who was using a credit card to buy images from child porn Web sites: Schifelbine is a quadriplegic. He cannot walk, requires 24-hour nursing care and spends all his time in his bed or wheelchair. After hearing about his physical disabilities, U. S. Attorney Terrance P. Flynn decided to offer the Belmont man an agreement that would carry no criminal conviction or prison time. Schifelbine, however, will forfeit \$50,000 to the federal government and his use of the Internet will be restricted. Had he been prosecuted criminally, Schifelbine could have faced 10 years or more in federal prison." <http://www.buffalonews.com/cityregion/story/509797.html>

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## MEDIA

**Accidental poet on the right track** – by James Morrison (*guardian.co.uk*). "His life story is that of an itinerant autodidact, with shades of The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists and Thomas Hardy's Jude. But Peter Street has defied decades of hardship and disability to become a war poet and BBC writer-in-residence, with four volumes of verse to his name. Street, 59, is about to release his fifth volume after winning a grant from the Royal Literary Fund, the benevolent society set up to help professional writers in straitened times. Past beneficiaries have included Samuel Taylor Coleridge, DH Lawrence and James Joyce."  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/dec/17/peter-street-poetry>

**Child from 'ballet family' joins 'Nutcracker' cast despite her disability** – by Katherine Shaver (*The Washington Post*). "When the Joffrey Ballet's 'The Nutcracker' opened at the Kennedy Center, Mary Cassell and other young local ballet students became children attending an elaborate Victorian-era Christmas party. Unlike the other dancers, Mary's leather slippers didn't touch the floor. Mary, 8, who has cerebral palsy, sat in a small, old-fashioned wheelchair, wearing leg braces beneath her costume."  
<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2008/dec/21/child-from-ballet-family-joins-nutcracker-cast/>

**DaDa Award winners** – (*guardian.co.uk*). "The DaDa Awards, celebrating excellence in the work of deaf and disabled artists, were presented at the new Liverpool Arena and Convention Centre earlier this month to coincide with the international day of disabled people."  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/gallery/2008/dec/11/disability-arts-dada-award-winners?picture=340337702>

**Gov. Paterson Speaks About SNL Skit** – "New York Governor David Paterson is speaking publicly for the first time about a controversial skit that aired this weekend on Saturday Night Live. . . . 'I can take a joke. I'm doing alright. I'm governor,' Paterson said. 'But on the lower frequencies of society, there are people in workplaces who get depicted the same way. There are children in school who get castigated because they look different or the fact that move around differently or have a disability that they're trying to cope with. So the perception that disability equals an inability to be responsible is totally wrong!'"  
[http://www.wcax.com/Global/story.asp?S=9529167&nav=menu183\\_2](http://www.wcax.com/Global/story.asp?S=9529167&nav=menu183_2)

**"Late Bloomer": Daringly breaking a disability taboo** – by Jeff Shannon (*Seattle Times*). "You're not sure how to react when you see a disheveled person in a wheelchair, their limbs contorted by cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy or some other disabling condition, unable to speak, possibly drooling a little, the spittle on their chin mixed with crumbs from a recent meal. . . . would it ever occur to you that this seemingly harmless person could be a serial killer? For daring to suggest such a thing in his creepy, taboo-busting film 'Late Bloomer,' Japanese writer-director Go Shibata deserves credit for obliterating the 'noble cripple' stereotype of disability that has prevailed in movies for decades. You won't find any 'My Left Foot' uplift in Shibata's raw, black-and-white, micro-budget digital video production. What you will find is a defiant, in-your-face reversal of the conventional and condescending images of disability that allow the able-bodied to alleviate their discomfort."  
[http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/movies/2008571011\\_mr26late.html](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/movies/2008571011_mr26late.html)

**Mencap's outdoor exhibition brings learning disability to More London** – "A large-scale, outdoors exhibition on the banks of the River Thames, organised by learning disability charity, Mencap, aims to increase understanding and challenge people's preconceptions of learning disability. 'This is me' is an exhibition displaying a selection of winning photographs and stories from Mencap's annual competition called Snap!. The collection offers a unique and moving insight into the lives of people with a learning disability. 'This is me' will be at More London by Tower Bridge, from 17 December 2008 until 8 January 2009, and will then go on tour around the UK. Every picture in Mencap's 'This is me' exhibition has been taken by, or features, someone with a learning disability, showcasing the talent and creativity of people with a learning disability."  
<http://www.mencap.org.uk/news.asp?id=6793&pageno=&year=2008&menuId=91>

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## MEDICAL

**Canadians Can't Afford Not to Have a Public Drug Plan** – "The Canadian Health Coalition (CHC) has released a ground-breaking report entitled Life Before Pharmacare. Starting in the fall of 2007, the CHC held a series of public hearings in communities across Canada. Over 250 Canadians gave testimony on how prescription drug costs affect them and their loved ones. The hearings were the first time Canadians had an opportunity to share their experiences and insights regarding prescription drug costs, availability and effectiveness. 'The burden of a loved one being sick in front of you and going down with dementia is enough. Last year we were \$6000 in debt with drug bills. Now we are faced with losing our home. We both worked hard all our lives and I don't think that's right,' said one retiree in Sarnia, Ontario."  
<http://www.healthcoalition.ca/LifeBeforePharmacare.html>

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## POLICY/RESEARCH

**Ethiopia: Centre Launches First Database on Disability** – "The Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development (ECDD) in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and UNICEF on Monday launched a website and an electronic database of information pertaining disability and related issues in Ethiopia. The database will be accessible using the ECDD website as well as CD Rom, to be distributed freely as of early in 2009 to parliament, government bureaus, university libraries, disabled persons Organizations (DPOs), developmental NGOs, and other interested organizations, Abrham Worku, Chairperson and Board Director of ECDD said at the launching ceremony held at the Hilton."  
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200812310372.html>

**Good news stories from 2008: Death, disability and statistics** – (*Connect-World*). "While [death and disability statistics](#) themselves are frequently depressing, it's good news that they had been gathered. Statistics and data analysis are crucial to identifying policy priorities, evaluating existing policies, and useful to campaigners and advocates. Here are some statistics that may challenge prevailing development priorities:

- [Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death](#)
- [Depression is the leading cause of years lost due to disability](#)

- [Breast milk could save 13% of all babies who currently die](#)
- [Road deaths are the No.1 killer of young people aged 10-24 worldwide"](#)

[http://www.connect-world.net/News/upload/statistics\\_30120808.html](http://www.connect-world.net/News/upload/statistics_30120808.html)

**National disability discussion paper** – "The issue of accessibility, affordability and equality of access to telecommunications technology and services impacts daily on the lives of people with disabilities. This paper is the [Australia] Consumers' Telecommunications Network submission to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs' National Disability Strategy."

[http://www.apo.org.au/linkboard/results.chtml?filename\\_num=248989](http://www.apo.org.au/linkboard/results.chtml?filename_num=248989)

**New National Center For Parents With Disability** – (*Ability Magazine*). "A new National Center for Parents with Disabilities and their Families has been established in Berkeley, California under the auspices of Through the Looking Glass, a non-profit organization founded in 1982. The Center will oversee several national research studies concerning parents with disabilities and their families, as well as provide consultations, trainings and publications to parents, family members and professionals. The research and resources of the Center will address the nearly 9 million U.S. parents with disabilities – 15% of all American families. Parents with disabilities include mothers and fathers in all disability categories – such as parents with physical disabilities, deaf parents, blind parents, parents with psychiatric or cognitive disabilities. The Center is funded by a \$500,000 per year federal grant for three years from the Washington, DC-based National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), U.S. Department of Education."

[http://www.abilitymagazine.com/news\\_NCPD.html](http://www.abilitymagazine.com/news_NCPD.html)

**New Report: Poverty line is being cracked, but not broken** – "While incomes for most Canadians on welfare were stuck far below the poverty line, some cracked that line in 2007, the newest report by the National Council of Welfare says. But tough economic times mean it will be tough to really break through, unless comprehensive, nationwide action is taken, says the advisory body to the federal government. . . . *Welfare Incomes, 2006 and 2007* estimates total welfare incomes in the 13 provinces and territories for four types of households: a single employable person; a single person with a disability; a lone parent with a two-year old child, and; a two-parent family with two children aged 10 and 15. There are 53 scenarios in all because Alberta has an additional program for persons with disabilities. The NCW has produced similar estimates since 1986."

<http://www.ncwcnbes.net/documents/newsroom/2008DecPressreleaseE.htm>

<http://www.ncwcnbes.net/> (report)

**New Study explores barriers faced by Canadians with Disabilities** – "The Canadian Labour Congress has released a new study on the employment realities of Canadians with disabilities to mark today, December 3, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The paper outlines the barriers to equal participation in society that Canadians with disabilities face, including exclusion from the workplace and a lack of accommodation in the workplace. Unemployment rates for workers with disabilities remain unacceptably high, which is why so many live in poverty. A major part of the problem, according to people with disabilities, is not skills, knowledge or ability, but the lack of accommodation, even though Canadian employers have a legal duty to accommodate and even though the measures to do so are generally

inexpensive. The study concludes by calling for changes to income support programs, which often leave people trapped in a choice between low benefits and working for poverty wages. The study also calls for new supports and services in the workplace, home and community as well as support from both employers and government for workplace accommodation."

<http://www.canadianlabour.ca/en/new-study-explores-barriers-faced-canadians-with-disabilities>

<http://www.canadianlabour.ca/sites/clc/files/12-03DisabilityDayEng.pdf>

**Number of Americans With a Disability Reaches 54.4 Million** – "About one in five U.S. residents - 19 percent - reported some level of disability in 2005, according to a U.S. Census Bureau report released today. These 54.4 million Americans are roughly equal to the combined total populations of California and Florida. Both the number and percentage of people with disabilities were higher than in 2002, the last time the Census Bureau collected such information. At that time, 51.2 million, or 18 percent, reported a disability. Among those with a disability, 35 million, or 12 percent of the population, were classified as having a severe disability, according to *Americans With Disabilities: 2005*. Nearly half (46 percent) of people age 21 to 64 with a disability were employed, compared with 84 percent of people in this age group without a disability. Among those with disabilities, 31 percent with severe disabilities and 75 percent with nonsevere disabilities were employed. People with difficulty hearing were more likely to be employed than those with difficulty seeing (59 percent compared with 41 percent)."

<http://spatialnews.geocomm.com/dailynews/2008/dec/18/news4.html>

**Ontario Hunger Report 2008: The Leading Edge of the Storm** – (Ontario Association of Food Banks). The report looks at a number of populations including individuals with disabilities. It notes that "Almost 70,000 Ontarians living with disabilities are faced with hunger every month. Over 20 per cent of all persons served by food banks in this province are persons with disabilities. This figure is well beyond the population average which is reports that 13.5 per cent of Ontarians are living with disabilities."

<http://www.oafb.ca/assets/pdfs/HungerReport2008.pdf>

**Poverty is making us sick: A comprehensive survey of health and income in Canada** – by Ernie Lightman, Andrew Mitchell, Beth Wilson (*Social Assistance in the New Economy, Wellesley Institute, and Community Social Planning Council of Toronto*). "Poverty is making Canadians sick, robbing hundreds of thousands of their health and leading to widespread preventable illness and huge costs for the health care system, according to powerful new research released today by the Wellesley Institute and the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto. The study uses Canadian Community Health Survey and income files to paint the most comprehensive picture to date of our nation's health."

<http://www.socialplanningtoronto.org/healthequitylightman2008.pdf>

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## REHABILITATION

**Amputees Can Experience Prosthetic Hand As Their Own** – (*Rehab Management*). "Scientists at Karolinska Institutet and Lund University in Sweden have succeeded in inducing people with an amputated arm to experience a prosthetic rubber hand as belonging to their own body."

The results may lead to the development of a new type of touch-sensitive prosthetic hands. The illusion of having a 'rubber' hand was achieved by scientists by touching the stump of the amputated arm out of sight of the subject while simultaneously touching the rubber hand in full view of the same subject. This created the illusion that the sensory input was coming from the prosthetic hand rather than from the stump, and that the hand belonged to the subject's own body. The effect was confirmed by the subjects' own descriptions of the experience and by their tendency to point to the hand when asked to localize the point of stimulation. That they experienced the rubber hand as their own was also substantiated physiologically in that they started to sweat when the hand was pricked with a needle."

[http://www.rehabpub.com/news/2008-12-16\\_01.asp](http://www.rehabpub.com/news/2008-12-16_01.asp)

**New Data on Risk Factors for Chronic Disability After Back Injury: Results May Aid Efforts to Prevent Long-term Disability in Injured Workers** – (*Newswise*).

"A wide range of factors—including variables related to health care and job characteristics—affect the risk of long-term disability for workers with back injuries, reports a study in the December 1 issue of *Spine*. . . . Not surprisingly, workers with more severe back injury were more likely to be on disability after one year. Workers with pain spreading down into the leg—indicating involvement of the spinal nerve roots, or radiculopathy—were at particularly high risk. Disability risk was also higher for workers who rated their initial disability higher, who had pain at more sites, and who had previous injuries resulting in more than one month off work. Another significant predictor was the specialty of the first doctor seen after back injury—workers who saw a chiropractor were less likely to be disabled at one year."

<http://www.newswise.com/articles/view/546998/>

**Study to ID Best Rehab Therapies for Patients With Traumatic Brain Injuries** – (*Rehab*

*Management*). "Rush University Medical Center, Chicago, and 10 other health care facilities in the United States and Canada have been awarded a \$4.3 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to identify which rehabilitation therapies, or combination of therapies, can best help victims of traumatic brain injuries. 'Our aim in this study is to isolate individual components of the range of therapies we use to treat our patients and determine how, and to what degree, each is associated with improved function,' says James Young, MD, chairman of the department of physical medicine and rehabilitation at Rush and an internationally recognized expert in the treatment of brain injuries."

[http://www.rehabpub.com/news/2008-12-16\\_02.asp](http://www.rehabpub.com/news/2008-12-16_02.asp)

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## SELF-HELP

**New Year, New You!** – "The Spina Bifida Association (SBA) is proud to celebrate Folic Acid Awareness Week (January 5-11) and Birth Defects Prevention Month. Every January, SBA increases awareness about the benefits of folic acid in reducing Spina Bifida births. Through awareness comes understanding and support of our mission to promote the prevention of Spina Bifida and to enhance the lives of all affected. SBA has developed a [Web PSA](#) video on recurrence prevention. Featuring the Mitchum family from Louisville, Kentucky, this 60 second PSA is a reminder of not only the importance of daily folic acid intake to reduce the risk of a

Spina Bifida-affected pregnancy but also highlights the need for an even greater dosage for families already affected by Spina Bifida."

<http://www.spinabifidaassociation.org/atf/cf/%7Beeed435c8-f1a0-4a16-b4d8-a713bbcd9ce4%7D/BROCKPRESSRELEASE.PDF>

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## SPORTS/RECREATION

**Making the countryside more accessible for everyone** – "The first project to map National Nature Reserve access available online. For the first time, some of England's most beautiful countryside will be more accessible for people with disabilities and parents with pushchairs thanks to a new online facility launched today which maps out the location and terrain of six of England's National Nature Reserves (NNRs). Using photographs, maps and detailed descriptions, this new online service provides information that everyone will find useful. It will be especially helpful for people with disabilities and their carers, parents with pushchairs to better plan and prepare for a trip to a National Nature Reserve. Sir Martin Doughty, Chair of Natural England, said: 'Everyone should have access to the health benefits and enjoyment that the outdoors provides.' 'This project will help people to plan their days out to some of our most important areas for wildlife in the knowledge that they are easy to get to and easy to get around. Making our countryside easily accessible is essential, not just for health and wellbeing, but to help forge a connection between people and the natural environment.'" <http://www.youreable.com/TwoShare/getPage/01News/01Current/November2008/access>

**SHAKE-A-LEG Newport Announces Breakthrough Advancement for Sailing** – "SHAKE-A-LEG Newport – a national leader in therapeutic sailing programs allowing children, adolescents and adults of varying abilities to dramatically improve their lives – announced today the donation of the 12-Metre Easterner (US 18) to the world famous disabled sailing program. Donated by Arthur Shlossman (Jamestown, R.I.), the classic yacht best known for its America's Cup history, will be adapted by SHAKE-A-LEG to allow people with disabilities to compete alongside able-bodied sailors. . . . Once Easterner has been modified, Callahan will lead a team of both disabled and able-bodied crew members aboard her to the starting line of The 12-Metre World Championship, hosted by the New Yacht Club in Newport, R.I., next September. More than forty 12-Metres from around the globe are expected to compete on the same waters that once hosted the America's Cup." <http://www.shakealeg.org/news.html>

**Wheelchair racer Petitclerc voted The Canadian Press female athlete of year** – (*The Canadian Press*). "Chantal Petitclerc is the first Paralympian to be voted The Canadian Press female athlete of the year since the award was created in 1933. The Montreal wheelchair racer finished first in a survey of sports editors and broadcasters across the country to capture the Bobbie Rosenfeld Award. The 39-year-old Petitclerc won five gold medals at the Paralympic Games last summer in Beijing. Petitclerc, who also set three world records, received 220 points to finish well ahead of Carol Huynh (win), who won a gold medal in wrestling at the Beijing Olympics. Hockey player Hayley Wickenheiser captured the award last year." [http://ca.news.yahoo.com/s/capress/081226/sports/year\\_female\\_athlete](http://ca.news.yahoo.com/s/capress/081226/sports/year_female_athlete)

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## TECHNOLOGY

### **21st century technology helps deaf people make telephone calls** – (*youreable.com*).

"TalkByText Home Edition - software developed by charity RNID - is set to revolutionise the way deaf and hard of hearing people communicate with friends and loved ones by facilitating real-time text conversation. The software, developed by the UK's largest deafness charity, overcomes problems previously encountered with communication solutions for deaf and hard of hearing people - analogue textphones, an alternative to voice-phones have evolved little since, are bulky, and often difficult to use. Instant Messaging services, also used by millions of hearing people worldwide, can't be used to make text-to-voice calls. RNID's new TalkByText Home Edition software offers users character-by-character text. . . . When making a call from TalkByText to a voice phone, RNID Typetalk - the UK's 24/7 text relay service funded by BT - will convert the text typed by the deaf person into voice to the hearing caller and vice versa. As text flows in real-time, it is possible to have a natural dialogue with any voice phone user as well as other textphone or TalkByText users."

<http://www.youreable.com/TwoShare/getPage/01News/01Current/November2008/talkbytext>

**For the Disabled, More Power for Play** – by Suzanne Robitaille (*Business Week*). "Assistive technologies are prevalent in the workplace, but when people with disabilities gear up to have some fun their options are more limited. This may seem like an oversight, but it's not: Disability protections have mostly focused on boosting jobs for this group, and employer demands for computers, mouse alternatives, and similar assistive technologies have soared over the last decade. . . . A handful of technology providers have taken the lead in putting more pleasure into pastimes for people with disabilities. Some companies, such as Microsoft ([MSFT](#)), already have a foothold in workplace assistive technologies, and they're now expanding into new scenarios. Others came to the assistive technology market by accident—having realized their products were life-changers for the disabled at play. Either way, they've all had a hand in opening the market for technologies that are making life more playful and productive for people with disabilities. The travel industry is at the forefront of providing accessible technologies, partly because airports and airlines are public spaces and must comply with many existing ADA rules. Chicago's O'Hare and Midway airports are exceptionally innovative."

[http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/dec2008/tc20081222\\_585171.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/dec2008/tc20081222_585171.htm)

### **Independence Technology L.L.C. to Stop Selling iBOT Mobility System in January 2009** –

"Independence Technology L.L.C. has announced that it will cease sales and marketing of the iBOT Mobility System in January 2009. The company says it remains committed to provide technical support and service to iBOT Mobility System owners through the end of 2013, at which time the company expects to close. Current iBOT owners can call the Technical Support Center in the U.S. at (800) 463-3669 and in the U.K. at 0800 404-9605 anytime they have a question or require service for their device. Despite significant, long-term investment by the company and acceptance of the iBOT Mobility System, demand has not proven sufficient to create a sustainable market. A challenging reimbursement environment for innovative assistive technologies has been a factor in limiting demand. The company has said it believes the development and introduction of the iBOT Mobility System has spurred innovation in the mobility market, and is grateful for the relationship that they have established with the disability community. The company believes that both the iBOT 3000 and 4000

Mobility Systems have helped people with a range of disabilities achieve a new sense of freedom and independence."

<http://www.spinalcord.org/news.php?dep=1&page=0&list=2092>

**Interacting With Computers Through Gesture Recognition** – (*Rehab Management*). "A system that can recognize human gestures could provide a new way for people with physical disabilities to interact with computers. Manolya Kavakli of the Virtual and Interactive Simulations of Reality Research Group, at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, says standard input devices—keyboard and computer mouse—do not closely mimic natural hand motions such as drawing and sketching, nor were they developed for ergonomic use or for those with disabilities. She and her colleagues have developed a computer system architecture that carries out gesture recognition. In the system, the person wears DataGloves with illuminated LEDs that are tracked by two pairs of computer Web cams working to produce an all-round binocular view, which allows the computer to monitor the person's hand or shoulder movements. The input can then be fed to a program, a game, or simulator, or to control a character, an avatar, in a 3-D virtual environment."

[http://www.rehabpub.com/news/2008-12-24\\_02.asp](http://www.rehabpub.com/news/2008-12-24_02.asp)

**People with Disabilities Motivate Inventors** – by Ellen Kampel & John M. Williams. "In today's technological world, people with disabilities have an array of assistive technologies at their disposal to address a number of challenges. However, this hasn't always been the case. Many assistive technologies have been developed based on identifiable needs within the disabled community. In many cases, well-known inventions are the result of inventors with family members or friends experiencing a physical or communication need that was not being addressed. Motivated to provide a solution for those they care about, these inventors created a product to address the need and brought them to market. One such example is Vinton Cerf. Cerf was frustrated by his inability to communicate with his wife Sigrid, who was deaf. So he helped develop Arpanet in the 1970's, the forerunner of today's internet. As part of that development, he co-designed the TCP/IP protocol for internet communication. Such communication capabilities have revolutionized the way people with disabilities are able to stay connected with the outside world."

<http://www.atechnews.com/motivateinventors.html>

**Robotic Device Could Help Stroke Patients** – by Randy Dotinga (*HealthDay News*). "U.S. researchers say they've developed a hand-exercising robotic device that appears to help stroke victims recover motor skills, even more than six months after a stroke. Brain scans suggested that the device, which patients squeeze with their stroke-afflicted hands, boosted activity in the part of the brain that handles use of the hands. 'There's still hope in these patients with chronic stroke who have had a stroke a long time ago. If they do the right type of exercises, they can get better,' said A. Aria Tzika, director of the NMR Surgical Laboratory at Massachusetts General Hospital and lead author of a study released Wednesday at the Radiological Society of North America annual meeting, in Chicago."

<http://www.businessweek.com/lifestyle/content/healthday/621934.html>

**Scientists try to let the blind 'see' fish** – by Greg Bluestein (*AssociatedPress*). "As brightly colored fish dart in and out of the rocks scattered in a small aquarium, a bewildering melody follows each of their movements. The eerie symphony comes from an 'audio aquarium,' a

contraption dreamed up by Georgia Tech scientists as a way to let blind people experience sea life. The researchers say they wanted to help people with disabilities do something that's more fun than functional. 'Many of the things we do help them solve basic problems -- shopping, working, brushing their teeth,' says Bruce Walker, an associate professor who works with the school's Center for Music Technology. 'There are very few assistive technologies that help them do the fun stuff.' Consider the aquarium firmly in the latter category."

<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/tech/D954O1GO0.htm>

**Survey of Preferences of Screen Readers Users** – "By completing this survey you will help inform development choices for those creating accessible web content. All screen reader users (even those that use screen readers only for evaluation and testing) are invited to participate. No personally identifying information, including IP address, is collected. Results will be reported as aggregated summaries and will be published in approximately March 2009. Your participation is purely voluntary and you can choose to stop at anytime. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes."

<http://webaim.org/projects/screenreadersurvey/>

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## CONFERENCES

### (🌟 New Conferences)

#### CANADIAN

**Meaningful Day Workshop** – February 12-13, 2009 | Winnipeg, Manitoba. "Do you support individuals with an intellectual disability, as a staff person or family member? Are you someone labeled as intellectually disabled who wants to change what you do during the day? Are you struggling to plan days, either for yourself or others, that are full of meaningful activities that build on gifts, abilities and interests? Well join the crowd!

This two-day workshop will focus on:

- Why is it difficult to design and implement supports for people of all ages, who have the label of intellectual disability, to have full, meaningful days?
- What kind of a vision is needed to guide our actions to effectively support people to be active, engaged and able to contribute to their community?
- How do valued social roles help in making the vision a reality?"

[http://www.gov.mb.ca/dio/whats\\_new/meaningful\\_day.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/dio/whats_new/meaningful_day.html)

#### **Louis Braille: From Literacy to Liberty 2009 Canadian Federation Of The Blind Convention**

**Louis Braille Birthday Bash** – May 1-3, 2009 | Victoria, British Columbia. "Celebrate the 200th birthday of Louis Braille at the fourth annual Canadian Federation of the Blind Convention."

<http://www.cfb.ca/>

**2009 CHHA Conference & AGM - "Technology: The Gateway to Hearing Life"** – May 21-24, 2009 | St. John's, Newfoundland. "The theme for the 2009 Conference is 'Technology: The Gateway to Hearing Life' and reflects the impact technology has on persons with hearing loss

and their families. A full line-up of educational workshops has been scheduled for May 22 and May 23, 2009. Some of the topics to be discussed could include cochlear implants, tinnitus, captioning issues & accessibility, hearing aids, speech recognition software, etc. Young adult sessions are also included."

<http://chha.ca/index2.php?content=information>

**2009 CDSA-ACEI Conference** – May 25-26, 2009 | Ottawa, Ontario. "The 2009 CDSA-ACEI Conference, held in conjunction with the Congress of the [Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences](#), will be at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, Monday May 25 and Tuesday May 26, 2009. The theme of Congress 2009 is 'Capital Connections: nation, terroir, territoire.' This theme invites an exploration of identity as physical space; the space of a people, a nation, and their historic 'terroir.' It asks the question: Has globalization produced a sea-change in our understanding of the relationship between place and who we are? Our conference will accordingly reflect that theme with regards to disability studies."

<http://www.cdsa-acei.ca/conference.html>

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## U.S.

**Technology, Reading & Learning Diversity 2009** – January 22-24 2009 | San Francisco, California. "The mission of TRLD 2009 is 'Opening Doors to Universal Learning.' Universal Learning embodies the idea of equitable and flexible access to concepts and ideas for all students, all people. The digital age we live in creates a level playing field and multiple opportunities for all learners to achieve."

<http://www.trld.com/about/mission/index.html>

**ATIA 2009** – January 28-31, 2009 | Orlando, Florida. "The ATIA Conference serves as a leading conference for the Assistive Technology community offering attendees the opportunity to participate in discussions with industry experts, learn about new technologies, best practices, and a host of specialized services. Assistive Technology products and technologies will be represented in various presentations, demonstrations and/or exhibits. In addition, hands-on labs will provide an opportunity to experiment with and evaluate the latest assistive technology devices and software."

<http://www.atia.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3280>

**First World Congress on Spina Bifida Research and Care** – March 15-18, 2009 | Orlando Florida. "The Spina Bifida Association (SBA) is pleased to announce the First World Congress on Spina Bifida Research and Care. This meeting promises to be the premier forum for a unique gathering of international Spina Bifida researchers and care specialists. For the first time, the international leaders in the medical and scientific community from the fields of neurosurgery, neurology, urology, developmental pediatrics, orthopedics, epidemiology, and other arenas will come together to discuss the future of care for this challenging and complex birth defect. Don't miss your chance to be a part of this amazing event...the future is now."

<http://medicalconference.spinabifidaassociation.org/site/c.qnKOKTOtHgE/b.3512717/k.BE78/Home.htm>

**The 24th Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference –**

March 16-21, 2009 | Los Angeles, California. "The 24th Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference will be held March 16-21, 2009 at the Los Angeles Airport Marriott & Renaissance Montura Hotels. Please join us as we celebrate 24 years of leadership in the technology and disability fields. We will be presenting experts and trends in assistive technology and persons with disabilities, while also highlighting adaptive technology for aging and international practices. The Call for Papers opens Monday, August 25th and closes Friday, October 17th. For additional information about Call for Papers or to submit a proposal please visit our Call for Papers page."

<http://www.spinalcord.org/news.php?dep=1&page=33&list=1963>

**17th annual Spinal Cord Injuries Conference –** March 18-21, 2009 | Orlando, Florida. "New technology, equipment and changes in early interventions are challenging multidisciplinary rehabilitation teams to improve protocols to maximize functional outcomes for persons with SCI. Quality of life issues such as sexual health, spasticity and pain management continue to drive changes in approach and treatment interventions as life expectancy is extended. Improvements in technology and wheelchair function expand options for maintaining shoulder function while maximizing mobility. How do we integrate these changes and discoveries into our clinical practices to provide the best care we can for persons with SCI? Join us at the 17th annual Spinal Cord Injuries conference being held in Orlando this coming spring and take home a cadre of valuable tips that you can apply immediately in your work setting. Seize this opportunity to combine education and an early spring warm up in this spectacular resort location."

<http://www.contemporaryforums.com/m412409/bene.asp>

✿ **Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium -** April 17, 2009 | Baltimore, Maryland. "Jacobus tenBroek founded the National Federation of the Blind in 1940 and served as its president until his death in 1968. He was a constitutional law scholar, a blind professor at Berkeley, and an author of treatises on the Fourteenth Amendment and social welfare. Dr. tenBroek created the concept that civil rights should apply to disabled Americans, and he published extensively regarding the variables involved in the application of the law to those with disabilities. That blind and other disabled people have been able to gain a substantial measure of participation in American life is largely due to Dr. tenBroek's thought and energy. To carry forward the work of Dr. tenBroek in assuring that all citizens may have the opportunity for full participation in the society in which we live, the National Federation of the Blind is hosting the Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium. The 2009 symposium, 'New Perspectives on Disability Law: Advancing the Right to Live in the World,' will examine the new perspectives on disability law both in the United States, brought about by the election of a new administration and the signing of the ADA Amendments Act, and internationally, as a result of the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities."

[http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Law\\_Symposium.asp](http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Law_Symposium.asp)

**Multiple Perspectives on Access, Inclusion, and Disability Annual Conference –** April 28-29, 2009 | Ohio State University Columbus Campus. "The Ninth Annual Multiple Perspectives conference continues the university's efforts to bring together a diverse audience to explore disability as both an individual experience and social reality that cuts across typical divisions of education & employment; scholarship & service; business & government; race, gender &

ethnicity. This year's theme 'Change, Challenge & Collaboration' reflects the critical place in history we occupy. Between last conference and this call for papers the United Nations has adopted the Convention on Disability, Congress passed a new GI bill and the Higher Education Opportunity Act which include a significant focus on disability; the Access Board is proposing changes in Section 508, the Department of Justice is in the final stages of a comprehensive review and update of the regulations for the ADA's Titles II and III; and the ADA Amendments of 2008 are working their way through Congress. The theme and the quotes below are offered as a guide to framing your proposals and considering your topics from a fresh perspective."

<http://ada.osu.edu/conferences/2009Conf/callforpapers09.html>

**Pacific Rim International Forum** – May 2-3, 2009, | Honolulu, Hawaii. "With its beginnings dating back to 1985, the Pacific Rim International Conference on Disabilities has evolved into one of the top rated international educational offerings for and from persons with disabilities, family members, researchers, service providers, policymakers, community leaders, advocates, and nationally recognized professionals in the various disciplines in the diverse field of disabilities."

<http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu/>

**21st Annual Postsecondary Disability Training Institute (PTI)** – June 2 - 6, 2009 | Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. "Come learn skills you'll use every day! The objective of this Training Institute is to assist concerned professionals to meet the unique needs of college students with disabilities. Participants can select from a variety of Strands and Single Sessions taught by experts in the field that provide participants with in-depth information and adequate time for questions and follow-up activities. Participants also have opportunities to share information and network with each other at various activities throughout the week."

<http://www.cped.uconn.edu/09pti.htm>

**The Second National Conference on the Employment of Lawyers with Disabilities** – June 15-16, 2009 | Washington D.C. "The Conference will be hosted by the ABA Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law and 2008-2009 ABA President H. Thomas Wells Jr. It is co-sponsored by the Association of Corporate Counsel and the Minority Corporate Counsel Association. This groundbreaking program aims to: encourage large legal employers, particularly corporations and law firms, to sign pledges to promote diversity and inclusion within the workplace with an emphasis on hiring and retaining lawyers with disabilities; develop best practices for promoting disability diversity and inclusion; and identify legal employers and work settings that are models for the legal profession. The Conference is part of the ABA's commitment to open the legal profession to lawyers with disabilities."

<http://www.abanet.org/disability/conferences/09conference.shtml>

**2009 Resna Conference** – June 23-27, 2009 | New Orleans, Louisiana. "Join us in New Orleans on June 23-27, 2009 for the Annual RESNA Conference at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel. For information about the hotel, click here <http://www.sheratonneworleans.com/>. For information about New Orleans, check out <http://www.neworleansonline.com/>."

<http://www.resna.org/conference/index.php>

[Back to Contents Page](#)

## OVERSEAS

**Third International Conference on Disability Research** – March 22-26, 2009 | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. "Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz, Prince Salman Center for Disability Research will proudly host the Third International Conference on Disability Research from the 22nd to the 26th of March, 2009, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The goal of this conference is examining and promoting the role of research in preventing disability and improving the quality of life of individuals with disabilities, and the means of facilitating that through international partnerships targeted at high impact research." <http://www.pscdr.org.sa/en/news/Pages/ThirdInternationalConferenceonDisability.aspx>

**4th International State-of-the-art Congress "Rehabilitation: Mobility, Exercise & Sports"** – April 7-9, 2009 | Amsterdam, Netherlands. "The theme of the 4th congress underlines the development taking place in our research since 1991: from a strongly manual wheelchair-oriented focus back then, towards the much broader perspective of mobility restoration, active lifestyle, exercise, training and sports in the context of rehabilitation practice today." <http://www.move.vu.nl/links/rehabmove2009/program/>

**International Cross-Disciplinary Conference on Web Accessibility 2009** - April 20-21, 2009. | Madrid, Spain. "Population demographics indicate that our populations are ageing across the board. As the population ages the financial requirement to work longer is increased, but the ability to work longer is reduced because disability becomes a bar to employment. With the growth of the knowledge economy, and a move from manual work to more thought and communication based activities, there is the very real possibility of older Web users being able to finding productive, fulfilling, and social empowering employment; if only technology, and specifically the Web, were available to them. An ageing but Web literate population indicates a large market for online shopping and services especially when mobility is a problem for the shopper. In this case we wonder how this new population we interact with Web based resources, and what new problems in accessibility will there be to overcome?" <http://www.w4a.info/>

**Eighteenth International World Wide Web Conference** – April 20-24, 2009 | Madrid, Spain. "The International World Wide Web Conferences Steering Committee (IW3C2), Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM) and Madrid municipality cordially invite you to participate in the 18th International World Wide Web Conference (WWW2009) to be held in Madrid, the charming and cosmopolitan Spain's capital. The World Wide Web Conference is the global event that brings together key researchers, innovators, decision-makers, technologists, businesses, and standards bodies working to shape the Web. Organized by IW3C2 since 1994, the WWW conference is the annual opportunity for the International community to discuss and debate the evolution of the Web. The conference will feature a range of presentations on world-class research, as well as stimulating talks, workshops, tutorials, panels, and late-breaking posters." <http://www.www2009.org/>

**The Second International Conference on Information and Communication Technology & Accessibility** – May 7-9, 2009 | Hammamet, Tunisia. "After the success of ICTA 07, with more than 300 attendees from about 30 countries, the Second International Conference on

ICT and Accessibility will take place in the beautiful town of Hammamet from 07 to 09 May 2009. ICTA 09 will provide a unique forum for all research related to ICT and e-accessibility. This conference addresses new trends and challenges, emerging technologies and progress in standards relevant to today's fast moving areas of Information and Communication Technologies. It will also discuss how e-accessibility can be supported and improved."  
<http://www.icta.rnu.tn/callforpapers.html>

### **DSAI 2009 Software Development for Enhancing Accessibility and Fighting Info-exclusion**

– June 3-5, 2009 | Lisboa, Portugal. "Welcome to DSAI 2009. After a successful start with DSAI 2006 and 2007 editions, the International Conference on Software Development for Enhancing Accessibility and Fighting Info-exclusion (DSAI 2009) will take place in June 2009, at the MSFT - Software para Microcomputadores, Lda. - TAGUSPARK - Lisboa - PORTUGAL. Nowadays, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) play a major role in our lives. However, ICT development which is indifferent to the concerns of social inclusion may raise barriers and increase the gap between the average user and those with special needs, instead of contributing to eliminating this gap and promoting equal rights and opportunities for all. Senior citizens and others with special needs are often faced with multiple minor disabilities that prevent them from enjoying the benefits of technology and higher quality of life standards. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, technology design should take into account accessibility and usability features for the protection and promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities, in all policies and programmes."  
<http://dsai2009.utad.pt/>

### **19th IAGG World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics** – July 5-9, 2009 | Paris, France.

"Every four years, the World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics represents a unique and irreplaceable event attended by experts from around the world to discuss the latest findings in the field of ageing. The 19th congress, which is taking place in Paris in 2009, is particularly important, as it coincides with an ideological u-turn. Lifespan extension and the growing number of elderly people, once considered as catastrophic, are now viewed as an indisputable progress."  
<http://www.gerontologyparis2009.com/site/view8.php>

### **AAATE 2009 Conference - Inclusion between past and future** – August 3-September 2, 2009 |

Florence, Italy. "As technology develops rapidly and an Information Society is approaching, the concept of Assistive Technology seems to be moving away from adopting the most appropriate device/s for each user in order to overcome the limitations to her/his activity to the design and set up of the total environment in which people live, supported by suitable functionalities (services) and, when necessary, by additional support devices integrated within the environment. At present, these two perspectives are deeply intertwined, from both a technological and a social point of view. The relationship, coexistence and transition between them currently represent the first challenges for the world of Assistive Technology. This is coherent with the WHO-ICF model, which describes disability as resulting not only from a person's intrinsic attributes but also from the context. Therefore, according to the emerging technological perspectives, inclusion of all citizens can be pursued by the creation of inclusive living environments in which the abilities to carry out necessary tasks are redefined, particularly with reference to the accessing of information, interpersonal communications, and

environmental control. From this perspective, this approach is also coherent with the definition of eInclusion, as approved in the 2006 Riga Ministerial Declaration: 'e-Inclusion means both inclusive ICT and the use of ICT to achieve wider inclusion objectives'."

<http://www.aaate2009.eu/>

[Back to Contents Page](#)