



DISABILITY RESOURCE DIGEST

Volume 9 Issue 10 November 2009

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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. Readers are also invited to send comments and suggestions regarding the DRD to this same e-mail address.

ACCESSIBILITY

A new home for accessibility at Google – (*Google*). "Information access is at the core of Google's mission, which is why we work to make the world's content available to people with disabilities, such as blindness, visual impairment, color deficiency, deafness, hearing loss and limited dexterity. Building accessible products isn't only the right thing to do, it also opens up Google services to very significant populations of people. According to the United Nations, 650 million people live with a disability, which makes them the world's largest minority."
<http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2009/10/new-home-for-accessibility-at-google.html>

Access Awareness Honour for Royal Ontario Museum – (*ArtDaily*). "The Ministry of Community and Social Services has honored the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in a new video for its leading implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act. The video follows the steps the ROM has taken to ensure its accessibility to all visitors and employees, shot during Minister Madeline Meilleur's visit to the ROM during Access Awareness Week. The honor bestowed upon the ROM by the Ministry of Community and Social Services is a positive recognition of the Museum's dedication to accessibility. The ROM is committed to making the Museum accessible for all visitors and has developed a comprehensive accessibility policy."
http://www.artdaily.org/index.asp?int_sec=2&int_new=33717

Accessibility plan 'investment for all' – by Karen Mckinley (*ChronicleJournal*). "A proposal to make all public and private buildings accessible to all disabilities is being reviewed. The idea, being prepared under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), was up for public discussion at Confederation College on Saturday. Groups representing persons with disabilities and individuals met to look at some of the proposal – over 225 pages of it – to give their feedback. There are standards in place already to make access to buildings and services easier, said Ron Ross, president of Persons United for Self-Help (PUSH) Northwest. The real concern is making the public aware of them."
http://www.chroniclejournal.com/stories_local.php?id=215407

Apple listens and talks about accessibility – (*IT Director*). "Apple products have included accessibility functions for many years; the difference in the latest releases is that Apple is making accessibility a significant part of the marketing of the products. In the recent Snow Leopard release of Mac OS X, accessibility is one of the bullets on the first page of the announcement. The latest iPhone and iPod announcements have majored on the ability of these devices to talk to you using Apple's VoiceOver technology; this opens these devices up to anyone with a vision impairment, turning them from 'cannot use' to 'must have' accessories."
<http://www.it-director.com/content.php?cid=11612>

Ebook Accessibility Issues Trouble OverDrive and Adobe – by Josh Hadro (*Library Journal*). "Some 30 million Americans potentially rely on software accessibility features to access library materials, according to the Reading Rights Coalition (RRC). So last spring, when text-to-speech (TTS) stopped working on OverDrive ebooks because of a software change from Adobe, millions of print-disabled patrons found themselves with fewer options for accessing digital library materials. In response, the RRC—a group of 32 organizations representing

those with print disabilities—asked the Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) in July to take action."

<http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6701693.html?desc=topstory>

Los Angeles Public Library Suspends Purchase of Adobe Digital Editions – (*PRNewswire*).

"The Reading Rights Coalition (RRC), which consists of thirty-one organizations dedicated to equal access to the printed word by people who are blind or who have other print disabilities, announced today that the Los Angeles Public Library system has agreed to suspend purchase of inaccessible e-books using the Adobe Digital Editions (ADE) format. The library was informed by the RRC that ADE e-books cannot be accessed by technologies used by the blind and others with print disabilities, including devices that read text aloud or convert it into Braille."

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/los-angeles-public-library-suspends-purchase-of-adobe-digital-editions-63591572.html>

Evaluating Cognitive Web Accessibility – (*WebAim*). "Web accessibility for individuals with cognitive or learning disabilities is varied and complex. It is an area with little definitive research and few concrete recommendations. Even WebAIM's report on cognitive research shows that users with these disabilities are as varied as the common recommendations provided by those in the field of web accessibility."

<http://www.webaim.org/articles/evaluatingcognitive/>

Nfb-Newsline - Free Service To Those Who Cannot Read Regular Newsprint! – "Would you like a newspaper with your morning cup of coffee? NFB-NEWSLINE® just added its 300th publication AND it's still growing. Five Spanish-language newspapers are now available to all subscribers. The service handles thousands of phone calls each day for individuals across the country who now access daily newspapers and magazines as never before. The toll-free centralized call-in center provides service on demand to any subscriber. This also enables those who cannot read conventional print to have access to all content offered on NFB-NEWSLINE® when traveling throughout the United States twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week."

http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Newspapers_by_Phone.asp?SnID=1204802144

Pickering man awarded for accessibility work – "A Pickering man who drives a cab in Toronto received an award recently for helping customers with disabilities. Thomas Ispanidis, who's driven with Co-op Cabs for 20 years, received the company's first Exceptional Leadership Award for Community Service for his hard work supporting WheelTrans Users."

<http://www.newsdurhamregion.com/news/article/137358>

Self-Advocate Speaks on Technology Access and Barriers – by Jenifer Simpson (*AAPD*). "At a recent Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Workshop on October 20 that focused on broadband access for people with disabilities, Elizabeth Weintraub, former Vice President of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE), spoke on employment and outreach issues. Her panel, entitled 'Accessibility and Affordability Barriers to Broadband and Internet use Faced by People with Disabilities,' also included representatives from the American Council of the Blind, National Association of the Deaf, American Association of Deaf-Blind, Spinal Cord Advocates, Speech Communications Assistance by Telephone Inc, and Inclusive

Technologies. The purpose of the FCC workshop was to gather more information for development of the National Broadband Plan, due to the U.S. Congress in February 2009." <http://jfactivist.typepad.com/jfactivist/2009/10/selfadvocate-speaks-on-technology-access-and-barriers.html>

UN meeting calls for new technology policies for disabled in Asia-Pacific – "A United Nations-backed gathering in the Republic of Korea wrapped up today calling for improved access to Internet and mobile phone technologies, among others, for some 400 million persons with disabilities living in the Asia-Pacific region. The three-day workshop, jointly organized by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), recommended new guidelines to improve access to information and communication technology (ICT) for persons with disabilities in the region." <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=32557&Cr=telecommunications&Cr1=>

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ADVOCACY

Disability Rights Online News - September 2009 Issue Thirty Two – "Disability Rights Online News is a bi-monthly update about the Civil Rights Division's activities in the area of disability rights. The Division enforces laws prohibiting discrimination based on disability in employment, housing, access to businesses serving the public, access to government programs and services including voting and public transportation, and unconstitutional conditions in institutions of confinement." <http://www.ada.gov/newsltr0909.htm>

Disablist abuse for Guardian blogger – by Cathy Reay (*DisabilityNow*). "A columnist for the Guardian has said she's upset by a failure of the moderation of their website after she received disablist abuse on one of her blogs. It took Guardian website moderators approximately an hour and a half to locate and delete comments posted on regular columnist Marjorie Ellis Thompson's Comment Is Free blog post on 4 October." <http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk/latest-news2/disablist-abuse-for-guardian-blogger>

Drug Makers Are Advocacy Group's Biggest Donors – (*MindFreedom*). "A majority of the donations made to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, one of the nation's most influential disease advocacy groups, have come from drug makers in recent years, according to Congressional investigators. The alliance, known as NAMI, has long been criticized for coordinating some of its lobbying efforts with drug makers and for pushing legislation that also benefits industry. Last spring, Senator Charles E. Grassley, Republican of Iowa, sent letters to the alliance and about a dozen other influential disease and patient advocacy organizations asking about their ties to drug and device makers. The request was part of his investigation into the drug industry's influence on the practice of medicine." <http://www.mindfreedom.org/kb/psych-drug-corp/nami/fitzpatrick>

United Spinal Association Offers Disability Etiquette Booklet: An Essential Resource for Disability Awareness – (*PR Newswire*). "The United Spinal Association (www.UnitedSpinal.org) in recognition of Disability Awareness Month, offers a free booklet, 'Disability Etiquette', for anyone who wants to interact more effectively with people with

disabilities. 'Disability Etiquette' covers basic interaction principles as well as detailed information that apply to people with various disabilities including mobility and sensory impairments, developmental and psychiatric disabilities, HIV/AIDS, learning disabilities, Tourette's syndrome and many others."

<http://au.sys-con.com/node/1145302>

Victory Day for Ray Sandford! – (*MindFreedom*). "MindFreedom has campaigned for the right of Ray Sandford to say 'no' to his ongoing, outpatient forced electroshock. Today the Ray Campaign has finally achieved victory: No More Forced Electroshock for Ray, Ever! Today, Ray Sandford of Minnesota phoned the MindFreedom office with some very good news: It is official. After more than 40 involuntary, outpatient electroshocks (also known as electroconvulsive therapy or ECT), Ray has won. The court agreed to his change of guardianship. Ray's new guardians support his right to say 'no' to intrusive procedures such as electroshock. Ray made this comment for MindFreedom International members and supporters, who have backed his campaign for almost exactly one year."

<http://www.mindfreedom.org/shield/ray/ray-sandford-victory>

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COMMENTARY

Ghana: Society Ought to Have Compassion on People with Disabilities – by Helena Selby (*Alla Africa*). "Physical disability is not the destiny of any human being. It as well is not the criteria for measuring one's prospects in life. If people with disability (PWD) are given the right opportunity by society, to be like any other human in society, then the dreams of PWD will be a reality. Everyday PWDs, apart from going through the pain associated with their physical being have to contend with heavy hearts full of pain, depression, anguish and oppression over the way they are treated by society. Society ought to put in mind that being physically challenged was not the idea of the victims, and that it came by accident."

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200909020995.html>

You don't need sight to have vision – by Sandi Wassmer (*guardian.co.uk*). "I am astounded by the recent flurry of activity in the news, suggesting that Gordon Brown may not be fit for the job of prime minister due to his visual impairment. I appreciate that he is in the hot spot politically, but attitudes like these only serve to perpetuate inaccurate negative perceptions of visually impaired people. I have lived in both the blind and sighted worlds and the one thing that I can say, with absolute certainty, is that the only thing now disabling me is ignorance."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/oct/12/sight-vision-gordon-brown>

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EDUCATION

New Edition of the Knowledge Path, Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs – (*HEATH Resource News*). "The Maternal and Child Health Library is a virtual guide to MCH information. It offers a wide variety of electronic resources, including the MCH Alert, knowledge paths, databases, and other materials developed for professionals and families."

The library is located at the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health at Georgetown University. View the library online at <http://mchlibrary.info> ."
http://www.heath.gwu.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1184&Itemid=5

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EMPLOYMENT

Justice Department Commemorates National Disability Employment Awareness Month – (PRNewswire). "Assistant Attorney General Thomas E. Perez of the Civil Rights Division issued the following statement today in commemoration of National Disability Employment Awareness month: 'The Civil Rights Division is committed to ensuring that the millions of Americans with disabilities are able to live full, productive lives through access to employment and all aspects of civic life. Unfortunately, myths and falsehoods about disabilities make it far too difficult for many individuals with disabilities to secure a job,' said Assistant Attorney General Perez. 'The Justice Department today renews its vigilance to fairly and judiciously enforcing federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of a disability. by protecting the rights of all individuals so that they can contribute to our society, we strengthen our communities and our nation as a whole. I am honored to join President Obama to commemorate National Disability Employment Awareness Month on the occasion of my return to the Justice Department'."
<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/justice-department-commemorates-national-disability-employment-awareness-month-63773087.html>

Survey Shows Wide Acceptance for Capabilities of People Blind, Severely Disabled, Despite 60 Percent Unemployed – (Reuters). "As part of October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the AbilityOne Program's central nonprofit agencies are releasing survey results that demonstrate Americans have an overwhelming acceptance of the work capabilities of people who are blind or have other significant disabilities. The survey findings also reveal that more than 9 out of every 10 Americans believe the government should support employment opportunities for people who are blind or have other significant disabilities through programs like the federal AbilityOne Program."
<http://www.reuters.com/article/pressRelease/idUS155510+23-Oct-2009+PRN20091023>

Tools to educate employees about disability threats – "The Council for Disability Awareness (CDA) is alerting all employers that disabling illnesses have become one of the fastest growing threats to employees' income. In fact, they now account for 55 percent of workplace absences. The CDA's recently published 2008 Long-Term Disability Claims Review revealed that income-limiting disability claims have risen by 35 percent in the last decade. This same study found that 95 percent of reported disability claims are due to non-work related illnesses, such as cancer, stroke, heart disease, diabetes and back impairments. Based on the rising frequency of disability, the CDA is urging employers to increase their efforts to educate employees about the risk to their incomes -- and encourage them to take steps to avoid this risk if possible and prepare financially if unavoidable."
<http://www.news-medical.net/news/20091005/Tools-to-educate-employees-about-disability-threats.aspx>

US Department of Labor announces Web-based collaborative policy-making initiative to address disability employment barriers – "The U.S. Department of Labor today announced the launch of ePolicyWorks – a collaborative, information-sharing initiative among national policy-makers and stakeholders designed to address specific barriers to employment faced by people with disabilities. Managed by the department's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), ePolicyWorks is an unprecedented effort to tackle critical disability employment issues."

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/media/press/wbc.htm>

Workforce3 One Unveils New Disability & Employment Resource – "Navigating the services and resources available for assisting people with disabilities to obtain quality employment is like fitting together the pieces of a puzzle. America cannot successfully compete in a global economy without fully engaging the 33 million working-age people with disabilities in our workforce. As we meet our goal of 'Good Jobs for Everyone,' the public workforce system needs to expand its capacity to provide integrated, seamless, and accessible services and programs to people with disabilities and/or other challenges to employment. To achieve this goal and building upon lessons learned from the Employment and Training Administration's Disability Program Navigator (DPN) initiative, the workforce system is collaborating with a wide range of partners to help people with disabilities obtain meaningful and effective employment opportunities."

<http://disability.workforce3one.org/>

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GENERAL

Helen Keller statue to be unveiled at Capitol – by Ashley Hayes (CNM). "It was a moment vividly depicted in the movie about her life: 7-year-old Helen Keller, holding one hand under a water pump as her teacher spelled 'W-A-T-E-R' into her other hand. In that moment, Keller, an Alabama native who lost her sight and hearing to illness as a toddler, understood that meanings were hidden in the manual alphabet shapes her teacher, Anne Sullivan, had taught her to make with her hands. The moment was shown in the play -- later made into a movie – 'The Miracle Worker.' On Wednesday, a statue commemorating her 1887 breakthrough will be unveiled in the U.S. Capitol's National Statuary Hall, the first statue in the Capitol of a person with a disability, as well as the first of a child, according to the Alabama governor's office."

<http://www.cnn.com/2009/US/10/06/helen.keller.statue/>

New Mobility Turns 20 – by Sam Maddox (*NewMobility*). "Here's a picture of NEW MOBILITY at 20, as commemorated by the narratives of five NM subjects, each riding a different roller coaster: Other than being about the same age and using wheelchairs, these people are not of a type. They are, however, linked in a unique way: Four were photographed in the early days of the magazine, and again for this issue, by C7 quad Chris Benson. The other is Chris Benson herself. The unifying theme? Survival and transcendence."

<http://www.newmobility.com/articleView.cfm?id=11515>

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GOVERNMENT

CANADA

N.B. minister rewriting disability pension law – (CBC). "New Brunswick's minister of social development said Friday that he is working hard to rewrite what he calls a 'dumb government law' that deprived a Moncton man of the provincial disability supplement. Writing in a blog, Kelly Lamrock comments on the case of Mike Kennedy, who was denied the supplement in September because his monthly federal pension is \$1.70 over the limit. Lamrock said when he heard about Kennedy's situation, he asked his department bureaucrats if he could issue a cheque to people who are just a little over the limit. But, he said, there is a law that prevents him from doing that."

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/new-brunswick/story/2009/10/23/nb-disability-law.html>

Outstanding warrants to be ineligible for social assistance – (B.C. Government). "The provincial government will restrict access to income assistance and disability assistance for people with outstanding indictable arrest warrants in B.C. and other provinces, as well as arrest warrants under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada). Indictable offences are the most serious types of offences and include a wide range of crimes such as assault, breaking and entering, drug trafficking, murder, assault with a weapon, and assault causing bodily harm."

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2009HSD0059-000505.htm

Social Assistance, Pension and Tax Credit Rates, July to September 2009 (*Ministry of Community & Social Services*). – Canadian Social Research Links, sent out every week, linked to this useful Ontario government fact sheet. The factsheet contains current rate information (benefit levels) for the following federal and Ontario programs:

- Federal Income Security programs
- Ontario Works - Social Assistance rates (eff. August 2009) + earnings
- exemptions and incentives
- Ontario Disability Support Program - Social Assistance rates (eff. July 2009)
- Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income System (provincial top-up for Ontario seniors receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement under the federal Old Age Security program)
- Ontario Child Benefit
- Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families
- Ontario Sales and Property Tax Credits

http://www.communitylegalcentre.ca/legal_information/Tips/IM/SA_pension_rate_Jul-Sep_2009.pdf

US

Obama inks defense bill with hate crimes provision – by Ben Feller (AP). "Trumpeting a victory against careless spending, President Barack Obama on Wednesday signed a defense bill that kills some costly weapons projects and expands war efforts. In a major civil rights

change, the law also makes it a federal hate crime to assault people based on sexual orientation. . . The measure expands current hate crimes law to include violence based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. To assure its passage after years of frustrated efforts, Democratic supporters attached the measure to the must-pass defense policy bill over the steep objections of many Republicans."

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5h6sgjIL7BtQ0ut1GYxjIHGHvHV5qD9BKAF801>

President Obama Proclaims October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month

– (*SpinalCord.org*). "In proclaiming October 2009, as National Disability Employment Awareness Month, President Obama called upon all Americans to celebrate the contributions of individuals with disabilities to our workplaces and communities, and to promote the employment of individuals with disabilities to create a better, more inclusive America, one in which every person is rightly recognized for his or her abilities and accomplishments. Read the full story for complete text of the proclamation."

<http://www.spinalcord.org/news.php?dep=1&page=0&list=2366>

VA Extends "Agent Orange" Benefits to More Veterans – "Relying on an independent study by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki decided to establish a service-connection for Vietnam Veterans with three specific illnesses based on the latest evidence of an association with the herbicides referred to Agent Orange. The illnesses affected by the recent decision are B cell leukemias, such as hairy cell leukemia; Parkinson's disease; and ischemic heart disease."

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1796>

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HEALTH/WELLNESS

Chronic Diseases in Canada Volume 29, No. 4, 2009 – "Chronic Diseases in Canada (CDIC) is a quarterly scientific journal focussing on current evidence relevant to the control and prevention of chronic (i.e. non-communicable) diseases and injuries in Canada. Since 1980 the journal has published a unique blend of peer-reviewed feature articles by authors from the public and private sectors and which may include research from such fields as epidemiology, public/community health, biostatistics, the behavioural sciences, and health services or economics. Only feature articles are peer reviewed. Authors retain responsibility for the content of their articles; the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the CDIC editorial committee nor of the Public Health Agency of Canada."

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cdic-mcc/29-4/index-eng.php>

H1N1 Striking Children With Disabilities Hard, Officials Say – by Michelle Diamant (*Disability Scoop*). "The number of children who have died from the H1N1 virus is 'increasing substantially,' health officials said Friday, and children with disabilities and underlying medical conditions appear to be hardest hit. Already 76 children have died from H1N1, or swine flu, this year and the flu season is just beginning. Flu season traditionally lasts until May. The number of deaths is especially striking given that fewer than 90 children died in each of the last three years from seasonal flu. Most of the children who have died from the H1N1 flu strain

had disabilities or underlying health conditions, officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Friday."

<http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2009/10/09/h1n1-disability/5748/>

Longer Life with Less Disability Predicted – by Charles Bankhead (*MedPageToday*). "More than half of the babies born today in developed countries will live to be 100, and the extended lifespan will likely come with fewer disabilities and limitations, according to a review of aging and its impact on healthcare systems. The growing population of very old individuals will challenge nations' healthcare resources, but recent trends suggest the strain on society will be manageable."

<http://www.medpagetoday.com/PrimaryCare/PreventiveCare/16254>

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LEGAL

Disney Wins Segway Suit Dismissal; Settlement Voided (Update1) – by Sophia Pearson and Doris Bloodsworth (*Bloomberg.com*). "Walt Disney Co. won dismissal of a lawsuit claiming a ban on personal two-wheel transporters at its facilities violates federal disabilities laws, after a judge rejected a proposed settlement in the case. Two Illinois residents and one from Iowa sued Disney in November 2007 after the company barred them from using the Segway Personal Transporter on family vacations at four theme parks in Florida. As an alternative to Segways, Disney agreed in December to acquire at least 15 newly designed electric stand-up vehicles to settle the case."

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601103&sid=a0rqNBI7sQxl>

Insurer ends health program rather than pay out big – by William Ehart (*WashingtonTimes*). "Ian Pearl has fought for his life every day of his 37 years. Confined to a wheelchair and hooked to a breathing tube, the muscular dystrophy victim refuses to give up. But his insurance company already has. Legally barred from discriminating against individuals who submit large claims, the New York-based insurer simply canceled lines of coverage altogether in entire states to avoid paying high-cost claims like Mr. Pearl's."

<http://washingtontimes.com/news/2009/oct/14/ny-insurance-company-tries-to-rid-itself-of-high-c/>

Missteps on York Street stairs – by Andrew Duffy (*The Ottawa Citizen*). "The decade-long legal battle over wheelchair access to the York Street staircase is back at Step 1. The Federal Court of Appeal last week returned the case to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal for a new hearing to decide if the steps discriminate against the disabled. The three-member appeal court panel said both the initial tribunal and the judge who reviewed its decision made mistakes in their rulings. The \$1.7-million York Street Steps, which link Mackenzie Avenue and Sussex Drive, are not wheelchair accessible. The National Capital Commission, however, contends it made a reasonable accommodation for that failure by ensuring a public elevator was installed on the nearby Daly site when it was redeveloped."

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Missteps+York+Street+stairs/2095251/story.html>

New Law Will Improve Medi-Cal for California Workers with Disabilities – (*WID*). "Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger of California signed AB 1269 into law just a few hours before the

legal deadline on October 11, 2009. Staff for the bill's author, Assemblymember Julia Brownley (Santa Monica), informed the bill's sponsor, World Institute on Disability, WID, shortly after the bill became law. California residents who work and use Medi-Cal services reacted swiftly."

<http://www.wid.org/new-law-will-improve-medi-cal-for-california-workers-with-disabilities/>

Swiss could call time on assisted suicide – by Sunil Peck (*Disability Now*). "The Swiss government has proposed legislation that would make it illegal for disabled people from the UK to go to clinics there to commit suicide. Politicians have put forward two proposals in an effort to regulate the practice of assisted suicide. The first would ban assisted suicide outright, and a second would involve restrictions on who could seek assistance to die. Under the second proposal, which is said to be favoured by parliament, an assisted suicide organisation would have a duty of care to help only people with a terminal illness and who declare their wish to die, and who have given long and proper consideration to their decision. Organisations would also need to obtain the medical opinions of two independent doctors certifying that the person has the legal capacity to make a decision and that they have a physical illness that is incurable and will result in death within a short period."

<http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk/latest-news2/swiss-could-call-time-on-assisted-suicide>

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MEDIA

ATIA Video Contest Winner Shows How Life-Changing Assistive Technology Is -

(*Marketwire*). "The ATIA (Assistive Technology Industry Association) is pleased to announce the winners of its Video YouTube Contest. The goal of the contest was to raise awareness about the power of assistive technology and how life-changing and enhancing it can be for individuals and their families. . . The grand prize winning video, My Assistive Technology (AT) Success Story, features Pete, a homebound man with multiple disabilities who uses a variety of assistive technology products."

<http://ca.sys-con.com/node/1150972>

National arts and disability strategy – (*Australian Policy Online*). "This strategy sets out a vision for improving access and participation in the artistic and cultural activities for people with disabilities. The Strategy provides a framework within which jurisdictions can assess and improve existing activities. It also identifies new priority projects that could be progressed as national initiatives or by individual jurisdictions. The Strategy sets out eight underlying principles that will guide its implementation. These address issues such as the right for all Australians to have access to, and participate in, arts and cultural activities, and the need for people with a disability to be involved in the decisions that affect them."

<http://www.apo.org.au/research/national-arts-and-disability-strategy>

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MEDICAL

Winnipeg's poor sell meds to get by – (CBC). "Winnipeg's poor, sick and homeless are turning more frequently to the sale of prescription medication to pay for the necessities of life, a CBC News investigation has revealed. The burgeoning trend is creating headaches for doctors who are increasingly confronted with the dilemma of denying drugs to ill patients on the suspicion they'll just sell them."

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/manitoba/story/2009/10/21/man-prescriptions-cbc-investigation.html>

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POLICY/RESEARCH

First National Study On Crime Against Persons With Disabilities – "The first national study on crime against persons with disabilities was released today by the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), Office of Justice Programs. In 2007 persons age 12 or older with disabilities experienced about 716,000 nonfatal violent crimes, including rape or sexual assault (47,000), robbery (79,000), aggravated assaults (114,000) and simple assaults (476,000). They also experienced about 2.3 million property crimes during the year. Based on interviews for the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), the study identified six types of disabilities among persons who experienced criminal victimization: sensory, physical, cognitive functioning, self-care, go-outside-the-home and employment. A disability was defined as a long-standing (six months or more) sensory, physical, mental or emotional condition that makes it difficult for a person to perform daily living activities."

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/press/capd07pr.htm>

New Policy shows how to provide human rights in rental housing – (OHRC). "New guidelines will help improve equal access to rental housing for all Ontarians. The Policy on Human Rights and Rental Housing, Canada's first comprehensive look at how barriers to housing can be identified and eliminated, was released today by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC). The policy follows extensive research and consultation with tenants, housing providers, decision-makers and other partners. Its aim is to provide tools, practical scenarios and information that can be applied to everyday situations, so that human rights problems can be eliminated quickly or prevented from happening in the first place."

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/resources/news/policylaunch>

Report: Employers, Low-Income Young Adults and Postsecondary Credentials – (HEATH Resource Center). "This new report, 'Employers, Low-Income Young Adults and Postsecondary Credentials,' highlights programs in 14 communities that are successfully addressing the challenge of providing disadvantaged young adults with the technical and postsecondary education that may qualify them for skilled positions." For the full report, visit

www.workforcestrategy.org.

http://www.heath.gwu.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1192&Itemid=5

http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/WSC_employer_involvement_2009.10.20.pdf

Save Disability Studies at U of T – (Rabble.ca). "Disability studies, which aims to examine and deconstruct ableism, has found a home at the University of Toronto for the last three years."

The undergraduate program is headed by Dr. Rod Michalko, and the University of Toronto is threatening to not renew his contract. If this happens, disability will only be represented at the university by the medical faculties - those who seek to eliminate instead of embrace disability. This is troubling enough, but what disturbs me the most is the destruction of a remarkable and still growing community. Students who are intellectual seekers and non-conformists have found a way to fit in under Dr. Michalko's guidance. He does this by encouraging people to not fit in. He allows the free flow of ideas and discussion in a way that I have never seen in any other university program. He invites students to direct the flow of their own learning and design their own assignments. As a result, in just a few short years, disability studies at the University of Toronto has acquired a faithful following of students who otherwise feel out of place on campus and in academia in general."

<http://www.rabble.ca/babble/activism/save-disability-studies-u-t>

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REHABILITATION

Researcher Seeks to Improve Schools For Disabled Students – (*Rehab Management*). "New Jersey Institute of Technology Research Architect B. Lynn Hutchings says that by making a few practical, effective, and relatively inexpensive changes to school buildings, they can become better environments for students with severe physical, intellectual, and sensory disabilities. She will spread the word to school social workers at the November 6 to 8 annual meeting of the Council for Social Work Education, in San Antonio. 'Not surprisingly, we found that most of our design recommendations developed for students with disabilities work better for all students, and allow teachers to work with students in settings that better meet everyone's needs,' Hutchings said in a statement released by NJIT, Newark, NJ."

http://www.rehabpub.com/news/2009-10-29_01.asp

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SELF-HELP

Disaboom Launches Redesigned Media Site – (*Business Wire*). "Disaboom, Inc. (www.disaboom.com), the leading online resource and community for people with disabilities, today announced the launch of its redesigned flagship site, Disaboom.com. The result of a collaborative redesign process begun earlier this year, the redesigned media site incorporates feedback from hundreds of Disaboom 'power user' and member volunteers, reflects the highest standards of website accessibility compliance, and leverages recent advances in software development technologies."

<http://www.reuters.com/article/pressRelease/idUS132829+23-Oct-2009+BW20091023>

<http://www.disaboom.com/>

Making Life Easier Store from The Wright Stuff – "Welcome to the Making Life Easier Store from The Wright Stuff. We provide adapted utensils, assistive devices, gifts for the elderly, seniors, disability aids, products for the handicapped, and lots of adaptive daily living aids that make life easier. We have lots of specialty products that are not available online. If you don't see what you're looking for, contact us and we'll help you find the 'Wright Stuff!'"

<http://www.wrightstuff.biz/>

National Parenting with a Disability – "A blog to help parents with disabilities communicate with each other. Published by Through the Looking Glass a Berkeley, CA based organization serving families with disabilities since 1982."
<http://parenting-with-a-disability.blogspot.com/>

Yes, You Can! Online – (*SpinalCord.org*). "Paralyzed Veterans of America's Yes, You Can!, A Guide to Self-Care for Persons with Spinal Cord Injury is now available online in an expanded, updated, and interactive fourth edition. The first few months after a spinal cord injury (SCI) are a stressful and uncertain time. Yes, You Can! is written expressly for the newly injured and is also an invaluable lifelong reference for all people with disabilities, helping them gain knowledge and confidence to address the important issues related to living with SCI. For over two decades, Yes, You Can! has been compiled and edited by Stephen P. Burns, MD, and Margaret C. Hammond, MD, and more than 40 experts from the Seattle VA Health Care System. Having answers is central to personal care and independence for people who have SCI and the new fourth edition contains the most up-to-date information available."
<http://www.spinalcord.org/news.php?dep=1&page=6&list=2367>

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SPORTS & RECREATION

Athletes With Intellectual Disabilities Might Compete In London Paralympics – by Dave Reynolds (*Inclusion Daily Express*). "Athletes with intellectual disabilities should find out next month whether they will be allowed to compete in the Paralympics when the games start in 2012 in London. The BBC reported Friday that the International Paralympics Committee and the International Sports Federation for Persons with an Intellectual Disability will present a proposal to the IPC's General Assembly in mid-November to allow such athletes to again be included in future games."
<http://www.inclusiondaily.com/news/2009/10/27/102709intsports.htm>

Goodell defends NFL to Congress about concussions – by Frederic J. Frommer and Howard Fendrich (*BusinessWeek*). "NFL commissioner Roger Goodell would not acknowledge a connection between head injuries on the football field and later brain diseases while defending the league's policies on concussions before Congress. Under sometimes-contentious questioning from lawmakers -- and suggestions about reconsidering the league's lucrative antitrust exemption -- Goodell sat at a witness table Wednesday alongside NFL Players Association head DeMaurice Smith. Both men agreed to turn over players' medical records to the House Judiciary Committee. Chairman John Conyers, D-Mich., asked Goodell whether he thinks there's an injury-disease link. Goodell responded that the NFL isn't waiting for that debate to play out and is taking steps to make the game safer."
<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9BKAI502.htm>

Into their shells, they find release – by Miriam Hill (*Philadelphia Inquirer*). "Kaitlyn Willard has been in a wheelchair for 10 years, since she was 9. It is her constant companion. She has propelled it through the halls of Upper Darby High School, across the campus of the University of Alabama, and to victory in the wheelchair division of the Broad Street Run. But for the last two years, there has been one place where she casts it aside: the Schuylkill, where she gets

out of her chair, settles into a sleek, white boat, and rows. Yesterday, she and her partner, Maureen Glynn, won their race in the 28th Bayada Regatta, the world's oldest such event for disabled people."

http://www.philly.com/inquirer/local/20090830_Into_their_shells_they_find_release.html

Nigeria: NTDC Set to Promote Disabled Friendly Tourist Facilities – (*Alla Africa*). "Nigeria like other parts of the world lacks many appropriate accessibility provisions for the general population. This is a problem which affects many people both in their daily lives and also as tourists. Physical access and access to information are often less than adequate in transport, at tourist destinations, in accommodation and all kinds of venues and attractions. This lack of accessibility has a direct and negative effect on tourist numbers (both inbound to Nigeria and within Nigeria) and on the quality of tourism destinations and products."

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200910020091.html>

VIA Rail Canada to boost famed transcontinental train's accessibility and appeal – (*Reuters*). "VIA Rail Canada today announced a \$19.5 million program for the reconfiguration of 12 of the stylish stainless steel passenger cars used on its western transcontinental train, the Canadian, to increase its accessibility and market appeal. The work is being funded from the \$407 million allocated for passenger rail improvements under the Government of Canada's Economic Action Plan."

<http://www.reuters.com/article/pressRelease/idUS228775+30-Oct-2009+PRN20091030>

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TECHNOLOGY

AT R&D News Bulletin No. 8, October 2009 – "Welcome to AT R&D News, a free new monthly newsletter from FAST with the latest on Research and Development in the AT field. Our aim is to help researchers stay up to date with national developments, local initiatives and research projects relevant to the AT community. There are also regular updates on sources of funding, AT jobs, conferences and opportunities to share knowledge about the AT sector."

<http://www.fastuk.org/research/currentebulletin.php>

Discover How to Use Adobe InDesign to Create Accessible PDFs – "Archived recording of October 28, 2009 Discovery Series. Learn how to create tagged PDF files directly from InDesign and speed up your digital publication process while meeting accessibility guidelines. Find out about elements of design that will make your professional print layout more effective to all readers."

<https://admin.na5.acrobat.com/a774694537/p54901420/>

Does technology make it easier or harder for disabled entrepreneurs? – (*IT Director*). "This house believes that technology makes it harder for disabled entrepreneurs. The motion was narrowly defeated when debated at the event organised by WCIT on the 7th October."

<http://www.it-director.com/content.php?cid=11593>

Google highlights Android 1.6 accessibility features – by Rosalie Marshall (*V3.co.uk*).

"Google has unveiled new accessibility features that form part of the Android 1.6 update for mobile phones. Android 1.6, also known as 'Donut', was released last month and follows

Android 1.5, known as 'Cupcake', which was released in April. The announcement was made by Google research scientist T.V. Raman, who is blind and well known for building and tailoring technology to help visually impaired people. Raman has already built a version of Google's search service tailored to blind users."

<http://www.v3.co.uk/v3/news/2251715/google-highlights-donut>

New Co:Writer 6 Word Prediction Software -- Assistive Technology Tool Guides Struggling Writers to Write Grammatically-Correct Sentences with Proper Spelling – (Prweb).

"Educators teaching struggling writers and students with special needs can use Co:Writer 6 to break through students' writing and spelling barriers and improve their self expression. This assistive technology writing tool is especially effective for students with physical, cognitive and learning challenges and for students with autism spectrum disorders. The software uses sophisticated logic and context clues to create accurate word predictions, even if students spell words phonetically or inventively."

<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2009/10/prweb3036074.htm>

Second Life's other life – (Australian Policy Online). Audio with Antony Funnell ABC Radio National. "Second Life (the 3-D virtual world) is having a renaissance -- it's shaping up as an important research and educational tool. In this program Brighton-based psychologist Dr Suzanne Conboy Hill discusses a project she's involved in using Second Life to aid people with mental and intellectual impairment."

<http://www.apo.org.au/audio/second-lifes-other-life>

Software Company Uses Video Modeling to Assist Children with Autism – (WebWire).

"According to new statistics recently published, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has announced that 1 in 100 children now have some form of autism. With such a high prevalence rate, many parents, educators and medical professionals are seeking the most effective treatments and therapies available. With this in mind, a South Carolina-based software developer is using the Activity Trainer video modeling program to assist children with autism, which it claims is a highly effective tool in treating children with the complex disorder. 'Research proves that video modeling increases acquisition rates across a wide variety of skill-sets for individuals with autism,' said Karl Smith, founder of Accelerations Educational Software and father of a child with autism."

<http://www.webwire.com/ViewPressRel.asp?ald=105361>

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CONFERENCES

(🌟 New Conferences)

CANADA

15th Annual Canadian Association for Supported Employment (CASE) Conference –

November 11-13, 2009 | Moncton, New Brunswick. "CASE is proud to co-host this event in partnership with the New Brunswick Association for Supported Services and Employment Inc. The CASE conference attracts leaders in the field year after year, and is highly valued as a high quality networking and professional development event.

Conference Highlights

- International Speaker Sean Wiltshire opens the conference
- Former and present Members of Parliament, and past president of Canadian Chamber of Commerce, join us as conference keynote speakers
- Longer networking breaks as requested
- Increased focus on policy and employer involvement
- Superb made-in-New-Brunswick talent and entertainment to delight
- Over 400 YEARS of collective experience in Supported Employment offered by workshop presenters! For more information, check out the [Conference Brochure](#) (949KB [PDF](#))"

<http://supportedemployment.ca/en/conference/>

- ✿ **26th International Seating Symposium** – March 10-13, 2010 | Vancouver, British Columbia. "This international symposium addresses current and future developments in the areas of seating, positioning and mobility. Topic areas include service delivery, product development, research and evaluation. The format for the symposium will include plenary, poster, instructional and paper sessions. Extensive opportunities are provided for networking with colleagues."

http://www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/26th_Seating.htm

- ✿ **DRN 2010 "Pathways To Success: The Power of Inquiry, Connections & Mentorship"** – May 17-18, 2010 | Vancouver, British Columbia. "The DRN Conference Planning Committee is pleased to invite you to the 2010 annual conference, which will bring together once again, practitioners in both programs and services in post-secondary institutions from around the province, along with community based programs. This year, we are also looking forward to including representatives from lower mainland secondary schools with a view to strengthen the transition process for students. This year's theme aims to bring you new information through inquiry, expand and strengthen your efforts through connections among all stakeholders, and foster success through mentorship. Featuring international keynote speakers, such as David Harp : internationally- acclaimed writer and teacher of cognitive psychology and cognitive science , actor Geri Jewell and much, much more!"

http://www.drNBC.org/newsDetail.cfm?DNWS_NEWS_ID=760

- ✿ **College Committee on Disability Issues 22nd Annual Conference** – May 17-20, 2010 | Huntsville, Ontario. "The College Committee on Disability Issues (CCDI) invites you to join us at Deerhurst Conference Centre for the 22nd Annual conference. Titled 'It All Starts Here - Transitioning from Secondary School to College or University' the conference program will provide a variety relevant tracks designed to provoke thought and discussion and will highlight transitioning from secondary school to College or University to employment. The conference is three days of skill building and partnerships to promote success for students with disabilities. For: Disability Specialists; Assistive Technologists; Learning Strategists; Counsellors; Elementary and Secondary School Teacher Assistants; parents; and students the conference is three days of learning and networking which will enlighten and energize each conference delegate."

<http://www.ccdiconference.org/>

International Society for Gerontechnology 7th World Conference – May 27-30, 2010 | Vancouver, British Columbia. "Internationally recognized experts in gerontechnology will share

their knowledge and experience through lectures, symposia, workshops, papers and posters. Topics to be addressed will include rehabilitation engineering, robotics, telemonitoring, telecare, ICT, biomechanics and ergonomics, assistive technology, inclusive design and usability, smart homes and smart fabrics, sensor technology, and cognitive aging and computer games."

<http://www.sfu.ca/isg2010/about/index.html>

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U.S.

WFN XVIII World Congress on Parkinson 's Disease and Related Disorders – December 13-16, 2009 | Miami Beach, Florida. "Celebrate 50 Years of Scientific Advancement in Parkinson 's Disease. In 2009 the WFN XVIII World Congress on Parkinson 's Disease and Related Disorders celebrates half a century as a leading international summit for clinicians, researchers, and allied healthcare professionals worldwide seeking real solutions to improve the long-term outcomes for Parkinson 's patients. Over 3,000 participants are expected to attend this biennial Parkinson 's Disease congress – the eighteenth organized by the World Federation of Neurology (WFN) 'Research Group on Parkinsonism and Related Disorders'." <http://www2.kenes.com/parkinson/Pages/Home.aspx>

- ✿ **The 25th Annual International Technology & Persons with Disabilities Conference** - March 22-27, 2010 | San Diego, California. – "The conference strives to present a best-practices approach for the education of students, professionals and consumers involved with the many aspects of technology and disability. Your experience, gained through practical applications and/or research, is vital to the promotion of effective assistive technology practices on a widespread basis." <http://www.csunconference.org/index.cfm?EID=80000218>

- ✿ **The Third Pacific Rim International Forum on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** – April 12-13, 2010 | Honolulu, Hawai`i. "The 2010 Pacific Rim International Forum will focus on the convention on rights of persons with disabilities with special attention to education and employment. 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 and nationally recognized professionals in the various disciplines in the diverse field of disabilities. Pac Rim continues to provide cutting-edge opportunities to learn from one another, share resources and ideas that support the quality of life, community inclusion, and self-determination for all persons with disabilities and their families and help shape our world community." <http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu/>

7th International Cross-Disciplinary Conference on Web Accessibility – April 26–27, 2010 | Raleigh, North Carolina. "A revolution in the information society is now starting, based on the use of mobile phones in developing countries. The hyper-growth of mobile phone penetration is deeply changing the lives of people in most of the world; their ways of communicating, working, learning, and structuring their societies. The promising next step is obviously to access the Web. The Web has already touched the lives of over a billion people and now is

the time for the next billions. However, this expansion faces unprecedented accessibility challenges. Even the word 'accessibility' needs a new definition for people in the developing regions. How can someone who is illiterate or barely literate access the Web? In some cases, a language may not even have a written form. The affordability of the technology is also a challenge, while access is constrained by low computational power, limited bandwidth, compact keyboards, tiny screens, and even by the lack of electric power. All of these constraints compound the problems of access and inclusion."

<http://www.w4a.info/2010/>

- ✿ **2010 International VSA arts Festival** – June 6-12, 2010 | Washington, D.C. "From June 6-12, 2010, VSA arts will bring together artists, educators, researchers, and policy makers with disabilities from around the world for a multicultural celebration of the arts and arts education. Featuring visual, performing, literary, media artists, and a guest list that includes over two thousand participants from all corners of the globe. . . A primary goal of the International Festival is to provide information and effective strategies that can be translated from theory to practice for use in the home, community, or classroom. With this goal in mind, the 2010 International VSA arts Festival will convene an International Education Conference at the downtown Grand Hyatt Washington, June 10–12, 2010. Focusing on three areas—21st - Century Learning, Inclusive Education, and Pathways to Employment—the conference features several notable keynotes including percussionist Evelyn Glennie, Kenneth Eklindh of UNESCO, and noted author and arts educator Sir Ken Robinson."

<http://www.vsarts.org/x5992.xml>

- ✿ **RESNA 2010 and the International Symposium on Quality of Life Technology** – June 26-30, 2010 | Las Vegas, Nevada. "Call for papers: Scientific and Student Scientific Papers will be due January 18, 2010. Instructions for submitting these papers will be forthcoming."

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

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OVERSEAS

- OASIS 1st International Conference - Open architecture for Accessible Services Integration and Standardisation** – November 4-5, 2009 | Florence, Italy. "How to support holistically the independent living and mobility of the elderly across Europe? How to connect services for the elderly in an one-stop-shop fashion and interrelate/ integrate them? What are the elderly and their families/ carers primary needs, concerns and expectations from the technologies and services arising? These, and much more, are to be presented in Florence, in the OASIS 1st International Conference.."

<http://www.oasis-project.eu/index.php/lang-en/news-topmenu-19/20-general-news/222-oasis-1st-international-conferencedetails>

- 12th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons (TRANSED 2010)** – June 2-4, 2010 | Hong Kong, China. "The Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation (HKSR) is proud to announce that the 12th International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons (TRANSED 2010) will take place in Hong Kong in 2010. The theme of TRANSED 2010 is Sustainable Transport & Travel for All. Held every three years, TRANSED conferences are milestone events in the field of accessible

transportation, attracting researchers, policy-makers, transport operators, consumers and other specialists worldwide to share innovations and best practices in order to make transportation and mobility accessible to everyone."

<http://www.transed2010.hk/front/#>

- ✿ **12th International Conference on Computers Helping People with Special Needs** – July 14-16, 2010 | Vienna, Austria. "Over the last decades the advancements in Assistive Technologies (AT) and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have significantly influenced the life of people with disabilities. According changes in awareness and understanding of disability as well as social and legal frameworks, driven by Disability Rights and Independent Living Movements led to what is known as eAccessibility, Universal Design or eInclusion. The more ICT and AT increases, people with disabilities are enabled to take part in almost any area of life, and eInclusion and eAccessibility become a common responsibility of mainstream ICT development. In 2008 ICCHP summarised this process in the equation 'equality =eQuality'. 'Equality', equal access and, therefore, equal chances in society are dependant on 'eQuality', the quality of systems and services in taking the needs of all users into account including those with disabilities. Interfacing the existing and emerging Human-Computer Interface is and will stay a key issue."

<http://www.icchp.org/node/194>

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