



Assistive Technology: Past, Present and Future

Med Services Europe B.V., January 20, 2006

URL: <http://www.pr9.net/health/medicine/3417january.html>

Many people equate assistive technology with sophisticated electronic devices. This report dispels the confusion around assistive technology and encourages the reader to share their experiences in a new website at <http://www.NewDisability.com>

PR9.NET January 20, 2006 - Zurich, Switzerland -- Assistive technology, sometimes known as Adaptive Technology, includes devices or equipment used to maintain, increase or improve the abilities of individuals with disabilities. Dr. Gene Emmer of Med Services Europe explained, "It is important to realize that assistive technology is NOT only computer programs or electronic devices. Since many people think of computers when thinking of technology, this is a common mistake. Assistive technology doesn't have to be high-tech, but it should serve the purpose of "assistance" and can include anything from a stick one uses to reach for something to a walker or a wheelchair, to more complex items such as environmental controls or adapted vehicles."

This means that assistive technology has existed since the first homo sapiens picked up a branch to help himself over rough terrain. Sophisticated forms of assistive technology date back for centuries as well, as the 6th century saw an image of a wheelchair being carved in stone on a Chinese sarcophagus. Today, assistive technology is available to support many common disabilities. For example assistive technology may:

- Provide help with communication, such as speech, writing and typing aids
- Help people with difficulty accessing a computer with the standard keyboard and mouse. They include software programs such as a screen reader or on-screen keyboard and hardware, such as a head operated mouse.
- Provide exercises that stimulate train and assess cognitive functioning.
- Assist with daily living such as cooking, dressing, toileting, bathing, eating
- Provide assistance with hearing or visual limitations such as flashing light system for the doorbell, hearing aids and closed caption decoders for TV.
- Provide assistance with mobility such as wheelchairs, walkers and canes.
- Help with missing or disabled limbs such as artificial limbs, braces, supports
- Allow disabled individuals to take part in sporting or leisure activities.
- Support the muscular-skeletal systems and maintain positions needed to perform desired activities, such as moulded seats, lumbar supports, and modifications to wheelchairs would fall into this category.
- Improve access to print materials such as Braille devices and translators, and large button telephones.

Dr Emmer said "We have created a new website at <http://www.NewDisability.com> which is designed to be a platform for communication between the disabled community and the assistive technology industry. This could help to catalyze future developments of assistive technology. There is a forum where visitors can express their feedback about all kinds of innovative assistive technology. We want to hear about personal experiences, about what products people like or dislike. Users, manufactures and distributors are encouraged to visit the new website and share their visions of the future of assistive technology"

###

About Med Services Europe B.V.

About the Author: Dr. Gene Emmer is President of Med Services Europe (<http://www.NewDisability.com>). We are European Representatives of Colours Wheelchairs and RehaDesign Wheelchair Gloves (the Wheelchair Gloves designed for Active Wheelchair users). We are seeking distributors for our products, please contact us for more informaiton.

Phone: +41764249963
Website: <http://www.NewDisability.com>
E-Mail: americannj@aol.com