

Knowledge Transfer - DSP Profession Knowledge, Mentors, and Colleagues

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Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (CIDI)



Georgia Tech – Atlanta GA

- Braille Services
- Captioning and Described Audio Services
- Professional E-Text Producers
- Certified Assistive Technology Team – Tools For Life
- Accessibility Consulting –UX
- Research (disability-related)

Topic Purpose

- Those with decades of knowledge must share how-to-do the day-to-day job of a DSP.
- There are opportunities to learn the important how-to from an accessibility mentor and where to find mentors.
- Staying abreast of new technologies, including AI, to keep access in the forefront.

We are informed through the lens of several U.S. Disability laws:

The following laws are applicable to public universities in the U.S.:

Section 504

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (ADAAA) (Title II)

Section 508 (ICT)

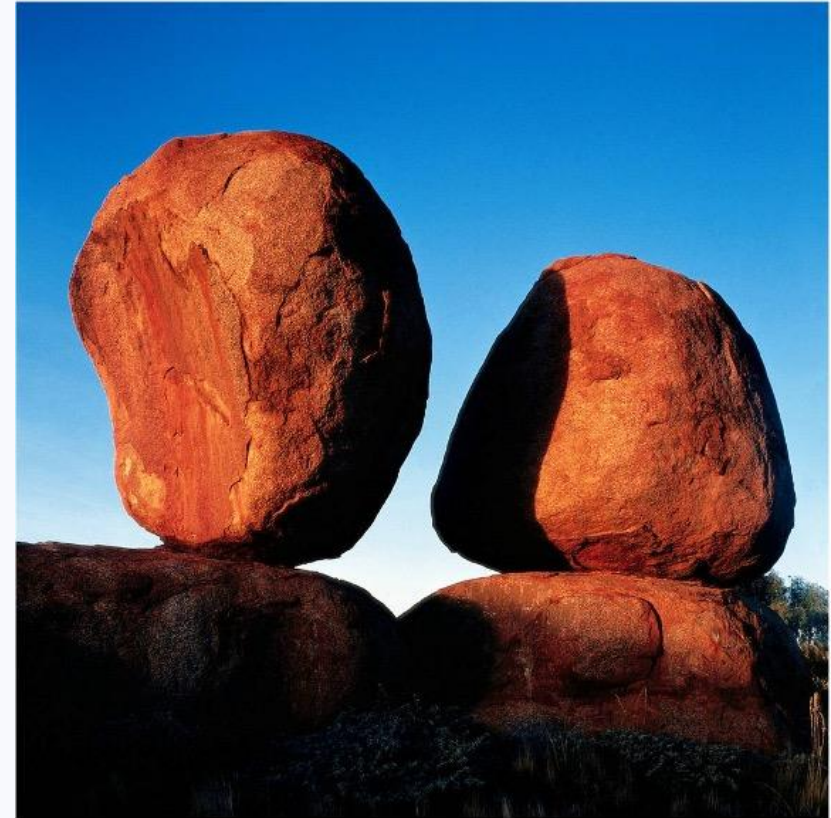
Impact of 504 and ADA Title II

- ▶ Students who have qualified for admissions have a right to be in higher education.
- ▶ Once admitted, students have a right to access academic and nonacademic programs. Including course activities, study abroad, distance education, on-line learning, and any program sponsored by the college.
- ▶ Public institutions must ensure that the web content and mobile apps that it provides, directly or through contractual, licensing, or other arrangements, is readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.
- To do so, it must comply with an existing, specific standard: Level AA success criteria and conformance requirements specified in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1.

DSS staff serve as both;

An advocate for students with disabilities

Representing legislative rights and limitations for the institution and remain abreast of disability legislation



DSP Qualifications and Skills

Understand disability legislation

Understand medical and psychological reports

Budget optimization skills

Ability to deal with arrogant, manipulative, controlling, modest, and kind people.

Ability to create responsible advocates.

MacGyver skills - whatever items are available for a solution.

Scientific/engineering skills to create full-staff coverage.

Negotiating skills for budget, additional staff, first-floor office locations, etc.

Ability to speak/sign multiple languages.

Rehab Act 504 & ADA

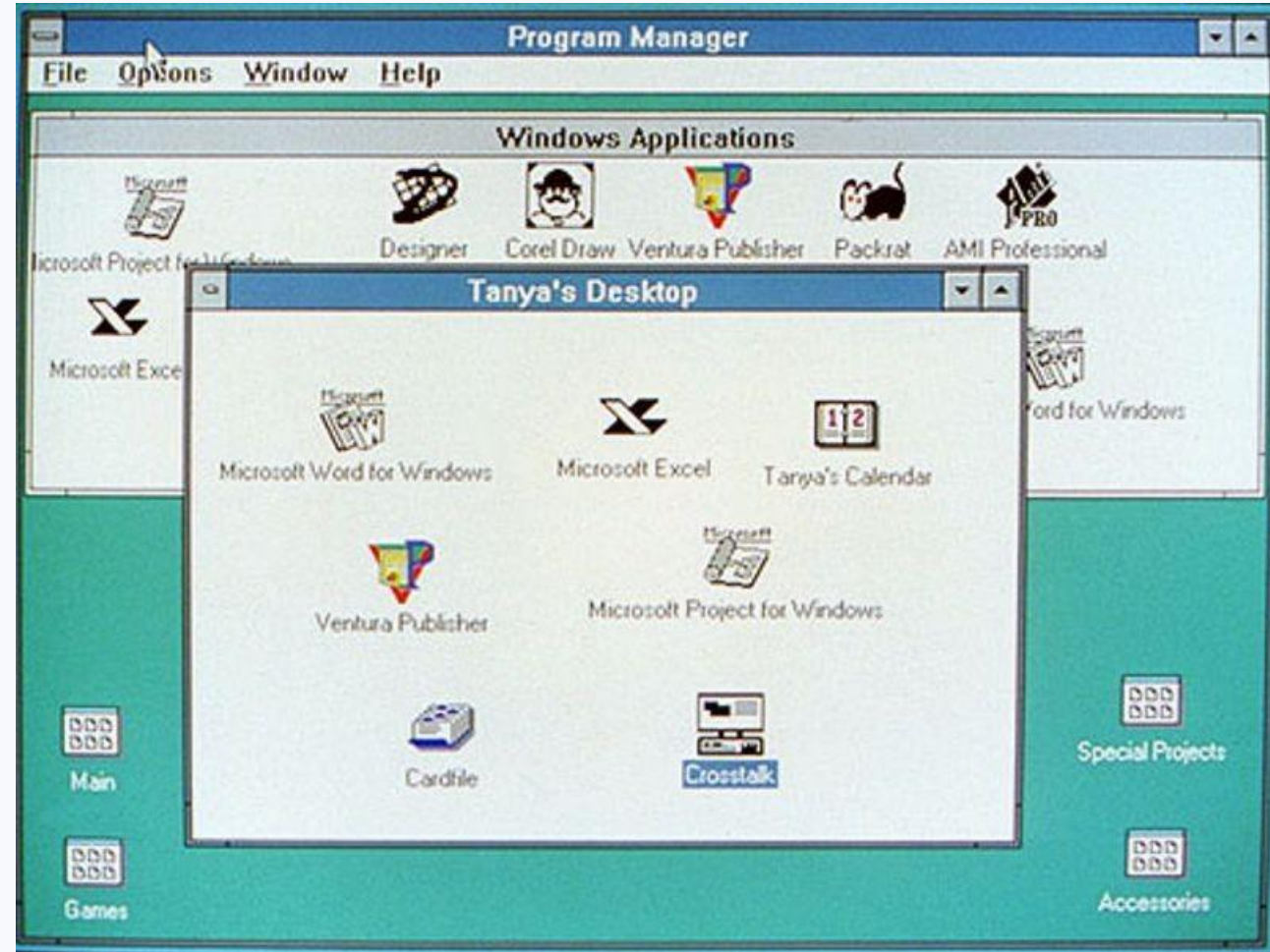
Rehab Services Act of 1973
(Section 504)
Americans with Disabilities Act
1990, ADAAA 2008

First generation Disability Support
Providers began with Section 504.

1st gen: 1973 +30 years = 2003

2nd gen: 1990 +30 years = 2020

3rd gen: 2008...



Help Wanted

Jane Jarrow, a 45+ year veteran in our field, at least half of the attendees to the 2024 AHEAD conference may be new to disability support work.
Disability Access Information and Support (DAIS)

DSPs may come from a variety of backgrounds:

K-12 background - a different philosophy (student success)

Voc Rehab background - funding and programming

Educational Technology background – devices and software

- Some struggling with the how-to of day-to-day activities.
- Hiring policies often do not allow for knowledge transfer.

Locate mentor support, connections, and access colleagues.

- Best support - DSP mentors or a DSP network within a state or area.
- Conference networking and attendance
- Visit other DSP offices
- State Assistive Technology Act (AT) Program
- Request faculty to assist in tough decisions (access colleagues)
- Some certifying groups provide credentials for work in accessibility fields.
- Your ideas?

Georgia Example

The USG has evolved its efforts into a braided approach to meet the needs of SWD:

- State-networked disability service providers (DSPs)
- Regents' Centers for Learning Disorders (RCLDs)
- Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (CIDI)



Advocacy Indulgence Case

Accommodation request from student: Ability to listen to music of their choice while in testing situations. (Both online and in person testing)

What is the functional impairment that listening to music during testing is necessary to provide access?

Was this part of a student's IEP or 504 plan K-12? Why now?

Is this a preference or necessary for access?

Access vs. Success

Purpose...

not to ensure success, but rather to assure equal access to the opportunity, allowing the student to show whether they can be successful

Guarantees Access,
not Success.

We must look at each individual disability and the functional impact of the disability for each student.

We must provide reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access.

Allowing Bluetooth is not recommended (access to outside sources of information regarding the test material).

Faculty are relying on us to maintain academic integrity of their exam.

How do you monitor this? DSS staff in short supply.

Music is playing out in the open is distracting to other students.

Work the main issue...

Reduce distractions or anxiety:

Private or near private testing setting.

Adjust time of testing.

Noise cancelling headphones/ear buds without Bluetooth, traditional ear plugs

Noise machines (rain, white noise, waves, etc.)

Other ways for a student to self-soothe.

Preparation greatly helps reduce anxiety (tutoring, time management, calendaring, reducing course load if possible).

Always new developments

DSPs must stay abreast of new technologies coming to campus and be aware of the potential for AI misuse.

DSP needs an understanding of AI generated tools...

Harmonize – question prompt generation & real-time coaching.

Sana – AI LMS

Multiple tools – create, voice over, and update videos with AI.

Camb-ai - dubs your content into 100+ languages with accents and dialects.

Clueso - AI removes filler words and long pauses from video (professional).

New = Inquiry

Use of new technologies on college campuses should come with some caution and a review process to protect institute data and remain compliant with policies.

Example: Georgia Tech a new policy from Office of Information Technology

Current example: OIT has disabled the use of third-party AI plugins pending a comprehensive risk review.

Currently approved: Teams Premium and Zoom AI Companion

Importance of Access

Just because it is new, doesn't make it right for education and accessibility.

Audio Description AI - Not capable to describe video, may describe still photos, but inaccurately or incompletely.

Video Captioning AI – May be a good way to start, understanding that a hearing human will need to correct and adjust timing to match speaker. 90% correct is still 10% incorrect.

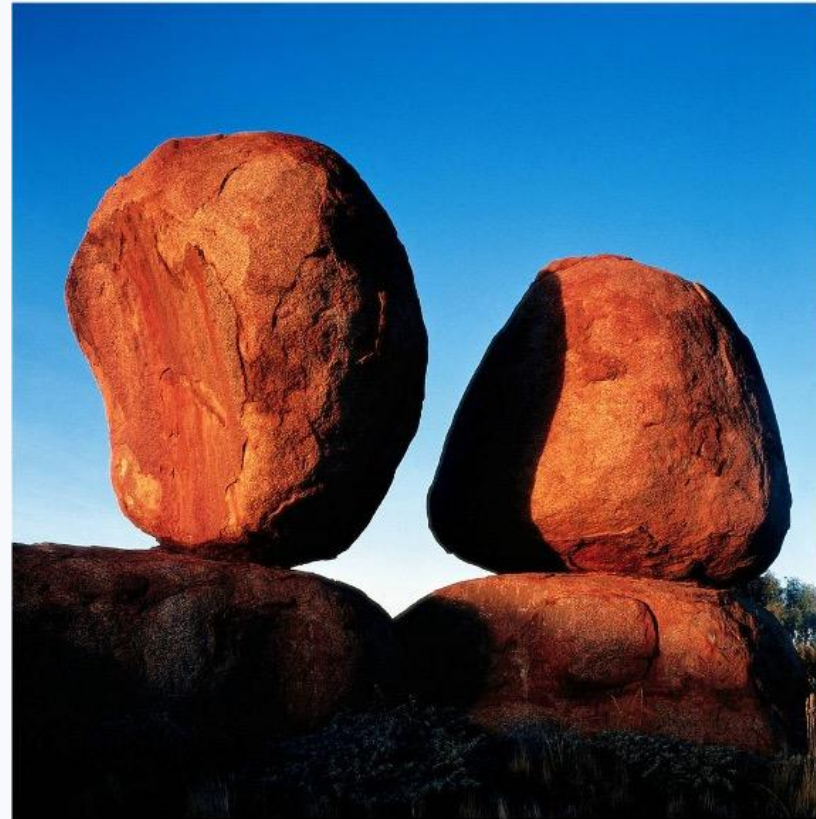
Real-time Captioning AI (Zoom, MS Teams, classroom) Trouble with accents, wrong best guess does not empower deaf students, content overwhelming. Students with reading difficulties still have difficulties with captions.

So, you're telling me there's a chance?

AI produced transcripts (Speech to Text) used in real-time platforms and recorded media are another way to **provide immediate access to spoken speech.**

Through AI, people using these technologies can experience **automatic, no-cost, or low-cost** transcripts.

Considerations must be made in determining when AI use is appropriate to fulfill access needs for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals.



In some situations, the DSP may be the only voice campaigning for access.

Speaking (politely)

- The college, programs, activities, web content, and mobile apps must meet our obligations under the law and provide access, accommodations, and protect a student's personal information.
- YOU are responsible for helping the college meet our legal obligations to students with disabilities.
- Faculty or staff members are not independent contractors.

How to say, “No” (Jane Jarrow)

- There are times when a DSP must refuse requests for an accommodation.
- Change it to, **The reason why I’m not approving this accommodation, at this time**
- Make it the request, not the person- “We decided not to grant the accommodation because the accommodation requested doesn’t seem warranted, based on information presented to us.” Respond to the request, do not refuse the student.
- Be careful not to say too much....
- Template denial letters do not sound like case-by case consideration of the request.

Progress in AI for DSS

Stay abreast of new technologies, including AI and keep **access integrity in the forefront.**

Conferences (AHG)

Computer (AI) policies on your campus

Computer Science Department – access partner

Students and Staff

State Assistive Technology Act (AT) Program

<https://at3center.net/state-at-programs/>

Mentor – Mentee time

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**Accessibility makes things inclusive for all and
possible for some.**