

June 2010

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## TDDP Helps Make Telecommunication More Accessible to Pennsylvanians

Pennsylvania's statewide Telecommunication Device Distribution Program (TDDP) provides telecommunication devices at no cost to eligible citizens with disabilities or older Pennsylvanians who may not otherwise have access to telephone services. A variety of equipment is available to make telecommunications more accessible to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, have vision impairments, limited mobility, and cognitive or speech disabilities.

Goodwill's AT program has recently become a volunteer center for the TDDP program and is available to assist anyone in the community who is interested in learning more about the program, eligibility requirements, and the devices offered, or in applying for equipment.

For more information, contact your friendly AT Specialist or visit [www.disabilities.temple.edu/programs/assistive/tddp/](http://www.disabilities.temple.edu/programs/assistive/tddp/).

## Sneak a Peek at Some TDDP Devices

Here are just a few examples of equipment available through the TDDP:

- The amplified photo speaker phone has large programmable photo memory buttons so that a number can be dialed by pressing on the picture. It also includes amplified handset and ringer volumes, as well as a visible ring flasher. This device can benefit individuals with memory or reading impairments and hearing loss.
- The amplified talking telephone has large high-contrast buttons with Braille. A voice speaks each number as it is dialed and the user can record personalized button announcements. It also includes amplified handset and ringer volumes plus a visible ring flasher. This device can benefit individuals who are blind or have low vision, who have mild hearing loss, and those who may have difficulty pressing small buttons.
- The voice activated dialer connects to the telephone and phone line. It can program up to 60 name and number entries, allowing the user to place a call by speaking the other person's name. This device can benefit individuals who have limited mobility, are blind or have low vision.
- The amplified captioned telephone—or CapTel—automatically connects to the CapTel captioning service when a call is placed. A



*Amplified photo speaker phone.*



*Amplified talking telephone.*



*Voice activated dialer.*



*Amplified captioned telephone.*

Smartphone Apps  
can increase  
accessibility and  
independence!

Enjoy the  
*Accessibility Solutions*  
newsletter's new  
look!

third party transcriptionist types the text of the conversation, which appears in the display window in real time. This device can benefit individuals who can speak but cannot hear, and those who would like simultaneous visual and auditory feedback of their telephone conversation.

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## Assistive Technology? There's an App for That.

These days, smartphones aren't just for business executives, and they definitely aren't just for making simple telephone calls either. These mobile phones with advanced features are quickly becoming the new standard for cell phones in our society. Depending on the brand and wireless provider, users can download applications—or “apps”—which are programs that are created by users and businesses. Some apps, like games, are just for fun while others serve a more practical purpose, such as turning a smartphone into a compass. And while apps are available to all users, many have been created specifically to help users with disabilities.

Some apps were designed to provide alternative and augmentative communication options. The Proloquo2Go AAC and iAugcomm apps both use text-to-speech technology to turn smartphones into communication devices for users who have difficulty speaking through voice.

Other apps can increase accessibility for smartphone users with hearing impairments. FaceTime, Skype, Fring, and Tivi Phone apps turn smartphones into videophones, enabling deaf users to communicate with others through sign language. Amplitude and iHearClear apps amplify the sounds that the handset's microphone picks up, making it easier for individuals who are hard of hearing to hear a conversation, music, or anything else in their environment.

Still others are helpful for people with visual impairments. LookTel uses a smartphone's built-in video camera to scan and recognize everyday objects around the user. Just point the camera at an item—like a landmark or currency bill—and the app will speak the name of the object. Point it at printed text like a business card or menu, and LookTel reads the text aloud. Other apps, like Loadstone GPS and Wayfinder Access, employ satellite navigation and speak turn-by-turn directions aloud to help users reach their destinations safely and accurately by foot or car.

These are just a few examples of apps that can help empower users of all abilities, and more apps are created every day. Some apps are free; others cost a small amount. But compared to the expense of purchasing a separate device for each task, smartphone apps can be a convenient and economical solution for many people. While many apps still have more room for improvement, smartphone technology is taking a big step forward by helping to increase our access to the world around us!

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## Freebie Alert: Balabolka Text-to-Speech Software

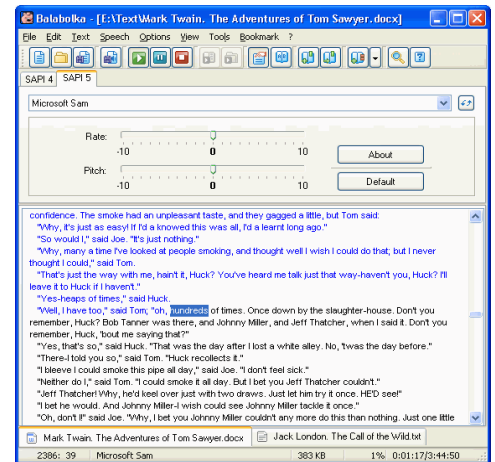
Balabolka is a free text-to-speech program that users can download onto a USB drive and run on any computer with a Windows operating system. It is compatible with all voices that have been installed on the computer.

Balabolka provides text-to-speech technology on the go!

By reading text aloud, Balabolka—which means “chatterer” in Russian—makes computers more accessible to individuals with no or low vision, reading or learning difficulties, or those who would simply like to hear the text as they read it. Some of Balabolka’s great features include:

- The ability to save on-screen text as an audio file
- The ability to read clipboard content
- The ability to adjust the speech rate, pitch, and other features
- The ability to customize the appearance by changing the font and background color, or by using “skins”
- Compatibility with various spell checker programs
- Portability by running the program from a USB drive—individuals can use it on any Windows computer at home, work, or school.

Balabolka has been highly rated by several software review websites. Visit [www.cross-plus-a.com/balabolka.htm](http://www.cross-plus-a.com/balabolka.htm) to download the free software or to find out more information. Individuals who do not already have voices installed on their computer can also download voice files from Balabolka’s website...for free!



Microsoft Office 2010 is new and improved!

## Microsoft Office 2010 Offers Greater Accessibility

This month, the newest version of the Microsoft Office suite hits store shelves. Office 2010 has more enhanced accessibility features than ever before. Here are just a few:

- The Accessibility Checker helps you ensure that your documents are accessible to your readers.
- Mini Translator allows you to click on text that you are not familiar with, or that is in a different language, to display the translation and read the word out loud.
- The Full Screen Reading view provides improved resolution and display to make text easier to read on the screen.

As a Microsoft Accessibility Resource Center, Goodwill’s AT Program can provide more information on accessibility in Office 2010 and other Microsoft products. Visit [www.microsoft.com/enable](http://www.microsoft.com/enable) or contact your AT Specialist today!

Alternative formats of this newsletter are available upon request.

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