



DREAMMS for kids

DIRECTIONS

Technology in Special Education

For Parents & Professionals

Vol. 2, No. 7

February 1996

Voice I/O & Software

Dr. Doolittle Meets Hal

by JANET HOSMER

Remember a scene like this? "Computer.... please calculate our new course and acceleration." The computer responds, "As you wish, Captain Kirk!"

Twenty years ago when Jim and Bones were zooming around in the Enterprise we all thought that this was really wild stuff. Well, it's not so wild anymore, and as a matter of fact... it's becoming pretty common-place. (Of course we're still working on the "Beam me up Scotty" part... but don't be too shocked if this also happens long before you imagined!)

The rapid advancement of computer technology, sound wave technology and CD-ROMs has opened up a whole new world of capabilities on our home computers! And... the prices are also coming down from space so that we all can afford to utilize this technology and put it to use where we feel it does the most good... for the education and empowerment of those with special needs. Let's take a look at the history of computerized voice and sound and see how we might apply some of the new products that we're finding on store shelves and in catalogs.

Talk To Me Please

Computers had the ability to *talk* to us quite some time ago. The problem was, the computer generated or synthesized sound of years back sounded robot-ish and was difficult to understand. That's not the case today. Synthesized (or computer generated) voice output sounds almost as good as digitized (or pre-recorded) voice. This is possible because your modern

Please see VOICE on Page 6



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My Dear Friends,

2/96



Happy Valentines Day!

I'd like to start off this month by welcoming Nancy Brown to our DREAMMS staff. It's great to have you with us!

As I write this month's editorial, we are scurrying around and getting ready for this year's Florida Assistive Technology Impact Conference, (FATIC). FATIC has become the highlight of our year.

This year, our presentation focuses on the Internet World Wide Web and how the information and resources found there can be used to positively impact the lives of children and adults with special needs and challenges. There is a vast collection of useful data that is readily accessible for those who know who to find it. Our goal is to provide a cyber map to all those who want to venture out into the unknown.

FATIC also gives us an opportunity to meet with teachers, parents, and vendors from throughout the country who gather at these educational and technology conferences to share experiences and learn from each other. We always come away with new ideas for technology use, literature on new products, and most importantly with input from parents and teachers on what they feel is important for their child or student! It's a great time all the way around, and I'm really looking forward to it! Look for a full report in next month's issue!

Also look for our new product catalog in your mail in the coming month. We've again expanded our scope and topic areas to better bring you the information that you need to easily put assistive and adaptive technologies to work in your home or school. We're truly excited about our new products and services, and hope that you will be too!

As always... my kindest personal regards! See you next month!

Janet

DIRECTIONS

Technology in Special Education

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Vendors - We welcome product news. Please include pricing and contact name with press releases.

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Becoming an Informed Reader

by SANDY OSBORN

It's great that we share information with one another. None of us have read all of the material available, particularly on the topic of Assistive Technology.

Let's review the short history of assistive technology and special education. Assistive technology was added to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990 and uses the definition of assistive technology from the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act (Tech Act) of 1988. There is only one legal definition and it is found in two laws. There have been several Office of

Special Education Programs (OSEP) policy letters and various hearing decisions that have helped to clarify what is covered by IDEA. These laws, policies, and decisions are binding in all states and the agencies within each state.

Readers of any article should note:

- 1) Laws, policy letters and hearing decisions will ALWAYS be referenced in the article. (You can then look up information for yourself.)
- 2) If the information does not have a reference, the reader should not assume that it is required.
- 3) When specific numbers of days are stated as requirements for

implementation, be sure to look for a reference. Seldom is this a national mandate. Not all states have these specific requirements. Unless mandated, few school districts are this exact.

Remember that we often write about facts and give opinions in the same article. It is the careful reader who looks twice to find the difference. Here's hoping these tips will guide you as you learn about assistive technology in educational settings.

Sandy Osborn is a private consultant in the areas of special education, assistive technology and adaptations for children and adults with multiple challenges.

Free Subscription

For Students, Parents & Teachers

MAINSTREAM

Magazine for the Able-D isabled

beneficial for parents and families for adjustment, networking, resources and support useful for professionals to see what is advertised and the products used by people with disabilities.

- Laura Nelson, OTR



MAINSTREAM provides a great deal of information on equipment options - as well as resource information. The focus on self-advocacy is a good learning tool.

- Darren J. Roberts,
Staff Supervisor

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Assistive Technology Funding & Systems Change Project Notes

FUNDING DECISION CASE REPORT

by Lew Gollinker, Esq. and Susan Goodman, Esq.

- I. Decision Date: Dec. 21, 1994
- II. Reported by: Lew Golinker, Esq. and Susan Goodman, Esq.
- III. Critical Issue: Whether teacher training, or, more generally, teachers and staff qualifications should be included in a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

SUMMARY

On December 21, 1994, the South Dakota Supreme Court issued a decision stating that "teacher training" was not an appropriate activity to be included in a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The case was brought by the parents of a six-year-old child with autism. A requirement that all of his teachers participate in an intensive five-day teacher training course called TEACCH, was included in the IEP. All agreed that the student had benefited from this training method. However, the school district removed this language from the student's draft IEP.

The parents requested an administrative hearing, at which the hearing officer ruled that the removal of the training requirement was

inappropriate. He stated that the five-day training course could be considered a related service because it was necessary for the child to benefit from special education. He also stated that it was not appropriate to revise the child's IEP by removing this requirement.

The case finally was heard by the South Dakota Supreme Court. The Court decided that teacher training is not listed as a related service in the regulations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and therefore, could not be considered as such. The Court said that, under the time-honored doctrine of ejusdem generis (which means where the general words in a law refer to a specific type of things), the general words will be interpreted to mean that they apply to the types of things listed. In other words, related services come with a general list of things that can be considered as a related service. The court said that the type of related services listed in the regulations did not encompass specific teacher training.

School districts may try to use this decision to oppose requests for or eliminate existing teacher training

requirements on IEPs. Other students have IEPs that require teachers to have certain knowledge or skills. Having special knowledge and/or training is important for students who need assistive technology devices and services.

The information in this memo is designed to help parents as they answer school districts that refuse to place teacher training on their children's IEPs, when teacher training is necessary for the child to benefit from special education.

ANALYSIS

We believe that this decision is wrong, because the Court did not read the regulations correctly. The IDEA states clearly that assistive technology devices and services must be included in a child's IEP if s/he needs it to benefit from the educational program. It clearly defines assistive technology services to include "... (F) training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing elementary and rehabilitation services), employers or other individuals who provide services to, employ or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of

... “assistive
technology
services
should be
added to
the child’s
IEP when
needed”...

persons with disabilities.” Therefore, the regulations DO plainly state that specific teacher training is a service that should be placed on the IEP if the student needs it to benefit from an educational program.

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs stated in a 1990 letter from Judy Schrag to Susan Goodman that “assistive technology services” should be added to the child’s IEP when needed. In a letter dated August 10, 1990, to Susan Goodman from Judy Schrag, reprinted at 16 EHLR 1317, the IDEA regulations state that assistive technology services can be special education, a related service, or a supplemental aid or service.

The South Dakota Supreme Court never mentioned assistive technology devices and services. It is impossible to conclude whether the Court ever considered this definition. That is the error. A clear mention of teacher training is included among the services that are thought of as IDEA “related services.” Therefore, school districts should never use the argument that specific teacher training for students who need assistive technology cannot be included in the IEP.

One of the reasons that this error may have occurred is that the Court looked only at the 14 definitions of specific related services in the IDEA

regulations. Neither assistive technology devices nor assistive technology services are included or referred to in that section. (They are also not included or referred to in the sections describing least restrictive environment or special education. Instead, they are stated to be special education, related services, or supplemental aids and services in another part of the regulations.)

Another puzzling part of the decision is how the court reached its decision by applying ejusdem generis. This Latin term says that, to decide the meaning of certain things in a law, one should look at other like things. But even looking at the 14 services listed in the IDEA regulations, the court should have seen “parent counseling and training,” which appears in this list. A special training program for teachers is not that much different from instructions to and training for parents so that a child will receive consistent services and support at both school and home. Under the doctrine of ejusdem generis, the court should have said that specific teacher training should be allowed.

SYSTEMS CHANGE AND ADVOCACY

This case has been appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. The court will make a decision, probably this fall, about whether they will hear it. Many schools will not wait to see what the

VOICE continued from Page 1

computer can manipulate data or files more efficiently, and can do more things with them!

As a result, many computer software programs or applications now have sound and voice output associated with them. Whether you're teaching a youngster to count, listening to your screen reading program, or playing Doom when you're supposed to be working, sounds, music and voice have become ordinary components of the computer application that you're using. And with the advent of faster (I believe quad-speed, or four times the normal access time is standard) CD-ROM (Compact Disk - Read Only Memory) technology, computer applications sound as good as the expensive stereo system in your living room! Add in some fancier and intelligent software, and your computer can talk to you about pretty much anything!

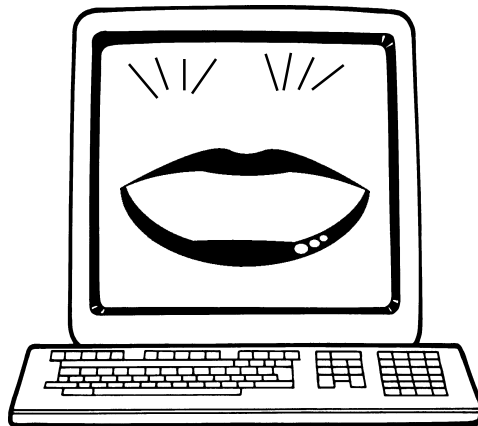
Voice Output Benefits

Speech synthesizers, screen readers, talking word processors, and similar processing aids may be an integral part of the curriculum for a child who is an auditory learner, or may need supplements to printed text. However, they almost have become a necessity for someone who is blind or has visual impairments, and wants to interface with a computer. The potential

benefits for users of this kind of technology is certainly exciting.

Do As I Say!

Computers listening to us, and understanding commands or directions is a little different story. It's (relatively) easy for a computer to generate speech, but to go the other way and have them understand it is a whole new ball game!



Computer programs that are designed to allow you to give verbal input are called speech recognition systems. They generally have vocabularies of words that are recognized when spoken into a microphone. This recognition process may or may not require the computer to be "trained" to recognize your voice. Some products also allow you to customize the recognized word vocabulary database by adding words that you need to use for your specific application.

Dictation Systems

Voice input computer dictation systems take your spoken word and input it into a word processor just as you would if you were typing at a keyboard. The computer recognizes what you are saying and converts your speech into words and paragraphs on the screen. This type of application also usually has some form of context analyzer so it can distinguish between words that sound alike (knew and new for instance) and use the appropriate word in the current sentence. Punctuation, spelling and error correction are all handled easily by commands and intelligent macros.

Dictation systems are not limited to word processing either. You can enter data into a spreadsheet or database, can create presentations, and can even dictate e-mail messages. All in a hands-free yet easily accessible environment. Daniel, a 10th grader who does not have full use of his hands, uses *Dragon Dictate*®, a PC dictation system, to write his History paper. Without it, he would have to rely on assistance from someone else, or would not be able to participate in regular classroom activities.

Navigation Systems

A windowed environment, whether on a PC or a Macintosh, is controlled by voice input navigation systems that act as the mouse for menu navigation and

selection. These “windows” based voice input systems allow you to do almost anything that you can do with a mouse in the windows environment. You can bring up an application, choose a menu option, and totally control your environment by voice. Commands like “drag down”, “double click” allow you to simulate mouse movement with your voice. You can also mix voice, mouse and keyboard commands together if necessary.

Environmental Control Systems

The newest and most exciting on the scene are voice activated environmental control systems. These systems provide those with physical limitation access to their

environment. Whole rooms, houses and buildings are being designed and created to be controlled by voice, radio frequencies and infrared devices. Phrases like “turn out the lights”, “turn on the stereo”, “flip the page”, “open the door” all give independence and abilities to an individual with physical limitations.

A recent story in the Pittsburgh Tribune Review tells of how Sanford Blatt, who is paralyzed from the neck down, now uses a voice activated environmental control system known as *Multimedia Max* to operate any electronic device from anywhere in his house. Using Max from his computer workstation on the second floor, Blatt can see who is on the front porch,

open the front door and turn on the hallway light. He can activate an alarm system, call rescue personnel, dictate a letter, send a fax, or play video games. The freedom he has gained from using this device is phenomenal!

Voice Input & Control Benefits

The benefits of being able to control access to your computer and your environment with your spoken word seem quite obvious. For those with physical injuries or visual and motor impairments, a whole world become available that wasn’t accessible before. Words like independence and empowerment take on a whole new

Please see VOICE on Page 8

Lose your mouse and increase your productivity.

From Wall Street to Silicon Valley, your top competitors have replaced hundreds of free mice that came with their workstations with \$199 MOUSE-TRAK trackballs. The reason: productivity and reliability.

Productivity: Laboratory testing has shown that only 4 hours of continuous mouse usage can result in as much as 60% loss of hand strength. A trader, engineer, or data entry user in that condition is simply not going to be as productive in the second half of the day as in the first. The same tests show no signs of physical fatigue when using a MOUSE-TRAK.

Reliability: MOUSE-TRAK’s rugged construction results in *much* higher reliability than mice or consumer trackballs. MOUSE-TRAK doesn’t take traders out of play or make support people pull their hair out! *Call, Fax, or email today to order or receive more information about MOUSE-TRAK.*



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MONEYCOACH

MoneyCoach is a multimedia software program designed specifically to give individuals with cognitive challenges more independence and better understanding in budgeting and checkbook management.



Interactive media overcomes deficits in reading, writing and math

I can't help it if I'm good at this!
- Carl, Special Needs User

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VOICE Continued from Page 7

meaning. Your computer can almost become an extension of yourself. Add on a modem, e-mail, the Internet and the World Wide Web, and your reach becomes limitless! It truly is the magic of technology at work!

Where Is This All Going?

Those of us who have been part of the computer industry for many years see the far reaching impact of the newer voice technologies! Besides the fantastic opportunities for children and adults with

disabilities, computers and technology will change the way we live! It won't be long before our homes are controlled through a central computer where operations (TV, phone, messages, bills, even groceries and supplies) can be monitored and maintained. Imagine sitting in your living room and saying something like this.... "Computer, I'd like to watch *Friends* tonight." Your computer might answer back, "There's a really cool episode of *Star Trek* at 9. How 'bout that? Shall I order pizza or subs?" □

Software Review

Laureate Learning Systems The Sentence Master 800.562.6801

The Sentence Master reading program is based on a revolutionary language approach developed by Dr. Marion Blank over a decade ago. The primary goal of the program is to overtrain the often elusive non-content words (such as "the", "is", "and", etc.) and word endings (such as "-s", "-ed", and "ing"). These non-content words, commonly called "little words", "sight words", or "functors" have long been known to be a major source of difficulty for poor readers.

The program is designed to take a student, even someone who cannot identify a single word, and systematically lead him or her to

mastery of our written language system.

The four level program has four word activities: Word Recognition, Sequential Recognition, Spelling, and Sentence Completion. Each level also contains eight sequentially-ordered stories along with printable story booklets.

This Sentence Master provides natural sounding speech, colorful graphics, and lively animation, and is accessible by alternative input devices! Our reviewers were impressed with the quality of the instructional content of the application! □

For More Info on Voice Input

*Multimedia Max
Multimedia Designs, Inc.
10 Woodcutter Court
Palm Harbor, FL 34683
813.786.3317*

*SenSei System
Safko International
1438 W. Broadway, Suite B240
Tempe, AZ 85282
602.731.9805*

*Kurzweil Voice
Kurzweil Applied Intelligence
411 Waverly Oaks Road
Waltham, MA 02154
617.893.5151*

*Dragon Dictate
Dragon Systems
320 Nevada Street
Newton, MA 02160
617.527.0372*

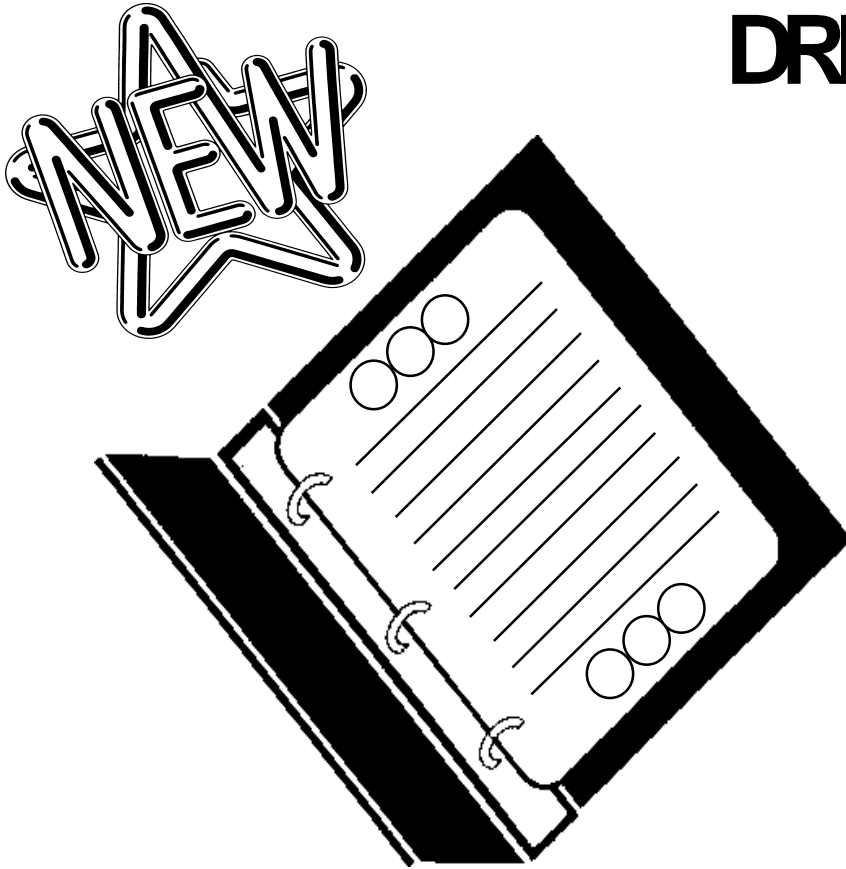
CONFERENCES

Date: February 15-17, 1996
Event: Florida Assistive Technology Impact Conference (FATIC)
Location: Orlando, FL
Information: 813.872.5281

Date: March 6-9, 1996
Event: 1996 LDA International Conference
Location: Dallas, TX
Information: 412.341.1515

Date: March 19-23, 1996
Event: CSUN, Technology & Persons with Disabilities
Location: Los Angeles, CA
Information: 818.885.2578

Date: March 26-28
Event: Arc Governmental Affairs Seminar
Location: Washington, DC
Information: 800.433.5255



DREAMMS SUPER PAK

Has it gotten to you yet? Are you tired of looking all over for the information that you need for your students with special needs? The answer you're looking for is finally here... the DREAMMS Super Pak!

Whether you're going to an evaluation or an IEP meeting - you'll want to know what's being done in the assistive technology world, and what's available for your student BEFORE the meeting.... not after. And you certainly want to be able to find all of this really important information in one place.

(Who has time to search the ERIC database and journals, run to the library and copy the articles and monographs you need from micro fiche) - AND put them all together where you can find them when you need them....Whew! It's hard work! Oh... and don't forget to call all the vendors and ask them to send you information on their assistive technology and adaptive device products! You'll need to know about them too!

Well, you can relax! We at DREAMMS know how valuable your time is. We also know what you need to know and exactly where to look for it. Our researchers have been gathering assistive technology related information from scores of sources for the past two years! We've taken it, formatted it, and put it all together in an indexed binder that you can reference over and over again! The DREAMMS Super Pak is a resource that will provide you with the background information that is necessary to adequately serve the needs of your students with special needs.

The DREAMMS Super Pak contains only public domain, re-printable information, along with catalogs and product information. You'll find articles relating to the acquisition, funding and use of assistive and adaptive technologies from the Council for Exceptional Children, NICHCY, the United Cerebral Palsy Agency and The Arc. All tolled we have over 40 reprints in our files, and the number is growing daily! You know that companies like Prentke Romich, Don Johnston, Edmark, TASH and Dunamis make products that are appropriate for kids with limitations and challenges. You'll find their product catalogs and information from over 30 more vendors and companies. All at your fingertips!

And, it's a real value for only \$49.95! Just count up the hours that you'd spend doing the research. You'll see what we mean! Give us a call (813.781.7711) and we'll get your Super Pak on its way to you right away! Be smart.... be informed.... be able to provide the best services possible for your student with special needs!

CAN YOU USE EXCEPTIONAL PARENT?

The magazine that helps you parent
your child with a disability.

Exceptional Parent was created in 1971 by three clinical psychologists, specialists in the care and education of children with disabilities and their families. Their goal was, and still is, to provide information, practical guidance, and emotional support for parents of children and young adults with disabilities and special health care needs.

Parents like you.

For two decades, this award-winning magazine has been a source of hope, help and guidance for millions of parents, family members and professionals concerned with the care of children with physical and development disabilities, including psychological, learning, emotional, hearing and vision problems, as well as chronic illness.

If your child has special needs, you have special needs, too, needs that range from expert advice to old-fashioned common sense. *You need information that matters, from people who care.* You need *Exceptional Parent*.

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ATFSCP Continued from Page 5

Supreme Court does, and must be ready to respond to an answer of “no” when specific teacher training is requested.

What should parents do, when teacher training or special staff qualifications are needed, to meet the IEP?

First, parents should not ask for teacher training. Instead, they should use the words “assistive technology services” in the IEP. Schools should have a hard time ignoring the definitions in the law, no matter what the court case said.

In addition, parents should point out that even before the amendment to IDEA including assistive technology devices and services, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) included the definitions of assistive

technology devices and services from the Technology-Related Assistance to Individuals with Disabilities Act. This is seen in the policy letter of August 11, 1990, mentioned earlier. This letter also said that schools could not refuse to consider assistive technology devices and services when writing an IEP.

Due process is another way that parents can enforce their children’s rights. Parents should contact their state Protection and Advocacy Program assistive technology staff for representation.

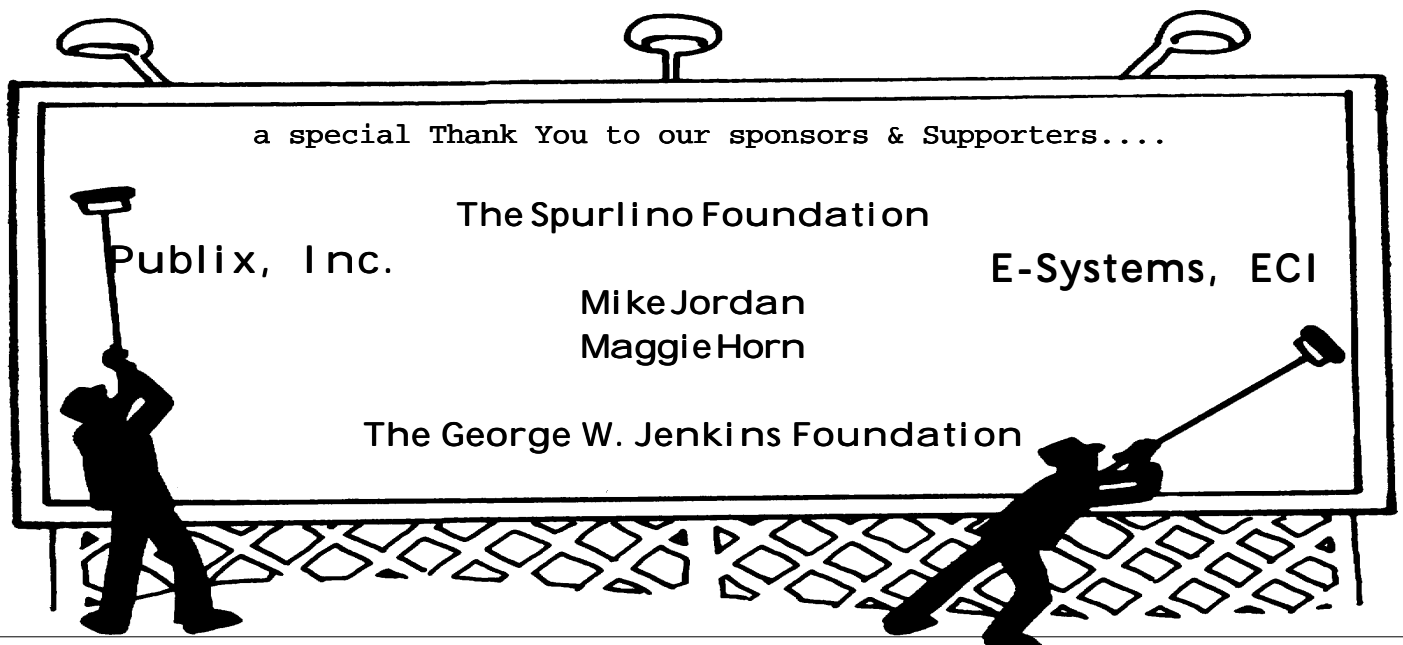
Finally, any parent or advocate facing removal of a teacher training requirement or refusal to put such a requirement on the IEP should contact the Assistive Technology Funding and Systems Change Project, at 1-800-822-0073 (voice), 1-800-

833-8272 (TDD), (202) 776-0414 (fax) or ATFSCP@aol.com (e-mail), so that a list of students wrongly denied may be made, to help persuade the Department of Education to take steps to correct this situation.

Cite as: 22 IDELR 26 (SD 1994)

Assistive Technology Funding & Systems Change Project - supported under contract HN94-0400 from the National Institute on Disability, U.S. Department of Education. □

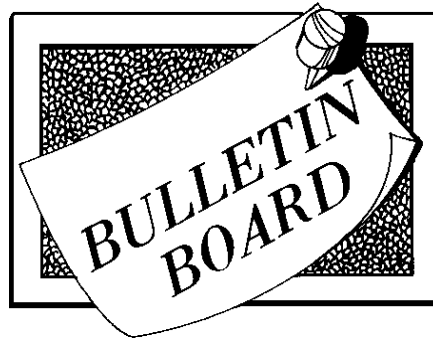
The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or the policy of the U.S. Dept. of Education and no official endorsement by the U.S. Dept. of Education of the opinions expressed herein should be inferred. Please contact your own state agency for policies in your state.



Kudos to Meeting the Challenge

Colorado Springs - based Meeting the Challenge, Inc. (MTC) is being honored by the Colorado Chapter of the Technology Transfer Society this month for innovative research. The award is for best commercialization of Small Business Research (SBIR) contracts for 1995 and Meeting the Challenge, Inc. is the first firm in the rehabilitation technology field to be honored by the society. This research has been performed for the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, an agency of the U.S. Department of Education. The Technology Transfer Society was founded in 1975 and now consists of a national organization and seven regional chapters.

This latest award is specifically for *Money Coach*, the company's newest software product for individuals with disabilities, which resulted from two and a half years of research funded in part through the Department of Education's SBIR program. The software program utilizes state-of-the-art multimedia technology to maximize understanding and involvement in personal money management for people with cognitive disabilities. *Money Coach* is designed to overcome deficits in reading, writing and math skills. (Meeting the Challenge - 719.444.0252)



HOME TEAM on the Net

Home Systems Network is announcing their management of the HOME TEAM (HOME Technology Education And Marketing) site on the Internet. The HOME TEAM is a joint effort involving many trade associations, manufacturers, publishers, distributors, and service providers which are focused on educating consumers about modern home technologies.

The HOME TEAM has initiated a series of information pages on the Internet World Wide Web. Viewers are offered a large and growing variety of information which includes such things as information about each type of intelligent home system, lists of resources for products and services, an industry survey, news about the industry, articles of interest and more.

Obtain more information by contacting them at any of the following: URL is <http://www.hometeam.com>, and e-mail address is: creator@hometeam.com (Home Systems Network - 405.330.0718)

Thinkin' Things Collection 3

Edmark Corporation announced the release of *Thinkin' Things Collection 3* the newest in an award-winning series of software programs designed to build students' thinking and problem solving skills. *Thinkin' Things 3* will challenge students in grades three through eight to develop logical reasoning, analyze and synthesize information, explore elementary computer programming concepts, experiment with physics properties and build key problem solving skills. It is available for \$69.95 on dual platform CD-ROM for Macintosh and Windows 95 or Windows Version 3.1. (Edmark - 1.800.362.2890)

Home Automation Newsletter

Home Automation is a newsletter published by the HomeTech Project of Seaside Education Associates, Inc. Articles pertain to the home use of technologies and controls for the individual with disabilities. *Home Automation* is funded by a grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration, US Dept. of Education. For further information on how to obtain a copy of this informational and useful publication contact the project at: PO Box 6341, Lincoln Center, MA 01773, or call the number below. (Seaside Education Assoc., Inc. - 800.886.3050)