

Georgia Technology White Paper:

Overview of the White Paper



For people without disabilities, technology makes things easier.
For people with disabilities, technology makes things possible.

Why did we write this paper?



The Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities wanted to learn more about how people with disabilities use technology. They wanted to know how they could help more people be successful.

What is this paper about?

This paper is about the ways people with disabilities use technology in their daily lives. It identifies problems that they have trying to use the same technology as everyone else. This includes:



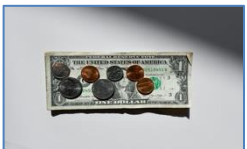
People with disabilities need help getting the same devices



People with disabilities need better access to the internet



People with disabilities need training and support to use technology



People with disabilities need funding to help pay for technology

Why is this paper important?

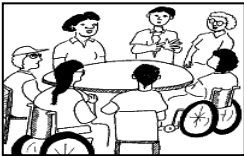


Groups that help people with disabilities want to know the best ways to help them. People who give money to these groups want to know that the help they give to people really works.

What did we do?



We read a lot of papers that other people had written about how people with disabilities use technology



We hosted 4 focus groups in Georgia to talk about how they use technology.



We asked people to fill out a survey on-line. The survey asked questions about how people used technology. It asked about what kinds of problems they had and what kinds of help they needed.



We interviewed 88 people. The interviews were with people with disabilities, experts, family members, teachers and professionals.

We asked them what they were doing to help people use technology. It asked their opinion about the problems people had and the best ways to help them. We wanted to know:

- √ What kind of services people could get to help them use technology,
- √ What changes are needed to help more people get technology, and
- √ What advice they would give the Georgia Council about helping people use more technology in their lives.

Results

What did we learn from the papers we read?



Sixteen states have programs that promote the use of technology. These states help people get technology to help them be more independent.

What did we learn from the focus groups?



23 people attended the focus groups. People said they use technology to play games, listen to music, send email, connect with friends, and bible study.

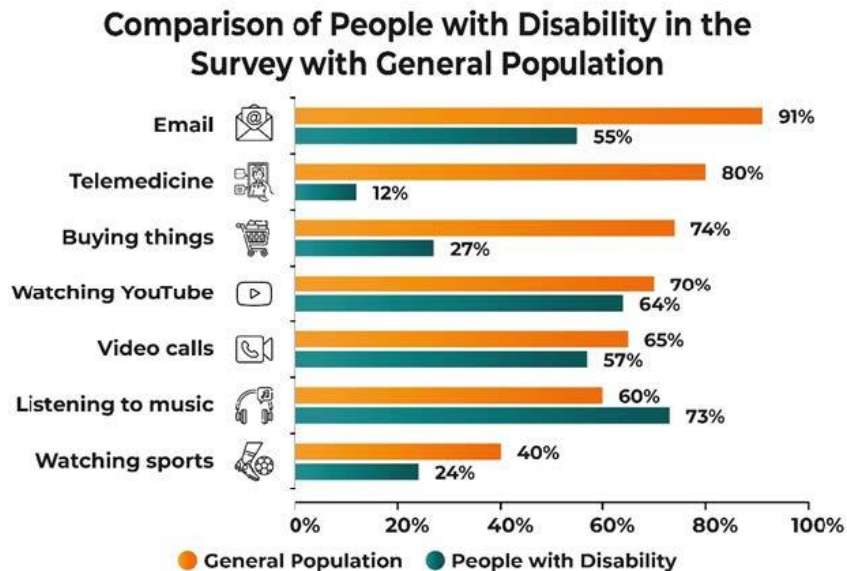


People said the biggest barriers to really using technology were:

1. Knowing how to use technology
2. Not having access to the internet or the money to pay for it
3. Getting help to use technology
4. How much devices and the internet costs

What did we learn from the on-line survey?

170 people filled out the survey. 97 people had disabilities. We compared what they said to how most people are using technology. People with disabilities use technology less than other people.



What did we learn from the interviews?



Sixteen states have Technology First or Enabling Technology programs



The sixteen states have higher funding for technology in their Medicaid Waiver programs.



They have training for everyone to help people use technology.



They have conferences to bring people together to learn more about how technology can help people with disabilities.

What do we recommend the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities do to help Georgians with disabilities use more technology?



The Council should start an Enabling Technology Taskforce to help move things forward. The Taskforce should include people with disabilities and other stakeholders.



The Council should work with Georgia DBHDD to develop policies about technology. These could include a policy for people to talk about how they can use technology at their annual service plan meeting.



The Council should fund a project that would have activities to help people with disabilities get and use the same technology as everyone else.

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