ENTELIS STATE OF THE ART REPORT – EASY TO READ VERSION

Introduction

Research in Europe reports that people with disabilities of all ages have personal experience with technology.

Some people lack sufficient skills and knowledge to effectively join in the digital society.

The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities requires society and researchers to act in advance and promote ideas to help people with disabilities develop technology skills.

In education the situation is rapidly changing.
Different forms of teaching are possible because people can use technology at home and in the classroom.

Many types of technology, such as virtual reality, smart phones and educational games further enhance the opportunities of people with disabilities.

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The aim of ENTELIS

ENTELIS is an established network and can offer knowledge on ways to reduce the digital divide. They can do this by investigating:

- the needs for technology skills training

- the lack of policies at local, national and international level that invest in the development of technology skills.

- independence for people with disabilities by use of technology.

What and who is investigated

The aim is to access human rights and improve the development of technology skills.
By doing this it can improve the use of technology for quality of life.

To do so, there is a need to look at changes in:

- policy level
- pedagogical and learning level
- teacher-learner interaction level

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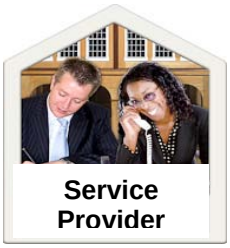

This means that the project studies:

The views, experiences and needs of people with disabilities, who hold a central role.

The views of other people such as trainers, products and service providers and policy stakeholders.

The learning of technology in various situations and settings in and out of school.

Literature Review Outcomes
Review of scientific papers and research projects showed that:

In Education

- the role of technology is very important for learners with disabilities
- the role of technology varies in different educational settings (e.g. primary, secondary, higher education);
- technology can influence learning strategies and the curriculum.
- learners and teachers perceive the role of technology in different ways
- other skills (eg. literacy, maths) can be promoted through the use of technology

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for older adults

- usefulness and usability of technology varies according to daily needs,
- attitudes towards new technology is influence by the quality of life
- the time technology is introduces in a person's life is important
- teaching and learning to use technology can be challenging
- experiences of how technology and relevant services are implemented and succeed vary

in daily life

- there is great power and potential of technology for improvement of learning, communication, and daily living
- there are many examples of the benefits of the use of technology
- There are a number difficulties such as physical and functional factors that may cause individuals to not use and in some cases abandon the technology.
- These can include lack of digital skills, peoples perceptions being very different, the equipment being too complex and the fear that assistive technology may give a "disabling image".

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- it is recommended that user and family should be trained for technology skills

in Employment

- there are positive effects of the use of technology,
- technology is related to work outcomes and productivity of people with disabilities
- there is a need for careful selection of the technologies, as well as for support and education and inclusive employment policy.

there are a number of barriers relating to learning about technology and using it:

- policy issues,
- financial issues,
- professionals' and users' awareness and training
- problems in service delivery (eg. assessments, support)
- accessibility and technology design

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Experiences and Interview Outcomes.

In the research of the ENTELIS project a number of people with disabilities, service and products providers and educators were interviewed.

The interviews examined people's ideas and needs for the development of technology skills. Results showed the following:

People with disabilities believe that

- Technology seems to improve learning, functioning and communication.
- Most young people with disabilities are taught how to use technology in school.
- Older people learn how to use technology in other situations, outside school, such as by using the internet.
- Technology skills are absolutely necessary for employment, though there is always prejudice and discrimination
- In economic and civic life technology skills are important for people's independence, participation and safety

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- **There are a number of barriers such as:**
- accessibility of digital technology.
- language of applications for non-English speakers.
- lack of opportunities for technology learning.
- lack of legislation on the use of technology by people with disabilities

Educators and trainers believe that

- Technology is important for people with disabilities and has many benefits

- The development of technology skills by people with disabilities is related to people's age, the older they are the more difficult it is to develop such skills

- Technology skills are vital for the employment of people with disabilities

- Technology skills allow a faster and easier way of getting information & communicating

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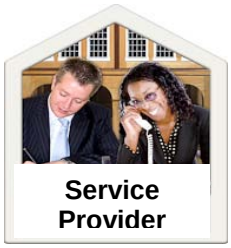
- There is a need for more organized technology training programmes for people with disabilities and their families, carers and teachers
- There is resistance and fear in the use of technology by some groups of people, such as older adults



Service and product providers believe that:

- Technology and especially the use of the internet is important for people with disabilities.
- Availability of technology is very important in order to help people develop technology skills
- The role of the state is also very important for helping people with disabilities to develop technology skills at school
- Technology training should be customised to the needs of particular groups of people with disabilities
- Technology skills improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities
- Technology skills improve autonomy and activities in society

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- The main barriers to the use of technology are; difficulties in accessibility and negative society attitudes

Conclusions & Suggestions

The review of literature and the results of the interviews of the ENTELIS project show that researchers need to investigate further

- Why technology is abandoned in various settings or by various groups of people with disabilities
- Why different groups of people with disabilities respond in different way in learning how to use their technology
- How the various barriers can be reduced and how people with disabilities can be encouraged to develop technology skills

In addition, the ENTELIS network will develop awareness papers and activities, which will inform the public and the policy makers on the importance of technology skills for people with disabilities.

We will also make suggestions for training programmes that will be customized to the specific needs of various groups of people with disabilities.

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Finally, the members of ENTELIS invite people with disabilities and other stakeholders to get involved in the network.

ENTELIS want them to participate in our activities and work with us in order to increase the use of technology by people with disabilities of all ages.

Lifelong Learning Programme

This ENTELIS project has received money from the European Commission to do its work. Nevertheless the European Commission is not responsible for what is written in this report.

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