

RERC-ACT R1/R3 Project:
Needs, Knowledge, Barriers and Uses of AT by Persons with Cognitive
Disabilities

To ensure that persons with cognitive disabilities and their support persons use the technology, it is necessary to understand not only their needs, but also the barriers that impede their use. Ongoing input from these constituencies is crucial. The R1/R3 project is designed to: 1) assess the needs for technology, current knowledge of available technology, use of technology, and barriers to its use from the perspective of people with cognitive disabilities and from their support persons; and 2) compare specific differences across the three groups (Alzheimer's disease, Developmental Disabilities, and Traumatic Brain Injury).

Approximately 36-60 individuals with developmental disabilities, Alzheimer's disease and traumatic brain injury and their caregivers participated in focus groups. Participants were asked to identify needs for technology, uses of technology and barriers to the use of technology through the use of demonstrations of various technologies and the use of hypothetical scenarios. On-line survey have also been developed for persons with cognitive disabilities and also for caregivers. These surveys have identified which technologies are being used by the different groups, how helpful these technologies are perceived to be, and what barriers exist in using them. The survey has been disseminated nationally through the internet. Preliminary result will be presented that compare the needs, use and barriers across the through groups.

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