



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DECLARATION

### **1. Why do you use the term “cognitive disabilities” rather than “intellectual disability” in the Declaration?**

The term “cognitive disabilities” was specifically selected to include a broad range of cognitive conditions that can impact quality of life and independent living. Cognitive disabilities include intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorders, severe, persistent mental illness, brain injury, stroke, and Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. Technology and information access is essential for all people to live an inclusive life in our society today. People with intellectual disability and other cognitive disabilities together pose a formidable block of potential users of technology: An estimated 28.5 million Americans, more than 9% of the U.S. population, had a cognitive disability in 2012. People with cognitive disabilities worldwide are believed to exceed 630 million individuals, according to recent World Health Organization estimates (2011).

### **2. Why is this Declaration important?**

*The Rights of People with Cognitive Disabilities to Technology and Information Access* is a statement of principles on the rights of all people to inclusion and choice in relation to technology and information access. The Declaration builds on the recognition of the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be integrated into the community. Decades of advocacy by parents, people with disabilities, and conscientious professionals in the field have resulted in the principles of *inclusion* and *choice* being codified in laws, policies, and practices affecting people with disabilities and their families. This Declaration moves the discussion into the realm of one of the newest expression of community integration: the use of technology to socialize with others, share common experiences, participate in government, have access to education, and engage in commerce

### **3. Why is it important that the Declaration be released now?**

The pace of the digital age is accelerating rapidly through new innovations, such as those in cloud computing, where the potential positive impact of cloud-based initiatives include not only improved personal communications, but also health promotion, disease prevention, enhanced social interaction, and individualized supported employment opportunities such as remote job coaching. Technology and information access today is no longer a luxury; it is essential for

people with cognitive disabilities to have the same access as their peers without such disabilities in order to fully participate in the worlds of today and tomorrow. Human-centered computational support technologies must be adapted or uniquely developed and properly disseminated to match the unique needs and preferences of individuals with cognitive disabilities. Advancing the rights of people with cognitive disabilities to technology and information access is an extremely important next step in the worldwide implementation of inclusion and choice.

#### **4. How will this Declaration help people?**

The Declaration, which is being officially released internationally through the AAIDD journal, *Inclusion*, and at the Coleman Institute's October 2, 2013 conference in Colorado, will stimulate greater attention, both in the U.S. and worldwide, to the possibilities now at hand for people with cognitive disabilities while simultaneously championing their rights as citizens of the world to access such technologies in home, school, and the workplace.

#### **5. How can you as an individual or organization become involved?**

We invite all of you who support the Declaration to visit the website of the Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities at <http://www.colemaninstitute.org>, sign the declaration, and use it to advance your advocacy efforts for and with people with disabilities.