

## Technology in the Disability Arena

Recently, IACP explored how technology is being utilized by providers in Iowa. Over 300 participants responded from across the network- and thank you so much if you took time to engage. The findings indicate that Iowa providers of disability services have opportunities to increase their knowledge and utilizations of technology in the service area as well as in operations. More on that final report soon...

Let's bring up the topic of resistance to infusing technology into operations and direct services practice. There are urban myths in the field that suggest technology will replace direct support professionals. There is little knowledge about the state-of-the-art advances in technology for people with disabilities. There is a reported lack of organizational infrastructure for training, IT assistance and maintenance, and policy relating to technology are barriers to adopting technology - as is a lack of financial resources to pay for them. Others suggest that rural spaces don't have access to the internet. Generational differences in staff profiles create disparities in usage and skill level/comfort with technology options. Some believe that families are resistant to trying out technologies due to loss of control, "danger" on the internet, and belief that someone with an intellectual disability isn't capable of using technology such as a smart phone, computer, or iPad/tablet.

These are among the issues the warrant consideration, true or not true.

In the study, IACP asked the network to report on all the ways that they use technology in their lives. Most of these respondents were professionals working in a provider agency. Among the extensive list included telephone, text, music player, games, learning, checking the weather, checking the news, email, shopping, reading, GPS for directions, reviews of restaurants and items, social networking such as Facebook and Instagram, reservations, calendar, reminders, etc... and the list goes on and on.

Is there any reason that people with disabilities should not have access to technology in these same and perhaps additional ways? Some folks across the country believe this is an inherent right of people with cognitive disabilities to have equal access to information and technology as decreed in the Declaration, which we invite all of our members to review and consider signing on to.

Here is the link:

<http://www.colemaninstitute.org/declaration>

**The Rights of People with Cognitive Disabilities to ...**

[www.colemaninstitute.org](http://www.colemaninstitute.org)

People with cognitive disabilities have an equal right to technology and information access. A coalition of disability organizations and individuals asserted this ...

IACP understands that infusing new technology and new approaches will take time, resources, and political will. The world is changing. With it comes a need to continually challenge how we do things, to look at new ways of doing things, and to be open to testing out these disruptive technologies to advance the quality of lives for people with disabilities. Here at IACP, we are looking forward to helping our members advance their knowledge and utilization of technology to advance their mission and impact for people with disabilities in Iowa.