

specific phrases. The user must then fill in the blanks with words instead of letters in each box. If the answer is correct, a congratulatory message pops up with the number of points earned. If the answer is incorrect, the box turns red. There is no need to install or download anything since it is accessible online. However, a one-time registration to create login information is required for access. "Read My Quips" is both challenging and entertaining at the same time, especially when background noise is increased to try and understand speech.

In 2007, the Telecommunication Industry Association (TIA) introduced a standard to reduce interference from cordless phones when used with a telecoil in a digital hearing aid. Research showed that the interference was caused by the digital hearing aid telecoil, rather than the radio frequency signal from the cordless. The TIA-1083 logo with the broken ear symbol and a small "T" in the lower right corner is now bilingual to conform to Canadian standards.

Therefore, if the cordless phone packaging displays the bilingual blue logo, it conforms to the standard for interference. With these phones however, we found that the maximum volume was not high enough for moderate to severe hearing loss, since they are not amplified phones like adapted landlines and some cordless. Therefore, these phones are best suited for people with mild hearing loss.

In November 2010, the standard was revised as TIA-1083-A that now covers wireless interface with the Internet. The standard now covers wi-Fi (Wireless Fidelity), VoIP (Voice-over Internet Protocol), Bluetooth, and USB (Universal Serial Bus). ◀

Digital and Mobile Communications for Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing Students

Maria Barile, Jillian Budd, Catherine Fichten and Jennison Asuncion of Adaptech Research Network

As its name suggests, the term "social media" refers to digital media that are used to interact socially. Examples of social media include: microblogs (essentially, an online "diary" with brief descriptions events, opinions, views — the most popular microblogging platform is Twitter); social networking (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+); photo sharing (i.e. Picasa, Flickr); blogs; and vlogs (videoblogging, shared on sites like YouTube).

Some popular applications of social media that would be useful for Deaf and/or hearing impaired persons are instant messaging services (such as Windows Live Messenger, AIM, Yahoo! Messenger) and texting via mobile phone. Not only are the online services free, one is not required to type GA to indicate "Go Ahead" or SK to end the conversation. Another difference is that with messaging systems, more than one person can communicate at the same time.



We, at the Adaptech Research Network, recently completed a study to determine the social media and mobile technologies that post-secondary students with disabilities use. This study looked at whether students found these discussed technologies useful and easily accessible, or if they found limitations. 722 postsecondary students with disabilities responded to our survey in 2009-2010. The following are some

responses of the 51 students surveyed who self-identified as Deaf (10 students) or Hard-of-Hearing (41 students).

In terms of cell phone usage:

- ▶ 38 out of 51 respondents (75%) used a cell phone or mobile device
- ▶ In total, 29 respondents used a cell phone without adaptations and 9 used a device with adaptations
- ▶ Of those 29 respondents who used a cell phone without any adaptations, almost half (48%) wanted a device with adaptations

When asked what type of adaptation they used, students reported the following:

- ▶ Hearing aid compatible technologies
- ▶ iCom Bluetooth
- ▶ Neckloop telephone
- ▶ Amplifier

Key problems with cell phones and Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing students:

- ▶ Poor reception
- ▶ Poor speech clarity

Difficulties with phones are not a new issue, and go as far back as the 1980s, when organizations such as CHIP were advocating for T-coils. Since phones provide the greatest barrier for hearing aid users, it is not surprising that young adults with hearing impairments would want adaptations to these technologies.

Today in Canada, mobile phones
continued on next page



HEAR Program



Resource Centre



Speechreading



Signed English Classes



Captioned Film Screenings



School Program



Reach Out

Digital and Mobile Communications for Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing Students continued

are not regulated and do not have to be hearing aid compatible. However, in the USA there are rating scales for cell phones. The scale starts at M1 or T1 (poor), and moves on to M2 or T2 (fair), M3 or T3 (good), then finally, M4 or T4 (excellent). There is an opportunity for the Hard-of-Hearing communities to advocate for unlimited access regulated mobile devices. ◀



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