

Theme this issue: Resources for computer use

November/December 2011

Assistive technology can help make computers more accessible



A BigKeys keyboard makes the keys more visible and easier to target

Assistive technology is a device or strategy that allows people to continue to live as independently as possible and enhances their quality of life.

When people find that their physical limitations prevent them from interacting with their community and controlling devices in their home such as a computer, there are several pieces of equipment that can help.

Trackballs

Trackballs allow the user to move a stationary ball, rather than the entire mouse. Cursor movement can be generated with fingers, thumbs and wrists with far less strength and movement required than with a regular mouse.

Kensington (www.kensington.com) and Logitech (www.logitech.com) each have trackballs available.

Keyboards and Keyguards

There are many types of keyboard and keyguards available for your computer. They can address vision issues, targeting and selection.

BigKeys keyboards (www.bigkeys.com) have keys that are about four times bigger than on your typical keyboard. Other accessibility features are built in to these keyboards, including "No Run-On," which means only one character will be sent to the computer, no matter how long a key is held down. Keyboards are available in different configurations and can be used with Mac or PC.

A keyguard is a plastic or metal plate that sits above the keys on a standard keyboard. It helps to ensure the person typing will only hit one key at a time, rather than inadvertently hitting multiple keys at once.

On-Screen Keyboards

If an individual cannot use a regular keyboard, on-screen keyboards are

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Holiday party and
RDSP workshop



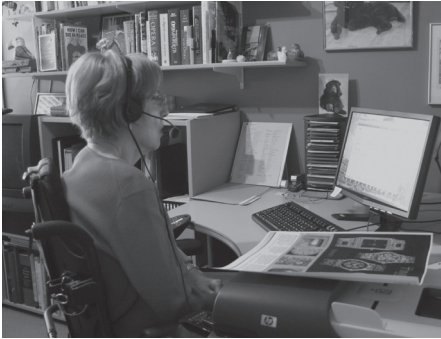
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Living with MS

Speech recognition helps this Toronto Chapter member stay in touch



Sandra at her home computer.

When typing became difficult for Sandra Borda, a technically-savvy friend of hers told her about Dragon NaturallySpeaking. This software program, and others like it, transforms speech into typing.

“I only have the use of one hand, so it’s really tedious to type,” she says.

For years, Sandra was able to use both hands on the computer without a problem, since the primary progressive multiple sclerosis she was diagnosed with in 1983 was progressing slowly.

It was about 10 years ago that she started using the program, and she also modified her keyboard through Windows accessibility features. She set it up so that she doesn’t use an attached mouse but uses her numeric keypad as her mouse, a feature known as Mouse Keys.

Sandra says the speech recognition technology is invaluable for whenever she is dealing with a text-heavy task, such as writing e-mails.

“I can communicate with my friends and family, and write them lengthy notes,” she says. “If I didn’t have that, I would not be in touch with as many people.”

She notes that she doesn’t use the software to its full capability and that it can be used more extensively to navigate computer systems, no mouse or keyboard required. ♦

If you would like to be featured in *MS Toronto*, contact Julie at julie.crljen@mssociety.ca or 416-967-3046.

Toronto Chapter holiday card sale

Spread holiday cheer to family and friends while supporting the Toronto Chapter’s programs and services

Please contact Patricia Cole at 416-967-3036 or patricia.cole@mssociety.ca to order or receive a sample.

Package of 10.....\$12.00

Package of 25.....\$30.00

Package of 50.....\$55.00

Package of 100.....\$100.00

Ask about adding a custom message to your cards.



Card artwork is *Snowy Firs*, by chapter member Patricia MacCulloch. The actual card is in full colour. Ask for a sample!

Chapter events

The Toronto Chapter presents...



Toronto Chapter Holiday Party

December 7, 2011
11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
1929 Bayview Ave.
Tickets - \$20 single/\$35 pair

Includes entertainment and a delicious meal! Tickets must be purchased in advance. Please register and you will be contacted to arrange payment.



RDSP Workshop

Learn about the following: opening an RDSP, benefits & contributions, withdrawing and closure of an RDSP.


January 24, 2012
Sign up for either an afternoon or evening session
1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
89 Centre Ave.
(Willowdale Ave./Cummer Ave.)

Event Registration

If you would like to register for a Toronto Chapter event, please contact the chapter via phone, e-mail or by using our online form:

 **Telephone**

416-967-3035

 **E-mail**

torontoevents@mssociety.ca

 **Online**

www.mssociety.ca/toronto
(Click on “Events”)

Self-Help Groups

The Toronto Chapter is affiliated with self-help groups meeting in different areas of the city. To find the group for you, contact Lynn at 416-967-3032 or lynn.laccohee@mssociety.ca.

New Self-Help Groups

The chapter is initiating two new groups. Please call Lynn if interested in

- A group for women with MS meeting downtown (Bloor/Bay)
- A Saturday morning group meeting in west-end Toronto for anyone with MS



MS 101

The Toronto Chapter's next MS 101 session, for those who are newly diagnosed and their friends and family, will take place in fall 2012. If you are interested in next year's session, registration will remain open year-round.

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Staff Update

Angela Rodriguez, Manager, Education



Angela Rodriguez

Many Toronto Chapter members recognize Angela as the enthusiastic leader of educational events, or the person who connected them with a recreational program or the person who helped them through a difficult time.

Angela's responsibilities have evolved and changed many times in her 20 years at the Toronto Chapter. "There have been a lot of changes, not only medically but in the services that we as a chapter provide. That has kept my interest, kept my enthusiasm."

This has been a particularly exciting year, Angela says, because of the events and programs the chapter has been able to offer.

An unexpected educational grant from the Leslois Shaw Foundation made two additional educational programs possible, a wheelchair ballroom dancing workshop and a conference, Making Strides by Taking Charge 2011.

"Our conference is a great chance to bring people together. We expect to see a lot of familiar faces, but hope to be able to meet some new ones as well." ♦

Thanks to all the chapter members who filled out and returned their Snapshot 2011 questionnaires. The chapter had a great response from members! The project has moved into the analysis phase. Look for a Snapshot 2011-themed issue of MS Toronto in the new year. ♦

Snapshot 2011

Toronto Chapter member questionnaire

Call for board nominations

The Toronto Chapter volunteer board of directors is issuing a call for board nominations. People with financial and/or legal backgrounds are especially sought, as well those with backgrounds using other skills such as strategic planning, human resources management, governance, communications and project management.

Successful applicants must be members in good standing of the MS Society at least three months in advance of being voted in at the annual general meeting (late March 2012). The deadline for application is Wednesday, November 30, 2011, at 5 p.m.

Those interested in being considered for the board of directors should forward a cover letter with a resume or detailed biography to the following:

Attention: Lia Messina, Nominating Committee Chair
c/o janice.wiggins@mssociety.ca

For inquiries related to this volunteer position, please contact Executive Director Janice Wiggins at 416-967-3010 or janice.wiggins@mssociety.ca. Full position details available at www.mssociety.ca/toronto/nominations.html. ♦



220 Lesmill Road
Toronto, Ontario, M3B 2T5
Phone: 416.444.4470
www.abilityhealthcare.ca
info@abilityhealthcare.ca

Go paperless

Receive your MS Toronto & flyers by e-mail and get the Toronto Chapter E-mail Bulletin. To go paperless, contact Julie, julie.crljen@mssociety.ca.



Resources for computer accessibility

Adaptive Technology Resource Centre

130 St. George Street, First Floor
416-978-4360
general.atrc@utoronto.ca
www.utoronto.ca/atrc

Assistive Devices Program

416-314-5518
Toll Free : 1-866-532-3161

SNOW

For students, parents & teachers
205 Richmond St. W., 2nd fl
416-977-6000 ext 3967
www.snow.idrc.ocad.ca

Elkie Adler Clinic

Baycrest, Elkie Adler Wing
3560 Bathurst Street, Main Floor
416-784-3600

Aroga

Online vendor
www.aroga.com

Microcomputer Science Centre Inc.

Online vendor
www.microscience.on.ca

Ability Health Care Supplies

416-444-4470
info@abilityhealthcare.ca
www.abilityhealthcare.ca

Donations

Aug-1-11 to Sept-30-11

Memberships

\$1570

Donations, General

\$5106

Commemorative Giving

In Honour

\$2790

In Memoriam

\$4051

Gifts in Kind

\$5555

United Way Toronto, Donor's Choice

\$0

Thank you donors!

Your contributions help provide services to individuals and families including educational, social and financial programs.

If you would like to donate to the Toronto Chapter programs and services, please make your cheque payable to: **Toronto Chapter, MS Society** and address it to the attention of Patricia Cole.

From the desk of...

Julie Crljen, Manager, Communications



Julie
Crljen

The Toronto Chapter, much like everywhere else, has been influenced in the past decade by the growing presence of electronic technologies.

Internet, e-mail, social networking — all of these things have altered the ways that companies and organizations distribute their message and deliver their service.

At the chapter, we have put a focus on evaluating how we can best utilize available technologies to meet our members' needs. Part of our recent Snapshot 2011 membership questionnaire asked the member a series of questions relating to their use of Internet and electronic technology. The questionnaire is closed and is in the analysis phase we look forward to finding out what you had to say.

In the meantime, chapter members are invited to sign up for our e-mail bulletin and also join us on Facebook. The chapter also gives members the option to receive event flyers and newsletters by e-mail. In addition, watch for webcasts of chapter educational events to be available in coming months.

If you have a suggestion or concern regarding the chapter's use of electronic communication, please contact me. ♦



Providing air conditioners to chapter members for more than 15 years.

For your heating and cooling needs, call 416-703-0571.

Commemorative Giving

The gift that helps to maximize the quality of life for people with MS

birthdays

memoriams

wedding favours

bar/bat mitzvahs

anniversaries

Contact: Patricia Cole at 416-967-3036 or patricia.cole@mssociety.ca or visit www.mssociety.ca/toronto/help.htm.

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Assistive technology..

available for download and purchase. In fact, most operating systems come with an on-screen keyboard included.

Click'N'type (www.cnt.lakefolks.com) offers a free for download keyboard and the Wivik (www.wivik.com) keyboard can be purchased. A free 30 day trial is available from the Wivik website.

Mouse Emulation

Under Accessibility Options on all Microsoft operating systems, you can find Mouse Keys which will allow the user to emulate the use of a mouse through the numeric pad on your keyboard (www.microsoft.com/enable).

Some wheelchairs are now capable of communicating with a computer and emulating the mouse through the chair's joystick. This must be discussed with an occupational therapist and wheelchair vendor.

Aroga (www.aroga.com) retails mouse emulators that can be worn on the head when use of hands and arms to control a mouse is not feasible. Microcomputer Science Centre Inc. (www.microscience.on.ca) offers for sale the No Hands mouse, which can be controlled through foot pedals.

Arm Support

Sometimes fatigue and strength can affect the use of a mouse or keyboard. Ergo Arm (www.ergoarm.com) manufactures several different types of products to provide arm support while using a keyboard or mouse.

Accessibility options for computers and devices

Both Windows (www.microsoft.com/enable) and Mac OS (www.apple.com/accessibility) come with a variety of features that can be activated. For example, Windows 7 and OSX have features like voice as an alternative to visual display and the ability to make the display larger or more visible. Each system has its own unique features as well. Accessibility features are also available on the iPad and iPhone. ♦

Most products are available from retailers. Funding options may be available in some cases. An individual should speak with a health care professional to find out more.

Programs and Services

Education, information & referral

- Short-term counselling and information about living with MS
- Bimonthly newsletter, literature, resource room and website
- Information and referral to community programs
- Education workshops and specialized courses including MS 101
- Educational presentations in the community

Equipment loans & equipment funding

Subsidies for Home Help & incontinence supplies

Supportive counselling & self-help groups

Recreation programs Volunteer services

Social action & advocacy

Office Hours

**Monday to Friday
9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

In order for us to serve you better, contact the Toronto Chapter prior to visiting us.

MSTC 2011

Making Strides by Taking Charge

Friday, November 18
and
Saturday, November 19

- **Learn from** presenters and fellow workshop attendees
- **Be introduced** to community services and organizations at the exhibit hall
- **Pay just \$55** (full conference fee), a great value!
- **Speak with** experts about important health and wellness issues
- **Make connections** to others, both in learning and social environments

Friday Evening

Keynote address-
They do research, don't they?

Cocktail party* featuring fashion show by IZ adaptive clothing
(*Finger foods provided; cash bar)

Saturday

Full day of workshops*
-Heart Health
-Fall Prevention
-Exercise
-Caregiving
....and much more
(*Breakfast and lunch provided)

Exhibit hall featuring a range of companies and organizations

www.mssociety.ca/toronto/mstc2011.html
To register, please see event registration information on page 3.

MS Toronto

Chair: Sean Foran
Executive Director: Janice Wiggins
Editor: Julie Crljen

MS Toronto is published bimonthly by the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, Toronto Chapter. The contents may be reprinted with customary credit. Your submissions are welcomed. Please note that we do not publish information about alternative treatments, therapies and natural remedies.

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MS Society of Canada Mission
To be a leader in finding a cure for multiple sclerosis and enabling people affected with MS to enhance their quality of life.

Toronto Chapter Vision
To maximize the quality of life for persons with MS and their support network living in Toronto Chapter's geographic boundaries.

The opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of MSToronto and of the MS Society of Canada. Articles on products and services are intended for information only and are not meant to be seen as endorsements.



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