

Holiday Update

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TCS Associates

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Advances in Assistive Technology

Special Interest Articles:

- Technologies Today
- 508 Compliance
- NTS System



Assistive Technologies (AT) not only benefit the workers within an organization, but can be used to capture the sometimes significant percentage of consumers with disabilities that reside in the market area (avg. 6% of the total population of the U.S.). These technologies will allow your customer/consumer interface departments to effortlessly serve the disabled community -- particularly those with hearing and vision impairments. TCS' adaptation of these technologies for your customer/consumer

interfaces will result in greater market share, support, and sales. TCS will also assist your organization's marketing efforts by informing your staff where to focus their efforts to best capture these populations. Some of the key improvements focus on server technology implementation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing customer interface, web site optimization for individuals with low vision, and AT system operation, administration training, systems maintenance, and support. TCS specializes in a multitude of assistive

technology devices. TCS promotes NTS, NexTalk VM, Dragon Naturally Speaking, MAGic, iCommunicator, JAWS for Windows, Lunar Screen Magnifier, Lunar Plus and Enhanced Screen Magnifier. TCS also does end user training and on-site installation.



Individual Highlights:

- Assistive Tech. 1
- NTS Service 1
- Dragon 7.0 2
- NGA 3
- Myrna Aiello 3

NXi Telephony Services (NTS)TM 4.0

NTS, or "NXi Telephony Services," is a network-based communication system for text chat and text messaging. NTS makes enhanced instant messaging and other services available to every user, while providing specialized services for the deaf. In order to use NTS within an organization, client software is installed on multiple users' computers within the organization and one or more NTS servers are placed on the organization's

LAN/WAN. An NTS server may include telephony hardware compatible with TTY devices used by the deaf. NTS can "TTY enable" each of its users to make or accept calls from the deaf. Every NTS user can also exchange secure instant messages and calls with every other NTS user on the organization's LAN/WAN. If the optional NTS "Uplink" is in place, then anyone on an Internet browser can call an NTS user, and messages/calls may be made

to NTS users in remote NTS sites. All text traffic over NTS is 128 bit AES encrypted. The secure NTS messaging and chat system is currently installed on numerous high security networks including U.S. federal and state agencies, and large corporations.

For further information or for a free demonstration please call Dana Marlowe with TCS Associates at (301) 942-9768 (V/TTY).



Year of the Dragon NaturallySpeaking

“...a client...told me that Dragon has changed her life and she was particularly impressed with the accuracy level of this new version of Dragon.”

- Eduardo Meza-Etienne

One of the most common trainings that we do is for Scansoft's Dragon Naturally Speaking (DNS), a speech-recognition software package. With the latest edition, 7.0, being so popular it keeps our trainers extremely satisfied and busy. Eduardo Meza-Etienne, Director of Business Development for TCS Associates, said “It is very gratifying to see how the end-user can take advantage of the multitude of features the new Dragon 7.0 offers them. At a recent training a client who is mobility-impaired told me that Dragon has changed her life and she was particularly impressed with the accuracy level of this new version of Dragon.” One of the nice

components that the user can create customized commands to automate his or her personal workflow.



Dragon NaturallySpeaking 7 is the most accurate and full-featured DNS ever released. There are many new and exciting features in the new version. Breakthroughs in speech engine technology deliver the largest single accuracy improvement ever for a DNS release. The new 7.0 include a vocabulary optimizer which improves accuracy and a performance center which guides the user through troubleshooting and performance optimization.

There is also an improved command browser and full support for more applications (DNS automatically learns the contact names in your Outlook address book). It also has natural punctuation that is automatically inserted when dictating in a casual writing style. Additional features are the improved text and graphic shortcuts, as well as support for additional input devices. DNS 7.0 now supports ScanSoft certified Pocket PC devices and additional digital handheld recorders, array microphones, and cordless microphones.

Dragon 7.0 is pleasing many government agencies as their employees continue to excel and exceed expectations.



Focus on NGA and NTS

The NTS system is sweeping over government agencies like the snow that blankets the DC area in winter. NTS is a network-based communications system for chat and text messaging (see article above for further NTS information).



Walking in a
winter
wonderland!

One of the key Federal agencies that utilizes the NTS system is the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) formerly (NIMA). Ron Siudzinski, System Engineer and Project Manager at NGA, has been a premier user of the NTS system for the past three years. Mr. Siudzinski loves NTS for a multitude of reasons. Regardless of which of the two offices he is working in, Ron, particularly likes the fact that he can be contacted anywhere. It has the capability to allow his colleagues to reach him whenever he logs in to his workstation by using his NTS account. Additionally his work laptop has NTS installed, and he can access the system whether he is working from home or traveling on the road.

NGA currently has one hundred user licenses, and twenty-five percent of those individuals use the NTS system with extreme regularity. Ron, uses NTS everyday for both incoming and outgoing calls. He also frequently logs on to the networks to chat with his coworkers and managers. "I particularly like the feature that automatically sends someone's message to my pager when I am away from my workstation," said Suidzinski. "It is really helpful for my professional job and career growth."

Ron highly recommends NTS because with emerging technologies, employees (who may be Deaf or Hard of Hearing) should be able to work on their computer and answer the phone simultaneously. The NTS system has many more features that a stand alone TTY unit.

As far as security is concerned, NTS instant messages are 128 bit AES (Advanced Encryption Standard) encrypted. Mr. Suidzinski said that he had to discuss implementing NTS with his security department, but after they tested it and read information, they agreed that it is a very minor security risk. Since NTS is accompanied by a special voice adaptor that was designed with limited half-duplex, most Federal security departments are comfortable with it.

An Interview with Myrna Orleck-Aiello of TCS Associates

The following interview has been taken from the Signs of Success website, when she was honored as a successful Deaf Business owner by Gallaudet and Merrill Lynch.

Q: Please talk a little bit about the history of your company.

A: I first established the business 21 years ago, and we were the first software company in Prince George's county. The reason we started with software is because there were a few computer stores, but no software stores. After giving it some thought, we decided to set up a software store for all the various computer brands like IBM, Apple,

Atari, Commodore, and all of the companies that were on the scene at that time. Some are still around today and some are not. But we had a whole variety of software. We were the first and the largest software store in College Park.

We expanded to offer computer sales. We expanded in the area of training. We offer classes for Deaf persons and classes for those who can hear. We offer basic computer training courses and repair courses as well as TTY repair courses. We have many different areas of training.

That is something new that we are in the process of

developing. It is training on how to communicate with co-workers or employers in the workplace in the government, and how to use adaptive equipment, such as TTY modems, and there are special voice reading devices for persons with disabilities. So, we offer training to the hearing co-workers or the Deaf co-workers, too. We offer sensitivity training.

Q: Do you believe communicating well contributes to the success of your business?

A: I do. In business, communication is really a key factor because we deal with the public most of the time.



*Myrna Orleck-Aiello,
President and CEO of
TCS Associates.*



The majority of those people are hearing. The people who work for me are hearing, or Deaf, or hard of hearing, and so forth. But, as for the customers, we have many different kinds of customers, including those with strong accents and different ethnic backgrounds.

It can be easy or it can be very difficult to deal with the communication challenges. The relay service in particular can be very frustrating because we are making calls to hearing customers, to professional hearing clients or to top government officials, and they are turned off by the relay service. They start to wonder about Deaf people being in business and what kind of business Deaf people can do. The communication challenge is really, really tough.

Q: Being in the Deaf Community, is there an overlap between your professional and personal life?

A: Sometimes it is a challenge, but I believe in ethics. I never discuss my clients, be they Deaf or hearing, when I am at a social engagement. If people come up to me and want to talk about something related to business or to their computer, I will go ahead and have that conversation with them, but I never give out names such as who bought a computer, or how much they paid. No, I keep professional confidences. I think this is crucial. It's just

like a dentist or doctor. They do not discuss patients. The idea is the same.

Q: Is your field competitive? How so?

A: The business is indeed very competitive and not only competitive, but also the fastest growing business because computers are never the same from day to day. They change from day to day. They are always changing. There is a new technology and there are new computers, and there are any number of things to keep up with, so I read a lot and I go to a lot of conferences and workshops and network by meeting professional people and just try to learn a lot. I go to meetings. It's really important in this business. This business requires a lot of every day learning.

Q: Does it take everything out of you to succeed?

A: Yes, everything. Most important is a lot of sacrifice, faith, patience, confidence, a good attitude about oneself, a positive outlook, a belief in making the business become better every day, and in growing and learning. The one thing that is most important is that you must sacrifice a lot.

Q: What is SBA 8A? How did this support help you?

A: The Small Business Administration had what they called an 8A certification. That was

considered a special group set aside for persons who are recognized or considered minorities, such as Blacks, Hispanics, Hasidic Jews, Asian Pacific Islanders, and so forth. There were a number of categories, but women and disabled individuals were not a part of that grouping. I decided to apply as a woman and as a disabled individual. It was a long struggle. For one year I fought to prove that I belonged in a minority group, and in the end I was successful and was awarded an 8A certification. That was one year ago as of this month. Because of that, I have been very focused on SBA-8A procedures in the government. As a disabled individual, I am very sensitive to helping others with disabilities in the government sector, and feel that our products and services will benefit everyone in the federal government. That is how Section 508 developed. It became a new law under ADA.



"It can be easy or it can be very difficult to deal with the communication challenges."

*-Myrna Orleck-Aiello
CEO of TCS Associates*



"Wishing you and your family a very happy holiday season from all of us at TCS Associates."







