CSUN Shows Dynamic AT Products
By John M. Williams

Attendees at the recent people California State University, Northridge Center on Disabilities' 22nd Annual International Technology & Persons with Disabilities Conference, March 19-24, tested some of the finest assistive technology products manufactured worldwide. The empowerment of products produced positive opinions from the visitors.

First time attendee Matt Johnson said, "This show exceeds my expectations. These products expand opportunities for users with disabilities in every aspect of their lives."

Johnson saw ABISee, Inc.'s portable technology for the visually impaired and AbleNet, Inc.'s FL4SH, a four-message scanning communicator with exclusive frame lighting. He saw Acceleration Educational software, The DT Trainer 2x, a product with 139 content programs and hundreds of reinforcers/games. It provides direct instruction and assessments for students.

He missed AD Information & Communication Company's the VOICEYE Player, a personal digital device designed and developed to convert text data stored in a VOICEYE Symbol into speech utilizing a Text-To-Speech function to recite the decoded data.

He visited Adobe Systems booth and was impresses by Adobe's new standards for producing content that engages persons of all abilities virtually anywhere at anytime.

He was impressed by Advanced Multimedia Devices new Smart Series communication device with features such as a smart overlay system and flash cards for added memory. His wife, Delores, a special education teacher was impressed by Attainment Company, Inc.'s low-cost basic skills instructional software, life skills curricula, and IEP resources.

Attendees saw Blink Twice's The Tango, the next generation of high-end Alternative and Augmentative Communication devices. It has a built-in camera and voice morphing, and couples that with innovative phrase-first language organization developed with the industry's leading professionals.

A memorable product for the Johnsons' was Words+'s Say-it! SAM Tablet XP1, a lightweight Windows XP tablet that runs EZ Keys™, Speaking Dynamically Pro™ or Talking Screen™ software.

This is a powerful, personal communications tool," said Mrs. Johnson.

Audiologist Alicia Cornwell was impressed by Telex Communications' digital talking book players.

"The clarity of Telex products has always impressed me," Cornwell said.

For the cerebral thinker, Brain Activated Technologies' Brainfingers showed how to use facial muscle, eye and brainwaves to provide mouse and keyboard control of PC Desktop and all Windows XP software.

To enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities, Canon USA, Inc. showed its accessible copiers.

Computer/Electronic Accommodations (CAP) showed how it provides assistive technology for federal employees and wounded service members. CAP services are available to individuals with visual, hearing, dexterity and cognitive disabilities.

Sandra Rooney liked the Cyrano Communicator because it uses digital pictures from the built-in camera for personalized speech. For those who can type, Cyrano Shorthand™ provides a text-to-speech engine and vocabulary library.

For blind music musicians, Dancing Dots showed its adapting technology to benefit blind musicians and those who educate them. Users can scan printed scores, listen to results or can convert to Braille music notation.

Dolphin Computer Access demonstrated software for blind and low vision computer users. Products include screen readers, screen magnifiers and Braille support, as well as daisy authoring software and daisy DTB software players.

Wheelchair user Michael Thornton says he was mesmerized by Exact Dynamics' Robotic Manipulator, which may be fixed to a wheelchair in order to gain extended independence for those who are severely disabled.

Hewlett Packard's Accessibility Program demonstrated the company's commitment to developing products, services and information that are accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities and age-related impairments.

Intellitools and Kurzweil Educational Systems showed educational technology to help students reach their potential, regardless of the cognitive and communication challenges they face.

Laureate Learning Systems commitment is proud to announce Language Links, an all-new, 6-level, evidence-based software series designed to help students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Developmental Disabilities (DD), and Specific Language Impairments (SLI) master syntax and become better communicators.

Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals discovered how the California Telephone Access Program distributes telecommunications equipment and services to individuals certified as having functional limitations of hearing, vision, mobility, speech and/or interpretation of information.

Mayer-Johnson LLC displayed enhanced learning and human expression with the Boardmaker Software Family and other materials using Picture Communication Symbols (PCS).

Microsoft Corporation introduced its Ease of Access Center in Windows Vista. Attendees explored the built-in accessibility settings for Windows Vista and discovered how to make the computer easier to see, hear and use.

Origin Instruments Corporation showed hardware and software access products for individuals with motor and speech disabilities.

ReadHowYouWant demonstrated technology solutions that create high quality, alternative format books to meet disability requirements worldwide. Its technology takes a book and re-type sets and reformats it into multiple print formats, large type, dyslexia and custom reader selected formats, e-books, Daisy, audio books and Braille files ready for embossing.

RJ Cooper and Associates showed a new inexpensive screen reader, new complete dial by voice cell phone package.

SAJE Technology displayed voice-activated solutions to control the telephone and environment, thus increasing independence and control to the user.

Serotek Corporation announced it expanded support for Microsoft Office in its System Access product, including the ability to create Excel spreadsheets and PowerPoint presentations as well as compatibility with Office 2007. System Access makes it easier than ever to create, browse, and edit spreadsheets in Microsoft Excel. Users can query row and column headings, jump to cells with data, follow hyperlinks, have System Access speak totals automatically when they change, set up monitor regions to speak automatically when they change, and even create and view Excel charts.

Speech Banana Therapies exhibited a 3-step Phonologic Auditory Hearit products and accessories amplification tools calibrated in the "speech banana" range of frequencies to expedite auditory processing abilities for children with language/learning disabilities.