SHARE PILOT PROGRAM HELPS CLIENTS ACCESS THE INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY

Disabled system users soon will be getting a guided tour of the information superhighway thanks to a pilot program currently being developed by SHARE. The program will consist of a series of workshops which will teach disabled system users how to access electronic information and services by computer.

"The long-term objective is that they become knowledgeable in techniques of traveling the information superhighway, with the possibility that it might ultimately lead to employment," says Les Cory, SHARE president. "It certainly should lead to a greater independence and self-sufficiency."

Cory says he expects that each of the five workshops will be devoted to introducing the class to a specific source of computer information and teaching students how to gain access to it using specialized hardware and software.

The first session will teach users how to access EMail, after which the students will practice their skills by exchanging pieces of electronic mail with one another. The second session will introduce the class to computer information services available through a library and teach students how to download information from library computer files to their own systems. The third session will show the group how to access a variety of electronic services, such as on-line discussion groups, and electronic banking and shopping.

Disabled system users will be able to access these electronic services independently through a new computer interface being developed by the engineering staff of the UMass Dartmouth Rehabilitation Engineering Center. Cory says these pioneering efforts will lead to the establishment of a "Virtual Community" for disabled people, where they can enjoy access to communications, leisure activities, and employment opportunities all via computer.

The full program syllabus is still under development, and instructors are currently being recruited. Cory anticipates that the initial program will be presented to a group of five or six system users. Those workshops will be videotaped for use in teaching future groups.

SHARE has received a matching-fund grant for $3,000 of the estimated $6,000 cost for hardware, software and training materials to launch the pilot group.

Donations received as memorial gifts (see our Memorial Day insert) also have been earmarked to help fund this project. SHARE gratefully acknowledges the help of the many supporters whose contributions will make this program an exciting reality. Your gifts promise a world of new opportunities for SHARE clients, and on their behalf we extend a heartfelt thank you.
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Update from the
UMD REHABILITATION ENGINEERING CENTER LAB

Rehabilitation
Center engineer
Mike McCarrick has
been busy in the lab
refining two devices that
will make independent
living easier for SHARE
clients.

One device is an
ultra-sensitive control
switch which utilizes a
bit of engineering technology called
a strain gauge. Typically a strain gauge
is used to measure changes caused by
the stress forces at key locations in a
building or other structure. Here it
detects and responds to even the
slightest motion of the switch, ena-
bling a person with extremely limited
motor ability to operate a
computer system.

Another device
recently developed is a
scanning combination
T.V./environmental
controller. This device
allows an individual to
control the functions of
a television receiver, such
as power, volume and
channel, as well as turn on and off
other electronic devices such as
lights, entertainment equipment,
etc. It operates through a wireless
control module and runs by use of a
single switch, offering the user
convenient and independent control
of his or her environment.

S. H. A. R. E.
WALK-A-THON
’94

SAVE THE DATE!
Sunday, October 23, 1994

Call us now for registration materi-
als or to volunteer to help. We need
prizes, sponsors, captains and divi-
sion leaders.

Your superb efforts at Walk-A-Thon
’93 raised more than $31,000 for
SHARE, and we need YOU to make
this year’s Walk another fund-
raising success.

WE NEED MICE!

Well, actually mouses. A
half-dozen to be exact. The Reha-
bitation Center
shelves are
stocked with
six donated
Macintosh
512 compu-
ters which arrived without mouses.

Now the search is on for tradi-
tional-style Macintosh mouses so
that these computers can be pro-
vided to SHARE clients.

If anyone has mouses or leads on
where to locate them, please contact
SHARE!
SHARE Searches for Home for Voyager

Recently, SHARE received a donation of a Voyager, an electronic text enlarger which assists visually impaired individuals in reading. The device consists of a television-like monitor with a tray set beneath it to hold an open book or other printed material. The Voyager magnifies the text placed below it and displays it in enlarged type on the T.V. screen. The user can set the degree of enlargement to suit his or her visual needs.

SHARE would like to place the Voyager with a visually-impaired individual who could benefit from the device. Arrangements can be made by calling SHARE at (508) 999-8482.

Learning Tools Ready for the Classroom

SHARE has a unique idea for putting to use five sets of Digital VT 101 computer terminals recently donated to the organization. We would like to place each set of two terminals in special needs classrooms. With the two terminals linked together, students could use the computers to sharpen their communication skills by typing messages to one another.

If you know of a special needs classroom that could benefit from these learning tools, contact SHARE headquarters at (508) 999-8482.

SHARE Wish List

In recent months, SHARE has found itself in need of equipment which individuals in our support network may have available for donation. At present SHARE needs:

- A 33 MHz (or faster) Model 386 MS-DOS PC for use by a woman with a condition similar to chronic fatigue syndrome. Her condition leaves her extremely exhausted after performing even simple, everyday activities such as getting out of bed or preparing a meal. She wants to write, but cannot maintain the physical stamina to work with a pencil or at a keyboard for more than a few minutes at a time. The Rehabilitation Center will customize this MS-DOS PC to enable her to control the computer by speech.
- XT and/or AT MS-DOS computers which can be adapted by the Rehabilitation Center staff for use by SHARE clients with other needs and abilities.
- A video tape player for use when showing the SHARE video at community speaking engagements.

Anyone wishing to donate these or other pieces of equipment may make arrangements by contacting SHARE.

Barney Frank Visits SHARE

A member of SHARE’s Honorary Advisory Board since last fall, Massachusetts Congressman Barney Frank paid a visit to SHARE headquarters at UMass Dartmouth in April. It was a great opportunity to give Congressman Frank a firsthand look at the Rehabilitation Center’s works in progress, and we thank him for his enthusiasm and support. Pictured are Congressman Frank and SHARE co-founder Les Cory.
UMASS DARTMOUTH
ENGINEERING STUDENTS
FOCUS DESIGN EFFORTS ON
HELPING OTHERS

Each year, UMass Dartmouth engineering students must design and build devices in partial fulfillment of their Senior Design Projects course.

This semester, a number of mechanical engineering and electrical engineering technology students decided to create devices that would benefit people with disabilities. Their projects were:

- A prototype of a phonetic piano which speaks phonemes when buttons on a piano-like keyboard are pressed in sequence.
- A prototype of an active-stimulation toy controller to enable a disabled child to control any of several battery-powered toys.
- A prototype of a talking scanning device controller with an emergency telephone dialer for use by a person who is both blind and physically disabled.

SHARE salutes these students' ingenuity and thanks them for giving their talents for the service of others!

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