



*Re:Wireless - The Wireless RERC's Consumer  
Newsletter*

*November 30, 2017*

*Volume 8, Issue #04*

**Connecting consumers of all ages and abilities to the research,  
development and outreach activities of the Wireless RERC.**

## **Welcome!**

I hope all of our readers got to take a few days off to be with friends and family during Thanksgiving. I am now trying to work off all of the turkey, gravy, sweet potato soufflé, rolls and stuffing I consumed last Thursday. With just four more weeks left till we ring in 2018, I think now is an apt time to provide you with an update on the Engineering Research Center for Wireless Inclusive Technologies (Wireless RERC) research and development activities.

- The latest version of our *Survey of User Needs (SUN)* has launched. I encourage all of our readers to participate. Full details and link to the survey are provided below.
- The Wireless RERC submitted reply comments in response to the Federal Communications Commission's Notice of Inquiry Concerning Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion.
- We have another SUNspot to share, this time on the use of intelligent personal

- assistants by adults with disabilities.
- Wireless RERC staff supported a wireless accessibility workshop at an AT&T store in Atlanta
  - Upcoming Events:
    - **2017 Georgia Assistive Technology in Education (GATE)** on December 8, 2017, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm at the Georgia Institute of Technology
    - **2018 CSUN Assistive Technology Conference** from March 19-23 in San Diego, CA

This newsletter is intended to keep you abreast of some of the latest activities in our research, development and training projects, share upcoming dates to events and conferences we'll be attending, and serve as an invitation to all of our consumers to participate in surveys, workshops, focus groups or user testing projects we may have underway.

Visiting our [website](#), subscribing to our [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) feeds, and becoming friends with us on [Facebook](#) are other great ways to stay informed of our progress!

Our Center's newsletter, the *Technology and Disability Policy Highlights (TDPH)* will continue to be issued monthly with content curated for a policy, industry, and research audience, while this one, *Re: Wireless*, will be released bimonthly with a focus on Wireless RERC news for consumers. As we re-sort our mailing lists to represent these new focuses, you may receive both newsletters, or you may be receiving the *TDPH* or *Re: Wireless* for the first time.

We welcome you as a reader and hope you enjoy the newsletter! If you are not currently a *Re: Wireless* reader and were forwarded this newsletter, you can join our mailing list below or text WIRELESSRERC to 22828. In 2018, we look forward to providing you wireless resource materials better matched to your interests.

Thank you for reading and enjoy the articles below!

Sincerely,

[Ben Lippincott](#) (Managing Editor)



## Take and Share the Survey of User Needs

The Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Wireless Inclusive Technologies (Wireless RERC) announces the launch of its updated [Survey of User Needs \(SUN\)](#). The SUN is the Wireless RERC's cornerstone survey on wireless technology use by people with disabilities. It has been completed by over 7,500 consumers with disabilities since it was first launched in 2001.

This latest version represents the 6th version of the survey, which is updated periodically in response to changes in technology. In addition to questions about cell phone and tablet use, this latest version of the SUN collects information about wearables, "smart" home technologies, and other next-generation wirelessly connected devices.

User responses will help designers and engineers make new wireless devices and services for people with disabilities. Data from the SUN also provides important information to the wireless industry, government regulators, and other researchers to help them make wireless technology more accessible and more useful to people with all types of disabilities.

If you have a disability, please consider taking this survey. If you know someone who has a disability, please forward the survey to them.

Additional Information:

[Take the Survey](#)

<http://b.gatech.edu/2yvCHnz>

[Share the Survey](#)

<http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/wireless-rerc-launches-latest-survey-user-needs>

## **Wireless RERC on the Record: Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capabilities**

October 5, 2017 - The Wireless RERC submitted reply comments in response to the Federal Communications Commission's Notice of Inquiry Concerning Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion [GN Docket No. 17-199]. The Inquiry sought stakeholder input on a number of issues, not the least of which were considerations on how to evaluate and include (a) deployment and use of mobile services, (b) the demographic characteristics of unserved areas, and (c) deployment based on demographic characteristics, independent of geographical location. Reply comments supported and elaborated on initial comments submitted separately by the Colorado State Broadband Office (SBO), the Communications Workers of America (CWA), Public Knowledge, et al., National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA), National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (MMTC), and others. The Wireless RERC concurred with comments made in support of the need for both fixed and mobile advanced telecommunications services in a community to be considered reasonably and timely delivered. Regarding the hot-button topic, Public Knowledge, et al. poignantly stated that "Because consumers who can afford [emphasis added] both mobile and fixed connections typically purchase both, they should be seen as complementary, not substitute products, that the Commission measures separately...if two products were truly "interchangeable," no one would buy both.[1]"

Wireless RERC reply comments also addressed underserved populations and areas. Our knowledge of wireless technology access and the need for both mobile and fixed broadband to deliver robust services to people with disabilities led us to recommend that data be collected on availability and usage amongst people with disabilities. A successful broadband deployment and adoption strategy must take into account availability, affordability, and usability. Further compounding the issue, as it relates to rural areas, is that there is a higher prevalence of disability in rural America compared to urban areas.[2] Placing rural residents with disabilities in a double jeopardy with regard to access to broadband services and the

benefits said access affords. That said, we agreed with recommendations to collect and report data on the demographic characteristics of unserved and underserved areas and specified that disability status be included as a variable.

Many more recommendations and comments were made regarding closing the digital divide, mobile edge content, accessibility, and affordability. To read the full document, select the following link below.

Additional Information:

[Read the Comments of the Wireless RERC](#)

[https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filing/1005674827669\]](https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filing/1005674827669)

## **2016 SUNspot (04) - Use of Intelligent Personal Assistants (IPA's) by People with Disabilities**

At some point you may have taken our cornerstone survey, the Survey of User Needs (SUN). This survey tracks the use and usability of wireless technology used by people with disabilities. We created "SUNspot" to share some of the latest findings. We launched the first version of the SUN in 2001. The data included in this report is from SUN version 5, launched in 2015. Data collection was conducted through 2016. The data reported here are preliminary results. Over 1300 people have completed the SUN questionnaire.

This 2016 SUNspot (04) addresses the following question related to use of wireless activities by adults with disabilities:

- Do people with specific disabilities use Intelligent Personal Assistants (IPAs) at different rates than people with other disabilities?

[Read here for full analysis of the 2016 Sunspot \(04\) - Use of intelligent personal assistants \(IPAs\) by people with disabilities](#)

## **Wireless Independence Now (WIN) Accessibility Workshop**

October 28, 2017 - The Wireless RERC, in collaboration with AT&T, convened a WIN workshop in Atlanta, Georgia at the Atlantic Station AT&T store as part of their Experience More outreach campaign. Lex Gillette, brand ambassador, World Record Holder, Paralympic Medalist & World Champion was in attendance. Attendees heard Lex Gillette's story and then stayed to learn about AIRA, a remote assistive technology that connects the blind with a network of certified agents via wearable smart glasses and an augmented reality dashboard. Attendees then stayed for a presentation on the accessibility features available on Android and iOS mobile devices.

More WIN workshops are being planned for 2018 in venues across the United States. People with disabilities, their caregivers, friends, and family are all welcome. You do not need to be an AT&T customer to attend these free events.

New presentations are currently being developed that will show the latest accessibility features found in Android 8 (Oreo) and Apple's iOS 11. Older presentations can be found at: [www.att.com/accessibility](http://www.att.com/accessibility)

To ensure you are notified of the next WIN Workshop date and location subscribe to the Wireless RERC's Consumer Newsletter *Re: Wireless* by texting WIRELESSRERC to 22828.

## Save the date!

Upcoming conferences, presentations and webinars include:

### **2017 Georgia Assistive Technology in Education (GATE) Seminar**

The GATE seminar, hosted by the Metro Atlanta Assistive Technology Consortium, will convene on December 8, 2017, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm at the Georgia Institute of Technology. The seminar is geared towards educators, parents, community stakeholders, and therapists who want to learn about assistive technology to help achieve success in the classroom for students of all abilities. Seminar session topics include Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC), Education/Learning, Sensory Impairment, and Accessibility. Focus will be placed on best practices, classroom implementation, product demonstrations, and strategies that will support students. In addition to presentations, there will also be an opportunity to meet with vendors for an up-close look at various types of assistive

technologies and services.

Additional Information:

[2017 GATE Seminar](#)

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2017-gate-seminar-tickets-36880227754>

### **2018 CSUN Assistive Technology Conference**

The 33rd CSUN Assistive Technology Conference (CSUN) will convene March 19 to March 23, 2018, in San Diego, California. CSUN is the largest international conference addressing topics regarding people with disabilities and assistive and accessible technologies. Conference topics typically pertain to the domains of education, employment and workplace, entertainment, independent living, law and policy, and transportation.

Additional Information:

[Conference Web Page](#)

<http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference>

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The Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Wireless Inclusive Technologies (Wireless RERC) is sponsored by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under grant number #90RE5025-01-00. The opinions contained in this website are those of the Wireless RERC and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or NIDILRR.

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