



**National Center for Technology Innovation**  
*Advancing Technology Innovations for All Students*

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**Assistive and Learning Technology Conference Brings Together Innovators,  
Policymakers, Researchers, and Philanthropic Organizations to Advance Learning  
Opportunities for Students with Disabilities**

Washington, DC — According to the U.S. Department of Education, approximately 6.6 million youth—or 13.7% of students enrolled in public schools nationwide—are served under the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEA). To discuss the role of technology in advancing learning opportunities for students with disabilities, the National Center for Technology Innovation (NCTI) is hosting a two-day conference, *Bright Ideas. Real Solutions.*

Taking place on November 15 and 16 at The Madison Hotel in Washington, DC, the conference comes at a critical juncture as the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind is underway. Nationally renowned technology innovators, policymakers, researchers, the media, and senior representatives from the philanthropic community, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the George Lucas Educational Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, and the NEC Foundation of America, will discuss the advancements and emerging trends in the assistive and learning technology field.

“Innovative technologies and new social media platforms, such as blogs, wikis, and social network Web sites, offer students with special needs a vehicle to communicate and engage with the world in ways that have not been possible to date,” commented Tracy Gray, Ph.D., Director of the National Center for Technology Innovation. “The wide spectrum of multimedia technologies breaks existing barriers and transforms access through new and exciting entry points for students with disabilities.”

Funded by the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education, the NCTI conference focuses on increasing access and achieving results for students with disabilities. In addition, it will focus on the recent findings from the special education community, which are shedding light on best practices for the general education population. Conference topics will include:

- *Trends in Wireless and Portable Assistive Technology;*
- *Speaking Out on the Effectiveness of Research Regarding Educational Technology;*
- *Social Media: Where the Action Is;* and
- *The Role of Public/Private Partnerships in Furthering Innovation.*



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Further, the TechMatrix ([www.techmatrix.org](http://www.techmatrix.org)), a comprehensive online database that allows education consumers to conduct customized searches and learn more about the accessibility and existing research of learning tools for mathematics, reading, writing, and assistive technologies, will be officially unveiled at the conference. Video sessions and copies of conference materials will be available on the NCTI Web site following the conference.

### **About the National Center for Technology Innovation**

The National Center for Technology Innovation (NCTI) ([www.NationalTechCenter.org](http://www.NationalTechCenter.org)), established in 2001, advances learning opportunities for *all* students, with a special focus on individuals with disabilities, by fostering technology innovation. Funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education, NCTI offers technical guidance to facilitate the growth and sustainability of assistive and learning tools. NCTI broadens and enriches the field by providing high quality resources and developing meaningful partnerships with innovators, entrepreneurs, researchers, and practitioners. The National Center for Technology Innovation is located at the American Institutes for Research in Washington, DC.

### **About the Technology Innovators Conference**

*Bright Ideas. Real Solutions.*, taking place on November 15 and November 16 at The Madison Hotel (1177 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Washington, DC) seeks to enhance the national discussion of the advances, challenges, and next steps for the assistive and learning technology field serving students with special needs. More information regarding the conference is available at <http://www.nationaltechcenter.org/index.php/events-main-page/annual-technology-conference2007/about-the-conference/>. Conference registration is waived for members of the press.