

*Selected Telecommunications Devices for  
Hearing-Impaired Persons*

December 1982

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# TECHNOLOGY AND HANDICAPPED PEOPLE

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## BACKGROUND PAPER #2: SELECTED TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVICES FOR HEARING-IMPAIRED PERSONS

Virginia W. Stern, M.A.  
Martha Ross Redden, M. S., Ed.D.

Project on the Handicapped in Science, Office of Opportunities  
American Association for the Advancement of Science, Washington, D.C.

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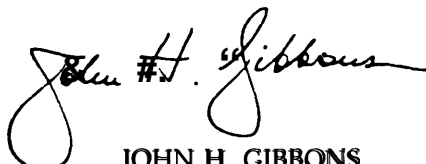
# Foreword

Technology exerts a powerful influence over the lives of everyone, making life easier, more fulfilling, but sometimes more painful and frustrating. This statement is especially true for people with disabilities. The appropriate application of technologies to diminishing the limitations and extending the capabilities of disabled and handicapped persons is one of the prime social and economic goals of public policy.

The Federal Government is deeply involved in programs that affect the development and use of technologies for disabilities. Congress and other institutions have become increasingly interested in questions of how well programs that directly or indirectly develop technologies and support their use have been performing. The Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources requested the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) to conduct a study of technologies for handicapped individuals. That study examined the specific factors that affect the research and development, evaluation, diffusion and marketing, delivery, use, and financing of technologies directly related to disabled people. The problems and processes of the development and use of technologies were analyzed in the context of societal allocation of resources and the setting of goals for public policy. The main report of the study *Technology and Handicapped People* was released in May of 1982.

This case study is background paper #2 of the study. There will be a number of case studies published as part of the assessment, and each will be issued separately. The case studies were commissioned by OTA both to provide information on the specific technologies and to gain lessons that could be applied to the broader policy aspects of technology and disability.

Drafts of each case study were reviewed by OTA staff; by members of the advisory panel to the overall assessment, chaired by Dr. Daisy Tagliacozzo; by members of the Health Program Advisory Committee, chaired by Dr. Sidney S. Lee; and by other experts in medicine, disability policy, Government, public interest and consumer rights, and rehabilitation engineering. We are grateful for their assistance. However, responsibility for the case studies remains with the authors.



JOHN H. GIBBONS  
Director

# Advisory Panel on Technology and Handicapped People

Daisy Tagliacozzo, Panel *Chair*

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Monroe Berkowitz

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*Committee for National Health Insurance*

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John Kimberly

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William Stason

*Veterans Administration and Harvard School of  
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Gregg Vanderheiden

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Michael Zullo

*Corporate Partnership Program  
U.S. Council for International Year of  
Disabled Persons*

## OTA Staff for Background Paper #2

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Health and Life Sciences Division*

Clyde J. Behney, *Health Program Manager*

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Rochester, N.Y.

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Washington, D.C.

Sarah Geer  
The National Center for Law and the Deaf  
Washington, D.C.

Harriet Loeb  
Washington, D.C.

Darld Long  
National Institute of Handicapped Research  
Washington, D.C.

Bryan R. Luce  
Office of Research and Demonstrations  
Health Care Financing Administration  
Washington, D.C.

James C. Marsters  
Pasadena, Calif.

James Reswick  
National Institute of Handicapped Research  
Washington, D.C.

Reese Robrahn  
American Coalition of Citizens With Disabilities  
Washington, D.C.

Barry Strassler  
Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc.  
Silver Spring, Md.

Don R. Warren  
Wisconsin Foundation for Applied Technology  
Madison, Wis.

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