

Transitioning with Technology

by Amy T Norton, M.Ed., ATP Assistive Technology Professional, Transition Coordinator, EASTCONN

At some point technology became an integral part of the day for each of the 18-21 year old students in EASTCONN's Regional Transition Services (RTS). What they use and when varies but they are on their way to becoming proficient in using technology to assist them in improving their daily lives. I have had the pleasure of working with this group as a consultant for the 2014-2015 academic year.

The students recently held a workshop for families and presented on how technology benefits them across school, work and community settings. They each did a phenomenal job of explaining the device they use and how it helps them. The ability to demonstrate these skills and advocate the use of these tools will go a long way in helping these young adults make a smooth transition with technology.

Elizabeth "Lizzy" Given, who will be graduating in June, is very resourceful with using her iPod throughout the day. She uses it for time management, creating lists, storing important information, and communicating with transportation, family, staff and others. She has become a technology leader for the group and spends time teaching others how to use their devices in ways they may not have thought of on their own. Lee Boyd, also be graduating in June, is great at entering data. She does an excellent job with recording payroll into Quicken, entering contacts and making shopping lists.

Ashley LaBeau, another June graduate, is great at conducting online searches. She has found wonderful recipes for Diner's Club, a monthly event in which several students plan lunch, purchase the items and cook for the group. Ashley makes great desserts!

Vinny Phila, a fifth year student in RTS, has been a great technology role model for the other students. He helps the other students with their technology and has also helped a couple of the young adults with studying for their learner's permit test by showing them how to use the online resources.

Austin Froehlich is very resourceful utilizing a computer to research history, ships, restaurants, and museums. He shares the hours and costs of a variety of museums as they plan their field trips. He is very competent at connecting the computer to the projector for the class to view the weather and the news.

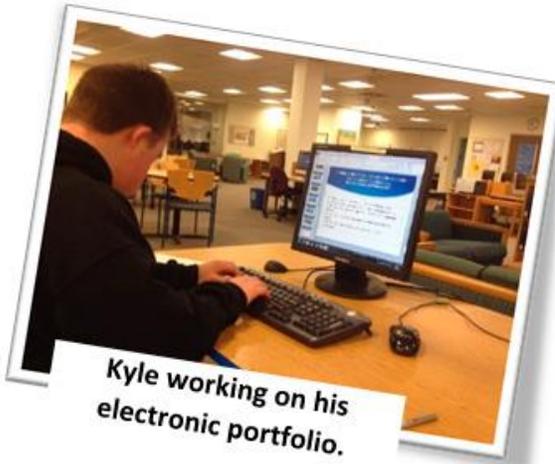
Austin Charrette was very reluctant to use any technology when he first began participating in RTS at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year. Through the support of staff and peers, Austin began to use technology tools in ways that make tasks easier for him. For instance, he had difficulty completing his time sheet using paper and pencil. It would take him a great deal of time and his writing was not always easy to read. He was given the opportunity to complete his time sheet on the computer using a form with drop down fields. He uses a flash drive and Google Drive to store his time sheet and prints it out to submit for the payroll deadline. Now, he is working on using technology in other ways to make everyday tasks easier.

Audray Bastien, who is new to RTS this year, quickly learned how to use the sharing capabilities of Google Drive to send her PowerPoint portfolio to family members and educators. She is using this skill to share other documents and materials. She also knows how to add attachments to emails and is always willing to show her peers how to do this. Another new member, Kyle Wilson, has perfected taking pictures of family members and friends and adding the photos to his contacts. He enjoys texting pictures especially of his dogs and his snowmobile.

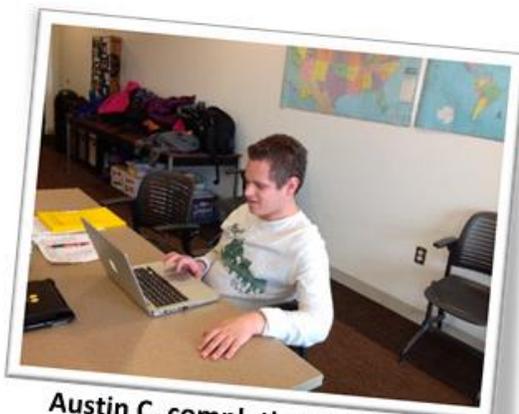
Christine Lessig, Teacher and Transition Specialist for RTS has put technology tools in the hands of her students. The technology is easily able to travel with students from home to school and into employment and community settings. She encourages them to use the tools to solve problems as they arise. She states, "Students become resourceful through a variety of compensation strategies and tools for independent living, financial management and employment."



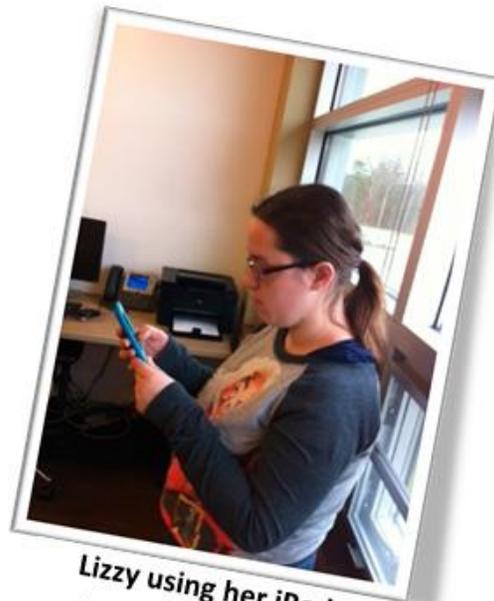
Audray using her iPhone to compare prices.



Kyle working on his electronic portfolio.



Austin C. completing his time sheet.



Lizzy using her iPod to prepare for the day.