

**Commission for Accessibility
Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 13, 2025**

Meeting Via Zoom

In Attendance: Christine Santori, Debbie, Pregor, Maureen Culhane, Debra Franceschini, Debra Dorairrajan, Tony Phillips, Don Ciota

Call to Order: 5:00 PM

N.B. There were two motions made during this session.

MOTION: To approve CfA minutes from December 9, 2024 meeting.

Motion by Debbie, Second by Maureen

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is significantly enhancing education and accessibility for individuals with disabilities by providing personalized and inclusive learning experiences. Key applications include:

1. Assistive Technologies:

- **Speech Recognition:** AI-driven speech recognition software aids students with physical disabilities or learning difficulties by converting spoken words into text, facilitating easier communication and learning.
- **Text-to-Speech and Speech-to-Text:** These tools assist visually impaired students by reading text aloud and support those with writing challenges by transcribing spoken words into written form.

2. Real-Time Captioning and Transcription:

- AI-powered services provide real-time captions during lectures, benefiting students with hearing impairments by ensuring they can follow along with spoken content.

3. Personalized Learning:

- AI systems analyze individual learning patterns to offer customized educational content, accommodating diverse needs and learning styles, which is particularly beneficial for students with specific learning difficulties.

4. Environmental Control:

- AI enables students with mobility challenges to control their learning environments through voice commands or other interfaces, promoting independence and engagement.

5. Communication Aids:

AI applications like Voiceit translate non-standard speech into clear text or audio, assisting individuals with speech impairments in effective communication.

6. Content Accessibility:

- AI tools help create accessible educational materials by providing image descriptions, simplifying complex texts, and ensuring compatibility with assistive devices, enhancing inclusivity in educational settings.

AI Definition and Applicability for the Disabled

These AI-driven solutions are transforming education by making it more accessible, personalized, and inclusive for students with disabilities, thereby fostering an equitable learning environment.

Alan Turing generally is credited with the origin of the concept when he speculated in 1950 about “thinking machines” that could reason at the level of a human being

Turing was followed up a few years later by John McCarthy, who first used the term “artificial intelligence” to denote machines that could think autonomously. He described the threshold as “getting a computer to do things which, when done by people, are said to involve intelligence.”

Darrell M. West is a senior fellow in the Center for Technology Innovation within the Governance Studies program and a co-editor-in-chief of TechTank. :

As argued by John Allen and myself in an April 2018 paper, such systems have three qualities that constitute the essence of artificial intelligence: intentionality, intelligence, and adaptability.

INTENTIONALITY

Artificial intelligence algorithms are designed to make decisions, often using real-time data. Using sensors, digital data, or remote inputs, they combine information from a variety of

different sources, analyze the material instantly, and act on the insights derived from those data. As such, they are designed by humans with intentionality and reach conclusions based on their instant analysis.

Intelligence:

Machine learning takes data and looks for underlying trends. If it spots something that is relevant for a practical problem, software designers can take that knowledge and use it with data analytics to understand specific issues.

ADAPTABILITY

The last quality that marks AI systems is the ability to learn and adapt as they compile information and make decisions. Effective artificial intelligence must adjust as circumstances or conditions shift. This may involve alterations in financial situations, road conditions, environmental considerations, or military circumstances.

CONCLUSION

In short, there have been extraordinary advances in recent years in the ability of AI systems to incorporate intentionality, intelligence, and adaptability in their algorithms. AI software learns as it goes along and incorporates real-world experience in its decision making. In this way, it enhances human performance and augments people's capabilities.

During this meeting there were discussions about the applications of AI and other issues including the future use of self-driving cars, which was brought up by Tony. Maureen mentioned the RPS Transition Plan Program

MOTION: The CfA has been invited to participate once again in Ridgefield Public School's 2nd Annual Transition Fair. The event will be held on **Thursday, March 13th from 6-8pm.**

Motion by: Christine

Seconded: Maureen

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Adjourn: 6:15 PM

2025 Meeting Dates

	Feb 10	Mar 10
Apr 7	May 12	June 9
July n/a	Aug n/a	Sept 8
Oct 6	Nov 10	Dec 8

*All meetings are Via Zoom on Monday of the dates above at 5:00 PM.

Minutes by Don Ciota

