

# Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

Welcome to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living (WNYIL). Our guest today is Erin Brunelle, director of Client Services with the Center for Assistive Technology at the University at Buffalo. And I'm your host, Ernie Churchwell. Welcome to the program, Erin.

Thanks for having me, Ernie.

00:00:19 Speaker 1

It's our pleasure and as usual, you're here because of the auspices of TR Aid.

00:00:26 Speaker 1

Hard as it may be to believe after all these years, I'm betting there's still a couple of people listening that don't know exactly what that pertains to assistive technology. If you could enlighten us.

00:00:39 Speaker 2

So, we meet people all the time who don't know about TR Aid. TR Aid stands for Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities. So, it's TR Aid and it's a New York State program that provides free assistive technology demonstration and short-term loans to people in the community.

00:00:57 Speaker 1

All right. And so, this is an avenue to people getting the assistive technology they need to have a more independent lifestyle, and you can help them try them out and get connected to them if need be.

00:01:12 Speaker 2

Exactly. And we do receive funding every year to purchase new technology. So, if there's something that someone is interested in or maybe a piece of technology that the community is hoping we have, but we don't currently have an inventory, we love to hear from the community to request things within our inventory as well. So, if there's something that someone is hoping for, and we may not have yet, please feel free to reach out because it's how we make sure that our inventory is meeting the needs of those in our community.

00:01:41 Speaker 1

Yes. And so people can hear about more and more and what's available. You focus on a particular type of technology on each show. And today I believe you're going to have something to say about Voice Access for Windows 11. I'm betting a lot of people don't even have Windows 11. But what can you tell us about the advantages that it has over Windows 10?

00:02:05 Speaker 1

Which was the standard for many years.

00:02:08 Speaker 2

Certainly. So, Windows 11 is becoming the new standard, slowly but surely. So, within the next few years Windows 10 will no longer be the expected standard, and people will be encouraged to update to Windows 11.

00:02:24 Speaker 2

Historically within Windows, so even before Windows 10 back into Windows XP and Windows 7, and I believe even before that there was a software feature built into Windows called speech recognition and that enabled someone to use their voice to control the computer. And I'll be honest as an assistive technology professional, I found that it was not the most consistent feature. It often did not work as well as people may have wanted it to. It had some limitations.

00:02:55 Speaker 2

And I had always said that that was the one feature that really needed to get updated, and it hadn't been updated yet. So here we are finally in 2024, Windows 11 has updated that feature. Windows speech recognition will no longer be served within Windows 11 in the coming at least month I want to say, if not sooner than that it will be retired and now, we have Voice Access in Windows 11 instead.

00:03:20 Speaker 1

Terrific. What audience is this feature intended for primarily?

00:03:25 Speaker 2

So, speech recognition is a little different than dictation. A lot of people might use dictation where you're talking into your phone, or the computer and it types what you say.

00:03:35 Speaker 2

Speech recognition is where you could actually control the whole computer with your voice. So, you could say things like open Microsoft Word, click cancel, click OK, and you can control the computer hands free. So, anyone who maybe has some physical limitations or even has the need to use their computer while they're standing up and walking around, their home or their office could find some benefits within the Voice Access feature.

00:03:59 Speaker 1

Reading between the lines, it sounds like you figured this is a much-advanced version than what was there before.

00:04:07 Speaker 2

I certainly hope so. Any new feature has bugs that will always get worked out, but when the Windows speech recognition really needed some updates for a long time, so I'm hopeful that those updates are finally here and that we've got a new feature to try to work out instead with Voice Access.

00:04:23 Speaker 1

Goodness. Well, your delightful descriptions have made the time speed. We're just about out of time. I'm sure people will have questions. How can they reach you?

00:04:33 Speaker 2

So, you can give us a call at 716-836-1168 where we can also respond via email at [cat-traid@buffalo.edu](mailto:cat-traid@buffalo.edu)

00:04:46 Speaker 1

Thanks so much for being with us, Erin.

00:04:48 Speaker 2

Thank you.

00:04:49 Speaker 1

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