

The National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) has recently established a new Center on Access Technology. The Center is a collaborative research and development network of individuals at NTID and RIT, along with other universities, industry and professional organizations to promote research and development that explores the potential for technology to have a positive impact on the access issues common to the educational experiences of deaf individuals. It provides leadership and support for those NTID individuals developing, implementing, assessing and evaluating access technologies as they pertain to enhancing the educational experience of men and women who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. The Center is charged to investigate, evaluate, and report on the most effective and efficient use of access technologies and train individuals in their use in order to accelerate the widespread implementation of best practices within deaf education at the postsecondary level. The Center is focusing its efforts on technologies that have a high likelihood of improving access to postsecondary educational opportunities for deaf students within the next several years. Upon project completion, the Center will report and disseminate project findings, developments, and any resulting instruction and training issues to appropriate organizations and individuals. This presentation will describe the planning and information gathering process used to formulate the operating guidelines for the center. Each of the four strands of activities being conducted by the Center will be described, with examples. The strands include classroom access technologies; mobile technologies; training and evaluation services and audio and sound technologies. Currently funded projects and pending proposals will be reviewed.