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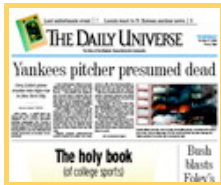
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## BYU receives new technology for the disabled

By Catherine Romney - 19 Jul 2006

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BYU is the second university to receive an assistive technology device, EagleEyes, which facilitates communication and learning for individuals with severe disabilities.

The device is an innovative mouse substitute that uses electrode-monitored eye movements to control mouse functions on a computer. Individuals who use this device are non-verbal, paralyzed or at most have a yes or no method of communicating.

The device was presented to McKay School of Education Associate Dean Barbara Culatta during an official presentation ceremony Tuesday afternoon in the David O. McKay Building.

EagleEyes was developed at Boston College by Dr. James Gips. Maureen Gates, the director of the EagleEyes program at Boston College, has used the device for the past 10 years, helping individuals with extreme disabilities learn basic principles. In 2004, Boston College partnered with the Opportunity Foundation of America (OFOA) to make EagleEyes commercially available.

The OFOA manufactures and distributes the device, as well as provides training and technical support to users. EagleEyes can be found in several Utah special needs schools, as well as two schools in Great Britain. The device can be used with most commercially available software and settings can be customized to each individual user.

Debbie Inkley, founder and executive director of the OFOA, spoke at the presentation of the wonderful merits of the EagleEyes technology for individuals with severe physical disabilities.

"It is not a magic answer," Inkley said, "but it opens up their world even further."

The McKay School will use EagleEyes to train special education and general education teacher candidates in the use of this form of assistive technology. BYU students who qualify

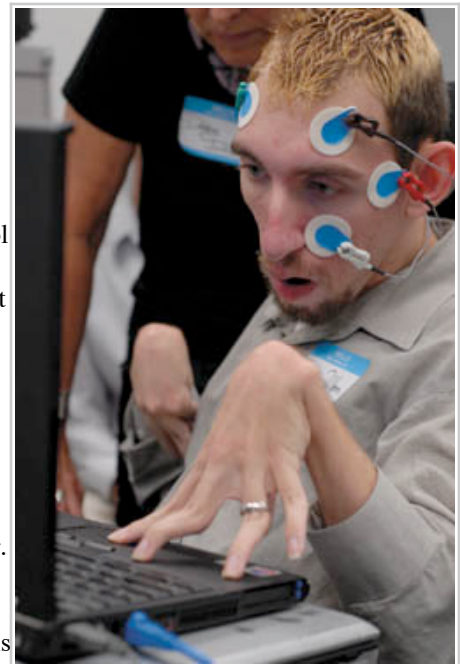


Photo by Scott Thompson  
 Britt Allen demonstrates how to use the new EagleEyes computer access system. BYU is the second school in the nation to receive the technology from Boston College.

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will also be able to use the device.

"It's an amazing, wonderful gift to our students," Culatta said during the presentation ceremony.

The presentation included an explanation about the EagleEyes project from OFOA Board Chairman Howard Sharpley and a demonstration of EagleEyes by Britt Allen, a young man confined to a wheelchair and incapable of verbal communication.

Allen used EagleEyes to paint a picture in the "EaglePaint" program and to play "EagleAliens," a simple video game that allows users to master control of the mouse with their eyes.

Gates explained that through the use of this device, non-verbal children can learn how to read, a concept that will open greater possibilities to these individuals.

The OFOA is a non-profit organization, established in 2000 by a group of Salt Lake City executives who saw the need for educational and employment opportunities for minorities and those with physical, emotional, financial and domestic challenges.

The long-range goal for the OFOA, Sharpley said, is to continue improving the EagleEyes technology and unlock the potential within disabled students.

Tina Dyches, an associate professor in special education, will use the EagleEyes technology in her augmentative alternative education classes.

"We want to educate our future educators," Dyches said.



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