

## Helping people with upper extremity disability stay connected

Consider a day in the life of a person with an upper extremity disability. Simple functions and tasks are often too difficult to perform and make every aspect of their day a reminder of what they cannot perform, contribute, or provide for themselves. Activities we all take for granted are often times beyond their capabilities -- a simple task like reading the morning paper, or a book, and being able to turn the page often becomes a monumental task.

A person who previously had full use of their extremities, but through an accident or disease has had their capability deteriorate, has the desire to regain as much of what was lost as possible. What cannot be regained through therapy can sometimes be regained through the use of technology. Without the availability and use of alternative technology to compensate for lost extremity use, people with upper extremity disability often feel that they must simply accept their fate and the difficult impact it makes on their life, everyday. In many cases, the impact on self-esteem, possible depression, and even despair become more serious than the disability itself. If only there were some tasks they could once again perform, it would give them the feeling of accomplishment and the psychological improvement and gratification that provides hope.

With the advances in technology you would think there would be numerous products to enable people with disabilities to perform some simple, yet rewarding, tasks. One such product, an alternative keyboard, could enable people with disabilities to return to their day-to-day life and complete simple tasks such as:

- Reading on-line news
- Reading a book
- Ordering a pizza
- Accessing Facebook
- Playing a game
- Sending and receiving e-mail
- Accessing entertainment like movies, music, etc.
- Everything else we take for granted on the web



When we do not have access to the web or e-mail we feel disconnected and we cannot get back to being connected soon enough. For that short period of time we feel less than 1% of what the disabled person feels. And even though the necessary technologies and products are in reach, they very rarely take advantage of them.

Providing the power of a computer to persons with disabilities for the first time can be an unleashing of potential, inclusion and accomplishment not easily matched by any other therapy.

That is why we developed the orbiTouch Keyless Keyboard. For the last 15 years we have worked to develop an alternative keyboard that can deliver this capability. With numerous success stories to share, we would like to bring the orbiTouch to hand therapists, physical therapists and hand surgeons who focus on upper extremity issues. I've taken the liberty to include additional information on how this alternative keyboard may become a solution you can provide to your patients.

I am available for discussion or consultation on how we may work together to improve the lives of your patients.

*Pete McAlindon*