Nina Onesti

We covered lots of topics in the lecture of Info I101 but what attracted my attention the most was the Assistive technology. Based on the lecture information, “assistive technology that's been specifically designed to help a person with a disability to perform a task.” And this was a direct quote from the Partnership of Employment & Accessible Technology. This topic was interested to me because I think technology was made to help people to achieve things better and people with disabilities are the ones that needed help the most. Some examples we mentioned in lecture were Screen Readers that could help the people that are having trouble to speak to communicate with others and auto captioning which helps the deaf people to understand the content of the video.

I read an article from theadvocate.org. The Author, Matthew Lynch talked about how assistive technology made education and learning easier for the disabled people. Then he mentioned the growth of assistive technology in the last few years helped a lot of children in schools, but he thinks that there will be a greater expansion in the assistive technology field which will make the disabled children learning and playing alongside with the healthy children. He gave an example of how children with learning disabilities will have a harder time to process the new information so he said, “systems which allow students to learn and interact at their own pace will be invaluable for these children.” He suggested that teachers will record a video of them teaching and the system will transform this information into an interactive experience so that the children can learn and process at their own pace. He also gave a lot of solutions to help the children with
blindness and impaired hearing. He concluded by saying that there’s no limit for the assistive technology and we should prioritize to help the children the needed the help the most.

The reason that I am interested in this topic is that assistive technology is what I believed what technology should be like. I believed that technology should help people to achieve things in an easier and more efficient way. Assistive technology helps the disabled people work and learn more efficiently, so it fits my idea and value. As a healthy person, I can’t imagen the struggles and harshness the disabled people went through. I really respect all the people and I think people should be able to treat fairly. That’s why I felt a connection of Mr. Lynch’s point that the expansion of assistive technology will allow all the disabled children to study and play along with other healthy people. I think this is the ultimate goal that we are trying to achieve and through the expansion of assistive technology we can definitely get there someday.

I am seeing a lot of potential career in assistive technology. As Mr. Lynch said in his article, there will be a lot room for assistive technology to grow. He motioned about helping the blind, deaf and learning-disabled students. These three areas will be taking a lot of time and resource to figure it out. How to use technology to help the disabled students to study along with the healthy students will be a big problem to solve and it will take many years of investing and developing. There are definitely more areas to cover as well, such as making a perfect self-driving car to help the crippled people to travel and
making a speaker that can read-off the dumb people’s mind to help them to communicate with others. All the fields will be expanding in the next few years and will make a great career out of that.

Beyond Students, assistive technology can also help disabled people in the working place. Corinne Weible, the project manager for PEAT, explained that a simple assistive technology such as a “screen reader on a computer can help a person with a disability to read a job posting.” This will be very useful and beneficial to the disabled people since they have to make a living as well. According to an interview with Keith Bundy who is blind and serves as the digital accessibility consultant and trainer with Siteimprove Inc., he worked for over 35 years in various job position and assistive technology helped him so much. He said that the assistive technology has expanded and upgraded so much. Back in 1981 he had to rely on his wife and assistant to read him the materials. Nowadays, he “can read printed material by simply scanning it with [his] phone using an OCR app called KNFB Reader that instantly converts text to speech or Braille.” With the help from the features and applications he could work as the same pace as his coworkers and most importantly he didn’t doesn’t require sighted assistance anymore. The expansion of assistive technology made disabled people work at a more efficient rate and more convenient situation with lower resources to be put in.

From all the aforementioned reasons, I believe assistive technology is a very topic field because it follows my definition of technology and have a lot of are to grow so it’s a
good career choice. It also helps disabled people by making their life more convenient and increase their working efficiency. This is the reason I choose the topic of assistive technology.

Citation: