

balance

what it's all about

BCITS  technology for living 

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World Travel through Adaptive Ingenuity

by Lily Cheung | For any world traveller, there is much needed research and planning to optimize experiences in foreign destinations. Ean Price has the added consideration of wheelchair accessibility which can often lead to detours or inconveniences during travel.

However, creativity and ingenuity are true assets for any traveller looking to take an accessible trip in comfort and style. In this article, Ean reflects on some of the tips, tricks, and clever hacks fashioned during his recent sojourns to Italy, Hungary, Czech Republic, Germany and the Netherlands.

When exploring the unknown frontier of a foreign country, Ean packs along two custom-made, one-foot long, reinforced aluminum diamond plates. These plates, which stow easily in his backpack, serve as a ramp. They enable Ean to ease on and off sidewalks, as well as to traverse single steps into various establishments. These handy plates make otherwise out-of-reach venues completely accessible.

Ean says, of all the countries he visited, he thought it fitting that Germany, a country renowned for its efficiency, had the most accessible city centres in Munich and Berlin. Roads were smooth and well-maintained, with accessible entryways to various locations.

Conversely, the city of Prague was the least accessible. However, Ean absolutely loved the energy of the capital and would gladly go back to explore this vibrant city.

Of course, space is limited in many European cities. "Everything is miniaturized!" Ean says. Many hotel bathrooms were tiny, with little room to manoeuvre equipment. Ean adapted by purchasing an inexpensive foldable lawn chair. Ean's attendant cut an opening in the centre of the seat which then served as a shower chair and commode.

On beautiful rainy days, if Ean stayed in a hotel with a patio, he would place the shower chair outside and bathe in the grand view of Europe's majestic urban landscapes.

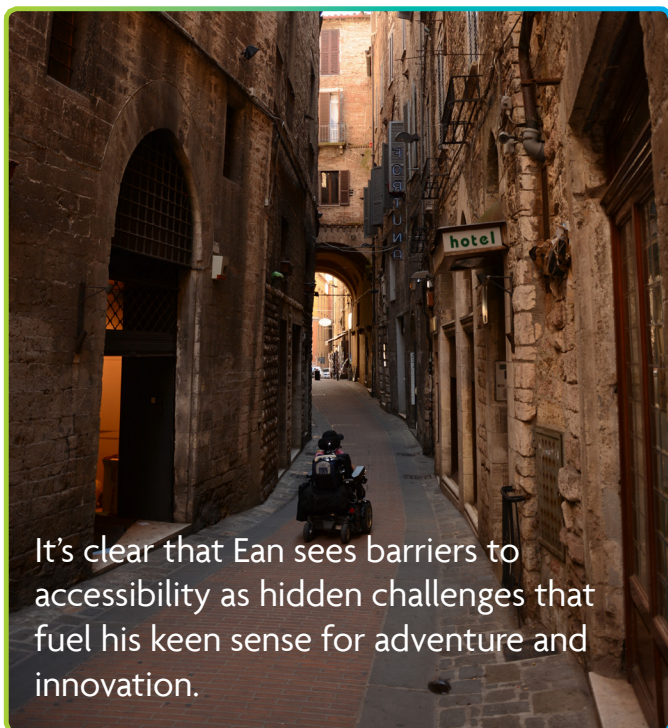
Ean's mobility depends on the fine-tuned functionality of his Permobil power chair. He has a customized shipping crate which protects the jutting arms and various attachments from the risks of air cargo transport.

On the day of his flight, Ean typically assembles the shipping crate at air cargo, where he then transfers to a standard manual chair provided by the airline. He is then pushed to the airplane's cabin door, where Ean's attendant subsequently carries him to his assigned seat. Ean brings his own memory foam cushion that fits

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nically on a standard aircraft seat. The cushion is adapted with a large Velcro chest strap that wraps under his armpits and around the seat's backrest. The ventilator and suction machine rest under his feet, with emergency bags and a secondary ventilator stowed in the overhead.

With all his travelling, Ean has experienced the best and worst case scenarios with his assistive devices, including his power chair and ventilators. Because he needs to be supported by his ventilator for most of the day, as well as requiring periodic suctioning via his tracheostomy tube, Ean highly recommends a secondary ventilator and two suction machines for any long expeditions. Ean recalls a trip when he brought only one ventilator which Murphy's Law rendered ineffective in extreme weather conditions. From that experience, Ean knows the best practice is to bring a secondary ventilator and suction unit to ward off travel blues.

As Ean continues to explore this wonderful world, he adapts to each challenge like a clever fox: calculating, anticipating and ultimately overcoming resistances to reach his mark. It's clear that Ean sees barriers to accessibility as hidden challenges that fuel his keen sense for adventure and innovation.

For more travel information, check out our blog at bcits.org. ●

Scotia Charity Challenge

Let's raise funds for TIL Together!

BCITS has registered for the Scotiabank 5km and Half Marathon Charity Challenge on June 25, 2017 in Stanley Park, Vancouver. Any funds raised will go directly to clients through our TIL programs. Our staff has created a team and we are hoping our clients join us in participating!

You can support us in these ways:

- Join us by wheeling, running or walking the 5km or half marathon. You can sign up with the TIL Team under "BCITS" or create your own local team under "BCITS charity." Use the following BCITS discount codes when you register:
 - Half marathon discount code: 17AITSPD21K
 - 5K discount code: 17AITSPD5K
- You can also register to fundraise for us without participating in the Challenge yourself
- You can sponsor our TIL team under the BCITS

To register, please go to vancouverhalf.com and click: "Register." Be sure to register with BCITS.

Please ask our RTs and Biomedes for details when they visit you or email us at info@BCITS.org. We will be posting information on our website as well on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BCITS/> and Twitter https://twitter.com/PROP_TIL. ●



Touch: It's a Good Thing

BY CATHY GRANT

Without touch you can die.

I may never have died physically, but my emotions and my soul were on the critical list several times.

I feel that many people, including caregivers and other supporters, find it hard to touch people who have a disability. Part of the reason might be ignorance, but I think it's mostly fear—fear that they may hurt me in some way, fear that my disability is somehow contagious, fear that they may get into trouble with me or someone else if they “invade my personal space.” These fears are often exacerbated by my electric wheelchair. I wish people could get over this because it was contact with others that finally helped me to start healing.

The reason touch is so important is it lets the disabled person know they are real. This might sound a bit strange, but let me explain by telling you a bit about my life.

I am a middle-aged woman with cerebral palsy. I would be the first to admit that I am sensitive about parts of my body and, if I move or am moved too quickly in the wrong way, it hurts and I let people know it.

However, this doesn't mean that I'm made of glass! A gentle squeeze on the shoulder, back or hand is not going to break bones. If you are unsure about whether some form of touch is welcome or not, just ask!

With hugs and touch in general, it is still very important to respect your own boundaries and those of the person you're supporting. A hug given under duress is not a good hug.

The reason touch is so important is it lets the disabled person know they are real. This might sound a bit strange, but let me explain by telling you a bit about my life.

When my twin brother and I were born, we were both in incubators for around 52 days. The incubators at that time didn't easily allow touch by medical staff, let alone parents. I personally feel this had long-term negative affects on me physically and emotionally, making it more difficult to relate to people around me and increasing my feelings of isolation.

Research studies have shown that children who are regularly touched are happier and healthier as they get older.

I remember one night when I was very young. I was upset and my dad picked me up and walked me through the house. When we got to the living room, he started to dance with me in his arms. I remember it as if it happened yesterday.

When I was older, I had lots of hug posters and sayings all through my house, but people never seemed to get the hint!

I do know how I survived my childhood and teen years with very little touch from the people around me. I did this with faith and determination that my needs would eventually be met.

This finally happened about a year ago. I started being more honest with staff, friends and, most important, myself. I still have my bad days. Old tapes are played back in my head and I've had screaming match-

es with staff or friends. However, in the end, the air has been cleared and their hugs have let my body know that everything is all right.

Here's an example of something that changed. About a year and a half ago, I was talking to a new staff member who had had a lot of experience in the field. I was telling him about my life, an old story that I seem to tell all of my staff, when he suddenly came over and gave me a big hug.

At first I was floored. Someone was actually perceptive enough to see what I really needed. Then, I felt he was truly there with me, at that time, in that place. I also felt emotionally safe for the first time in a long time. When that happened, all the anger and frustration that I had been holding onto for years came out. I cried and cried, while this new staff person held onto me in silence. When the initial rush had settled down, he quietly listened. He couldn't help me with the problems I had, but by being present and letting me know by his physical actions that I was there, helped me heal.

A gentle hug means more than these words on paper. And, because we are in very difficult times with government and other supports, we need to hug people and support them in other ways. ●

iPad Recipes...Better than Gourmet Food

by Wayne Pogue |

So, let's discuss Apple Recipes. No, not apple turnovers, apple pie or apple cider, but creating a recipe that allows you to read eBooks on your iPad.



Confused? Let me explain.

Recently, Apple introduced "Recipes" which allow a switch user to temporarily change the function of their switch. For instance, the switch you normally use to scan apps, surf the web and send email, can temporarily be changed to a "swipe left" function.

If you were to create a recipe to "swipe left," you can turn the recipe on when you are in iBooks or any other eBook reading app, and your switch instantly becomes a "next page" button.

To turn the recipe off, you can either let the recipe time out or activate your switch for an extended period of time. At that point, your switch returns to its original function and you're ready to use your iPad for other things again, like looking up your favourite recipes!

The best thing about all of this is that, once you are initially setup to use switches, you can create recipes, turn them on/off and read eBooks without assistance.

For help in getting started, please email til@BCITS.org or call 604-326-0175.

Technology for Living...it is better than gourmet food! ●

help us fulfill our vision

BCITS, proud home of PROP and TIL, is a registered non-profit and charitable organization. The funds to operate these programs come from the Ministry of Health, through the Vancouver Coastal Health region. We are very grateful for this generous support.

However, this funding does not cover all the costs to provide equipment to TIL clients. For example, a special telephone for a person with a high level disability can cost as much as \$1000 and an automatic door opener can cost \$3000.

We provide many devices like these to adults—at no cost—to fulfill our vision of people living in the community as independently as possible.

You can help us continue this work through your donation. Any contribution large or small will be gratefully accepted. 100% of your donation will go toward equipment and assistive devices.

Charitable Registration Number 807477070RR0001

I would like to support TIL's equipment program.

- ☐ I enclose a cheque for \$ _____.
- ☐ I will make a donation by credit card through CanadaHelps.org.
[Donate in minutes by clicking on the CanadaHelps button on our home page at www.bcits.org.]
- ☐ I would like to donate directly by VISA. I will call 604-326-0175.

Please be sure to fill in all your contact details, so we can send your tax receipt (for donations of \$10 or more).

NAME _____

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Please return form to: BCITS, #103-366 E. Kent Ave S., Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6

thank you for your support



A Message to Landlords and Stratas

Improve Access with Suite Door Openers

by Frank Nose | Most rental and strata building managers are familiar with automatic door openers to allow building access for people living with a disability—as well as people using strollers, seniors and others.

What you may not know is that affordable door opener solutions are now available for individual suites. This article takes a look at suite door openers and how Technology for Independent Living (TIL) can help you give your building's accessibility a major boost.

Automatic door openers on suites work the same way as those on building entrances. Instead of a push plate mounted beside the door, a remote control switch is installed on the resident's wheelchair.

In most cases, there is also a header aluminum box above the doorway. These headers can be painted to blend with the building's decor, or different steel and wood finishes are also available.

Installation

Choosing a reputable installation company is important for equipment quality, long-term maintenance of the doors and for fast response times, when openers need repair. TIL has been employing Stanley Access Technologies for installations and maintenance for over twenty years, and we highly recommend them.

Security

Building entry openers can be easily integrated into the overall security system without compromising safety. In most cases, this cost is low. The security for the suite door opener is controlled by a complying lockset which is always locked from the exterior side and always unlocked from the interior side.

Costs

The cost of the suite door opener and installation will usually be fully covered by TIL for eligible clients, depending on availability of funds. The door openers we recommend come with a one-year warranty.

The building entrance door opener costs would be paid through the building's budget. Our TIL staff can advise you on this work, and there is usually a cost savings when the building and suite door opener are installed at the same time.

We're Here to Help

TIL is the expert on door openers for people with disabilities. We're happy to talk with you about installation, maintenance, costs and other questions you may have.

Phone 604-326-0175 or learn more at <http://bcits.org/technology-for-independent-living-program-til/> ●

What you may not know is that affordable door opener solutions are now available for individual suites.

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Content BCITS staff and clients

Coordinator Seka Bojbasa

Editor | Designer Ann Vrlak

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Mailing Address

#103-366 E. Kent Ave South,
Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6

TIL Phone 604-326-0175

PROP Phone 1-866-326-1245

Fax 604-326-0176

Email info@bcits.org

Web www.bcits.org

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American Association for Respiratory Care Congress 2016 by Patrick Cho

In October, I had the opportunity to attend the American Association for Respiratory Care congress in San Antonio, Texas.

It is a big annual national conference spread over four days, with over 300 original research projects, 120 speakers and 210 sessions of current respiratory care topics.

The conference was developed with the patient in mind, from showcasing the latest treatments and technologies for client recovery, to highlighting the role professionals play in maintaining health through disease management and telemedicine.

I really enjoy going to these events. As a therapist, I can sit back and see what everyone is doing and learn what's working well. The knowledge is passed back to the BCITS team where, ultimately, our clients will benefit.

The exhibit hall was buzzing from the constant chatter of vendors showcasing their latest technology and devices. One booth did stand out for me—their idea sounded too good to be true.

Ventec Life Systems unveiled their device, called the VOCSN, to the public. VOCSN stands for Ventilation, Oxygen, Cough, Suction and Nebulizer.

What is so unique about it? Well, it combines different therapies into one device! I played with a working demo unit, and I was amazed at how convenient and portable it was. VOCSN is still waiting for FDA approval, so it's not for sale and we don't know the price point.

However, it is exciting to see cutting edge technology and witness innovations pushing the boundaries of what will be happening in the near future. ●



Getting the Edge

The CPABC's Assistive Equipment Fund

by William Chiu | The Cerebral Palsy Association of BC (CPABC) understands that living with cerebral palsy can make engaging in certain activities more challenging. Barriers to access can show up in unique and different ways for each person, so we've made it our goal to help create a Life Without Limits, despite obstacles people might face.

Whether it's getting back to the things they love or getting through the day with more ease, we want to be a part of the solution.

It's no secret that adaptive equipment is expensive. Paying hundreds or thousands of dollars for a special device is not something that everyone can afford and it's a main reason we began our Equipment Assistive Devices Fund. The program started three years ago and we have seen the tools we fund have a life-changing impact.

The fund subsidizes a range of equipment including communication and writing aids, vision and hearing devices, and home accessibility aids. In the past, we have even helped with funding computer parts, portable lifts and adaptive tricycles.

In 2015, we had a very memorable experience helping a young child, Wyatt De Groot, get stronger for his physical activities. He has a passion for sledge hockey, but Wyatt and his family found that his cerebral palsy was holding him back just a little bit. In his case, his cerebral palsy was making his left lower leg and ankle weaker. An ankle foot orthosis (AFO) was prescribed for him, but custom orthotics can cost well over a thou-



"The financial burden of Wyatt's AFO was something we were not expecting. It was such a relief to get some support from the Cerebral Palsy Association." Melissa De Groot, Wyatt's Mother

sand dollars. This is especially costly for a child like Wyatt who will quickly outgrow an AFO and need a replacement every few years. A situation like this can definitely become a burden—reason enough for CPABC to assist Wyatt and his family.

Since the program started, we have been able to provide over \$25,000 to individuals who need that extra edge in their daily activities. We've helped people to do activities that are meaningful to them. It's something we're extremely proud of.

If you live with cerebral palsy or know someone that has cerebral palsy, we want you to know we can help.

For more information on the Equipment Assistive Devices Fund and the CPABC, visit: <http://bccerebralpalsy.com/programs/equipment-assistive-devices-funding-program/>. For any questions, concerns or application details, please contact: info@bccerebralpalsy.com or (604) 408-9484 ●



Connect with us online!

Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook

Social media is a powerful tool in today's world for connecting people and organizations, and spreading news and ideas.

At BCITS, we believe in maximizing people's quality of life as much as possible through technology, so we are excited to announce that PROP and TIL are now on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.

We want to connect with our current clients, future clients, professionals and organizations that support people with disabilities and independent living.

We will be posting PROP and TIL content on our website www.bcits.org and on the following social media accounts:

Twitter: [Technologyforliving@PROP_TIL](https://twitter.com/Technologyforliving@PROP_TIL)

LinkedIn: The BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities (BCITS)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BCITS/

Please help welcome us into the online community by following us! We look forward to connecting with you!

Yes, I Accept Your Invitation to Join BCITS

The BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities (BCITS) Home of Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program (PROP) & Technology for Independent Living (TIL)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

**Please mail this form along with any applicable membership fees to BCITS:
#103-366 E. Kent Ave S., Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6. Thank you.**

Please Check One

- ☐ **Membership for Registered BCITS Clients** Please mail completed form to BCITS (the cost of postage constitutes your membership fee)
- ☐ **Non-client Membership** Please mail completed form along with \$20 annual membership fee payable to BCITS.

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Google Keep is a Keeper

BY MARK STOCKBROOKS

The Google Keep app is an effective way to keep tabs on tasks and reminders. It would be useful to pretty much anyone I can think of, from Wall Street executives to rural farming employees. It's just that versatile!

I've found it to be a great way to take care of business without backtracking or duplicating efforts.

Like most of you, I have a multitude of tasks to juggle on an ongoing basis and don't always have the best recall for every piece of information that enters my life. Hopefully, this app will help make your life a little bit easier too and help you to "keep" up.

Originally an Android offering in the Google Play store, Keep is now also available for all of your Apple devices.

If you already have Google Keep for your device, why don't you go ahead and jot down a note to teach a friend or family member about the benefits of using Keep!

I hope it's a great tool for you to "keep" your sanity in the swirling world of information overload we're living in today. ●

