Interim Progress Report –

Reach out and Touch Someone: Providing Remote Real-Time Interpreting

Equipment Expenditures:

At this point, we have purchased three pieces of equipment.
- Logitech QuickCam Vision Pro USB Camera
- Samsung Ultra Mobile PC
- Dell XPS 1530 laptop with integrated webcam.

Positions Filled:

There have been no positions filled as this was not a part of our particular grant proposal.

Work Accomplished to date:

Camera Testing - Investigated Logitech QuickCam for picture clarity as well as motion quality. One of the concerns we have is that the rapid hand and finger motions of interpreters may become blurry or "ghost" when seen by the student. This has been experienced to varying degrees. We are currently attempting to develop a method of reducing or eliminating "ghosting" from the process.

Wireless Signal Strength testing – some initial wireless signal strength and bandwidth testing has been completed, however this will not provide an adequate representation since the summer term traditionally has fewer students and thus much less network bandwidth usage. Once students return during the fall, and the wireless network on campus begins to experience heavy utilization, this will provide us with an accurate metric to gauge how successful or viable the project will be.

Cell Phone Signal testing – We are using an AT&T cell phone and it appears that current AT&T wireless infrastructure has recently increased in strength as well as coverage. We're able to receive a stronger and clearer signal than earlier in the year.

We have developed a process for providing remote interpreting. There are two potential methods for providing remote interpreting. The first method involves interpreting based solely on auditory input to the interpreter. The second involves interpreting that utilizes auditory as well as visual input (by way of a web camera focusing on the instructor) that the interpreter can actually watch. The second method may be more problematic due to the additional bandwidth usage of not only streaming interpreted video to the student's desktop of the ultra mobile pc, but also the additional subsequent streaming of instructor video to the remote interpreter.

Timeline for Completion:

Fall Term has us currently on schedule for testing wireless usage during periods of heavy network traffic. This will identify if there is sufficient bandwidth for wireless motion video of sufficient quality.

We will also begin testing the concept that interpreters require visual feedback (web camera covering the instructor) or if verbal information is sufficient for coherent remote interpreting. Our resident DHOH (Deaf and Hard of Hearing) program manager and interpreter has made the case that visual cues, body language and other visual nuances and feedback play a large part of interpreting process. We will investigate this and determine the impact on the student when there are no visual cues available to the interpreter.

Once that issue has been resolved we will proceed with the remainder of the planned list of milestones during the rest of the year.