Race, Disability & Technology news updates

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- Published occasionally
- Pillars:
  - **Research News** (internal and external to CREATE)
  - **Spotlights** (partner, open source, …)
  - **What We're…** Reading/Watching/Listening to
  - **Resources**
- Platform: Brevo

Fall 2025

- When we have a full outline
- Special edition to all CREATE email recipients
- Project reports - if any are ready

News

AY 2024-45 Grantees

Draft article: https://create.uw.edu/?p=10613&preview=true

Submission deadlines

https://create.uw.edu/initiatives/research-funding-at-create/rdt-call-for-proposals/

Events

What we're reading

March 2025

With news about groundbreaking research at CREATE and about UW events featuring pioneering experts on race, science, and technology, this issue of CREATE's Race, Disability & Technology newsletter showcases our ongoing work to achieve a more just and accessible future for all.

Research at the intersection of race, disability & technology

We are excited to report on some of the much-needed research that [CREATE's Race, Disability & Technology (RDT) Grant](#) has funded.

Collaboration with educators and students to expand Wordplay

CREATE faculty member [Amy Ko](#)'s 💬 [Wordplay](#) is a coding platform for creating accessible, multilingual, interactive, and playful typography to support diverse high school computing classrooms. In a recent CREATE-funded project, to center voices of those who are minoritized and disabled in Wordplay's continued development, Ko collaborated with impacted educators and students. The project involved:

- Students representing Hispanic, Black, and rural communities, including some identifying as disabled
- A youth advisory board, all multilingual
- Project meetups of 40+ high school and college students from around Puget Sound, where students built a lot of features and engaged in open source community management.

These efforts yielded a concrete roadmap for design features informed by youth and teacher designs and a long-term collaboration with a local teacher, who will use Wordplay in technology classes.

Toward Language Justice: Exploring Multilingual Captioning for Accessibility

A large number of people worldwide communicate in more than one language. But captioning tools – used by d/Deaf and hard of hearing (DHH), neurodivergent, and other disabled individuals to transcribe speech to text – are not available in all languages. CREATE Ph.D. student [Aashaka Desai](#) led research to understand how multilingual disabled individuals use caption technologies and cope with language barriers.

Desai will present findings at the [CHI 2025 Conference](#): the usefulness of current captioning tools is affected by participants' comfort with a language, characteristics of their languages, and cultural perceptions. The team offers suggestions for addressing inequities, which include how to build better technology and changing the philosophy that guides captioning research.

Exploring AI-Based Support in Speech-Language Pathology for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children

[being reviewed by Aaleyah] Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) work with children who have speech and language difficulties. The work is full of challenges, including high caseloads and administrative tasks. Those challenges are greater when SLPs provide care to culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) children with disabilities.

CREATE Ph.D. student [Aaleyah Lewis](), advised by CREATE associate director [James Fogarty](), worked with a group of SLPs to identify possibilities for AI-based support. Lewis' team studied the SLPs' perceptions of AI usefulness and the biases in AI-generated speech-language pathology materials. They noted the implications of contextually unaware AI, the need to carefully craft AI prompts, and the need for diverse representation in AI-generated materials. While also addressing systemic challenges within the SLP profession, the team defined recommendations for SLPs interacting with AI-based tools and general-purpose AI tools in their practice.

Opportunities

The [Rooted in Rights blog]() has [launched a call for submissions](), inviting disabled writers to share survival and perseverance strategies in a 500-word blog. The aim is to gather resources that can help disabled individuals and communities adapt and survive during turbulent times. Examples:
- Accessibility workarounds, organizing tips, strategies on getting basic needs met, highlighting a direct service organization
- Things that bring you joy: books, comedy or media recommendations
- Tips for finding community, strategies for rest, and strategies for resistance

Events

Labs for Liberation Summer Institute on Disability and Design

A collaborative, generative, theoretically rigorous, and lab-based space for integrating accessibility theory and practice. The goal is to spark new conversations between critical disability studies and Black feminist disability approaches to design and technology.

- March 7: Applications due
- June 9 - July 18: free, online, and accessible lecture series, open to the public
- [Summer Institute info and registration details](#)

The Long Road to Equity in Research: Public Lecture

- March 17, 2025 9:30 am
- Walker-Ames Room, Kane Hall
- [Register](#)

[Dr. Evelynn Hammonds](#) will present *The Long Road to Equity in Research* at the Office of Research public lecture. Hammonds will explain how achieving equity in the scientific, technical, and academic enterprises in the United States has been a long struggle. She will discuss examples of the historical barriers that have been overcome and the challenges that remain, specifically in higher education in STEM fields.

Dr. Hammonds is Harvard University's Barbara Gutmann Rosenkrantz Professor of History of Science, Professor of African and African American Studies & Professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences in the T. Chan School of Public Health.

The Tech Policy Lab's Distinguished Lecture

Dr. Alondra Nelson, a renowned expert in science, technology, policy, social inequality, and race and former Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, is the distinguished lecturer.

- Thursday, April 3, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- On the UW Seattle campus
- Tech Policy Lab lecture info and RSVP details

The Human Experience of Black People with Disabilities and Their Rights Under the ADA

Free webinar series from the Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, all taking place at 9-10 a.m. PT. Register for the remaining sessions:

- June 3 - Intersectionality: Unpacking Discrimination, Stigma, and Multiple Marginalization
- September 2 - Fighting for Civil and Disability Rights: Strategies to Overcome Barriers
- December 2 - The Power of Visibility and Community Advocacy

EVENTS

RDT event - recap from Community Day (unless we can publish newsletter first)

The RDT initiative is a cross-campus program sponsored by
- [Paul G. Allen School of Computer Science & Engineering](#)
- [Buerk Center for Entrepreneurship](#)
- [Office of the ADA Coordinator](#)
- [Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity](#) Race and Equity Initiative
- [Population Health Initiative](#)
- [Simpson Center for the Humanities](#)

WHAT WE'RE READING

Death of the Author

Acclaimed novelist Nnedi Okorafor's latest book, *Death of the Author*, takes non-normativity – a disabled woman who does not produce children – as the basis for a metafictional exploration of the tales we tell about normativity and future technologies. The plot includes androids and AI waging war in the grown-over ruins of human civilization. Booklist calls it an "exploration of conservationism, Africanfuturism, and what a world without humans could look like."

How to Be Disabled in a Pandemic

Disability scholars, writers, and activists chronicle the impacts of the pandemic in New York City's prisons, migrant detention centers, senior centers, hospitals, schools, shelters, and more. The book is both an accounting of what happened in one specific city in 2020–2021 and a clear guide to the creativity of a disability justice response to "mass disabling events" and their disproportioning of risk and harm. With a foreword by Judy Heumann, [the open access book](#) is available to read online or as a PDF.

[**Unmasking AI: My Mission to Protect What is Human in a World of Machines**](#), Dr. Joy Buolamwini,

The author was the guest speaker at UW College of Arts and Science Big Read event, Feb 20, 2024

"Unmasking AI goes beyond the headlines about existential risks produced by Big Tech. It is the remarkable story of how Buolamwini uncovered what she calls "the coded gaze"—the evidence of encoded discrimination and exclusion in tech products—and how she galvanized the movement to prevent AI harms by founding the Algorithmic Justice League. Applying an intersectional lens to both the tech industry and the research sector, she shows how racism, sexism, colorism, and ableism can overlap and render broad swaths of humanity "excoded" and therefore vulnerable in a world rapidly adopting AI tools. Computers, she reminds us, are reflections of both the aspirations and the limitations of the people who create them.

"Encouraging experts and non-experts alike to join this fight, Buolamwini writes, "The rising frontier for civil rights will require algorithmic justice. AI should be for the people and by the people, not just the privileged few." "

Confronting Race, Gender, and Ability Bias in Tech

Meredith Broussard's [More than a Glitch: Confronting Race, Gender, and Ability Bias in Tech](#) includes a chapter on ableist bias in tech and a chapter on AI in breast cancer diagnosis. Broussard, a data scientist, has written the book for a wide audience. An [e-copy of the book](#) is available through the UW library.

Neuroexpansive™ Thoughts

"The white, nondisabled bodymind is not the 'norm,' the 'typical,' or the line from which we diverge."

Because white people have, historically, designed cognitive and behavioral tests with assumptions of white culture and experience, if you're Black, you are already likely to be labeled "neurodivergent." So terms like "neurodiverse" and "neurodivergent" will never be able to accurately describe Black bodyminds. In a *Medium* article, Ngwagwa encourages the use of the term "neuro-expansive" and invites a shift away from white, cis, hetero, patriarchal, sanist, definitions of dis/ability and bodymind experiences. While the post is from the pandemic times, Ngwagwa's words are relevant to our work at the intersection of race, disability, and technology.

[PDF] **"Vulnerable, Victimized, and Objectified": Understanding Ableist Hate and Harassment Experienced by Disabled Content Creators on Social Media**
S Heung, L Jiang, S Azenkot, A Vashistha - 2024

[Interesting paper. Looks at some intersectional issues. Depressing too though :(. –Jen]

Content creators (eg, gamers, activists, vloggers) with marginalized identities are at-risk of experiencing hate and harassment. This paper examines the ableist hate and harassment that disabled content creators experience on social media. Through …

Previous editions

January, 2024

In this issue, we announce the awardees of funding for research at the intersection of race, disability, and technology – and an opportunity to hear about the projects from the researchers. We recap two thought-provoking lectures by women of color who are leaders in disability justice. Stemming from those lectures and our own work, we have a robust reading list for you!

FUNDED RESEARCH

CREATE is pleased to announce Race, Disability and Technology funding awards from our first two rounds of proposals.

Save the date for a presentation of these projects at a February 28 seminar, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

A Community-Based Design and Development of an Multilingual, Accessible Educational Programming Language.
- **Dr. Amy Ko**, Professor, iSchool
- Award: Tier 1, November 2023

Most programming languages and tools exclude multilingual, disabled people from using them by assuming English fluency, eyesight, fine motor skills, and neurotypical learning. As a result, teaching computing equitably is impossible, often requiring segregation or exclusion. While some platforms have made progress on accessibility in isolation, no platform engages the unique intersectional ways that multilingual disabled learners creatively leverage technologies and their language assets to orchestrate computer science learning.

The goal is to partner with three middle and high school teachers serving Puget Sound's ability and language-diverse immigrant and refugee youth of color to make computing education viable in their classrooms. The approach will be to grow a community of youth, teachers, and undergraduates focused on need finding to identify design and research gaps.

Exploring Challenges and Opportunities in Multilingual Captioning for Accessibility
- **Aashaka Desai**, Ph.D. student in the Paul G. Allen School of Computer Science & Engineering

- **Dr. Jennifer Mankoff** (PI), Richard E. Ladner Professor in the Allen School, and Director of the Center for Research and Education on Accessible Technology and Experiences
- Award: Tier 1, November 2023

An estimated fifty percent of the world is multilingual or fluent in several languages. If conversation partners are multilingual, speakers will often switch between languages during a conversation, leveraging the expressiveness of each language. But many existing language technologies support dominant languages only or require users to specify a single language. This limits how people use language and technology-mediated communication such as captioning, which is often used by d/Deaf, hard-of-hearing (d/DHH) and/or disabled individuals for communication accessibility.

And while much of English speech recognition is available on video conferencing platforms, automated captioning for other languages is not easily available. This project will investigate how multilingual d/DHH and disabled people navigate this variability in linguistic support; identify current practices, challenges, and opportunities; and ask how we might move toward communication accessibility across all languages and scenarios.

Examining Black Experience in Accessibility Technologies

- **Aaleyah Lewis**, Ph.D. student in the Paul G. Allen School of Computer Science & Engineering
- **Dr. James Fogarty** (PI), Professor, Paul G. Allen School of Computer Science & Engineering
- Award: Tier 1, July 2023

A broad exploration of Black experience in accessibility and current accessibility technologies, both to further develop research at this intersection and to potentially identify opportunities for future focused examinations of specific findings. The project will develop an interview protocol that directly elicits personal experiences in which participants felt an assistive technology did not support them in an aspect of their Black identity or where they felt their Black identity created additional accessibility barriers. The project will also explore Black experience outside of accessibility settings, such as cultural code-switching experiences of Black older adults interacting with voice assistants.

Next research funding opportunities

For details on funding opportunities from CREATE and proposal requirements and deadlines, see Race, Disability & Technology: Call for Proposals.

- Tier I proposals for up to $15,000 can be used to support pilot research and capacity building efforts to develop leadership of relevant people/organizations. Due annually in November.

- Tier II proposals for up to $35,000 must have strong stakeholder representation and community support. Letters of Intent are due in early October. Full proposals, if invited, are due in November.

Inclusive Excellence Faculty Fellowship Program, offered by the UW College of Engineering to implement a training and development program in the College for instructional faculty leaders and DEI "change agents." Fellows are offered tools and resources for integrating intercultural competence and inclusive teaching practices to redesign their course and facilitate impactful change in their unit and across the college.

- Applications due by February 19

CREATE researchers moderate 2 lectures with disability justice leaders

Winter quarter kicked off with two outstanding lectures with women of color who are leaders in disability justice. CREATE Director Jennifer Mankoff moderated the Conversation with Alice Wong, asking about her experience as a disabled person in academia and what she thinks needs to change. Raising the visibility of disabled people was foremost and is the focus of her book Year of the Tiger: An Activist's Life, which was the topic of the Autumn 2023 CREATE Accessibility Seminar.

A week later, two CREATE Ph.D. students, Aashaka Desai and Aaleyah Lewis, moderated a conversation with Patty Berne, who Wong referenced several times as her introduction to disability justice. Berne, who identifies as a Japanese-Haitian queer disabled woman, co-founded Sins Invalid, a disability justice-based arts project focusing on disabled artists of color and queer and gender non-conforming artists with disabilities. Berne addressed language justice within the disability community, noting that "we don't 'language' like able-bodied people." Part of Berne's

work at Sins Invalid is normalizing access needs like the use of ventilators and augmented speech technology and working in multiple languages to create an inclusive experience of everyday life.

WHAT WE'RE READING

New theories and histories of race and disability

The [Fall 2023 issue of *Disability Studies Quarterly*](#) features new theories and histories of race and disability! Its contributors take up many of the issues discussed by Alice Wong and Patti Berne in their recent UW Public Lecture appearances. This wide-ranging issue even includes an article by CREATE's new Director of Strategy and Operations, [Olivia Banner](#).

History of Black Panther 504 Activism

Earlier this month, the City of Seattle held the event [Celebrating Inclusion in Community: 50 years of the Rehabilitation Act](#). As a follow-up, we are reading [Dr. Sami Schalk](#)'s chapter about the [history of Black Panther 504 activism and its ties to the contemporary disability justice movement](#).

Resource for Sign Language Interpreters: Black Multilingual Researchers, Consultants, and Interpreters

Myers and Lawyer is a team of Black multilingual researchers, consultants, and interpreters who are challenging historic and contemporary frames of language access. They have contributed to an array of useful publications and research articles that center BIPOC service providers and consumers. https://myersandlawyer.com/

Black, female, and disabled academics were less likely to be entered for REF 2021

Academic staff who were female, Black, or disabled were less likely to be submitted for assessment in the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF), new analysis has found. The [findings appear to reflect entrenched issues](#) with inequality and underrepresentation in the higher education sector.

"Strong Black Women": African American Women with Disabilities, Intersecting Identities, and Inequality

Reading list on race, disability, and technology

Motivated by the Alice Wong lecture where she "assigned reading homework," we have started the [CREATE Reading List](#) with some of the books, articles, and blog posts that have inspired us – and some we haven't read yet. Like any good reading list, this is a work in progress. Have we missed something great? Email us at create-contact@uw.edu.

OCTOBER 2023 SPECIAL EDITION:
Race, Disability, and Technology

This month we focus on what is–and what isn't–happening in research at the intersection of race, disability and technology. We spotlight a Community Partner that works specifically at that intersection, and an app that aims to reduce misunderstandings during traffic stops. What We're Reading summarizes two articles on parenting with disabilities, where challenges are compounded by racial bias. You'll also find intersectional events to commemorate 50 years of Section 504 of the ADA.

CREATE NEWS

Funding proposals due November 15
The Race, Disability, and Technology initiative is accepting proposals for up to $15,000 to support pilot research and capacity-building efforts that address the gap in scholarly work at the intersection of race, technology and disability. Join our mailing list to find out about related calls and events.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Research at the Intersection of Race, Disability and Accessibility

Two CREATE Ph.D. students, Aashaka Desai and Aaleyah Lewis, and collaborators have found a lack of research at the intersection of race and disability and assessed the value of such research. They are presenting their findings at ASSETS 2023 next week.

- Short read on CREATE website
- Full ASSETS 2023 paper

Virtual Traffic Stop expands
A Gainesville Florida K-12 school has announced their endorsement of Virtual Traffic Stop and has encouraged parents and their children to sign up and start using the app. Now being used by two police departments (University of Florida and Gainesville police departments), the app designers aimed to ease tensions and prevent misunderstandings between drivers and law enforcement during traffic stops. They'd love to expand further:

Contact the designers to learn about becoming a partner

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Open Doors for Multicultural Families logo with the words: disability, community and opportunity
Open Doors is a CREATE Community Partner that has contributed panelists at our 2022 Community Day and our Race, Disability & Technology conversation in February.

By removing cultural and linguistic barriers for families from low income, immigrant, and refugee communities of color, Open Doors operates in South King County to help families define the direction of their lives. They nurture early childhood development, youth leadership, and job readiness and provide support for older adults with disabilities.

EVENTS

UW 504 at 50 events and resources

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the UW has a plethora of new websites, resources and events. We'll be posting about them all year, but this month we want to highlight three upcoming talks that feature the intersection of race and disability:

The Disabled Gaze - Jaipreet Virdi
October 24, 6:30 p.m.

Dr. Jaipreet Virdi asks us to consider how being disabled changes the ways people view the world and the things they create. Through these perspectives, she invites alternative approaches for remaking crip worlds where disabled people are centered first and foremost.

An Evening with Alice Wong
January 9, 6:30 p.m.

Disabled activist and writer, Alice Wong will join us remotely for a moderated conversation addressing topics important to her work in raising the visibility of disabled people.

Disability Justice: Centering Intersectionality and Liberation - Patty Byrne
January 17, 6:30 p.m.

The cofounder and Executive Artistic Director of Sins Invalid, will discuss the importance of intersectionality in disability justice and the need to address how diverse systems of oppression reinforce each other.

WHAT WE'RE READING

Intersections of disability, racial, and environmental justice

Catherine Jampel's paper in Environmental Sociology asserts that disability both increases exposure to environmental injustice and is more likely to be caused by environmental injustices. After Hurricane Katrina, "the increase in disability in New Orleans was disproportionately concentrated among young and middle-aged Black women, with the young faring the worst."

The author raises concerns about stigmatizing disability, and argues that environmental justice is "fundamentally an access issue: How can everyone have access to a healthy world in which to live, work and play?"

Parenting with disabilities

Two recent publications address unnecessary challenges faced by parents with disabilities and how those challenges are made extraordinary by a legal system that is not protecting parents or their children.

Rocking the Cradle: Ensuring the Rights of Parents with Disabilities and Their Children finds that the roughly 4 million parents in the U.S. who are disabled (about 6% of parents) are the only distinct community that must struggle to retain custody of their children. And Under the Watchful Eye of All: Disabled Parents and the Family Policing System's Web of Surveillance details how the child welfare system employs extensive surveillance that disproportionately targets marginalized families, subjecting them to relentless oversight.

- CREATE's take on these two Parenting with Disability articles