

# Consumer Technology Initiative— Your One-Stop Shop



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**HLAA's Consumer Technology Initiative is a new online resource to make it easy for people to get this technology information in one reliable, centralized place.**

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**T**he mission of HLAA is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, support and advocacy. We are committed to the highest ethical standards. As a consumer organization, an important element of our work is to drive change in the marketplace. We also represent the consumer point of view to industry and businesses in order to drive innovation and to demand more effective products and technology. This has always been important to our membership and constituents who are highly dependent on technology, but is becoming progressively important as a result of the dramatically changing and complex technological environment that impacts people with hearing loss.

Assistive and emerging hearing technologies can greatly enhance an individual's ability to function in everyday situations, increase independence at home, school and work, provide communication access, and prevent the isolation that often occurs when consumers do not have the technology tools and skills to communicate. These technologies can also significantly enhance the quality of life for people with hearing loss in every facet of their lives.

This is why we have created the Consumer Technology Initiative (CTI)—a new online resource to make it easy for people to get this information in one centralized place to help them lead successful lives.

The Consumer Technology Initiative will:

- Serve as a national resource on current and emerging hearing technologies for consumers and other stakeholders
- Provide a consumer perspective to current and emerging hearing technology companies
- Build an online hearing technologies community on HLAA's website
- Educate hearing health care professionals on the benefits of educating consumers on the use of hearing technologies and communication strategies
- Provide national outreach, education, and resources to expand consumer access to and use of current and emerging hearing technologies
- Provide capacity-building and technology skills resources and training for HLAA Chapters and State Organizations
- Provide online and hands-on hearing technology education and resources, to include webinars demonstrating specific technologies, products and services
- Track and publicize current and emerging hearing technology research for consumers and other stakeholders

## The Online Product Directory

An exciting feature of this new program is an online product directory where HLAA members and others can go to find hearing assistive technologies. Consumers can easily locate products and services to enhance their hearing in various communication settings. The directory will include products that allow you to:

- Engage more productively in face-to-face conversation.
- Enjoy media to the fullest extent on any platform.
- Easily understand what is being said on the phone.
- Learn about alerting signals necessary for a safe, convenient and independent lifestyle.

The product directory will give consumers the opportunity to review and rate products, link products to manufacturers' and distributors' websites, and engage in online discussions about products.

HLAA members were given a preview of CTI and the product directory at the HLAA Convention in St. Louis this past June. The public launch will occur in the fall, with more information to come.

### HLAA as the Go-To Source for Technology Solutions

We know that technology is changing so rapidly, it becomes a challenge for consumers (as well as hearing health care providers) to stay on top of new developments and products in the hearing enhancement arena; it is often difficult to know good products from bad ones. We intend to meet that need and to be as well-known and trusted as sites like Web MD or Angie's List.

In addition, to being the definitive source of information for consumers, CTI will also serve as a resource to manufacturers so that they have a better understanding of the needs of consumers when designing new products. HLAA will provide a unique intersection between the needs of consumers and manufacturers and serve as the change agent necessary to stimulate the market to develop products that better serve consumer needs.

Many aspects of the world we live in are changing. The health care field is rapidly changing with apps and telemedicine becoming the norm. Likewise, we see the field of hearing health care and personal hearing technology on the cusp of delivering new ways to provide hearing assistance and technology. HLAA not only wants to be responsive in this changing environment, we intend to be a leader in that change. CTI provides us with that vehicle. We want you to be part of this excitement. Check out the new product directory. Participate in the online community discussions.

CTI is just getting started and we will continue to build out the website and add new components over the next few months. We will be asking for your input and involvement. Be part of creating the future for the next 35 years! **HLM**



### Message from the Chairperson of the Board

**T**he HLAA Convention in St. Louis is fast approaching at the time I am writing this message, so I plan to share news in the next issue of *Hearing Loss Magazine*. To highlight a few things—several Board members talked to Congressional representatives about the tax credit bill in March. Your letters sharing vignettes of your experiences are powerful, reinforce the messages we give to Congress, and emphasize the impact of hearing loss. This is helpful to remember when we talk about moving our recently shared policy positions forward and ask for your input. More soon. I hope you're enjoying your summer!

*Margaret Wallbagen, Ph.D. can be reached at [chairperson@hearingloss.org](mailto:chairperson@hearingloss.org).*

# Online Learning

## Registration is open for the HLAA Hearing Loss Support Specialist Training (HLSST)

HLSST is an online, self-paced training program which provides core knowledge for individuals who work with people with hearing loss. The training consists of four classes with as many as fourteen lessons in each class. Lessons are composed of multiple readings and captioned videos. The classes are:

Class I: Hearing Loss: The Basics

Class II: Coping with Hearing Loss

Class III: Hearing Assistive Technology and Services

Class IV: Advocacy, Resources and the Law

You may register for one class at a time or register for the entire program at once for the discounted price of \$225. For complete details, table of contents, and registration information, visit [hearingloss.org/content/hlsst](http://hearingloss.org/content/hlsst).

Questions? Email Nancy Macklin at [nmacklin@hearingloss.org](mailto:nmacklin@hearingloss.org).

