

Client Semantic Compaction Systems

URL www.minspeak.com



The Situation:

In 1980 Dr. Bruce Baker had his first contact with individuals who could not use speech or hand signs successfully with unfamiliar communication partners. He saw the communication aids and visual languages (VL's) used at that time and sensed that they did not really meet the needs of those people. From that first meeting came a commitment to helping people with communication disabilities and Dr. Baker's development of Minspeak, a system for representing language. Today, Minspeak is used in many communication devices by thousands of men, women and children with autism, cerebral palsy and other disabilities that cause communication impairment.

The Challenge:

Minspeak is an effective and efficient language representation method that promotes independent communication. With a small number of pictures – called icons – the person using Minspeak can independently communicate a large vocabulary without having to spell or to learn and navigate through a large set of pictures. To augment the support that was already available for the communication devices that utilize Minspeak, Dr. Baker wanted to develop a website that would support users, teachers and caregivers in maximizing the benefit of Minspeak, create a community of Minspeak users, and connect users and caregivers with the Minspeak resources they need in their area.

The Solution:

Tachyon Solutions, working closely with the Minspeak team at Semantic Compaction Systems, developed a website that addressed three core constituencies of Minspeak: users, families and caregivers, teachers and therapists, and academicians and students. Users, Families and Caregivers is a content rich section of tips and tricks for working with Minspeak, an opportunity to share their story with the community, and access to an online directory of Minspeak resources. For teachers and therapists, the site provides guidance on how to successfully implement Minspeak teaching strategies, an opportunity to ask an expert for advice, information on events and conferences relative to Minspeak, and the ability to register with the online directory as a Minspeak resource. Academicians have access to all of Dr. Baker's research papers and

other research information. And students can identify student learning experiences and register in the online directory.

Finally, for those caregivers who are trying to determine the best communication system for the child, Tachyon Solutions developed a Flash demonstration of the Minspeak system in action.