
It's my job

My special area is electronic assistive technology, or EAT for short. I work for a company which makes equipment to help severely disabled people. I mean people who can't walk, people who have very limited movement – perhaps they can move only their head.

We make equipment which helps these people to live as independently as possible. By moving their chin, by blowing down a tube, or simply by speaking, they can send an email, adjust the temperature in the room, or operate a TV.

In this kind of work, you need a knowledge of mechatronics. That's where mechanics, electronics, and software engineering meet. Take a page-turner, for example. It's a device which turns the pages of a book or magazine. The input can be a pneumatic switch – that's a switch worked by air pressure. You operate it by sucking or blowing down a tube. These signals are interpreted by a microprocessor which controls the mechanism which turns the pages. That mechanism uses electrical and mechanical devices. All three branches of engineering combine to make it work.

It's an exciting job. Each development in technology means new possibilities for disabled people.

Listen to Track 1_32 and follow the text. Be ready to discuss.