

Home Automation

Home Controls for All Abilities

Volume 3, Issue #4

April 1996



SenSei® computer screen-shot of "home" environment

SenSei: Environmental Control and More

My name is Elizabeth J. I am 38 years old and am a quadriplegic.

Before having the **SenSei® System** in my life, my daily activity was very very limited. Just before my personal care assistant left me each afternoon, I would be placed in my wheelchair in front of the television set. The television would be set on one station and there it would stay whether I liked it or not. I was not in control. I could not change the channel or adjust the volume. Almost everyday, my mother would come home from her job and find me asleep

in front of the television. Now that I have **SenSei®**, I can turn the television on or off at will, adjust the volume and change the channel to watch what I please.

In the winter months, before I had **SenSei®**, the sun would set in the early evening. On some occasions, my mother would not get home until after sunset. When this would happen, she
"SenSei®" cont. on page 2

Product Information

Safko International manufactures the computer based environmental control unit that Elizabeth wrote about in the previous article.

The unit allows individuals with physical, cognitive, and communicative disabilities access to most Macintosh and IBM compatible computer programs.

Table of Contents

SenSei: Environmental Control and More.....Pg. 1

Product Information...Pg. 1

HomeTech News.....Pg. 3

"Product Info." continued on pg. 3



SenSei® computer screen-shot of "Telephone Dialing" environment

SenSei® ECU

"SenSei®," continued from pg. 1

would arrive home to find me sitting in the dark because we had forgotten to leave a light turned on. With SenSei®, I control my environment. Not only can I control the lights, but I can control the ceiling fan, the thermostat and other electrical appliances.

On days when I knew someone would be over, I would have to arrange to have the front door left unlocked and opened. I was necessary but scary. I was afraid of intruders. Now, I have my door lock hooked up to my SenSei® System and I can let people in who I want to see. In the case of a fire or personal emergency,

I could not call for help before SenSei®. Now, with the telephone connected to my SenSei®, I can

call for help or dial 911 if the need should arise.

When I wanted to write in my personal journal or write a letter to a friend, I would have to dictate what I wanted to say to someone else and have them write it down for me. Now, with SenSei® I have the ability to write for myself. This is more important than I can say.

The SenSei® System even has software programs and games that I can share with my children. This gives me quality time with them even though my physical movement is so limited.

If I have something important to do, I can do it myself. I don't have to rely so much on someone else. I am not afraid to be left alone at home because the system allows me to be in control and take care of myself. I love the independence,

control and the privacy that I now have with the help of SenSei®.Δ

Product Information

"Product Info.," continued from pg. 1

SenSei® (which is a Japanese term meaning master or teacher) provides hands-free access to computers, environmental controls (including lights, heating and AC, doors and security) and computer based books.

It offers telephone access with the ability to place or answer phone calls without exiting any running computer programs. The system is available with many different options including computer based applications such as word processors, spreadsheet programs, drawing applications and database software.

The SenSei® system can be controlled through a variety of input devices e.g., adapted keyboards, ability switches.

The manufacturer states that the unit is virtually ready to go right from the box and requires very little training. SenSei® incorporates graphic navigation. Graphic navigation relies on the users ability to recognize pictures as representations of various environments e.g., bedroom, kitchen, etc. and objects e.g., radio, VCR, TV, lamps. It may be used by people

"HomeTech News" Cont. on page 3

of all ages as well as by individuals with differing levels of cognitive ability.

The SenSci® allows nonverbal users the ability to communicate. With the Sentence Construction Kit a series of nouns and verbs can be combined to form sentences with digitized or recorded human voice. The Type Talker allows the user to type from the screen keyboard and have the computer say whatever is being typed

The base package sells for approximately \$6,000.00. The company will develop a system to meet the individual users needs. The total cost of the SenSci® will vary depending on the configuration. For instance, if an individual already has a computer the system can be developed around it. If not, Safko International will supply the appropriate computer, Macintosh or IBM, as part of the package. The base price of SenSci® with a computer is \$8,000.00.

For additional information contact **Safko International, Inc., PO Box 1479, Chandler, AZ 85244-1479.** Phone: (602) 731-9805.

Alert Units

ADA Enterprises manufacturer of **Life-Lite** Products offers three products for individuals with hearing impairments.

The first unit is a combination smoke detector and photoelectric strobe light. During a fire or if

there is smoke the detector's alarm will sound. Within 15 seconds the strobe light will activate.

The unit is able to wake a hearing impaired person because of the light's intensity and the number of flashes per minute. This unit is well suited to individuals with hearing impairments but also for any situation where individuals may need enhanced warnings.

Additional strobe lights are available for remote visual signals that may be placed anywhere in the home.

The second product is a remote strobe that has a built in relay which allows it to be activated by any hard wired smoke detector.

The third product is a standard doorbell combined with a strobe light. The unit works like a conventional doorbell. Multiple strobe

lights can be linked to the unit for placement throughout the home.

For additional information contact: **ADA Enterprises, 9 Abbey Lane, PO Box 768, Middleborough, MA 02346.** Phone: (508) 947-9880.Δ

HomeTech News

Resource Fair for Individuals with Special Needs. Reading Memorial High School Gymnasium, 62 Oakland Rd., Reading, MA. On **Tuesday, April 2, from 7:30 PM—9:30 PM.** HomeTech and more than 50 other organizations that provide services to individuals with special needs will be present. For more information call: **(617) 944-3284.**

HomeTech will also be present at the **Massachusetts Transition Initiative conference, Thursday, April 11, 1996 8:00 AM—3:00 PM.** Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, 181 Boston Post Road West, Marlborough, MA. If you would like additional information call: **(617) 287-7597 V/TTY.Δ**

Community News

On April 18, 1996 from 9:00 AM-4:00 PM the **New Hampshire Assistive Technology and Aging Training Series** will present: **Hearing, Seeing, and Getting**

"HomeTech News" continued back page

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