



THE FUTURE IS Flush with Toilet Technology

By Jeffrey Kerr

I had the privilege of touring the number one rehabilitation research institute in the world – The iDAPT Centre for Rehabilitation Research, and it's in Toronto!



Toilevator



ToiLocator



American Standard Access Pro.



All of the work at the Centre focuses on making life easier for people with disabilities or those recovering from illness or living with age-related conditions. The work is centered on more effective rehabilitation treatments, devices and technologies that assist individuals, their caregivers and the professional community.

A tour through the iDAPT premises felt somewhat akin to being on a movie set – picture Star Wars!

There are many different labs that are actually simulators for real life scenarios. The labs I toured included WinterLab, StreetLab, DriverLab, StairLab, HomeLab, and CareLab.

I was interested in the work undertaken in each lab, but wanted to focus on the products being developed in the HomeLab for this issue of

Outspoken – and the next issue too.

My focus is barrier free real estate. I help wheelchair users find the perfect home that suits their unique challenges. The conversation always focuses on the bathroom. And in the bathroom the two most common challenges are the toilet height and the toilet location.

iDAPT is all about solving common problems and helping people overcome everyday challenges. I was amazed at how they were able to solve several issues related to the toilet with two ground breaking products: the Toilevator and the ToiLocator.

The Toilevator is the result of addressing a simple problem: find a better solution to the raised toilet seat that fits onto standard height toilets.

Raised toilet seats create negative images including the fact they are unsafe, unsightly and unsanitary. To accommodate the optimum height for a wheelchair user, the toilet would have to be raised from 14.5 inches to 19. The added height would also benefit seniors or those with hip or knee disabilities.

A number of prototypes were developed and reviewed with

limited positive feedback until the idea of raising the whole toilet was put forth. The result of developing that simple idea was a practical and affordable solution. As you can see in the photo, the Toilevator provided the solution of providing increased height using the original toilet. There are two additional benefits of using the Toilevator rather than a raised toilet seat. It is not obvious or institutional looking, blending in with the bathroom. Plus, the Toilevator allows the installation of a bidet toilet seat. A bidet toilet seat promotes improved health through better personal hygiene. It also helps individuals maintain their privacy and independence in the bathroom.

The good news is the product has already gone to market through Hartmobility, is winning awards including 'Product of the Year by the Canadian Hardware and Housewares Manufacturers Association' and is getting glowing reviews on Amazon.com where it is for sale at a very affordable price. In fact, the day I wrote this article it was on sale from \$125 down to \$96.00 US.

The ToiLocator solves a different problem – how to relocate the toilet without costly renovations. Everyone prefers to remain in their own home. But the ability to get on and off the toilet can mean the difference between living where you want to and having to move.

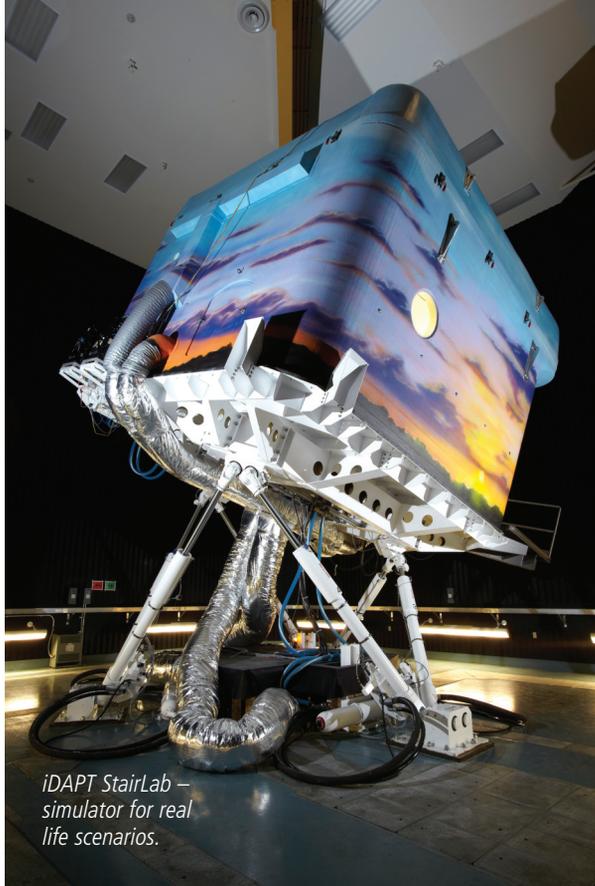
It is very common to see a toilet tucked in a corner of the bathroom. It can become inaccessible for a variety of reasons, for instance if the user needs a walker or wheelchair to access the toilet or room is required for a health care aide.

As you can see from the photo, the simple changes, which do not require costly renovations, will solve the problem. ToiLocator allows the toilet to be repositioned in a bathroom to make it more accessible, as well as raising the height of the toilet. An added waste pipe extends from the toilet towards the original waste pipe so that a reconstruction of the bathroom layout is not necessary. This product is in the final testing stages and to date is not available commercially.

"Being able to use your toilet can mean the difference between staying at home and going to a nursing home," added iDAPT scientist Tilak Dutta. "There isn't a good solution for making the toilet more accessible short of an expensive renovation. We think this product can fill that gap."

In addition to the work being done at iDAPT to make toilets more accessible, American Standard has recently launched a new toilet product call Access Pro. It makes accessibility easy, with an adjustable drain that allows the toilet to be moved easily 3.5" to either side. It is taller than a standard toilet, referred to as the '16-1/2 inches Right Height' and includes an elongated bowl for additional comfort. The design meets criteria for accessibility legislation while meeting the needs of the whole family.

I recently spoke with Michael A. Del Guidice from American Standard. "It is important for leading manufacturers such as ourselves to rethink existing products and design new ones that meet the needs



iDAPT StairLab – simulator for real life scenarios.

of persons with disabilities and the growing seniors market. To accommodate those who want to maintain independence and aging in place often requires renovation of a bathroom and this is where American Standard can play a large role. The AccessPro's innovative design saves time and money allowing the toilet to be relocated without costly renovations to meet accessibility standards."

I have also been in discussions with American Standard to gauge their interest in modifying their Access Pro toilet design to connect a version of the ToiLocator directly to the actual toilet base.

These options for toilet height and location provides simple but innovative solutions for challenges faced by wheelchair users and others. In addition, toilet location is a huge problem when it comes to modifying a bathroom, especially in a condominium. Having the ability to easily re-locate the toilet is a game changer for individuals needing an accessible bathroom.

For more information on buying and selling wheelchair accessible homes, condos and investment properties please see Jeff's ad below. ●

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