



The AT Messenger

....bringing technology to you

Published by the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative

Vol. 3, Issue 2, Mar/Apr 1995

Did You Know....?

Beth Mineo, DATI Director

...That we are surrounded by assistive technology success stories here in Delaware? For example, are you aware that several Delawareans have invented new assistive technologies? Did you know that the University of Delaware is home to the national centers for rehabilitation robotics and augmentative and alternative communication? Do you realize how many new assistive technology services have come into being in the past few years? Do you have any idea how many lives have been changed when individuals find the right technology to meet their needs?

The national press seems to gravitate toward interesting "tech tales," yet Delaware seems to be underrepresented. I think part of the reason is that Delawareans tend to go about their business, hesitating to call attention to their successes. I would like to bring the spotlight closer to home, so that we can all appreciate what is going on in our own backyard. To get us started, with the next issue of the *AT Messenger* we will feature a column called "Homegrown" in which we will highlight personal success stories and technology innovations emanating from The First State. If you would like to contribute to this column, or would like to suggest a topic, please give me a call.

DATI would like to recognize homegrown AT expertise in another way. Starting with this coming year's annual conference in October, we would like to feature more of our in-state expertise. On Page 5 of this newsletter, you will find a proposal submission form. If you would like to

Cont'd. on page 11

New DATI Publications Available!

Delaware Assistive Technology Resource Guide

The *Resource Guide* is a compilation of more than 120 service provision agencies and consultants with expertise in assessment, prescription, and/or client training. Specific service areas are indexed for ease of use. Contact information, fee structures, and populations served are listed for each agency or consultant. Sections for sign language interpreting and braille services are also included.

Independence Through Technology Video

This informative 14-minute videotape is a wonderful overview of how assistive technology can aid in maintaining independence for individuals with disabilities. It is ideal for use in general AT awareness or training activities and is open-captioned. Information about the DATI and other AT resources in Delaware are also included.

For prices and ordering information for these and any other DATI publications, please see the order form on pages 9 & 10 of this newsletter!



Assistive Technology Access Alternatives

Be a “Switch Hitter”

*Patty Hove, Chief Occupational Therapist
Kent County Assistive Technology
Resource Center*

How often do you use a switch in everyday life? To turn on the radio? Turn off a light? Do you use your hands? Due to the recent advance in technology, operating a switch is no longer reserved for the hands! Individuals who don't have good control of their hand movements can use other parts of their body to activate a switch. An occupational therapist (OT) helps determine the best placement of the switch and what type of switch should be used. The proper switch and switch placement makes a difference in function and comfort.

Upon completion of a comprehensive switch assessment, which involves obtaining a background history, goals of the individual, evaluation of motor and visual/motor skills, and trial use of switches, the OT determines what is the most reliable movement pattern (least amount of energy expended by the individual), makes recommendations for the placement of a switch or switches, and the type of switch that would be most effective. In addition, the quality and type of movement are important factors in choosing the best switch for an individual. Muscle tone may increase and adversely influence a movement. Other important considerations include:

- Will the switch be used for one function (i.e., turning a light on and off) or multiple functions (i.e., computer access, ECU operation, etc.)?
- Does the switch site encourage abnormal or primitive reflexive patterns?
- Are there multiple switch sites available for separate functions: mobility, communication, ECU (Environmental Control Unit) operation,

toy activation, computer access, etc.?

- If the switch site is determined to be near the face, is it cosmetically pleasing, or does it obstruct the individual's face and inhibit communication? How?
- How many switches will be needed? Will they look fluid with an individual's tray or chair or become “monstrosities with multiple arms”?
- How often will the switch be used? Durability is an important feature.
- Will the switches be mounted? Who is responsible?
- Who is responsible for recommendations and is follow-up provided?
- Has a good team approach been utilized?
- What are the costs of the switches and mounting systems?

After a switch assessment, these individuals became more independent in various aspects of their lives:

D. uses her right foot to push a rocker switch placed on the footplate of her wheelchair for powered mobility. Foot placement was the key to allowing D. to use powered mobility.

G. uses his elbow to activate the switch for using his computer. He was wasting a lot of energy trying to use his hand to hit the switch time after time and, even then, accuracy was a problem.

J. uses a switch placed above his knee to access his communication system. His knee was where his movements were most con-

trolled, so a knee switch increased his rate of communication.

J.W. uses his chin to turn on a joystick that operates (by infrared) his heating, air conditioning, and his electric door.

K.W. uses a large flat durable switch at her foot to turn on the television because, when using a switch placed at her hand, she used all of her energy to focus on the switch and missed the action on the TV. Her foot switch clicks when she hits it so she doesn't need to look at it to use it.

When looking at an individual's goals for independence, consider how a switch assessment can supplement traditional therapeutic evaluations. Your local Assistive Technology Resource Center has a switch assessment kit which offers an array of over 40 different switches, but be sure to consult with an occupational therapist about switch placement and the type of switch in order to save time and energy for you and the individual who will be using it.

In the Wink of an Eye

*Ken Gardner, AT Specialist
Sussex County Assistive Technology
Resource Center*

People with severe physical disabilities typically want to live as normal and independent life as possible. The EyeGaze Computer System from LC Technologies is one doorway to such independence.

If a person has steady head control and the ability to move one eye, he or she can access a system that can control lights and appliances, turn on the TV or VCR, use the telephone, read text, type a letter, play various games, or access the DOS mode on the computer. One of the beauties of the EyeGaze is that the client needs no prior knowledge of computer operation. The computer is the tool by which the many facets of the EyeGaze can be utilized.

Seated in front of the computer monitor, the user operates the system by looking at rectangular EyeGaze keys that are displayed on the computer monitor. To press an EyeGaze key, the user looks at the key for a specified period of time. The gaze duration required to visually activate a key, typically a fraction of a second, is adjustable. Following are some examples of daily living activities that can be accomplished with the EyeGaze system:

- Turning on lights and appliances (no special house wiring is required)
- Communication - In conjunction with a speech synthesizer, it provides voice output for non-verbal users.
- Typewriter - A total of four keyboard configurations range from simple to complex. Whatever is typed on the screen can be printed or spoken by the speech synthesizer.
- Telephone - The user may place or receive calls. Frequently used numbers can be stored in a "book". Non-verbal users may utilize the speech synthesizer to talk on the phone.
- Second computer mode - The system can operate as a keyboard input to a second computer giving the user the ability to operate off-the-shelf programs.
- TV/VCR - The system, used in conjunction with an infrared remote control device, allows the user to control both a TV and a VCR.
- Read Text - A program that allows the user to select text for display and provides visually controlled "page-turning".

The system is portable in that cameras and monitors are installed at each of two sites. A small computer is carried between those sites. Along with portability, the EyeGaze system has many adjustable parameters that can easily be changed to suit the individual. Additional information is available by contacting:

cont'd on page 4

Access Alternatives *(cont'd from page 3)*

Nancy Cleveland
LC Technologies, Inc.
9455 Silver King Court
Fairfax, VA 22031
Phone: (703)385-7133
Fax: (703)385-7137

LC Technologies also has a toll-free number available for consumers to speak with a Registered Nurse about patient evaluation, medical questions, and the usefulness of the EyeGaze System. That number is (800)733-5284.

Devices Available

Low Cost! 3-wheeled electric scooter. Cushion-upholstered, reclining chair w/adjustable foot rests, attachable lap tray and casters for moving. Works fine. (Item 3-2-001)

Devices Wanted

Needed: 4 strollers for older children (carrying capacity of up to 120 lbs.). Request 2 that come with umbrella, 2 which can convert into car seats. Looking for donation.

Call DATI Central Site at (302)651-6790 for further information or to place your free ad!

Annual Conference Presentations Sought

Plans are well underway already for the 1995 DATI Annual Conference, to be held on Wednesday, October 4, 1995 at the Sheraton Inn and Conference Center in Dover. As in the past, the conference will feature a keynote address, exhibits of assistive technology products and services, and several short sessions on various AT-related topics.

The DATI Training Activities Committee is currently soliciting proposals for presentations to be made during these short sessions. Presentations should address assistive technology issues and will last 1-1/4 hours, including time for questions. Proposals for presentations must include a one-page abstract of the topic to be covered, expected outcomes of the session, and the method of instruction to be used. The Committee will rank all proposals according to their quality and topical relevance. The most highly-ranked proposals will be incorporated into the conference program. Conference registration fees will be waived for those presenters whose proposals are selected for presentation.

Proposals are due **by May 1, 1995**. Complete the form on Page 5 and return it to the address below. For further information, contact Donna Bacon via the following phone numbers:

DATI Training Activities Committee
Applied Science & Engineering Labs
University of DE/A.I. duPont Institute
P.O. Box 269
Wilmington, DE 19899
Phone: (302)651-6790
TDD: (302)651-6794
Fax: (302)651-6793

We look forward to your ideas and your help in planning this year's conference!

DATI Annual Conference
Session Presentation Proposal

Title of Presentation _____

Presenter(s) _____

Address _____

Daytime Phone __ (____) _____ Fax __ (____) _____

Abstract of Presentation _____

Method of Instruction _____

Return form to: DATI Training Activities Committee
 Univ of DE/A.I. duPont Institute
 P.O. Box 269, Wilmington, DE 19899
 Phone: (302)651-6790 (V); (302)651-6794 (TDD)
 Fax: (302)651-6793

FINANCING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

A Way of Thinking

Ron Sibert, Funding Specialist, DATI

Locating funding for assistive technology has been described by some as a science. Others consider it an art. Still others call it an exercise in patience and persistence. Sometimes, though, it is simply a way of thinking.

The field of assistive technology is quickly evolving beyond the traditional medical model. Educational and vocational applications are taking on lives of their own, and such equipment cannot always be purchased through public or private medical insurance. The resources of charitable organizations are also often limited. Then there are the far reaching implications of laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended (sometimes requiring various agencies to purchase assistive devices). But this, mostly because of the perceived expected cost, has generated a fair amount of concern in the business, educational and political arenas. The search is on for creative solutions.

In his famous book, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, Richard Bach tells the story of Jonathan, a bird who wanted to fly faster and farther than any bird had ever flown. At one point in the story, he asks a sage to show him the fastest method of reaching a particular mountain peak that stood far off in the distance. His mentor told him that the fastest way to reach his goal was simply “to be there.”

In the world of assistive technology funding, “being there” can mean being sufficiently aware to make the right purchase at the right time for the right reasons. At the agency level, it means purchasing only equipment that is, or can easily be made, accessible. A little forethought can not only make the purchase of technology much less

expensive in the long run, but taken as a common practice, it can even influence the types of products that are made available for purchase on the open market. For example, schools, businesses, service providers, financial institutions, and others are relying increasingly on technology to perform almost every function in their respective operations. Imagine a world in which these organizations’ purchasing officers were aware of disability-related issues—so much so that all of the office machines and computers they purchased **for everyone** had accessibility features built into them. Given legal requirements and limited budgets, this enlightened approach to purchasing makes a great deal of sense—dollars and sense.

For instance, when a company or school buys a computer that can accommodate a range of input and output devices, the special needs of individuals with a variety of disabilities can be met by simply “plugging in” the appropriate adaptations. This is clearly preferable to buying a whole new set of machines or having to make costly (and often unreliable) modifications to an existing system. The marketplace is also affected in this scenario because as purchasing for accessibility becomes more commonplace, mainstream manufacturers respond to the increased demand by producing even higher quantities of accessible products for general consumption.

Similarly for individuals, getting the most for the dollar depends on the awareness and preparedness of the buyer. Selecting the appropriate device for a particular person is best accomplished through an evaluation by a qualified (usually health care) professional. Purchasing the equipment that best serves the individual’s needs is the one sure-fire way to avoid wasteful, multiple purchases. Again... a way of thinking.

New Law Affects Disabled Medicare Beneficiaries

Release from ELDERinfo

A new federal law has been enacted which amends the Social Security Act. This law makes several changes to the federal requirements for Medicare supplement insurance.

Effective January 1, 1995, disabled Medicare beneficiaries will be eligible for the 6-month open enrollment period for Medicare supplement insurance upon their 65th birthday. Prior to this new law, these persons were not eligible for the 6-month open enrollment period that recipients of regular Social Security benefits enjoyed unless they enrolled in Medicare Part B on or after their 65th birthday.

During the open enrollment period, a person can purchase the Medicare supplement policy of his or her choice and the insurance company cannot turn them down or charge them more.

Additionally, all disabled Medicare beneficiaries who turned 65 between November 5, 1991 and January 1, 1995 and who were not eligible for the 6-month open enrollment because they were enrolled in Medicare Part B prior to reaching age 65, are given a one-time, 6-month, open enrollment period beginning January 1, 1995. This one-time federal open enrollment period applies to any Medicare beneficiary who had Part B coverage prior to age 65 and turned 65 between November 5, 1991 and January 1, 1995.

Delaware Medicare beneficiaries with questions about this new law or Medicare, Medicaid, Medicare supplement insurance, long-term care insurance or other health insurance should call ELDERinfo at (800)336-9500 to schedule an appointment with a volunteer health insurance counselor at one of thirty-seven counseling sites

statewide. ELDERinfo is sponsored as a public service by the Delaware Insurance Department and the DHSS Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities.

Don't Quit

*When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high
When you want to smile but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest, if you must, but don't quit.*

*Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As everyone of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up though the pace seems slow,
You may succeed with another blow.*

*Success is failure turned inside out,
The silver tint in the clouds of doubt;
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far:
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit,
It's when things seem worst, you must not quit.*

-author unknown

Chrysler Offers Incentives

The Chrysler Corporation is offering a cash reimbursement of up to \$1,000 under its new Automobile Program. The money can be used toward the purchase and installation of adaptive driving and passenger equipment installed in all 1994, '95, and '96 Chrysler vehicles. The programs run through December 31, 1995. Customers also receive complimentary telephone debit cards with 30 minutes of prepaid calling time. For more information about the program, contact David Barnas with Chrysler at (313)252-8887.

Need to Send a Message Fast— In Braille?

Western Union now has a braille telegram service available. Call them at (800)325-6000 for details.

New AT Articles Available

The Assistive Technology Funding and Systems Change Project has produced the following informational articles:

- “The Americans with Disabilities Act and Assistive Technology” outlines how assistive technology devices and services can be used to meet the requirements of the ADA.
- “Tax Law Provides Subsidy for Assistive Technology” summarizes the Disabled Access Credit and the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Removal, both of which reduce costs for employers who provide accommodations under the ADA.
- “Fast Facts on Individualized Education Programs” discusses ways to include assistive technology in an IEP and tips to help make sure it is!

Free copies of any of these articles can be ordered through the DATI Central Site by calling (302)651-6790 (V) or (302)651-6794 (TDD).

Augmentative Communication Workshops at A.I. duPont Institute

The Augmentative Communication & Technology Clinic of the A.I. duPont Institute in Wilmington is sponsoring two workshops this Spring. “Integrating Augmentative Communication Technology into the Classroom” is scheduled for April 12, 1995 and “Adaptive Play, Augmentative Communication & Active Participation: An Inter-Disciplinary Approach” for May 4, 1995. For more details and workshop information, please see the center calendar insert.

Your Chance to Advise the President!

The National Council on Disability (NCD) has been appointed by Congress to monitor ADA implementation and must regularly report to the President and Congress on the ADA's progress. As the Fifth Anniversary of the ADA approaches, NCD is collecting information on how truly effective the law has been. They would like to hear your personal stories as to the law's impact on your life and are particularly interested in hearing about varying types of successes and the methods you used to achieve those successes. These stories could be about your own personal experiences, those of your employer, or something related to changes in the community.

If you have personal experiences to share or would like to contribute input that might affect disability policy, send your stories to:

National Council on Disability
1331 F Street, NW, Suite 1050
Washington, DC 20004-1107
Phone: (202)272-2004
TDD: (202)272-2074
Fax: (202)272-2022



Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative

Publications List & Order Form

The following publications are available from the DATI Publications Office. All prices include shipping and handling. Please be sure to indicate the items you wish to purchase and include a complete mailing address for shipment.

<u>Funding Fact Sheets</u>						
Set of five fact sheets providing overviews of the policies and practices of five major funding streams in Delaware relative to assistive technology. Can be ordered separately or as a set.		Single Copy	2-9 Copies	10+ Copies	Qty Ordered	Total Amt
FS-1	Public Schools	<i>Free</i>	\$1.00 ea	\$.50 ea		
FS-2	Medicaid	<i>Free</i>	\$1.00 ea	\$.50 ea		
FS-3	Medicare	<i>Free</i>	\$1.00 ea	\$.50 ea		
FS-4	Voc Rehab & Independent Living	<i>Free</i>	\$1.00 ea	\$.50 ea		
FS-5	Social Security	<i>Free</i>	\$1.00 ea	\$.50 ea		
FS-6	Set of Five		\$5.00 set	\$2.50 set		

<u>Guide to Funding Resources for Assistive Technology in Delaware</u>					
Comprehensive guide to the primary resources for assistive technology funding in Delaware. The guide contains information on eligibility, coverage policies, and application procedures. The material is assembled in a binder with index tabs for convenience.		1-9 Copies	10+ Copies	Qty Ordered	Total Amt
FG-1	Funding Guide	\$5.00 ea	\$4.00 ea		

<u>Delaware Assistive Technology Resource Guide</u>					
Guide containing detailed information about the assistive technology resources for services provision and consultation in Delaware. Service providers are indexed by the types of AT in which they specialize and the types of services they provide. Consultant information contains detail on individuals' experience and training relative to different aspect of AT. The materials are assembled in a binder with index tabs for convenience.		1-9 Copies	10+ Copies	Qty Ordered	Total Amt
RG-1	AT Resource Guide	\$5.00 ea	\$4.00 ea		

<u>Independent Living Brochure Series</u>		Any Quantity	Qty Ordered	Total Amt
Five colorful brochures describing the benefits of assistive technology for activities of daily life.				
IL-1	You Can Get There From Here (Reaching and mobility aids)	<i>Free</i>		
IL-2	Zip It Up (Clothing adaptations and dressing aids)	<i>Free</i>		
IL-3	Around the House (Housecleaning and storage)	<i>Free</i>		
IL-4	Cleanliness Is Next To... (Personal Care and Grooming)	<i>Free</i>		
IL-5	What's For Dinner? (Cooking and dining)	<i>Free</i>		
IL-6	Set of Five Brochures	<i>Free</i>		

<u>Independence Through Technology Video</u>		Any Quantity	Qty Ordered	Total Amt
An introduction to the many ways in which assistive technology can impact lives. The video contains information about the DATI and other AT resources in Delaware.				
IV-1	Independence Video	\$10.00 ea		

Order information

Your mailing address:

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Number of items ordered_____Total Amount Enclosed_____

All publications also available in large print, braille, or audiotape. Please indicate preference.

Be sure that you don't miss a single issue of the *AT Messenger*. If you're not on the project's mailing list already, clip this form and send it in today!

DATI Mailing List Application

Name _____ Title _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

Phone: Business _____ FAX _____ Home _____

I am a: <input type="checkbox"/> Person with a disability (please specify): _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Family member of a person with a disability <input type="checkbox"/> Friend/advocate/colleague of someone with a disability <input type="checkbox"/> Professional working with people who have disabilities (please specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Interested citizen <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ _____	Accessibility Needs: <input type="checkbox"/> Braille <input type="checkbox"/> Large print <input type="checkbox"/> 15/16 Audiotape <input type="checkbox"/> 1-7/8 Audiotape <input type="checkbox"/> ASL Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/> Tactile Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish	I would like to be involved in: <input type="checkbox"/> Technology users peer network <input type="checkbox"/> Service provider network <input type="checkbox"/> Funding initiatives <input type="checkbox"/> Presenters network <input type="checkbox"/> Project governance (boards & committees) <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy activities <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer work as: _____ _____
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Send completed application to:

Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative

A.I. duPont Institute

P.O. Box 269, 1600 Rockland Rd.

Wilmington, DE 19899

Phone: (302)651-6790 TDD: (302)651-6794 FAX: (302)651-6793

Did You Know? (cont'd from Page 1)

share your AT know-how and experiences with about 300 others with common interests, please submit your ideas for a presentation. If selected, you will be featured in the conference program and will receive complimentary conference registration. More details can be found on Pages 4 and 5.

New A.D.D. Support Network Formed

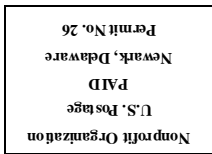
A series of meetings to discuss Attention Deficit Disorder issues among young adults is being supported in part by a grant from the National Science Foundation to the Applied Science & Engineering Labs. The meetings are *not* therapy, *not* lectures, and *not* advice—but a chance for young adults with ADD to share experiences and ideas or just listen to the concerns of other young adults. Meetings are scheduled for March 10 and April 28 at 7:00 pm in Room 116 of Purnell Hall, University of Delaware. For more information, contact Rick & Mary Ellen Foulds @ (302)234-0208 or email Greg Foulds at kluge@brahms.udel.edu.

Address Correction Requested

Wilmington, DE 19899

P.O. Box 269

*University of Delaware/A.I. duPont Institute
Applied Science & Engineering Laboratories
Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative*



DATI Throughout the State...

New Castle County

*Delaware Elwyn
321 E. 11th St.
Wilmington, DE 19801-3499
(302)657-5647; (302)658-8860 (TDD)*

Kent County

*Easter Seal of Del-Mar
Kent County Community School
Carver Rd.
Dover, DE 19901-2716
(302)739-6885; (302)739-6886 (TDD)*

Sussex County

*Easter Seal of Del-Mar
Easter Seal Rehabilitation Center
600 N. DuPont Highway, Suite 100
Georgetown, DE 19947
(302)856-7946 (voice or TDD)*

The AT Messenger is published bi-monthly by the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative.

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Donna Bacon, Education & Training Coordinator
Sonja Simowitz, Staff Assistant
Gregg Stum, Research Programmer

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