

## **The AT Messenger...bringing technology to you**

Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI), Volume 15, No. 1,  
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### **AT Reuse Gets Huge Boost with New Federal Funding**

The DATI has received a three-year, \$600,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration to improve access to assistive devices by Delawareans with disabilities. DATI and its 19 partner organizations will use the grant to make reutilization of AT an efficient, cost-effective, and safe alternative for Delawareans who have disabilities and who are in need of such devices but cannot afford them.

The project was kicked off at a retreat in early January. The two-day event began with a press conference on January 4, at which representatives from the University of Delaware and the federal funding agency announced the grant and discussed its importance. "In supporting innovative efforts to provide for the reuse of assistive technology devices, this new grant provides a very interesting twist on the notion of recycling," said Dr. David Roselle, UD President. "It is a way to be both fiscally responsible and environmentally friendly, in addition to meeting the needs of Delawareans. It's a win-win-win situation."

Jeremy Buzzell, Program Specialist with the Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration, said that promotion of the reuse of assistive technology is a priority for the federal agency. He said the administration considers the grant "an investment" because the work accomplished in Delaware will serve as a model to help other states improve their efforts.



*Jeremy Buzzell*

Beth Mineo Mollica, DATI Director, noted that a large number of Delawareans have unused AT in basements, closets, attics, and garages. "There are so many people who need AT, yet cannot access it through state agencies or insurance," says Mineo Mollica, "that the notion of AT reuse just makes good sense." The new grant will help the state to build on its existing capacity relative to recycling and reuse of AT to create a coordinated, streamlined system for connecting individuals in need of such devices with sources in the community.

Some state agencies have already made a commitment to reuse AT, although the programs are limited by a variety of constraints. For example, the Colonial Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America has operated an equipment recycling program for many years. The DATI operates the AT Exchange, a "want ads" system that enables individuals to buy, sell, or give away used devices. The Milton Lions Club maintains a warehouse of hospital beds, crutches, walkers, and wheelchairs. The Delaware Solid Waste Authority operates numerous recycling initiatives, including those targeting consumer electronics, and partners in this pursuit with the Opportunity Center, Inc., which employs people with disabilities in its computer recycling activities. The goal of the new Delaware Recycles and Reuses Assistive Technology project is the formation of a coordinated equipment reutilization network.



*Marvin Williams  
shares his  
thoughts with  
Kathy McCoy,  
Jeremy Buzzell,  
and Carolyn  
Phillips*

After the conclusion of the press conference, the work began in earnest as representatives of the partner agencies—known collectively as the Stakeholder Consortium—set about devising a plan for Delaware's reuse effort. Members of the consortium include: AARP, Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children, Avenue Medical, Chesapeake Rehab Equipment, the Colonial Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the DATI, the Delaware Department of Education, the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council, the Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, the Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired, the Delaware Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance, the Delaware Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities, the Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Delaware Solid Waste Authority, the Disabilities Law Program, Easter Seals Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore, the Hearing Loss Association of Delaware, the Milton Lions Club, the Opportunity Center, and the State Council for Persons with Disabilities.



*Lively discussion among (from left) Charles Laskowski and Cathie Field-Lloyd from the Opportunity Center, Denise Denny from the DE Solid Waste Authority, Joe Keyes from DDDS, and Wayne Carter from the Colonial Chapter-PVA*



*Hard at work are Daniese McMullin-Powell (State Council for Persons with Disabilities), Karen Jones (Department of Education), Matthew Tseronis and Bob Goodhart (both from the Division for the Visually Impaired)*

In his presentation to the group, Jeremy Buzzell emphasized that the country still has a lot to learn about what constitutes "best practice" when it comes to AT reuse, and Delaware's efforts, combined with those of the 11 other programs funded at the same time, will help guide future initiatives. A spirited presentation from Carolyn Phillips described Georgia's ReBoot program, which refurbishes used AT, including computers, and makes them available to others at reasonable cost. Consortium members got a great glimpse of "what's possible" from Carolyn's presentation.



*Carolyn Phillips has everyone's attention as she helps Stakeholder Consortium members to envision the possibilities*



On the retreat's second day, participants engaged in a series of large-group and small-group activities designed to identify the opportunities and challenges that the project faces. They concluded that issues such as equipment ownership, storage, transportation, and quality of needed professional services warrant much more study and discussion. Members also discussed the importance of outreach and marketing to ensure that all who can benefit from the program know of its existence. The group will meet monthly to learn from other reuse programs around the country and to define and build the structure of Delaware's reuse network. The February meeting featured Dr. Sara Sack, founder of the Kansas Equipment Reuse Program that is operated in partnership with Kansas Medicaid.



*Lisa Wolfe of AARP and Beth Mineo Mollica reflect on an idea expressed by Dave Michalik of Medicaid (not pictured)*

If you know of others who should be involved in the project, or you have used equipment that you would like to donate to a reuse effort, please contact Beth Mineo Mollica at the DATI Central Site. DATI will provide frequent updates on the progress of this project in future issues of *The AT Messenger*.

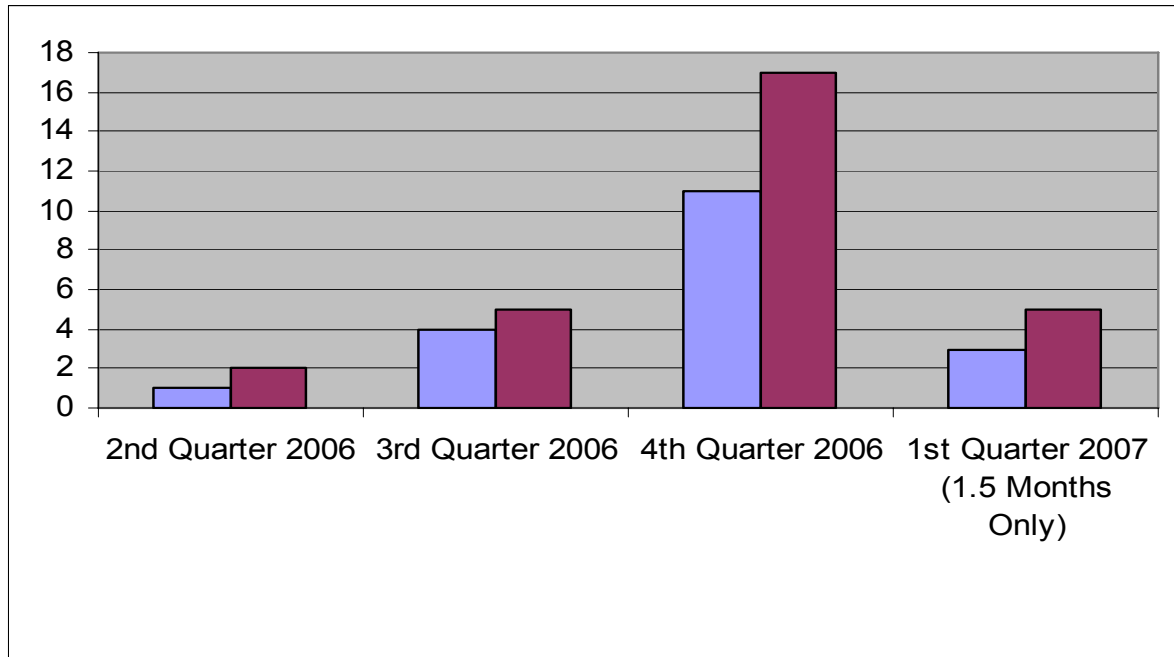
## **The BOLD Program Takes Off**

Beth Mineo Mollica  
DATI Director

In September 2005, the Tobin Foundation awarded funding to the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative for the Borrow-to-Own Low-vision Devices program. The primary purpose of the program was to

enable Delawareans with visual impairments to access relatively low cost (\$100 and under) devices efficiently and without burdensome bureaucratic entanglements.

The guidelines require individuals to try a product before they apply for the device through the program. This requirement was established to ensure that clients are selecting devices that truly meet their needs. Since the BOLD Program was announced to the public in the Spring 2006 issue of *The AT Messenger*, we have distributed 29 pieces of equipment through the program. The chart below represents the utilization of the program, by quarter, since Spring 2006. The left-hand column represents the number of individuals who received equipment, and the right-hand column represents the number of devices that were awarded. As the chart illustrates, utilization of the program is increasing steadily. Program utilization has been greatest in New Castle and Kent Counties, with 14 equipment recipients residing in New Castle County and 9 residing in Kent County. Only four individuals from Sussex County have acquired equipment through the program through mid-February.



The types of devices acquired range from magnifiers to mobility aids to a variety of "talking" products. The program has distributed 11 magnifiers of various types, three specialized watches, three talking

alarm clocks, a talking caller ID system, four talking bathroom scales, a talking prescription bottle, a key finder, a check-writing guide, two talking calculators, a specialized telephone, and a folding mobility cane.

The program routinely solicits feedback from individuals who received equipment about their reasons for accessing the program and their satisfaction with program services. Among the participants to date, the vast majority (75%) intend to use their new devices to enhance community living; 9% indicated that the primary use was for education, and 17% indicated that the equipment will be used primarily for employment. One-third of the program participants indicated that they utilized the BOLD Program because they could not afford the technology any other way. Forty-two percent indicated that they did not qualify for any other program that made devices available to them. Finally, 100% of the participants indicated that they were "highly satisfied" with the level of services that they received. One individual added the following comment: "Thanks very much. This is a great service to people; it's really wonderful."

## **The AT Bargain Basement**

Marvin Williams, AT Specialist  
Kent County ATRC

Hello, True Believers, and welcome to another installment of the *AT Bargain Basement*. I am Marvin Williams, your guide to the world of the ever-elusive yet rather plentiful assistive technology bargain. For those of you who are Basement regulars, welcome back. For those who are new to the Basement, welcome and let me explain our rules of engagement. First, I try to find you all of the AT I can find for \$100 or less. Second, I try to find you local bargains in local stores. However, in the interest of bringing you the best bargains I can, I do also include gems I find on the Internet. Third, I will always report the bargains you and your fellow Basement fans bring me. Fourth and most importantly, I hope you all have fun! So with that being said, let's get to the bargains!

My first find comes to you from the world of the wireless electronic locator. A wireless electronic locator is a device that helps you find

something that you regularly misplace: your keys, purse, remote control, or anything else that seems to grow legs and walk away right after you set it down. Here's how it works. You attach one of the small "find-me" units to the thing you regularly lose, presumably before you have lost it. Then, when you lose it, you can press a button on the "finder" unit, which will cause the "find-me" unit to beep and flash. For some of the systems, the "find-me" only beeps and flashes when the "finder" is a certain distance from it. **Radio Shack** has one of these wireless electronic locaters for \$29.95 for a one finder/one find-me set. If you aren't afraid to buy things online, you can get a nice 8 find-me/1 finder set from **The Sharper Image** for \$49.95. The ATRCs have a couple of finder systems that you can try, including the **Sharper Image** unit that I just described. Do keep in mind that these systems won't necessarily help you find the finder unit if you lose that...

My next bargain is actually a tip I received from an AAC discussion group, and it's pretty neat! If you are an individual who uses an AAC device with an infrared (IR) output so that you can control a television remote or any other IR environmental control unit, you can now access your **Playstation 2** or **Xbox** for between \$20 and \$40. Both of these game systems have various DVD playback sets you can purchase (they range in price). This is the key to being able to control the system because included in the sets are IR receivers. Also included are remote controls that include the regular buttons on the gaming controller. So all you have to do is the standard IR remote training you would do for any other remote control and set up an appropriate interface screen for the user, and then you're all set to play your favorite games! This will not provide access to the L3 and R3 buttons on the **PS2** controller, but it will get you there with everything else. You also have the added benefit of being able to control the DVD playback of the systems. So no more sitting on the sidelines when everyone else is playing. Time to get in the game!



*PlayStation 2 controller*



My next bargain is another of the **Franklin** products, of which some of you know I'm very fond. It's the **Franklin Speaking Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary**. What makes this little marvel a bargain in my book is that it has all the power of the larger **Franklin Speaking Language Master** while being more compact and professional in appearance. It boasts over 40,000 word definitions from the 11th edition of the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*, a thesaurus with over 500,000 synonyms and antonyms, learning games, a nice head phone jack for private listening, and the usual ease of use **Franklin** has been known for. If you are an Internet shopper, you can do well getting this deal for \$85 from **Buy.com**. If you prefer store purchasing, you can get the same model from **Target**, if it's in stock, for about \$95.99.

My final bargain is actually one from a previous installment, but it seems to be one that some of you have purchased and enjoy. So here again for your consideration I bring you the **One-Touch Can Opener**. The **One-Touch** is a great little can opener that sits on the top of a can and drives itself around, opening the can just below the lip of the can. The nice thing about that is that you can put the lid back on the can fairly easily with a good fit. I have heard from three different Bargain Basement fans who say it's a great little product. We also have one available to borrow at the Kent County ATRC. You can buy it from **Wal-Mart** for \$19.95, when in stock, or from **Walmart.com** for \$18.44 plus shipping and handling. You can also find it at the **Kitchen Collection** in Rehoboth Beach for \$19.99 while supplies last.

And that will bring to a close this installment of the *AT Bargain Basement*. Tune in next time when I'll bring you even more bargains and hopefully some more success stories to share with you. Until then remember, just because it's a bargain, doesn't mean it's cheap!

## **Let's tango! Philadelphia**

**tango!**, from Blink Twice, is on tour and will be visiting the Hilton Philadelphia Airport on Tuesday, May 8. Registration is at 8:30 am and the day-long session will run from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm. This

introduction and information session will provide attendees with enough experience to feel comfortable using this exciting tool.

The session will teach a broad range of strategies on how to get the most out of this new AAC device. Discussions will include how to use the **tango!** to promote literacy and learning in the classroom, innovative ways for quick content creation using the device's built-in camera and voice morphing, and how the seamless interfaces for scanning and computer use make the tango simple to use. 0.5 ASHA CEUs are available for attending this instructional session.

A registration fee of \$35 per person includes training materials, lunch, and refreshments. Space is limited and advanced registration is required. For further information or to register, please visit [www.blink-twice.com/tours](http://www.blink-twice.com/tours) or contact: Jackie Nadel at (646) 747-0807 or via email at [jn@blink-twice.com](mailto:jn@blink-twice.com).

## **RFB&D Announces New Member Promotion**

The Fall 2006 issue of *The AT Messenger* turned the spotlight on Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D), a national nonprofit organization that produces accessible audio textbooks for students of all ages with dyslexia, visual impairments, or physical disabilities. Their comprehensive library contains over 30,000 digital title selections, and continues to grow.

The organization just announced a special new member promotion, which is valid until June 15th, 2007. Each new institutional membership purchased entitles the member to the **Victor Reader Vibe** portable CD player by **Humanware** and **EaseReader** software by **Dolphin** for PC use at no cost. The table below provides the details.

For more information about RFB&D's audiobook catalog and their players and accessories, visit their website at [www.rfd.orb](http://www.rfd.orb).

If you would like a hands-on experience with the players to assist you in your decision-making, contact the DATI ATRC nearest you. All

ATRCs have equipment and sample audio CDs that you can try, as well as associated literature and membership materials.

	<b>Level One Membership</b>	<b>Level Two Membership</b>	<b>Level Three membership</b>
<b>Complimentary Equipment</b>	1 Victor Reader Vibe	2 Victor Reader Vibes	3 Victor Reader Vibes
<b>Software</b>	1 EaseReader Software	1 EaseReader Software	1 EaseReader Software
<b>Audiobooks</b>	25 Audio Books	50 Audio Books	100 Audio Books
<b>Membership Fee</b>	\$350.00	\$500.00	\$950.00
<b>Shipping Fee</b>	\$6.50	\$6.50	\$6.50
<b>Promo Code</b>	FP111	FP112	FP113

## **DATI Equipment Loan Policy**

DATI has a wide variety of equipment at the Assistive Technology Resource Centers for the primary purpose of demonstration and short-term loan. The policy for the loan of the equipment is as follows: The standard loan period is two weeks, defined as the day borrowed (e.g., Monday the 10th) to the same day two weeks later (e.g., Monday the 24th). Loans may be extended providing there are no names on the waiting list and/or that an extension will not interfere with an existing reservation. The maximum loan period is four weeks. A maximum of four devices may be borrowed during any single loan period. However, combinations of devices may be treated as a single device if the components are interdependent—either operationally, or because one component is required for the user to access another. Equipment loans across state lines are not permitted. Equipment must also remain in Delaware throughout the loan period.

## **To Contact DATI's Central Site office or the ATRC closest to you, call 1-800-870-DATI**

Press

#1 for English or

#2 for Spanish,

then press

#3 for the Central Site office

#4 for the New Castle County ATRC

#5 for the Kent County ATRC

#6 for the Sussex County ATRC

TDD callers: Do not press #1 or #2 and your call will be answered on a TDD line at the Central Site office.

## **DATI Resource Centers Throughout the State...**

1-800-870-DATI

[dati@asel.udel.edu](mailto:dati@asel.udel.edu)

### **New Castle County ATRC**

Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children  
203 Administration & Research Bldg.

1600 Rockland Rd.  
Wilmington, DE 19899  
(302) 651-6790;  
(302) 651-6794 (TDD);  
(302) 651-6793 (fax)

**Kent County ATRC**

Easter Seals Kent County Center  
100 Enterprise Place, Suite 1  
Dover, DE 19904-8200  
(302) 739-6885;  
(302) 739-6886 (TDD)

**Sussex County ATRC**

New location to be announced!  
(302) 856-7946;  
(302) 856-6714 (voice or TDD)

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