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TTAP Delivers Again for the Demonstration Centers

Each of our statewide network AT demonstration centers strives to display and present a variety of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services (including assisting individuals in making informed choices regarding, and providing experiences with, the devices and services), using people who are familiar with such devices and services and their applications. These demonstrations are available to consumers and their family members, as well as advocates, employers, and educators. As AT continues to improve and meet the needs of our network’s consumers, each center’s demonstration equipment must present state-of-the-art technology and be in excellent condition. Also, people providing the demonstrations must be provided hands-on training and kept informed of the latest improvements and newest technology.

TTAP Director Roger Levy travels to each supported center in the network at least once a year to insure we maintain these goals. Roger has been VERY busy recently logging over 7,500 Texas highway miles to deliver, install, and effectively train demonstration center staff on new or improved general AT equipment and various computer systems, including new software. The network served over 700 individuals last year, and continues to improve to reach and serve a growing and diverse community of users.
Join us at the 2011 TATN Statewide Conference on Assistive Technology in Houston

The Texas Assistive Technology Network (TATN) will hold its statewide conference on assistive technology June 14 – 16, 2011, at the Region 4 Education Service Center in Houston. If you haven’t registered, please hurry as the registration fee is only $105 for this event. Learn about the latest assistive technology at over 100 concurrent sessions. The conference will feature nine nationally-recognized speakers presenting half-day sessions, and will showcase over 60 vendor exhibits. You’ll get a good look at many types of assistive technology being used in classroom settings, as well as new technologies commercially available to help districts and schools provide access and accommodations for a variety of students with special needs. This year the Assistive Technology Applications Certificate Program (ATACP), through California State University Northridge, is available as a pre-conference session as well.

For more information on the Texas Assistive Technology Network Statewide Conference, please visit www.texasat.net or www.texasatconference.net

Latest News from the Loan Program

TTAP Announces New Recycled Device Program

In our continuing effort to promote independence for people with disabilities and provide enhanced access to assistive technology, TTAP has initiated the Extended Device Loan Program. The EDLP will maximize the use of recycled devices and will assist individuals with disabilities who do not have sufficient resources purchase a computer or assistive device and acquire needed technology. These devices/software/computers will be available on a first come, first serve basis. The program will end once computer or assistive device supplies are gone.

Contact TTAP’s AT Coordinator, John Morris, for details and application forms by e-mail at: jcmorris1@mail.utexas.edu

Assistive Technology Q&A

Q: Is the Microsoft Windows 8 operating system ready?

A: No, but speculations are rampant that it will be out in 2012.

Some tech sites on the Web are speculating that a new "Windows Store" is perhaps the most ambitious feature for Windows 8 described by developers. Microsoft may offer a
store service to third-party software developers. The store will allow easy discoverability of applications, both from within Windows, and from the Web.

The store will handle standard features like account management and software updates, as well as providing capabilities such as the ability to replicate applications and settings across different devices. The store would be curated, so only applications that reached a certain quality standard would be permitted. The basic model then, is a cross between Apple’s App Store and Valve’s Steam. For further information, check out the following Web sites:

http://news.cnet.com/8301-13860_3-20009035-56.html

http://www.neowin.net/news/microsoft-planning-039windows-store-039-app-store-for-windows-8


Will there be more accessibility in Windows 8? – We’ll have to wait and see.

**Article: Assistive Technology in the Classroom**

From an online article on the Assistive Technology Training Online Project’s Web site at the University at Buffalo’s Center for Assistive Technology:

**What Is Assistive Technology?**

Assistive Technologies are the tools and strategies that act to liberate the use of technology for all students as well as to provide new ways to "assist" interactions and learning. They act to "augment abilities and bypass or compensate for a disability" (Lewis, 1994).

AT is anything that makes "it" easier for a student to...

- Turn things on
- Get dressed, eat, or bathe
- Read
- Write
- See
- Hear
- Get around or move
- Communicate
- Play
Changing Classrooms

As we enter the twenty-first century, we find that recent legislation and technology innovations are changing the ways teachers teach and children learn. Since 1990, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), has mandated that "to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled."

Over the past 10 years, the percentage of students with disabilities served in schools and classes with their non-disabled peers has gradually increased and continues to grow. In fact, approximately 95.9% of students with disabilities, ages 6-11, receive their education in regular education classrooms/resource rooms (OSEP, 2002). The 1997 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) calls for providing access to the general education curriculum in order to improve outcomes for all students.

The majority of students with disabilities are capable of participating in the general education curriculum to varying degrees with some adaptations and modifications. As inclusive schools become the norm, schools are becoming more accessible to all students; standards are being set and creative designs employed.

As instructional issues arise regarding how to meet the individual learning needs of all students, new tools are being investigated. Educators begin with the curriculum, and then ask how existing classroom tools, materials and activities might be re-designed to assist all students in achieving learning outcomes. School districts are searching for viable tools that will expand access to the general education curriculum for all students.

Computer Technology

Another major classroom change is the use of computer technology. Computers have become an essential literacy tool in our society; its use crucial for future success in the workplace. Over 76% of American students use a computer at school; 83% use one at home for school assignments/word processing (NCES, 2001). Internet access in public schools has increased to 78%, with 27% of classrooms with Internet access (NCES, 2001). However, to best take advantage of the potential of technology, teachers and students must have adequate and equitable access; schools must build the capacity to use technology, develop a technology plan and offer adequate training and technical support; and teachers and students must use technology in effective ways (Jerald, 1998).

With increased access to education technology, it can be used to create more accessible curricular materials in fast and easy ways for students with disabilities (Research Connections, 1999). As classrooms materials are created in digital format, they can then
be accessed and manipulated in a variety of ways to be heard, seen, and manipulated. For example, students can change how they interact with digitized materials by:

- **Enlarging the size of the text**
  - Changing the color or font of the text
  - Having the text read aloud
  - Hearing labels read of pictures/simulations
  - Speaking into a computer microphone to write
  - Using alternate input options: trackballs, larger keyboards, touch screens, etc.

Software companies are designing programs that meet a wider range of needs. CD textbooks and e-Books are just two examples. Universal Access features are embedded in programs that present content in alternate ways, with multiple options for student control (i.e. text-to-speech, enlarged fonts and tool bars with large, well labeled buttons) (CAST, 1998). Other characteristics promote student engagement, interest, and motivation. These "built-in" options make learning more relevant.

For further information, visit http://atto.buffalo.edu

**Spotlight on TTAP Demonstration Centers**

This quarter the TTAP spotlight shines on:

**Not Without Us!**
**Abilene Center for Independent Living**
3303 N 3rd, Suite B
Abilene, Texas 79603

**Not Without Us!** is committed to promoting the Independent Living Philosophy by empowering people with disabilities to exercise self-determination when fighting for their civil rights, dignity, independence, and full inclusion.

**Core Services Include:**

Advocacy: **Not Without Us!** provides information and assistance to people with disabilities and their families in accessing support systems, and promoting changes that enhance full access to the community.

Peer Support: The center provides a forum for individuals and their families to obtain a greater understanding of disability issues and their solutions.
Information and Referral: Comprehensive and current information on resources for people with disabilities is provided. Referrals are given for services such as housing, education and attendant assistance services.

Independent Living Skills Training: **Not Without Us!** offers individuals basic training in skills that empower them to live more independently (i.e., cooking, money management, transit training, etc.).

**Not Without Us!** is a TTAP Computer Access Demonstration Center with a variety of computer assistive technology. For further information, or to make an appointment for a demonstration of assistive technology, call (325) 672-5460.

**Tech Corner**

**The Blind Geek Zone**

Audio Tutorials, Podcasts, Demos, and much more. Here’s a Web site provided by a blind 47-year old Ohioan Webmaster where you will find various audio files allowing you to learn about new things. There are many demonstrations of hardware and software products for you to listen to before you buy them. There are many audio tutorials that cover many different programs and devices, including Windows 7, Vista, Outlook Express, Goldwave, Nero Burning ROM, Skype, and others. There are also many tutorials for doing maintenance on your computer. There are tutorials that will help you do an unattended installation of your operating system. The Web site also records podcasts where the Webmaster talks about things going in his life and his community. The Webmaster hopes you will find something on the Web site that will help you to learn about something new that will allow you to be more productive and independent. New files were added on 04/13/2011. Visit http://www.blind-geek-zone.net/

**What’s on TTAP for Summer**

TATN Conference 2011 
June 14-16
Houston, Texas
http://www.texasat.net or http://www.texasatconference.net

AHEAD Conference 2011 
July 11-16
Seattle, Washington
Phone: (704) 947-7779
http://www.ahead.org
Just for Laughs

This is a cartoon of a young boy and his teacher. Dialogue: “I don’t have my homework. My dog deleted it.”

Information

TTAP values your input. If you have any suggestions, comments, or would like to have an article included in the newsletter, please let us know at:

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(512) 232-0753/jcmorris1@mail.utexas.edu
(512) 232-0750/dwest@mail.utexas.edu
(512) 232-0772/jayhawker@mail.utexas.edu

Texas Technology Access Program
Texas Center for Disability Studies
The University of Texas at Austin, L4000
The Commons Learning Center
10100 Burnet Road
Austin, Texas 78758-4445

www.techaccess.edb.utexas.edu

TTAP Demonstration Centers

Full Demonstration Centers

- Easter Seals, Fort Worth
- Paso Del Norte Children’s Development Center, El Paso
- United Cerebral Palsy, Dallas
- Easter Seals of Houston (formerly UCP of Houston)
- Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living, Corpus Christi
Computer Access Demonstration Centers

- RISE Center for Independent Living, Beaumont
- East Texas Center for Independent Living, Tyler
- Brazos Valley Rehabilitation Center, Bryan
- Goodwill Industries of Central Texas, Austin
- Brazoria County Center for Independent Living, Angleton
- Helping Hands, Amarillo
- Not Without Us!, Abilene

Portable Computer Demonstration Centers

- REACH Center for Independent Living, Plano
- Houston Center for Independent Living, Houston
- Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center, Belton
- VAIL – Valley Association for Independent Living, McAllen