



AT Bytes

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Assistive Technology Initiative

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Courage Center

www.courage.org/atweb

What's New Courage

Disability Awareness Month

October is Disability Awareness Month. Once again, Courage will be involved in a variety of activities and conferences during October. It's the time to recognize both the service providers and people with disabilities. Courage gives a big thanks to all who are involved in Disability Awareness and who are enthusiastic about the area of disability.

Closing the Gap and Minnesota Occupational Therapy Association Presentations

Sony Ericson and Jen Mundl will be speaking at Closing the Gap in October. This is an honor as a select few are given the opportunity to speak at a national level. The topic will be Simple Solution: Everything for under \$250. The presentation will be given a second time by Sue Redepenning and Jen Mundl at the Minnesota OT Association annual conference in Rochester during October.

Assistive Technology Events

Assistive Technology and Early Childhood for People in Greater Minnesota

Early Childhood Assistive Technology Workshops are available by request for communities in Greater Minnesota! Workshops can be requested by parents and/or professionals. For information on scheduling a free workshop in your area please contact Tenley McDonald at 952-838-9000 or at stc@pacer.org.

Possible workshop topics include:

- ∞ Introduction to Assistive Technology
- ∞ Boardmaker or Boardmaker Plus
- ∞ Clicker
- ∞ Speaking Dynamically Pro
- ∞ Augmentative and Alternative Communication
- ∞ Toys and Universal Design

Trainings are funded in part by the Minnesota Department of Education.

Online Board Maker Courses

Mayer-Johnson is offering 30-60 minute choruses on a variety of topics dealing with Board Maker. There is no registration or fee for participating. Their webpage can be reached by going to <http://www.mayer-johnson.com/> and clicking on the training graphic.

Communication for Growth: Encouraging Successful Communication at All Levels

On November 8, this session introduces the concept of communicative competence and will discuss how to determine the level of communication independence. Practical examples will be shared on how to foster communication at the current level of independent. Contact Dannel at dannel.friel@dynavoxtech.com

Bloomington Disability Employment Lecture Series

In recognition of October Disability Employment Awareness Month, employers and people with disabilities will have an opportunity to hear local experts speak on a variety of work-related topics.

- ∞ Utilizing the Internet for Your Job Search (October 11, 952-563-4957)
- ∞ Resume Writing/Job Application Workshop (October 17, 952-563-4957)
- ∞ Self Advocacy Workshop (October 24, 952-847-5800)
- ∞ Art Exhibit at Oxboro Library (October 1-31, 952-847-5800)
- ∞ Minnesota Business Leadership Mentoring Day (November 8, www.mnbln.org)

Closing the Gap

Closing the Gap is a nationally recognized leader in assistive technology information distribution. The annual conference will be held October 18-20 at the Sheraton Bloomington. Over 500 exhibitors will be on hand to answer questions and show the latest and greatest assistive technology primarily for special education. Secondly, experts will be speaking on numerous topics related to assistive technology. Saturday is free to the general public to come and browse through the exhibits. To find out more, visit their website at www.closingthegap.com.

PACER Assistive Technology Open House

PACER Center will be celebrating 20 years of service at the Simon Technology Center during their open house on October 6. The open house runs from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. located off of Normandale Drive. Assistive technology will be showcased during this time.

Hot Web Sites

Michigan Exchange Website

ATXchange.org

People with disabilities who want to buy, sell, trade or donate tools or equipment now have a cyber home to assist them through a Web site recently launched by the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition (MDRC). The new site, ATXchange.org, focuses on the exchange of assistive technology - which includes any equipment that improves life for people with disabilities such as walkers, power scooters, Braille machines and software that reads computer screens out loud. Don't forget about Minnesota's exchange sites through PACER and Star.

Mathematics and the Internet

www.multiplication.com
www.aplusmath.com
www.thatquiz.com
www.primarygames.com
www.math.com
www.aaamath.com

US Golf Association Resource for People with Disabilities

<http://www.resourcecenter.usga.org/>

The US Golf Association believes their sport needs to be accessible to people of all ability. They host a special website dedicated to finding golf courses with accessibility features. Whether physically or visually challenged, there are courses that maybe appropriate for special concerns.

Hot Technology

Mobility

Clock Conversions



<http://www.infinitec.org/live/driving/carmods.htm>

Persons with higher level injuries require the most technologically-advanced features available to move them towards mobility and independence for driving. Whether someone requires electronic steering devices, joystick controls, quadriplegic driving systems, touch pad controls, or power head rests, there are a variety of driving options available on the market.



Quick Glance

<http://www.eyetechds.com/>

Quick Glance is an eye gaze system which responds to reflection of a person's pupils. By looking around the screen, the software and hardware device actually can follow an individual's eye movements. It is a solution for individual in end-stage ALS or other limiting conditions. The latest version has improved significantly making it a usable and intuitive method.

Sorting Activities

www.toolfactory.com

Activities include: Sort color, It fits, It doesn't fit, and Which set? Each activity has four levels of difficulty, plus a choice of these eight familiar topics: food, home, clothes, animals, play, transport, letters, and numbers. Students can work with numbers, words, or pictures, plus each activity screen provides full audio support for non-readers. Teacher options can be used to configure timing, font and background colors, pointer size, difficulty levels, and activity selection.

Vision



20 inch CCTV by Reliant magnifiers

<http://www.magnisight.com/>

Reliant Magnifiers make for easy reading of a wide variety of printed materials including bills, letters, the newspaper, magazines, and more. Simply place the material on the movable slide table and adjust the magnification level to your comfort. The Reliant 20 inch magnifier comes with a 20 inch viewing screen to magnify materials from 3x to 50x. These desktop magnifiers feature top quality parts and materials while delivering superior magnification quality and value.

Visual Impairments Package by Laureate Learning Systems

www.enablemart.com

This package is appropriate for children with exceptionally low vision who must solely rely on their hearing to understand the computer's instructions. Selections are made by using the number keys or an audible scanning option. It includes popular software such as First Nouns, 20 Categories, and First Verbs. It is an excellent learning program for early childhood in the elementary school.

Hard of Hearing and DEAF/deaf:



Sound Monitor

http://www.adcohearing.com/not_silent_call.html

Place in any room to monitor sounds such as a baby's cry. The unit may be adjusted for sensitivity to monitor a variety of sounds. When it detects a sound above the preset level, it sends a signal to any Silent Call Receiver.

Communication



Eco-14

<http://www.prentrom.com/eco>

The Eco-14 communication device is the latest in the Prentke Romich's advanced speech generating devices. It provides the user with a multitude of options for communicating effectively for young and old alike. The full features run on a Windows XP environment allowing the user to operate standard software along with communicating with other individuals using a natural sounding voice. It is intuitive with both picture and word base communication options.



JustAMP Digital Amplifier

http://www.iltsource.com/JustAMP_Digital_Voice_Amplifier_p/justamp.htm

JustAMP Digital Amplifier is a speech aid device designed to help whisper patients who have lost their ability to project a loud voice to speak again. Such voice loss may occur due to any of the following: Parkinson's, Lou Gehrig's Disease, aka Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), or Multiple Sclerosis (MS). The digital signal processing used in JustAMP allows filtering unequalled in today's analog amplifiers. The Crystal Whisper Technology uses state-of-the-art digital technology to virtually eliminate air rush noise commonly found using analog amplifiers.

Learning

Ablenet and Weekly Reader Team up

In August, the two learning experts teamed up to create an adaptable form of the Weekly Reader accessible to children with disabilities. Dubbed 'Weekly Reader AbleNet Editions,' these unique publications provide proven, quality content for today's special education classrooms. Teachers receive materials uniquely designed for students with moderate to severe disabilities, utilizing the fresh, engaging, and relevant content of Weekly Reader publications. In essence, this is Weekly Reader magazine adapted for special education classrooms.



The Quiz Maker

<http://www.pc-shareware.com/quiz.htm>

Looking for an easy way to create paper/pencil tests for your students at no cost? The Quiz Maker is a free online program that is easy to use even for those with novice level of computer knowledge. You can create fill in the blank and multiple choice questions with pictures and various text.

Hot Terms

Shareware: Shareware is a downloadable program that the operator is able to use at no cost. The developer of the program does request a small donation if the program is going to be used extensively.

Freeware: Freeware is a downloadable program that can be used at no cost forever.

Demonstration: A demonstration program is a full version of a commercial software program that a user is able to operate for a limited amount of time. Normally, one month or 30 days is the standard timeframe.

Open Source: Programs created for the general public with full features and abilities. Many are created in Linux; however, there are numerous programs for PC and Macintosh computer systems.

Windows Tips

A mouse is not necessary to control or operate a PC. Every command and need can be accomplished through a few simple keystrokes. We all use the Internet so when using Internet Explorer or other similar web browsers, try the following strokes to maneuver and navigate your way around the system:

Refresh	F5	Go Back	Alt Left Arrow
Address Bar	F4	Go Forward	Alt Right Arrow
Home	Alt Home	Favorites	Alt A

Volunteer Corner

New Products

This past month was an adventure into completing a variety of products for our consumers. The first product was a switch operated iPod Nano where the user is able to scan through all the functions on an iPod to control the device. Volume, playlists, pause and shuffle are the options they user can choose from.

The second device completed was a yodel switch. By making a sequence of two sounds, the user is able to connect to four different devices through a simple basic grunting sound.

On the Horizon



An English company named “Shadow Robot” created a robotic imitation of a human hand, the closest one ever to the real thing. The “Shadow Hand” provides 24 different movements, which allow almost identical functionality capabilities as the real flesh and blood hand. The Shadow Hand has integrated sensing and position control and uses 40 built in Air Muscles – small devices that provide a pulling force to the Hand. The Air Muscles behave in a similar way to biological muscles – they can contract up to 40% of their original length when actuated with a supply of compressed air and can provide a powerful source of force. These artificial muscles are easily controllable, enabling the robotic hand to handle even soft or fragile objects. In addition, small sensors can be applied to the artificial fingertips of the Hand, offering sensitivity sufficient to detect a small coin.

The combination of these abilities – force, tenderness and sensitivity can be very efficient in practice. The robotic hand can operate in inaccessible areas where radiation, toxic chemicals or biological hazards are present, or in potentially dangerous situations such as bomb dismantling. The robotic hand technology can also be used in rehabilitation and assistive devices, where accurate movements and sensitivity are crucial to the patient.

The very first robotic hand, “Barrett Hand”, a product of Barrett Technology, Inc. was introduced already in 1997. It was a 3-fingered device, which functioned mainly as a grasper, and was used broadly by NASA. Over the years, many different companies have further developed the idea.

The potential applications of robotic hands are numerous and varied - medical assistance, safety, even ironing the laundry. However, currently, the main use of the Shadow Dexterous Hand is in research. The University of Bielefeld is using the hand in their research into situated learning and at Carnegie Mellon it is being used in a research project on grasping. Others use it in neurological and rehabilitation projects, as part of humanoid robots. However, some see a long term non-practical

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