

IPAT Equipment Loan Library
Judie Lee, IPAT Director

One of the first challenges to be addressed by IPAT in 1994 was the limited opportunities people in North Dakota had to try a variety of assistive technology options before purchasing. It is critical for an individual to be able to try one or more pieces of equipment before buying and the shortage of North Dakota vendors in some AT categories, made this difficult if not impossible. In response to this predicament, IPAT established the statewide Equipment Loan Library (ELL) in 1994.

The ELL is available to state residents of all ages with disabilities and/or those family members and professionals that work with them. A trial use of equipment helps to ensure an individual finds a device that: has the capabilities to accomplish the identified tasks; fits the person's functional abilities; fits the individual's personal characteristics; works in their environment; and is compatible with other assistive technology devices they may be using.

The ELL provides short term equipment loans, typically 6 weeks in length. A small fee is charged, based upon the value of the device, ranging between \$10 and \$40. The devices are shipped by United Parcel Service (UPS) with a prepaid return label. Shipping costs are also assessed to the borrower but can be waived if delivery can be arranged through on-site pick-up and return; the ELL is housed in the Technology Access Center in Fargo. IPAT also employs a sliding fee schedule for the rental of ELL equipment for individuals with disabilities not covered by an agency.

Types of equipment available for loan include: augmentative communication, telecommunication; computer access; educational accommodations; vision aids; and environmental controls. For a more detailed listing, see www.ndipat.org. The equipment selected for the ELL inventory is based upon the following factors: 1) consumer demand and usage; 2) whether or not the equipment is available for trial use through another source in North Dakota; and 3) the availability of funding sources. . IPAT also networks with various vendors who are sometimes a rental source if an item is not available through the ELL.

The ELL inventory will continue to include and loan devices to meet the AT access needs of individuals with disabilities at school, at work, at home and in their community. By making AT devices available for short-term loan, the ELL meets the on-going need for: equipment exploration; trial-use (try before you buy); equipment availability for AT assessments by clinicians and educators statewide; access to devices for individuals whose own devices are in for repair or not working; and AT funding justification documentation. For further

information or to arrange an equipment loan you may call 1-800-895-4728 or e-mail ipatlloan@integra.net.

Electronic Dictionaries: Tools to Build Reading & Spelling Skills

School days are fast approaching for students from elementary through post-graduate settings. For those students who have difficulty looking up the meaning and spelling of a word in traditional dictionaries, there are electronic dictionaries available. Whether it is accessing the dictionary physically, or not knowing how to look up a word when you can't spell it, *Franklin Electronic Publishers*, offer a wide range of electronic dictionaries and spelling aids to make this task possible for a wide range of students.

These electronic dictionaries are compact, lightweight and easy to use. They range in price from under \$20 to \$450 and have a variety of features. It is important to match the needs of the end-user to the device features. Some questions to ask when making the match are: 1) How many words are included in the device's dictionary? 2) Is the device speaking or non-speaking? 3) Is the display screen easy to read? 4) Is the keyboard easy to use? 5) Are other tools (calculator, address book) part of the device? 6) Does it have phonetic spell correction (type in 'nolij' the device will find 'knowledge', type in 'kaufee' the device will find 'coffee' and so on)? Selecting the right device features can aid a student in learning to read and work independently in and out of the classroom.

Elementary Level Dictionaries

Children's Talking Dictionary & Spell Corrector (MSRP \$59.95) – this device is a speaking dictionary. It allows students to type a word they do not know how to pronounce, or do not know the meaning of onto the device's keyboard. The device will pronounce each letter, the entire word, and write the word in print or script. Students can also look up the word's definition on the device and have it read aloud. *(place photo here)*

Homework Wiz® (MSRP \$19.95) – this device has similar features to the previous electronic dictionary, but it does not offer the spoken output. *(place photo here)*

Both have a 40,000 word dictionary, a spell corrector and five games with variable skill levels.

Upper Level Dictionaries & Thesauruses

Speaking Language Master™ Special Edition (MSRP \$450) – this device is a speaking dictionary and thesaurus which includes features for students with a variety of disabilities. It can speak all keys, including letter, number and function keys; read the content on the oversized display window; features a large keyboard for easier data entry and comes with press-on locator dots. The device

contains 300,000 definitions, 500,000 synonyms, 11,000 antonyms, a grammar guide, and a phonetic spell correction for 110,000 words. (*place photo here*)

Speaking Merriam-Webster's Collegiate® Dictionary (MSRP \$119.95) – this device is also a speaking dictionary and thesaurus. It contains 200,000 definitions, 500,000 antonyms, a grammar guide and phonetic spell corrector. It does not speak all keys, and the keyboard and display window are smaller than those found on the previous device. (*place photo here*)

For more information about these and other electronic dictionaries, go to www.franklin.com, or contact IPAT 1-800-265-4728.

WANTED: Applicants for the 2007 Bismarck-Mandan Area Christmas in April Rebuilding Day

Applicants must be homeowners who need assistance in making home improvements that will enable them to remain in their home in safety, warmth and independence. Homeowners need to meet income guidelines and include older persons, persons with disabilities and low-income families. Typical home improvements include replacing floors and carpeting, repairs and improvements to plumbing, replacing unsafe electrical wiring and kitchen appliances, installing ramps and providing assistive devices, painting exterior and interior walls, plaster repairs and replacing or repairing drafty windows and doors.

Applicants may refer themselves or be referred by an agency, organization, family member, neighbor, or others. To receive an application call the Christmas in April office at 701-221-3232 or e-mail Christmas in April@gmail.com.

CONSUMER CONNECTION

Alternative Mouse to the Rescue

Brenda Arnston

My name is Brenda Arnston. I work in the WIC program at the Central Valley Health Unit in Jamestown, North Dakota, where all of our files are computer based. With the combination of overuse and bad body mechanics, I developed tendonitis and golfer's elbow this past spring. I not only was experiencing pain while working, but in daily activities such as, holding on to the steering wheel, brushing my teeth, and even playing with my toddler. Something had to be done soon, because the constant clicking of my mouse was worsening my condition. After researching the yellow pages and a few calls, I was fortunate to reach the IPAT Center in Fargo.

Finding the IPAT Center was the best thing that could happen at that time. I set up a time to meet with Jeannie Krull. Ironically, the same day I met with her, she had come upon a website called quillmouse.com (also known as

aerobicmouse.com). This sight offers a 30 day free download trial on the quill nib. Quill nib is a program that eliminates most of the clicking of the mouse. It is designed so that when the mouse is on an icon, it will click itself. It takes some time getting use to as it will click wherever the mouse is put. However, for me, this was truly a lifesaver and so it was worth it. I also took a break from the regular mouse and the pain is almost gone now. I am very grateful for the staff at IPAT. They were very welcoming and eager to help.

FUNDING NEWS

Writing Funding Requests for Assistive Technology: Part 1

Some information obtained from the *Neighborhood Legal Services Website*:
<http://www.nls.org/av/av-0798.htm> and <http://www.nls.org/av/winter06.htm>

Five years ago we published a series of articles in our newsletter dedicated to helping people write funding requests for assistive technology (AT). Funding for AT still remains a significant barrier and is one of the most frequently asked questions of the IPAT staff. Therefore, we thought it significant to talk about again.

Writing funding letters to acquire assistive technology (AT) can be a tricky business. When writing, one must match the AT need to the purpose of the identified funding source—medical, educational, vocational, and alternative funding avenues (i.e. organizations, foundations, and service clubs). For example, a child might need a communication device, which would be of benefit medically and educationally, but which is the **funding source**, insurance or the school? Medical sources do not fund AT based on how it will provide educational benefit. Likewise, schools do not fund AT on how it will assist someone medically. In doing this, both sources are NOT saying that the other need is insignificant; they are just stating that they will fund AT only when it fits within their given funding priorities.

The following are excerpts from two fictional funding reports for a child who cannot speak and is in need of a communication device. One is written for a medical funding source and the other for a school.

Medical Excerpt:

"The Best Talker 123 is medically necessary for Jane Doe as it will allow her to communicate her medical needs to her doctors and family members, which could possibly prevent further health and safety problems. For instance, she could have used the device to explain to her family that she was having severe tooth pain; instead it was not discovered until she went to the dentist months later. Through the use of the text-to-speech and pre-programmed message capabilities, Jane should also be able to recapture her expressive language skills and prevent any additional loss of her receptive language skills. The

Great Talker123 will also be flexible enough to provide Jane spontaneous speech, so she can address her immediate needs."

School Excerpt:

"The Best Talker 123 is necessary for Jane Doe to receive an appropriate education. Jane's receptive language skills are still appropriate for a young woman her age. However, her expressive language skills are decreasing because she cannot communicate effectively. She is unable to ask questions regarding schoolwork or assignments that she does not understand. Jane cannot partake in classroom debates or discussions that aid a student's ability to learn. Because she is not practicing self-expression as a skill, her ability to functionally communicate is regressing. If this regression continues, her scholastic experience could be severely compromised.

The Best Talker 123's text-to-speech and pre-programmed message capabilities will allow Jane to communicate functionally and spontaneously within her school environment. This device will allow her to recapture her expressive language skills and to receive a fair and appropriate education."

Remember that regardless of how the person will benefit from the AT device and where or how they will use it, address your funding requests to the mission or purpose of the funding source. Please contact Jeannie Krull at IPAT if you have further questions: 1-701-365-4730, 1-800-895-4728 or jmkrull@integra.net .



EQUIPMENT SPOTLIGHT

Go Talk 9+

The Go Talk 9+ is a portable, easy to use speech output device. It has a 45 message capacity with five levels on each of its 9 message keys. It also has 3 useful "core" message keys that stay the same on each level. You can take the Go Talk 9+ anywhere with the built-in handle. The 5cm square buttons with a built-in keyguard helps the user select the right message. Change levels with a

press of a button. Overlays are stored inside and slide in and out easily. It uses two AA batteries (included). Price: \$199.00.

To learn more about the Go Talk products call the Attainment Company at 1-800-327-4269 or go to their website at www.attainmentcompany.com. If you would like to rent the Go Talk 9+ from IPAT for a six week trial, call 1-800-895-4728.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Northern Plains Conference on Aging

Holiday Inn – Fargo, ND

September 5-7, 2006

Contact: Sandy Arends 701-298-4420

Connecting the Circle: Living & Working in the Community

4 Bears Casino & Lounge – New Town, ND

September 19-21, 2006

Contact: Vickay Gross 701-328-3982

Cortical Visual Impairment Conference

ND Vision Services School for the Blind – Grand Forks, ND

September 19 – 20, 2006

Contact: Kristen Votava 701-662-9009

ND Forums on Aging

September 25 Hillside Baptist Church Dickinson, ND

September 26 Bob's Pizza Inn Rugby, ND

September 26 Williston Sr. Center Williston, ND

September 27 TBA Valley City, ND

September 28 Burleigh County Sr. Cntr Bismarck, ND

ND Transition Institute: Collaborating for Successful Youth

Seven Seas Inn – Mandan, ND

October 2-4, 2006

Contact: Gerry Teevens 701-328-2277

ND Human Rights Coalition Annual Conference

Western Ramkota Hotel – Bismarck, ND

October 2, 2006

Contact: www.ndhrc.org