

IPAT in Review

Judie Lee, Project Director

The Assistive Technology (AT) Act is being reviewed and the US Congress is determining the future of all state "AT" projects. IPAT is North Dakota's AT project. As these oversight hearings take place, it is appropriate to consider the status of AT in North Dakota before and after the establishment of IPAT.

What Has IPAT Done?

IPAT has established an AT infrastructure in North Dakota and provides the following AT services to ALL people with disabilities in the state. These services were non-existent prior to IPAT.

Access to Equipment

1. IPAT Equipment Loan Library - Access to trial use of equipment is available to all North Dakotans in a state with a limited number of AT vendors. **1,499 equipment loans in 2001**
2. IPAT Equipment Expo! - Will travel to any ND community for a hands-on demonstration of AT devices. **690 people attended equipment Expos in 2001**
3. IPAT Used Equipment Bulletin Board - Links sellers and buyers of used AT devices through a comprehensive online database. **Hundreds of listings are maintained daily on the database**

Training

IPAT develops training materials and makes them available to the public. Training opportunities are coordinated and delivered at the state, regional and local levels. These resources are in place through IPAT and continue to change and adapt to meet the diverse needs.

1. 3,828 people attended
2. 102 IPAT trainings sessions in 2001

Technical Assistance

Assistance from IPAT's regional coordinators is available via phone, e-mail, internet and on-site consultations to assist individuals, providers, and agencies in making decisions regarding potential AT equipment solutions,

funding, set-up and use. This is a critical outreach service to the state's large rural population.

1. **2,931 individuals received technical assistance from IPAT in 2001**

Information Dissemination

Website ~ Video Library ~ Newsletter ~ Key Fact Sheets ~ Material Packets ~ Publications ~ Resource Development: Provide the infrastructure for an informed public.

1. **2700 people on the IPAT mailing list**
2. **website www.ndipat.org receives over 36,500 hits per year**

Interagency Coordination

IPAT facilitates the coordination of AT services between and amongst agencies and public/private entities.

1. **IPAT collaborated with over 70 agencies/entities in 2001**

The demands for an assistive technology program designed to support the AT needs of all people with disabilities in North Dakota, including those individuals experiencing the effects of aging, continue to increase.

IPAT Used Equipment Bulletin Board Update

In January 2002, the day-to-day operation of the IPAT Used Equipment Bulletin Board shifted to the IPAT Cavalier office as a direct result of decreased funding. Maintaining a database of used AT equipment, along with the ability to link an equipment

Individuals who have used equipment to list should call 1-800-265-IPAT (4728) or visit www.ndipat.org to obtain the needed forms. Once completed and signed, return the forms to IPAT. The information will then be entered onto the computerized database and posted online.

When callers contact IPAT in search of a device, the staff will provide the caller with information on all listings that may be appropriate for their needs. If an individual in need of equipment has access to the Internet, they can go to www.ndipat.org and click on the heading Swap Shop. Either way, the individual in need of a device will decide which listings to pursue and will organize the sale, trade or donation with the person listing the device. Once an item is no longer available, it is the responsibility of

the person listing the item to notify IPAT. Failure to do so may result in continued phone calls from individuals in search of that type of equipment.

Please help IPAT in recycling AT equipment by listing or using the IPAT Used Equipment Bulletin Board.

Share Electronically Scanned Books

Adapted from Bookshare.org

What is Bookshare.org? It is a web-based system supplying accessible books in digital formats for members of the general public with visual and other print disabilities. This online library enables book scans to be shared by using a special exemption in the U.S. copyright law that permits the reproduction of publications into specialized formats for individuals with disabilities. Copyrighted digital books are available only to U.S. residents who submit proof of a disability that affects reading. An array of security protections ensures that these books are available only to authorized users.

Who can benefit from Bookshare.org? People who are blind or have visual impairments that prevent them from reading ordinary newspaper print, even with correction; people with learning disabilities like dyslexia, which interferes with the ability to read printed material; and people with mobility limitations that interfere with holding or turning the pages of a book. As well, Bookshare.org will serve organizations, specialized nonprofit agencies and various governmental units that provide accessible materials to people with disabilities.

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Consumer Connection

Voice Recognition to the Rescue

By: Judy Siegle ~ Fargo, ND

A technology whiz I am not. But the fact that I knew that my mouth could move faster and with much greater ease than the fingers on my one hand led me to consider the possibility of trying voice recognition computer software. I have been a quadriplegic for 22 years and as a social worker, my one-handed typing technique that I learned in rehab years ago was barely adequate for my work needs. I knew that I could be a lot more efficient with my communication. When I heard of another quadriplegic who had tried a couple of voice recognition systems, I thought that if she could do it, I could do it too!



I decided that I should check with IPAT, the technology specialists in our state, to see if they had any experience or recommendations. Little did I know of the terrific program we have got! I was thrilled when Mike Bishop, IPAT staff not only had wonderful recommendations, but also a lot of experience with computers in setting up programs. He was willing to come to my apartment to install a system that he had used with others, with great success. He spent time teaching me how to use it and offered many helpful hints. Even days later when I had questions he was available to walk me through the problem, which was a huge asset. The program allowed me to have a 6 week trial period to see if it would work for me before buying, which was also great.

The benefits of the voice recognition software have been fantastic. I have the system at home and it was also easily installed on my computer at work. I am much more efficient on the computer and yes, even report writing is much more enjoyable.

Funding NEWS

Tricare, formerly CHAMPUS, Now Covers AAC Devices!

-Excerpts from a Letter by Lew Golinker, Esq.

"Tricare, formerly CHAMPUS, the health benefits program for dependents of active duty military service members and military retirees, will now cover and provide AAC devices to all program enrollees who require

them. Congress explicitly directed the expansion of Tricare AAC device coverage in the FY 2002 military reauthorization bill, signed by the President on December 28, 2001. Public Law 107-107, Section 702(2)(2001). "

Prior to this ruling the law was very confusing in regards to AAC device coverage. This confusion lead to a long and lengthy process filled with roadblocks for people in need of AAC devices. AAC coverage was available to dependents of active duty military service members, but excluded dependents of military retirees.

"Now the law explicitly states In Section 702(2): An augmentative communication device may be provided as a voice prosthesis under subsection (a)(15)." Because of this act of Congress, dependents of both active duty service members and retirees will be able to obtain necessary AAC devices in a timely fashion.

"In general, the elimination of any AAC device coverage barrier is welcome news, and in addition to the direct effects of those eligible for this program, it will serve as a catalyst for positive outcomes for those eligible for other programs. "

If you would like a full copy of this letter, please contact Jeannie Krull, Policy and Funding Analyst, by phone 1-701-239-7228 or 1-800-265-4728, or by e-mail jmkrull@fargocity.com.

EQUIPMENT SPOTLIGHT

Quadjoy Mouse

Do you know someone who is unable to use his or her hands, but wants to operate a computer? The Quadjoy may be a solution for them. It is a joystick with a sip-n-puff switch that acts like a real mouse, not a mouse emulator. To operate, one simply moves the joystick with mouth or chin and selects mouse click actions using the built in sip-n-puff switch. The mouse comes with a flex-bend arm mounting system and is compatible with Windows and Macintosh operating systems.



Call the IPAT Equipment Loan Library at 1-800-421-1181 to arrange a 6-week, no cost trail use. For more information or to purchase call SEMCO at 1-877-0736-2663 visit www.quadjoy.com. Cost: \$540 plus shipping and handling. An optional onscreen keyboard can be purchased for \$92 to allow the user full hands-free computer access.

Mark Your Calendar!

ND Association of Community Facilities Annual Conference
May 1 - 3, 2002
Celebrating 20 Years of Change
Register for 1, 2 or 3 days
Holiday Inn - Bismarck, ND
Contact: Mary Mercer, Minot State University

Community Ombudsman Conference
June 5 & 6, 2002
Seven Seas - Mandan, ND
Contact: Astrid at sosena@state.nd.us
ND Aging Services Division

Magic Mobility Camps
June 10-21, 2002
Moorhead, MN
July 8-15, 2002
Grand Forks, ND
No Charge
Contact: Tonya 866-225-4673

IPAT EQUIPMENT EXPO!
April 19 & 20, 2002
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND
Contact: Mike 1-800-265-4728