

Everybody's Vested Interest

Judie Lee, IPAT Director

There are an estimated 123,927 individuals with disabilities living in the state of North Dakota, based on US Census Bureau statistics. These individuals make up 19.4% of our general population and reside in all communities, regardless of size or location.

Consider for a moment an individual experiencing the effects of aging who wants to stay in their home, an injured worker who wants to maintain employment, or a student with a learning disability who wants to earn a college degree. Historically, the individual experiencing the effects of aging may be forced to accept institutional care as their only alternative, the injured worker faces disability compensation with little hope for future employment, and the student with a disability sees no avenue by which to pursue their vocational dream.

Current philosophies and technologies are challenging our past best practices as we re-evaluate the potential contributions of citizens with disabilities. Service delivery systems are being pushed to build a bridge from the often limited opportunities for persons with disabilities to the infinite possibilities inherent within our society. However, a functional bridge will only be built when all citizens see themselves as stake-holders.

Those in retail businesses need to ask themselves how to tap into that consumer base of 19.4%, communities need to ask how they can utilize 19.4% of their existing population as human resources, and families need to ask if there is a way to maintain or improve the quality of life for those they care about. Everyone wins when an individual is an interdependent member of society, when a worker maintains a job, and when a student continues their education.

Assistive technology can often be the solution for the individuals represented in the scenarios above, as well as, the link which makes a business more accessible for customers, a community activity more inclusive, and a loved one's quality of life better.

We can avoid running the risk of perpetuating unnecessary dependence on society and the potential loss of human resources by expanding our information base. There are many resources available in North Dakota to increase our understanding and possible options. Get started by seeking

out those having the knowledge and information you need to address issues you are facing.

Funding AT for the Young Child

The primary goal of assistive technology (AT) use with very young children is to provide access to social and learning opportunities and increase interaction with family members and peers.

Just as assistive technology devices and services are provided for school-aged children through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), provisions have been made for children with disabilities from birth to three years through the Early Intervention Program, known as Part H. In North Dakota, Part H is coordinated by the Developmental Disabilities Division of the Department of Human Services.

Under Part H, assistive technology devices and services have the same definitions as they do for preschool and school aged special education programs. Although Part H is payer of last resort for early intervention services, AT devices and services are mandatory and should be considered within all phases of the service delivery process.

Infants and toddlers who have and use AT within routine daily activities must have those devices available and implemented within any screening and evaluation activities. The use of AT by infants and toddlers must be considered and documented when developing the Individual Family Service Plan (ISFP).

For more information regarding Part H as a potential funding source for assistive technology (AT) for a child birth to three years of age, contact the North Dakota Office of Developmental Disabilities, (701) 328-8929 or Beth Duncan at (800) 265-IPAT.

Internet Talk

Bob Puyear, IPAT's Webmaster, CAC member & active Internet user

Computers, assistive technology and the Internet have allowed me to remain actively involved in the world without venturing outside my home. I have found the Internet to be an electronic "ramp" cut to information access, similar to the physical ramp cut I hope to find for physical access. With one "ramp", I travel the world of information, the other my community. However, the lack of human contact on the web gets boring at times, so I do venture out on occasion with my wife or on paratransit - naturally, good coffee is a must when I do!

A number of years ago when I first started using the Internet it was not as user friendly as it is today. Today you can choose from integrated software packages to complete a variety of tasks. One nice thing about the Internet is that different computer operating systems can communicate with each other - Macintosh, IBM, and the various UNIX systems can readily "talk" to each other.

Today we hear much about the Internet in the media, much of it negative - viruses, smut, unsolicited e-mail, selling e-mail addresses and stealing credit card numbers. Yes, all of this can happen, but through personal awareness, care and common sense these negatives can be eliminated. Do not let the negatives deter you from experiencing the positives of Internet use.

The Internet is very vast and is constantly expanding and changing. At a basic level, the Internet can be used for: sending/receiving e-mail; joining discussion groups called lists; sending/receiving files; reading/responding to newsgroups; and navigating the world-wide-web (WWW) using various browsers to locate a myriad of information.

Loads of information about assistive technology and issues relating to disability can be found on the Internet by starting at <http://www.ndipat.org>. If you visit interesting places not yet linked to that site, let me know so I can add them. Realize as you travel, that the term web describes the structural linking of the Internet well, so don't get discouraged when you find yourself right back where you started from, with no idea of how you got there. Remember, a journey of 1,000 web-sites begins with but one mouse click - enjoy & pack light!

Netiquette

Answer these questions to determine if you have proper Netiquette when you send e-mail messages:

1) What should be included in the header of an e-mail message?

- A. The sender's e-mail address
- B. The receiver's e-mail address
- C. The subject of the message
- D. All of the above

2) How can you best determine which e-mail you should read first?

- A. By the one-line summary in the message header
- B. By the people you like best
- C. By the e-mail addresses you recognize

D. By the responsiveness of the people sending you messages

3) What words should you include in the first sentence of the body of your message?

- A. Dear and the receiver's name
- B. The receiver's name
- C. Your organization's name
- D. The receiver's organization's name

4) What is the appropriate length of an e mail message?

- A. 650-950 words
- B. Four to five screens
- C. One to two screens
- D. Any of the above

5) How frequently should you check your e-mail box?

- A. At least once an hour
- B. At least twice a day
- C. At least once a day
- D. At least once month

Answers: 1) D 2) A 3) B 4) C 5) C

Source: Ann Marie Sabath, Cincinnati, OH

The Little Room

For all children, learning takes place through play. Play is an independent activity which allows a child to learn through repetition and comparison of their own interactions between environment, object and self. However, play is often difficult for children with disabilities, especially those with vision and/or movement limitations.

One way to promote independent play for young children with disabilities is through the use of the "Little Room" designed by Dr. Lilli Nielsen of Denmark. The "Little Room" consists of a frame supporting three side panels covered with differing materials and a Plexiglass ceiling from which a variety of objects are suspended by elastic or cord. Objects are hung to come into direct contact with varying body parts or to be within easy reach of the child. The "room" creates a safe, yet interesting environment where the child can readily and repeatedly interact with objects that are inviting to look at, listen to, touch, smell and or taste. Items should be selected

that provide contrast in weight, temperature, texture, sound, color, size and shape.

The old statement learning is child's play is an apt description of the concept behind the development and use of the "Little Room." If a child you know would like an opportunity to play in the "Little Room," call IPAT's Equipment Loan Library at 1-800-421-1181 and request it today.

Equipment News

Attention all individuals with limited movement, the IST Switch by Words+ was created with you in mind. It can be operated using infrared, sound or touch sensor options. Minimal effort is required to activate the switches and body site selection is almost limitless. The infrared switch detects slight movements, including eye blink, the sound switch detects breath or slight vocalization and the touch switch operates on skin contact of zero force. To set up a loan, call IPAT's Equipment Loan Library, 1-800-421-1181 or for pricing information call Words+, 1-800-869-521.

Build Your Vocabulary

1. **LOL** laughing out loud
2. **IMO** in my opinion
3. **FAQ** frequently asked questions
4. ;-) I'm winking
5. :-D I'm laughing
6. :-X My lips are sealed

Calander of Events

1. Children . .Everyone's Business
 - Doublewood - Bismarck, ND
 - Info: Gail (701) 255-1525
 - Sept. 23-24, 1997
2. Transition Fall Institute
 - Radisson Inn - Bismarck, ND
 - Info: Valerie (701) 328-3435
 - Sept. 24-26, 1997
3. Gain the Knowledge, Solve the Puzzle
 - Ramada Plaza Suites - Fargo, ND
 - Info: Dawn (800) 342-8230

- Sept. 27, 1997

4. Motivating & Managing the Child with Special Needs

- Radisson Inn - Bismarck, ND
- Info: Ina (701) 255-0185
- Oct. 1-3, 1997

5. Technology & Tools for the Future

- Holiday Inn - Minot, ND
- Info: Stella (701) 795-3019
- Oct. 10-11, 1997

6. Siblings of Children with Special Needs

- Anne Carlsen Center- Jamestown, ND
- Info: Deb (701) 328-8936
- Oct. 23-25. 1997

7. 15 Annual Closing the Gap

- Radisson South - Mpls. MN
- Info: CTG (507) 248-3294

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