

Minnesota STAR
Program
A System of
Technology to
Achieve Results



Minnesota's Assistive Technology
Act Program

Constellations

Summer 2006

Assistive Technology (AT) Works!

ADA Turns 16

The Americans with Disabilities Act, Public Law 336 of the 101st Congress, was enacted on July 26, 1990. This law, commonly referred to as the ADA, prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. It also mandates the establishment of TDD/telephone relay services.

When President George H. W. Bush signed the ADA into law he called this legislation a “dramatic renewal not only for those with disabilities but for all of us, because along with the precious privilege of being an American comes a sacred duty to ensure that every other American’s rights are also guaranteed.”

In a message celebrating the 16th anniversary of the ADA, W. Roy Grizzard, Jr. Ed.D., Assistant Secretary for Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Dept of Labor, wrote, “Passing the ADA was a testament to America’s commitment to equality for all Americans, including people with disabilities. History has shown that a commitment to equality for all results in economic and social benefits for all, building a stronger, more vibrant America.”

Want to learn more about the ADA? Turn to page two for a short list of resources.

In This Issue

ADA Turns 16	1
Telephone Trouble	3
Online Resources	3
Occupational Skills	3
Provider Spotlight	4
Announcements	4
Events	5
Technology for Transition	6
AT Lab at Minneapolis	
Public Library	8
Request for Proposals	10



(continued on page 2)

ADA Turns 16 *(continued from page 1)*

Online Resources

General

ADA Minnesota www.adaminnesota.org

Great Lakes ADA and Accessible IT Center
www.adagreatlakes.org

The ADA Game www.adagame.org

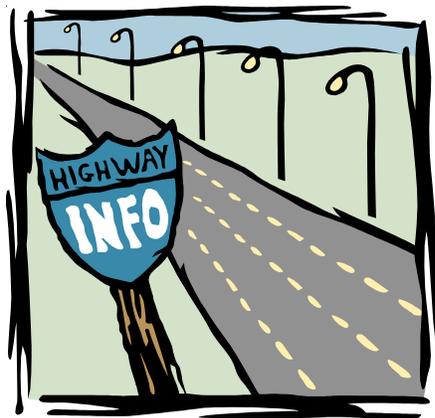
How ADA Applies to Businesses (10 short lessons) www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/reachingout/intro1.htm

Employment

Department of Labor, Office of Disability
Employment Policy www.dol.gov/odep

Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services
www.deed.state.mn.us/rehab/index.htm

Job Accommodation Network www.jan.wvu.edu



Legal

Minnesota Disability Law Center
www.mndlc.org

Parents

PACER Center <http://www.pacer.org>

Transportation

U.S. Dept of Transportation http://www.dot.gov/citizen_services/disability/disability.html

Don't have a computer? For more information about ADA call:

ADA Minnesota 1-888-630-9793 or 651-603-2001 (TTY)

Great Lakes ADA and Accessible IT Center 1-800-949-4232 (V/TTY)

ADA Information Line 1-800-514-0301 or 1-800-514-0383 (TTY)

Minnesota Disability Law Center 1-800-292-4150

US Dept of Justice ADA Hotline 1-800-514-0301

PACER Center 1-800-537-2237 or 952-838-0190 (TTY)

Rehabilitation Services (available through Minnesota Workforce Centers) 1-888-GET-JOBS



Telephone Trouble??

You may qualify for special telephone equipment free of charge. The Telephone Equipment Distribution Program (TED) provides special amplified telephones, telephone ring signalers, speakerphones, deaf blind equipment and other special equipment for individuals of all ages who have a hearing loss, speech and/or physical disability. To qualify for this program you must be a MN resident, have an active phone line, and have a family, household annual gross income at or below these guidelines: 1 person, \$39,900; 2 person, \$52,178; 3 person, \$64,456. For more information call 1-800-657-3663 or 888-206-6555 (TTY) or download an application from www.tedprogram.org.

Online Resources

1 Stop for Free Assistive Technology

Sponsored by Online Conferencing Systems, this list contains over 175 free software applications.

<http://www.onlineconferencingsystems.com/at.htm>

Microsoft Marketplace

Microsoft Marketplace has an assistive technology section with 115 items categorized by type and manufacturer.

www.windowsmarketplace.com/

RCTC offers Occupational Skills Diploma Program

The Occupational Skills Program provides individuals with mild to moderate disabilities with the vocational training necessary to obtain and maintain competitive entry level employment. The target population is individuals outside of a sheltered work environment who are unable to succeed in traditional college coursework. This program is focused on students whose desire is to obtain and maintain competitive employment.

For additional information visit the Rochester Community and Technical College Web site at www.rctc.edu or call Vicky Keller, 507-529-2722 or e-mail vicky.keller@roch.edu.

Provider Spotlight - Courage Center

Courage Center (www.courage.org) recognizes the importance of assistive technology to improve the functional capability of individuals with disabilities allowing people to become more independent, pursue work, and complete school. Therefore, Courage provides comprehensive services for people of all ages and disabilities in this area including environmental controls, adapted leisure, wheelchairs, modification of equipment, shop services, aides of daily living, camp, communication devices, computers and training, academics, memory aids, driving, ham radio, work adaptations, independent living, and more. Courage facilities can be found throughout the Twin Cities including Golden Valley, Stillwater, Burnsville and Forest Lake. For more information call 1-888-846-8253.

Announcements

Computers Go Round

Computers Go Round is a program of United Cerebral Palsy of Central Minnesota that distributes quality recycled computers to children and adults with a disability. These computers may be used for school, work, fun, shopping, or to keep in touch with family and friends. Since 2000, the Computers Go Round program has distributed over 400 refurbished computers to persons with disabilities and their families. If you know someone with a disability that could use a computer please call 320-253-0765 or obtain an application online at www.ucpcentralmn.org.



People Achieving Change Through Technology (PACTT) has moved to:

310 Elton Hills Drive NW
Rochester, MN 55901

The new PACTT Center includes an equipment loan program and computer lab. A sitting area is available to look at the many catalogs and resource materials available! Contact Rachel Weitzel, PACTT program manager, to take a tour of the new location (507-535-7101).

Events

Recycling

The Great Computer Drop-Off – Don't let dangerous materials contaminate our environment. Drop off your old computers, monitors, printers, microwaves, TV's, copiers, laptops and cell phones. Disposal fee is 55¢ per pound. Cash, checks or credit cards accepted. Checks should be made payable to UCP. A portion of the fee is tax deductible and benefits programs and services of United Cerebral Palsy of Central Minnesota. For more information call 320/253-0765 or 888/616-3726 or you may e-mail tech@ucpcentralmn.org.

St. Cloud Drop-Off

Tuesday, September 19th
9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Fulfillment Distribution Parking Lot
720 Anderson Avenue
St. Cloud MN

Elk River Drop-Off

Tuesday, October 10th
9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Sherburne County Fairgrounds
Elk River MN

Training

The Foundation: Computer Skills Training

This class is for those who have never or rarely use a computer. Basic skills will be taught including how to use a mouse, open and close programs, save a document, delete a document, and more!

When: August 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24
(Tuesdays and Thursdays)
Time: 3:00-3:45 p.m.
Location: PACTT
310 Elton Hills Drive NW
Rochester, MN 55901

Materials Fee: \$2.00

Class limited to 5 (Registration required, contact Rachel Weitzel at 507-535-7101)

The Internet Foundation

What is the Internet and how do you “get on it?”

When: September 11, 12, 18, 19
(Monday and Tuesday)
Time: 3:00-3:45 p.m.
Location: PACTT
310 Elton Hills Drive NW
Rochester, MN 55901

Materials Fee: \$2.00

Class limited to 5. (Registration required, contact Rachel Weitzel at 507-535-7101.)

Technology for Transition - Take Control!

When performing everyday tasks such as turning on lights, pulling up the shades or changing the TV channel is challenging or impossible, it's time to consider environmental controls. So where do you begin?

First you will need to determine the best method for you to use to activate the controls. This may mean using your voice, a switch or system that tracks body movement such as your eyes or head.

You'll also need to decide what you want to control and where. Maybe you only need to control the lights and TV in your bedroom. Or you may want to control many devices around your home.

If you only need to control one or two devices in one room, a simple inexpensive unit may be all you need. If, on the other hand, you want to build your own command center and control your entire home, you most likely will need the help of a professional.

Here are a few common and not-so-common ways to control your environment!

X-10 compatible products allow you to control devices plugged into your home electrical outlets. Most X-10 products are affordable and easy to install and available for purchase at stores like Radio Shack or Smarthome.com. To learn more about X-10 technology visit www.smarthome.com/about_x10.html.

With OmniRemote Pro software (www.pacificneotek.com/) you can use your Palm OS PDA to control your IR enabled devices, for example your TV or DVD player.



OmniRemotPro

Break Boundaries' REACH

(www.breakboundaries.com) lets you control multiple devices, such as fans, lights, telephone, doors, blinds & shades, and radio independently. This can be done by touching a screen or completely hands-free by moving a body part or simply speaking a command.



REACH

Sicare Pilot by Tash Inc. (www.tashinc.com)

Let's you use Natural Speech Recognition to control your Environment! Sicare Pilot converts spoken commands into signals that control numerous devices within multiple environments.



Sicare Pilot

The Travis Roy Foundation

Individual grants are awarded to persons with paraplegia or quadriplegia *due to a spinal injury*. Funds may be used to upgrade or maintain wheelchairs or for home modifications including ramps, elevator installation and other adaptive equipment. Grants typically range from \$4,000 to \$7,500; there is no minimum award. For more information visit www.travisroyfoundation.org

For a list of Minnesota professionals with expertise in the area of environmental controls visit STAR's Web site www.admin.state.mn.us/assistedtechnology/professionals.htm.

Now Open - The Assistive Technology Lab at MPL

It's worth a trip to Central Library in downtown Minneapolis. Bright, big and state-of-the-art are a few words that describe the new library. And with the opening of its Assistive Technology Lab you can call it accessible too!

The Lab has five computer workstations equipped with 21" monitors and OCR scanners. A variety of input devices may be "mixed and matched" between workstations as needed. (See sidebar.) In addition, each workstation is equipped with a choice of software to assist users who are blind or have difficulty seeing or reading. (See sidebar.)

The first thing you'll notice when you sit down at a computer in the lab is a customized welcome screen.

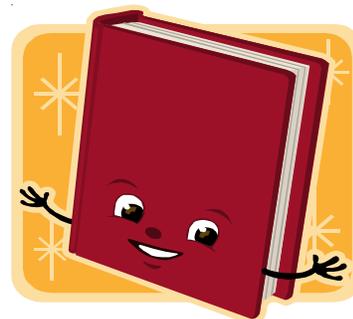
Welcome to the Minneapolis Public Library

Where would you like to go?

1. Minneapolis Public Library Home Page
2. MPL Catalog
3. My Library Account
4. MPL Central Search
5. My Files
6. Active Downloads
7. FreedomBox Network
8. FreedomScan
9. Choose Other Access Technology
10. FreedomBox Help

Input Devices

Viskikey® keyboard with large letters
 Micro Mini® Keyboard with Touch Pad
 Vision Board® high contrast keyboard with large keys
 Big Keys® keyboard
 Roller II® trackball
 Smart Cat® Touchpad mouse
 Switch adapted Big Track Mouse®



Software

JAWS Professional screen reader
 Freedom Box screen reader
 Open Book (with speech synthesizer)
 Zoomtext Xtra (with speech)
 Kurzweil 3000 Professional
 Magic

The welcome screen uses a unique interface built on FreedomBox technology (www.freedombox.info) to read the page. This interface was designed specifically for the lab in a joint venture between Serotek, the company that makes FreedomBox, and Freedom of Speech (www.freedomofspeech.com), the company that set up the lab. Patrons may use the computer's default settings or they may search the computer to locate other available assistive technology software by choosing item 9 from the welcome screen option list. If other software is selected the FreedomBox interface steps aside.

Other devices you'll find in the lab include:

SARA (Stand Alone Reading Appliance®) by Freedom Scientific (www.freedomscientific.com), is easy-to-use and reads a wide variety of printed material including books, mail, newspapers, and magazines. Using the latest in advanced optical character recognition (OCR) technology, SARA scans text and then read it aloud in a variety of voices and languages.



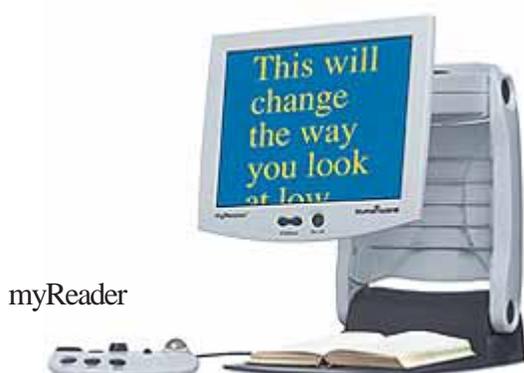
SARA

This stand alone device does not require a computer; however, SARA may be attached to a computer monitor, providing colorful, large print access to complement speech. Using this feature, a low vision user may change the print type style, color, size, and spacing to fit individual needs.

SARA also plays the audio elements of DAISY formatted Digital Talking Books, and comes with a starter library of 40 popular public domain books.

myReader™ (www.myreader.com) by Pulse Data HumanWare allows low vision readers to scan and read print material. Once the document has been scanned and captured it can be presented according to the reader's preference. Set text to a comfortable reading size and then view as a neatly wrapped paragraph (column layout), as a continuous line (row layout) or one word at a time.

For more information about the Central Library Assistive Technology Lab, call 612-630-6469.



myReader

MPL
is looking for
volunteers to staff the
Assistive Technology
Lab.

Interested?

Call 612-630-6469.

The children's section of the Minneapolis Central Library has a selection of 150 Braille books. Interlibrary loans are available.

Regions by Counties Served

Northwest: Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Polk, Pennington, Red Lake, Roseau

Northeast: Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, St. Louis

West Central: Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Traverse, Wilkin

East Central: Benton, Cass, Chisago, Crow Wing, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Pine, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd, Wadena, Wright

Southwest: Big Stone, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Meeker, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Swift, Yellow Medicine

Southeast: Blue Earth, Brown, Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Le Sueur, Martin, Mower, Nicollet, Olmsted, Rice, Sibley, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, Watonwan, Winona

Metro: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Washington



Request for Proposals

On July 31, 2006 the Minnesota STAR Program announced in the State Register and on its Web site a Request for Proposal to establish 7 AT Resource Centers. The seven regional AT Resource Centers will work to improve access to assistive technology through device demonstration and loan.

One responder will be chosen from each region (see sidebar) to serve as the Assistive Technology Center in that region for the purpose of this grant. In the first year, a pool of \$105,000.00 will be evenly distributed among the regions (see sidebar).

Proposals are due by 4:00 p.m. on September 1, 2006. Grants will be awarded by October 1, 2006.

Falling is a part of life. Without warning it happens.

It disrupts the flow.

Though it is difficult, falling is easy!

I know I will fall again.

Picking one-self up is the challenge!

In all that I say and do, 2 words call out to me:

Get Up! Get Up!

With all of my falls, feeling no pain I will rise again!

I can only be hurt if I dwell in the fall.

If I always rise, it is almost as if I never fell at all!

~N. Wilkie

Announcements (continued from page 4)

AT Services in Southeastern Minnesota

The Southeastern Minnesota Center for Independent Living (SEMCIL) is developing an assistive technology (AT) program to serve persons with disabilities in Southeastern MN. The program will begin teaching basic computer and Internet skills to consumers who need assistive technology devices to learn or increase their computer skills.

SEMCIL is also collaborating with two other agencies in southern MN that also provide AT services, People Achieving Change Through Technology (PACTT), a program of the Ability Building Center in Rochester, and SMILES, a Center for Independent Living in Mankato to form Region 6 of the Minnesota Regions Assistive Technology Collaborative (MRATC). This collaboration will allow for the expansion of AT throughout their service area.

If you have questions about SEMCIL's AT program or computer classes, please contact Brenna Gunderson, SEMCIL AT Coordinator, via email at brennag@semcil.org or via phone at 507-285-3918.

Events (continued from page 5)

Conferences

INCLUSION The Time is Now

The U.S. Business Leadership Network (USBLN) will be holding its 9th Annual National Conference, October 4-6, 2006 at the Minneapolis Marriott City Center hotel in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This year's conference has added a Career Fair for students with disabilities. Minnesota is the kick-off site for the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) National Mentoring Day for students with disabilities. Nationally recognized speakers include The Honorable Bob Dole, John H. Hager (Ass't Secretary U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services), Stedman Graham (author of *You Can Make It Happen: A Nine-Step Plan for Success*), Emmanuel Yeboah (2005 ESPY Arthur Ashe Courage Award), John D. Kemp (2006 recipient of the Henry B. Betts Award), Dr. W. Roy Grizzard (Ass't Secretary for Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Dept. of Labor).

For conference information visit www.mnbln.org.



Prsrt Std
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 171
St. Paul, MN

Department of Administration
STAR Program
309 Administration Building
50 Sherburne Avenue
St Paul, MN 55155

Phone: 651-201-2640

Fax: 651-282-6671

E-mail: star.program@state.mn.us

Check our Web site at
[www.admin.state.mn.us/
assistivetechology](http://www.admin.state.mn.us/assistivetechology)

Request a copy of the 2006 Assistive Technology Directory

Would you like a free copy of the 2006 Assistive Technology Directory of Funding Resources? Call 651-201-2640 or toll-free 888-234-1267 to request one or more copies of this popular directory.



All STAR materials are available in alternative formats

¡FOLLETOS EN ESPAÑOL! STAR ha empezado traducir folletos en Inglés a Español. Actualmente, STAR tiene dos folletos en Español: “Directorio de Recursos de Financiamiento para Tecnología Asistiva en Minnesota” y “El Programa STAR: Un Sistema de Tecnología para Lograr Resultados.

STAR does not endorse or recommend any particular product, individual or agency. The posting of information in this newsletter and on STAR’s Web site is educational in nature and does not imply endorsement by STAR’s funder, the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

A System of Technology to Achieve Results (STAR) is located within the Minnesota Department of Administration and funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended in 2004 (P.L. 105-364).