

Assistive Technology NEWS



From the Director's Chair -

Jill Pleasant, MA, OTR/L

It's been a long while since our last newsletter and AzTAP has undergone several significant transitions including moving to a larger office in a new location, staff changes, new training events, a new banking partner and many additions to our equipment inventory. Unchanged however, are the outstanding services provided by the people on our team - in Phoenix and in Flagstaff. In addition to AT knowledge and expertise, our staff members bring creativity, caring attitudes and the willingness to go above and beyond! These qualities are reflected in the consumer satisfaction feedback we receive. Here is a recent example:

"Heidi [Lervik] has gone out of her way to brainstorm and figure out a good technology solution for my friend who has ALS. The loan of the head pointer made a huge impact on my friend's life; also the free loan of the PC-Eye-Go really helped my friend with her decisions on technology."

Speaking of Heidi Lervik, she joined AzTAP last September as an assistive technology specialist. Also new is Mike Buckley, a seasoned AT provider who came aboard in March. Nikkol Anderson has added AzTAP hours to her workload in Flagstaff; and transitioning from AzTAP volunteer to student worker is Chris Bevan. Chris is completing his first year in the NAU Entry Level Occupational Therapy Doctoral Program and has a strong interest in assistive technology. To learn more about them, visit www.aztap.org/about/our-staff/.

We have said goodbye to Laura Wooten-LaFranier. Laura will be the new AT Specialist for the Queen Creek School District. When she came to AzTAP two and a half years ago, she started as a volunteer and was subsequently hired as our AT Assistant. Laura was very clear that her goal was to become an Assistive Technology Specialist. Towards that end, she recently completed



the Assistive Technology Certificate Program at NAU. Her Masters degree in Special Education, previous teaching experience, and her time at AzTAP have really prepared her to take on this new role. While all of us are sad to see Laura leave AzTAP, we are very happy that this opportunity has come her way!

Educational Events

Many of you have asked about the Annual Assistive Technology Conference. Although the 2015 event was highly successful with great reviews about the program and venue, we decided to postpone the conference for one year. We will be returning to the Scottsdale Hyatt Regency Resort at Gainey Ranch in 2017 for the full conference and already have a contract in place for **July 23-25, 2017**. Remember to mark these dates on your calendars now!

This year, as an alternative to the conference, we opted to offer, smaller more focused face-to-face trainings and webinars on specific AT Topics such as hearing, augmentative communication, and



Deaf-HOH Workshop

adapted toy and switch construction. There was high demand for these events and they filled up quickly. On Wed, August 3rd at 3:00 p.m., we



AAC Workshop Presentation



Switch Adapted Toys

have scheduled a webinar on IOS voiceover accessibility issues which will be presented by Darrell Shandrow Hilliker. More details to follow, so remember to periodically check the AT Education page on the website for updated information.

If you are interested in learning more about Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility, the Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP)

has added additional webcasts on this topic and they are available for viewing anytime. To access the webinars and their newsletters, go to <http://www.ataporg.org/ICTWebinars/Default>.

AzLAT Has a New Lending Partner

Changes have taken place at Arizona Loan\$ for Assistive Technology as well. Arizona MultiBank has been our banking partner since AzLAT began in 2001. MultiBank merged with Clearinghouse CDFI in 2015 making them a California based organization. As a result, there were obstacles blocking their ability to continue making consumer loans in Arizona. However, they worked with us to identify another financial institution able to offer similar financial services and we are pleased to announce that MariSol Federal Credit Union is now our new lender. As a credit union, their focus is on providing consumer loans. We have already closed on several loans and are very confident that this partnership will enhance AzLAT's services.



Augmentative Communication Evaluating and Training Program

Augmentative communication devices offer a “voice” for individuals who cannot speak or speak clearly enough for other people to understand what they are saying. Some devices are simple with limited message choices, but many are highly sophisticated and offer true communication independence.

Determining the best device requires expertise and experience on the part of skilled clinicians who work in collaboration with the client and their family.

IHD has been providing comprehensive Augmentative Communication Evaluations to children and adults with significant speech impairments for more than 15 years. IHD recently entered into another agreement with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) to continue providing these evaluations throughout Arizona. As part of this new contract, IHD will now also deliver the



initial set-up and training to support the client’s successful use of his or her new device.

Jill Pleasant, MA, OTR/L is the Project Director and Debbie Mariage has been promoted to Program Coordinator, Lesley Iacona, M.Ed. CCC-SLP and Nikkol Anderson, MA, OTR/L, ATP are the lead therapists for the Northern Arizona evaluation team. IHD has also established evaluation teams in central and southern Arizona to meet the need for this service.

In addition to IHD, there are four other agencies that have contracts with DDD to provide these services. DDD clients and their families have the right to choose the contractor depending on the county in which they reside.

Equipment Corner

AzTAP continually updates our equipment inventory which allows us to stay current with emerging AT products and to address borrower requests. New additions to the inventory include:

Myo Gesture Control Armband

The Myo Gesture Control Armband (Inventory # 52661) is from Thalmic Labs. It is a Bluetooth device that fits around the user’s forearm allowing gesture control access to PC, Mac, iOS and Android devices. The Myo functions by using highly sensitive motion and EMG muscle sensors to detect hand gestures like pinching two fingers, making a fist, waving left/right or extending fingers to make selections on the device. It has the ability to create a custom profile for the user so it remembers the user’s unique style of movement or gestures. The Myo is rechargeable and runs approximately one day on a full charge. The Myo is available in either black or white and costs \$199.00. It comes with USB charging cable, USB Receiver dongle and 10 sizing adjustment clips. More information about the Myo Armband is available at www.myo.com.



Double 2 Telepresence Robot



The **Double 2** (inventory # 52682) is an iPad-based telepresence robot that allows people to participate in activities even when they aren't physically in the same location. An iPad connects to the **Double 2** via Bluetooth through the iPad's camera and microphone. The person using **Double 2** can move the robot around and access the video and audio capabilities through an iDevice. It enables remote users to join the classroom or a meeting in real-time, interact with others

one-on-one, participate in group discussions, and even attend off campus events or field trips. The base price is approximately \$3000 (iPads must be purchased separately). More information is available at <http://www.doublerobotics.com/>.

Bestic AB Feeding System

The Bestic AB (inventory #52676) supports eating independence for persons who have difficulty feeding themselves due to loss of upper body strength and coordination. The system can be controlled by the individual's existing abilities such as minimal finger movements or head control. Key features include easy to set-up and learn, switch activation, lightweight portably allowing it to be used away from home, up to five hours of battery life per charge, and smooth, quiet operation. The spoon and plate are both dishwasher-safe. For more information and videos, go to www.besticinc.com.



Prodigi Connect 12 with Distance Viewing



direct access to the object or document being viewed.

The Prodigy Connect 12 with Distance Viewing (Inventory # 52608) is a lightweight and extremely portable full HD touchscreen video magnifier with

Additional features include a powerful, wireless camera with up to 40x magnification in full HD with integrated capture function. Its battery can provide up to 12 hours of use and the open Android platform offers access to 1,500,000 apps and native synchronization with Google world, Google Docs, Drive, Gmail, Google+, Hangouts, Chrome (all preinstalled), Smartboard connectivity and many other content providers. Learn more at <http://store.humanware.com/hus/prodigi-connect-12-with-distance-viewing.html>.

Sesame Phone

The Sesame Phone is an Android based touch free Smartphone controlled via head movements and voice commands. Once positioned and configured, the user "wakes" up the Sesame Phone with the voice command "Open Sesame", then navigates and makes selections for email, SMS texting, phone calls and web browsing by swiping and tapping on the phone using an on-screen dwell style interface. To close or put the Sesame Phone to sleep, the person uses the voice command "Close Sesame Phone". If you would like to try it out for yourself please contact AzTAP. For more information, go to www.Sesame-Enable.com.



Other AzTAP Device Updates

Apps

AzTAP continues to purchase apps and we have reorganized how they are displayed on the website to make it easier to see which apps are in our inventory by category. Learn more about the apps at <http://aztap.org/at-devices/at-device-spotlight>.

AT for Young Children

AzTAP has recently received requests for early mobility and bathing equipment appropriate for young children and we are working with pediatric therapists to fill this need. Watch for information on these devices in the next newsletter.

Website Accessibility

To ensure that the AzTAP website is fully accessible, we have contracted with Darrell Shandrow Hilliker, an accessibility consultant. Darrell has been reviewing the

entire site and recommending changes to improve its accessibility. As we work through the process, it is encouraging to learn that most of the issues Darrell has encountered to date are relatively minor and we are working with our web management company to correct the problem areas. One of the changes in progress is revising the Captcha feature to make sure it is usable by individuals who are deaf-blind.

According to the Captcha.net website, "A CAPTCHA is a program that protects websites against [ro]bots by generating and grading tests that humans can pass but current computer programs cannot. For example, humans can read distorted text as the one shown above, but current computer programs can't." However, persons who are deaf-blind may be unable to see or hear the text that needs to be typed into the text box. We will be replacing the current CAPTCHA feature with a more accessible option.



Educating Our Congressional Delegation about AzTAP

The majority of AzTAP's funding comes from the US Department of Health and Human Services – Administration on Community



Living. Since Congress appropriates the funds that support our activities, it is important that the members of the Arizona Congressional Delegation understand what AzTAP does and the impact our services have on Arizonans with disabilities. During the past six months we have had several opportunities to interact with Congressional staffers to educate them about AzTAP's accomplishments. We invited members of the Congressional Delegation to our Open House in December and were very pleased that Jennifer Papworth from Congressman Raul Grijalva's Avondale office was able to attend on his behalf. In March, during a conference in DC, Jill Pleasant met with staffers

from Senators McCain and Flake's offices and with one of Congressman Salmon's legislative assistants. The meetings went well and all three staffers expressed appreciation and high interest in our work.

AT ReUse

Open-Ended, Long Term Device Loans

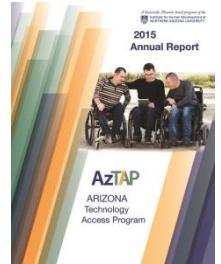
Selected, older devices in our inventory are available at no cost, for open-ended, long term loans. Check <http://aztap.org/at-reuse/> to see what is currently available and for instructions on how to request items.

The AT Exchange

There are a number of older, but usable devices available for FREE on the AT Exchange. They are listed by AT Category. To see what is available, go to <http://www.azatexchange.org/home.php>.

Annual Report

Every year, AzTAP tracks and reports data to our primary funding agency, the Administration on Community Living at the US Department of Health and Human Resources. This year we produced our first Annual Report which captures key data and aims the spotlight on important program accomplishments. View the report at <http://aztap.org/resources/publications/>.



Contact Us

The Arizona Technology Access Program

300 W. Clarendon Ave., Suite 475

Phoenix AZ 85013

(602) 728-9534 (Voice)

(602) 728-9536 (TTY)

(800)477-9921 (Toll-Free)

Email: AskAztap@nau.edu

Visit our website at www.aztap.org

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