



The AT Messenger

bringing technology to you

Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI) • Volume 14, No. 2 • Spring 2006

Special Issue Emphasizes Expanded Services and Supports

Beth Mineo Mollica, Ph.D.
DATI Director

We are using this issue of *The AT Messenger* as a way of updating our readers on a whole host of expanded services and supports being offered by DATI. As you know, the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative is our state program authorized under the federal Assistive Technology Act. The mission of the DATI is to enable people with disabilities to learn, work, play, and participate in community life more safely and independently with the help of assistive technology (AT). We accomplish this mission by providing information-and-referral both in person and via telephone, email, and our acclaimed website. At our Assistive Technology Resource Centers in each county, we offer equipment demonstrations and short-term equipment loans to help consumers become aware of technology options and their suitability for individual needs. We offer a variety of resources to help individuals acquire needed devices and services, including an on-staff Funding and Policy Specialist, an online *Guide to Funding Resources for AT in Delaware*, numerous fact sheets and other publications, and an AT Exchange program. We also expect our new AT loan programs to be operational very shortly. In addition, we work closely with state agencies and organizations to raise AT awareness, increase AT-related capacity, and improve education, employment,

accessible telecommunications, and community living through access to AT and accessible products and environments.

One of the most exciting new developments is the significant expansion of the DATI equipment inventory, thanks to a number of collaborations supported by local agencies and organizations. You can read about several of these initiatives in this issue, and you can find a comprehensive listing of all new equipment, organized by category, on Pages 6 through 9. All of this equipment is also included in our online inventory. This wonderful feature of our website, which can be accessed at www.dati.org in the Equipment Demo/Loan section, allows you to search the inventory by product name or equipment category. Equipment listings include a brief description of the device, manufacturer contact information, and the ability to reserve the equipment for demonstration and/or short-term loan from any of the DATI Assistive Technology Resource Centers. Eventually, the inventory module of the website will also include pictures of all of the products in the DATI centers, but it is taking us a while to gather and upload all of those pictures!

Focus on
New Services

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And an update on the operation of our AT Resource Centers... For many years, these centers were operated under subcontracts from DATI to other community organizations. In Fall 2005, the operation of the AT Centers was integrated with other DATI activities to streamline services and eliminate customer confusion about who we are and what we do. The same friendly, highly-qualified staff who have

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DATI Expanding Services and Supports (continued)

been meeting your AT needs for many years remain in the Centers; the only difference is that they are now University of Delaware employees! In fact, DATI's AT team—Eden Melmed, Marvin Williams, Dan Fendler, and I—will be teaching a course this summer on Universal Design for Learning as a part of the University of Delaware's Summer Institute in Educational and Assistive Technology.

It has been our privilege to have served as Delaware's State AT Program for the past 15 years. As always, the DATI stands ready to help people connect with the AT they need to live safely and independently. Please contact us if you have a need for technology, consultation, training, or another AT-related service—if we do not have the service or support that meets your needs, we will help you find one. ■

Community Programs Increase Access to AT

Tobin Foundation

DATI's partnership with the Tobin Foundation has yielded some wonderful outcomes for Delawareans with visual limitations. It has enabled DATI to add some terrific products to its inventory for demonstration and loan purposes. Among these are a variety of popular board games, adapted to make them accessible to those who are blind or visually impaired, and a fabulous portable magnification system that allows you to carry the power of a CCTV in your purse or (large) pocket. Tobin Foundation support has also enabled us to launch a brand new program to place relatively low-cost vision technology directly into the hands of those who need it. Beginning April 15, visitors to the ATRCs will be able to acquire certain types of equipment—such as magnifiers, writing aids, time-telling tools, and sunshields—free of cost. Here is how the program works: Individuals seeking tools to help them overcome visual challenges can visit an ATRC to learn about the array of products that might meet their needs. They will have the opportunity to try a variety of devices, and then borrow some to make sure that they are effective in home, employment, school, or other community settings. If the product they eventually select is available through the new program, we will arrange for them to receive that item for their personal use. Individuals may receive up to \$100 worth of equipment each calendar year. That can be a single item or several items, but the total cost cannot exceed \$100.

Hearing Loss Association of Delaware

The Hearing Loss Association of Delaware (formerly Self-Help for Hard of Hearing People) is

partnering with DATI to expand the hearing-related equipment available for demonstration and short-term loan at the Assistive Technology Resource Centers. With funding from the Crystal Trust, the Hearing Loss Association is expanding some of its community services, and realized that a partnership with DATI on the equipment component would both extend its reach and provide critical day-to-day management and tracking of the equipment it wished to make available to the community. This partnership enabled us to purchase \$10,000 in new products, including a variety of alerting and alarm systems, telecommunications products, and personal and large area amplification systems. Visit the DATI website to peruse the equipment inventory, or stop by to have a look! ■

In support of the Tobin Foundation's activities to assist Delawareans with visual limitations, the organization will hold the 20th Annual "Tobin Open" Golf Tournament on Monday, May 15 at the Newark Country Club. Proceeds from the fundraiser benefit Tobin programs to provide guide dogs and computers to those in need.

The "Tobin Open" includes a round of golf on Newark's 6,200 yard course, a golfers' reception at 5 p.m., and a buffet dinner at 6 p.m. An auction, awards ceremony, and prize distribution will be held during dinner. Cost for golf and all activities is \$190. For non-golfers attending only the dinner and awards ceremony, cost is \$50. For registration and information, contact the Tobin Foundation at (302) 655-5046.

The AT Bargain Basement

Marvin Williams, AT Specialist
Kent County ATRC

Hello true believers, and welcome to this installment of the *AT Bargain Basement*. This is the place where I, your humble AT Specialist, strive to find all of the assistive technology I can bring to you for under \$100. If you happen to find any bargains, make sure you send them along to me, and I'll enshrine them in the *Bargain Basement*! Now, let's get to the bargains!

The first bargain comes to us from Linda Heller from the Hearing Loss Association of Delaware, and Linda's bargain is cellular jewelry. These fancy bracelets actually light up and flash when your cell phone rings. I have seen watches that do this at **Wal-Mart**, but I haven't seen anything as attractive as these bracelets. These are great for cell phone users who are hearing impaired and are unable to be alerted by the vibration of the phone (if it's in a purse or coat pocket). Do note that currently the jewelry only works with GSM cell phones, so make sure that is the type of phone you have. The jewelry sells for \$19.99 and is available through **Potomac Technology**. Their phone/TTY number is (800) 433-2838 and their web address is www.potomactech.com.



Cellular jewelry by Potomac Technology

My next bargain was brought to my attention by DATI's own Sussex County AT Specialist, Dan Fendler. Dan suggested a nice low-priced MP3 player which would have a lot of educational uses given the recent boom in podcasting. Podcasting is the new 21st Century way of providing information and a more specialized education to students. I like podcasts as a means of listening to *Meet the Press* and other shows while I crank out *The Basement*. Basically, a podcast is an audio recording of material that one can listen to on an **Apple iPod** or other MP3 player. Well, Dan hipped me to some nice low cost MP3 players, one of which I bring to you today. The **IROCK-930** is a great little MP3 player that also has a secure digital card reader (those tiny

memory cards that go into your digital camera). This makes the player's memory expandable to 2 GB of storage with the proper secure digital card. The nice thing though, is that this MP3 player is not expensive, selling for \$25.99 on

www.amazon.com. Now don't be confused if you do a search on the **IROCK-930** and it shows you the **EZMP3** player 128 Mb.



IROCK-930 MP3 player

They are the same model. So if Podcasts or MP3 casts are your thing, you may want to give this bargain a try. Do note that not all MP3 players are compatible with **Apple's iTunes** format, the default format for podcasts. While this one is not, it is still a good bargain for listening to MP3s of classes and the like.

The next bargain is a real deal. It's the **GE Reveal** light bulb. Yes, a light bulb. The **GE Reveal** is a full-spectrum bulb, which provides better, "cleaner" light than regular incandescent or fluorescent bulbs. The **Reveal** bulbs have an element called neodymium in the glass. It gives the bulbs a distinctive blue color and acts to filter out the parts of light that may be taxing on the eyes. Normally, you would expect to pay top dollar for such lighting, but by replacing existing bulbs with **GE Reveals**, you can get the benefit for as little as \$2.50 for a four pack. Yes, you read correctly: \$2.50. What's more, you can get them at **Wal-Mart, Home Depot, and Lowe's**, so they are easily available. While there is still some debate over the health benefits of full spectrum lighting, I have found that using the lights does make a difference in how text appears on the page and computer screen. While the ATRCs don't have the **GE Reveal** bulbs for you to try, we do have other full spectrum lamps you can try free of charge, as usual.

My next bargain is some really nice software called **EasyOffice**. This software isn't a pirated version of

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The AT Bargain Basement (continued)

Microsoft Office. It's software that is compatible with **Office** programs like **Word**, **Excel**, and **PowerPoint**. It can also be used to create PDF documents instead of spending more than \$400 on **Adobe Acrobat**. While it doesn't offer all of the capabilities of **Acrobat**, it can still make a pretty useful PDF. It also has **EasySpeaker**, a text-to-speech program, bundled with it. **EasySpeaker** will read most every type of file **EasyWord** can open even if it's not opened in **EasyWord**. It can also read web pages. **EasySpeller** is an interactive dictionary and thesaurus that **EasyOffice** gives you. It also comes with **EasyVoice** for speech recognition to rival **IBM's Via Voice**. While it's no **Dragon Naturally Speaking**, it is extremely good

given its low price tag. **EasyOffice** has all of these programs and too many more to name here, all for \$59. Now, this money goes towards the development costs and the cost of giving you everything on CD. While \$59 may still seem like a lot of money, you should check out the website, <http://easyofficepremium.com/>, to see why it is indeed a steal at \$59.

And that will bring to a close this installment of the *AT Bargain Basement*. As usual, please send along any bargains you may find so that I can credit you and share them with everyone else here. So until next time remember, just because it's a bargain, doesn't mean it's cheap! ■

How to Identify and Prevent Medicare Fraud

*Laura J. Waterland, Senior Staff Attorney
Disabilities Law Program*

A recent *AT Messenger* article on Medicare's new criteria for wheelchairs and scooters (Summer 2005) highlighted an ongoing problem—Medicare fraud. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has cracked down hard in the last few years on durable medical equipment providers after numerous cases of fraud were discovered. Payments for power wheelchairs had risen 450 percent from 1999 to 2003, while the Medicare population had risen only one percent. Investigations revealed rampant fraud in the sale of durable medical equipment, especially power wheelchairs. In 50 investigations, federal authorities discovered \$167 million in fraudulent power wheelchair claims alone.

Medicare fraud is a huge problem that ultimately costs us all, as wage earners, as taxpayers, and as consumers of medical services. Medicare spending in 2004 was \$295 billion—roughly 12 percent of the total federal budget. And this was before the Medicare Prescription Plan! The federal government estimates that about 10 percent of expenditures are wasted on fraud and abuse. One way to help keep Medicare solvent is to reduce fraud.

With the arrival of Medicare's Part D prescription

drug program, there is more concern than ever that unscrupulous individuals will cook up ways to swindle Medicare recipients who are trying to navigate Part D's complex waters. Below I will go over some tips to help Medicare recipients identify potentially fraudulent activities and to avoid being "scammed."

Billing Fraud

Medicare fraud comes in numerous guises. The first is in billing. A typical scam is billing for services or procedures that have not been performed. Another is billing for an item that is different than the one you received. For example, a doctor prescribes and a supplier delivers a manual wheelchair, but the billing statement lists a power chair. Double-billing is another common scheme. Here are some real examples from 2005:

- In South Carolina, a licensed physical therapist was sentenced to 18 months in prison and ordered to pay \$400,000 in restitution for health care fraud. The therapist billed Medicare and a private insurer for three to five hours of therapy when only a one-hour treatment was rendered.
- In Virginia, a psychologist was ordered to pay

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Preventing Medicare Fraud (continued)

\$11,000 in fines and restitution for health care fraud. The psychologist submitted fraudulent claims to Medicare for neuropsychological evaluations and testing on nursing home patients. Many of the claims submitted were for dates of service when the psychologist was out of town.

- In Texas, the owner of a durable medical equipment company was ordered to pay \$546,000 in restitution for billing Medicare for power wheelchairs that were either not provided or were not medically necessary.
- In California, the owner of a laboratory company was sentenced to 10 months incarceration and ordered to pay \$180,000 in restitution for health care fraud. The man billed Medicare for diagnostic tests, including echocardiograms and ultrasounds, which were not ordered by a physician and were never interpreted by a physician.

Marketing Fraud

Another primary fraud method is sales and marketing. The power wheelchair fraud cases provide good examples of this type of scam. Medicare recipients were targeted with misleading advertising, aggressive door-to-door salesmen, and salesmen who even trolled shopping malls. In many cases, the scam artists submitted claims for chairs that were never supplied. In other cases, chairs were supplied for people who did not need or use them. In one Florida case, after a visit from a salesman, an elderly couple received two power wheelchairs, a hospital bed, and a pressure mattress, and they didn't need any of it.

A New Jersey company has gotten into a lot of hot water for its marketing tactics. **Electric Mobility** (famous for its **Rascal** scooters) has been the subject of state scrutiny. **Electric Mobility** engages in aggressive telemarketing and other hard-sell tactics. In an agreement with the State of New Jersey, **Electric Mobility** agreed, among other things, to refrain from misrepresenting that Medicare would pay for a scooter if, in fact, the claim would likely fail.

Aggressive telemarketing has been a particular

worry with Medicare Part D. Part D regulations allow "cold" marketing calls to Medicare beneficiaries. And while most calls have been on the "up and up," there have been scams. CMS sent an alert out in early March 2006 regarding a scam called "The \$299 Ring." A telemarketer attempts to solicit financial information over the phone for a fictitious prescription plan. The telemarketer in the scam tells the victim that there is a one time fee of \$299 to sign up for the plan. Other pressure tactics are employed, such as telling the victim that time for enrollment is running out.

How to Spot and Prevent Fraud

For billing fraud:

- 1) Review your Medicare Summary Notices each time and ask about any information you don't understand. Ask yourself whether you received the product or service that was billed. Did your doctor order the service? Look out for duplicate charges for the same service, charges for services that were never performed or equipment that was never ordered, and inappropriate or unnecessary charges for higher cost or new equipment when provided lower cost or used equipment.
- 2) Do not give your Medicare number or card to anyone except your doctor or other Medicare health professionals or legal representatives. Treat it like it is a credit card number.
- 3) Don't accept free equipment or services in exchange for giving your Medicare card. Nothing is ever free. Don't accept money to perpetuate or facilitate a fraud. You could very well end up going to jail.
- 4) Don't allow anyone except appropriate medical professionals or your representative to review your medical records.

For abusive marketing practices, be suspicious of any provider or salesperson who:

- 1) Indicates that the service is free, offers to waive your co-payments, or provides you with a free consultation.
- 2) Indicates that Medicare wants you to have a service, claims to know how to get Medicare to pay for it, or wants you to go to their doctor.

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Preventing Medicare Fraud (continued)

- 3) Indicates that they represent Medicare.
- 4) Uses pressure or scare tactics, such as telling you that you will lose your benefits or ability to get a service, or that Medicare is ending soon.
- 5) Uses telemarketing or door-to-door sales—this is not a reputable sales strategy for medical supplies or services.

You can stop telemarketers from calling you at all by registering your phone number with the Federal “Do Not Call” Registry at (888) 382-1222.

For Medicare Part D, CMS has allowed restricted telemarketing by prescription programs. However, plans can only call during certain hours and you cannot be enrolled over the phone or asked to pay for a plan over the phone. You can call them back to enroll. They are required to respect your request that they not call again. Also, while you can enroll on the internet, you cannot be asked to pay over the internet. The plan must send you a bill. No one can come to your door uninvited or ask you for personal information during marketing activities.

If you suspect fraud, you can report it a number of ways. CMS suggests that you should first try to resolve the matter with your health care provider and the Medicare Carrier or Fiscal Intermediary. In Delaware, this is Trailblazer at (888) 205-6833 for

Part B claims and Empire Medicare Services at (800) 633-4227 for Part A claims. If that doesn't work, CMS operates a fraud hotline at (800) 447-8477 and TTY (877) 486-2048, or fraud can be reported via email at htips@dhhs.gov.

Delaware's Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Disabilities operates a toll-free number to report Medicare Fraud, (800) 223-9074, or (302) 453-3838 to report in Spanish. You can report fraud to the Delaware Insurance Commissioner's Office at (800) 282-8611. Many of these activities also violate state consumer protection laws. Delaware Attorney General's Fraud and Consumer Protection Division can be contacted at (302) 577-8600.

If you report fraud to Medicare and your report leads to the recovery of at least \$100, and the claim is not already being investigated, you could be eligible for a cash award of up to \$1,000.

You can do your part to protect yourself and to improve the fiscal integrity of the Medicare program by protecting your private information and being alert and aware of the potential for fraud. Remember—there is truth to the old saying that if it seems too good to be true, it probably is! ■

New Inventory Items in DATI's ATRCs

Since DATI's Assistive Technology Resource Centers (ATRCs) opened in 1992, they have made over 8,200 no-cost AT loans to people in Delaware. One of the ATRCs' biggest challenges is keeping the inventory of equipment up-to-date.

Thanks to funds from a number of collaborations supported by local agencies and organizations, new equipment has just been added to the ATRCs. AT devices (divided by category) now available for demo/loan include:

Architectural Access/Home Design

- Portable Ramp – EZ Access
- Big Lamp Switch – Ableware
- Remote Control w/Key Chain Transmitter – General Electric

- Wireless RC System – AmerTac
- Indoor Light Control – AmerTac

Communication

- 7-Level Blue Communication Builder – Enabling Devices

- Access It – DynaVox
- DV4 and accessories – DynaVox
- MT4 and accessories – DynaVox

- Springboard II w/Spanish and

- accessories – Prentke Romich

- Randomizer – Adaptivation

- Voice Cue – Attainment Company



DV4 by DynaVox

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New Inventory Items in DATI's ATRCs (continued)

LinkPLUS with Word Prediction – Assistive Technology, Inc.

StepPad – Attainment Company

One Talker – Attainment Company

ChatPC II – Saltillo

Listen-to-Me – Saltillo

Personal Talker – Saltillo

BIG Step-by-Step Communicator – AbleNet

LITTLE Step-by-Step Communicator – AbleNet

SuperTalker – AbleNet

iTalk2 – AbleNet

Talking Photo Album – AbleNet

AAC Idea Book & Talking Picture Book – Augmentative Communication, Inc.

Optimist II – Zygo

LightWRITER and accessories – Zygo

Tech/Scan – Advanced Multimedia Devices, Inc.

Tech/Talk – Advanced Multimedia Devices, Inc.

Side Swiping Communicator – Enabling Devices

Visually Impaired Communicator – Enabling Devices

8 Message Communicator Multiplex – Enabling Devices



Vantage Plus WordPower by Prentke Romich

Mini-Com – Enabling Devices

Multi-Com – Enabling Devices

HipTalk Plus – Enabling Devices

Boardmaker Plus –

Mayer-Johnson

MiniMo – DynaVox

DynaWrite – DynaVox

Vantage Plus WordPower – Prentke Romich

Home/Office Intercom – Westinghouse

Steady Write Pen – Maddak

Sanford Comfort Ph.D. Grip Pen – PaperMate

Computer Software/Hardware

Write: OutLoud to Go Voice Bundle – Don Johnston

Inspiration Outliner SmartApplet – Inspiration Software

iPAQ PDA – HP

iPod – Apple

The Writer – Advanced Keyboard Technologies

Bluetooth Wireless Keyboard – Stowaway

HeadMouse Extreme – Origin Instruments

SofType – Origin Instruments

Tracker Pro – Madentec

Numeric Keypad – Belkin

Cordless Desktop Computer Combo – Logitech

Touch Screen Monitor – Planar

One-Handed Bluetooth Frogpad – Kaizen Frogpad

Large Print Wireless Keyboard – VisiKey

VerticalMouse – Evoluent

USB Mini Keyboard – Tash

USB King Keyboard – Tash

Switch Click USB – Tash

Mini Click USB – Tash

QuickCam Camera Mouse Software – Tash

Arm Supports Extension Height Pole – ErgoRest

Arm Support w/Mouse – True Arm

Gel Wrist Rest – 3M

Controls

Switches – Tash

Mountings – Tash

Clamps – Tash

Tube Connections – Tash

Switch Kits – Tash

Oversized Universal Remote Control – TK Partner



Oversized Universal Remote Control by TK Partner

Home Automation Kit – Plug 'n Power

5-in-1 Switch Modifier – Enabling Devices

X-Keys USB Switch Interface – PI Engineering

Educational Management

ClickIt – IntelliTools

Meville to Weville: Early Literacy & Communication – AbleNet

Bookworm and accessories – AbleNet

That's Life! Literature Series – AbleNet

Health, Safety, and Daily Living Support

Long Scrub Sponge – Sammons Preston Rolyan

Bath Mitt w/Soap Pocket – Skil-Care

Autodrop Eyedrop Dispenser – Owen Mumford

DressEZ Long Handle Shoehorn and Dressing Stick – ArcMate

Shoehorn – Sammons Preston Rolyan

Spyrolaces

Dysphasia Cup – Bruce Medical

Hi-Lo Scoop Plate – Parsons A.D.L.

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New Inventory Items in DATI's ATRCs (continued)

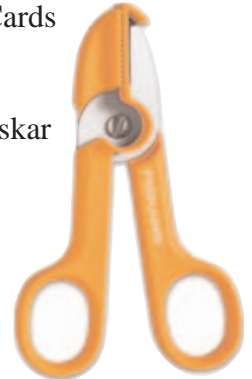
2 Handle Clear Cup w/2 Lids – Providence Spill-proof Container
T-Shaped Rocker Knife – Sammons Preston Rolyan
Kings Lightweight Foam Utensil Handle – Ability One Homecraft
Plastic Handle Bent Utensils – Sammons Preston Rolyan
Flexible Utensils – Richardson Products
Lighted Magnifying Toenail Clipper – Prime Way Companies
Home Travel Pillbox Timer – LifeWise
Talking Thermometer – Independent Living Aids
Ezy Dose Meditime Planner – Apothecary Products
Ezy Dose Magnifying Pill Cutter – Apothecary Products
Medication Weekly Manager – Timex
Medication Daily Manager – Timex
Carpal Tunnel Wrist Supports – Bruce Medical
Grocery Grip – Elder Corner
The Grip-All – Ableware
Doorknob Grips – Great Grips
D-Grip add on Handle – Motus
T-Grip add on Handle – Motus
EZ Pour Holder for Containers – Independent Living Aids
EZ Flo Auto Faucet Control – International Environment
Grip-It Multipurpose Tool – Grip-It Products
Jug Tipper – Ability One Homecraft
Universal Holder – Sammons Preston Rolyan
Weighted Universal Holder – Kinsman Enterprises
Hole-in-One Key Holder – Maddak
Non-Slip Grip Mat – Con-Tact
26" Reacher – Sammons Preston Rolyan
Angled Measuring Cup – World Kitchen
One-Handed Cordless Can Opener – Black & Decker
4-Way Multipurpose Can Bottle Opener – Evriholder Product
Jar Vise – SCI Cuisine International
Folding Pot Stabilizer – Parsons A.D.L
EZ Flip Spatula
Big Number Measuring Cups – Bradshaw International



Big Number Measuring Spoons – Bradshaw International
JarPop – Spring Mill Home Products
The Magic Opener – Inpro Products Group
Book Butler – Spartan International
Pill Case Clock – Casio

Recreation and Leisure

Battery Powered Card Shuffler – Maddak
Card and Pencil Holder – Ableware
Super Jumbo Number Playing Cards – Hoyle
Scrabble Tile Set – Mattel
Cut-N-Hold Floral Scissors – Fiskar
Garden Scissors – Tommyco
Easi-Grip Fork – Peta
Softouch Trowel – Fiskar
Sure Grip Trowel
Wiser Hand Tool – Holland Greenline
Garden Kneeler w/Rails – Step2
Garden Bandit – Landmark Innovations
Quintet – Unique Perspectives LTD
Digital Video Camera – AbleNet



Cut-N-Hold Floral Scissors by Fiskar

Blind and Low Vision

Multipurpose Check Writing Guide – Keitzer
Signature Guide – LS&S Group
Check Writing Guide – LS&S Group
Big Print Check Register – Big Type Co.
Optelec Compact – Optelec
HappyEyes Desk Lamp – Verilux
Fresnal Stand Magnifier – Tech Optics International Corp.
Quicklook – Ash Technologies
Ecolux Illuminated Pocket Magnifier – Schweitzer
Bifocal Magnifier – Independent Living Aids
Triple Folding Pocket Magnifier – Bausch & Lomb
Bar Magnifier – Ultra-Optix
Hands-Free Clamp on Magnifier – LS&S Group
Magnifier Attachment – Verilux
Extra Large Dome Magnifier
Stand Magnifier – Reizen
Stand Loupe Magnifier – Carson Optical
Hands Free Magnifier – Carson Optical

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New Inventory Items in DATI's ATRCs (continued)

Cell Phone Magnifier – Power Lenz

Yellow Tracker Bar Magnifier

Retractable Pocket Magnifier – Ultra-Optix



Hands Free Magnifier by Carson Optical

Gooseneck Magnifier – Reizen

Natural Daylight Floor

Lamp – Verilux

Big Shot Screen Magnifier – Ai Squared

ZoomText Ver. 9.0 – Ai Squared

FindIT Key Finder –

Ambitious Ideas Products

Tactile Braille Ruler –

Maxi Aids

XXL Calculator – Kikker-

land Design

Talking Calculator – Reizen

Desktop Base Magnifier

Large Printer Ruler – HearMore

Gigantic Laminated Bingo Card – Independent Living Aids

Raised Dot Dominoes – Reizen

Low Vision Connect Four – Milton Bradley

Large Print Scrabble – Mattel

Braille Uno – Mattel

Braille Low Vision Monopoly – Royal National Institute for the Blind

Talking Watch

Talking Atomic Alarm Clock

Low Vision Watch – LS&S Group

Talking Digital Tire Gage – GH Meiser

Talking Tape Measure – Caretec

Voice Activated Tactile Phone Dialer – Reizen

Deaf and Hard of Hearing



PockeTalker Pro by Williams Sound

Hearing Helper System 350E – Williams Sound

Conference Microphone – Williams Sound

Deluxe Folding Headphones – Williams Sound

Deluxe Behind the Head Headphones – Williams Sound

PockeTalker Pro Amplifier – Williams Sound

Door Chime Flashes Lamp –

Dimango

Door Knocker – COMPU TTY

Alert Master 6000 – Ameriphone

Amplified Phone w/Caller ID – ClearSounds

Conference Phone – RCA

Amplified Phone – Clarity

Vibrating Baby Monitor – Fisher Price

TV Ears Headset – TV Ears

Boostaroo – Upbeat Audio

Infrared TV Listener – Unisar

Microphone Windscreen – Williams Sound

Electronic Stethoscope – Andromed

SoundWizard II – ClearSounds

Telelink Phone Coupler – Williams Sound

Omni Plug Mount Microphone – Williams Sound

MicroLoop II – Oval Window

Portable Induction Loop – Oval Window

LR-600 Wireless Speaker/Receiver – Listen Technologies

Wake & Shake Jumbo Alarm Clock/Phone Signaler – ClearSounds

Carbon Monoxide Alarm – Kidde

Strobe Light Remote Visual Signaling Device – Kidde

Personal Tactile Signaler – Alertmaster

Emergency Response Phone – ClearSounds

Dialogue VCO Phone – Ameriphone

PowerTouch Business Phone – AA STRA

TeleTalker 040 – Williams Sound

XL-30 Amplified Telephone – Ameriphone

Beamer TV Videophone – Vialta

Beamer Video Station – Vialta

Freedom Match II – Hatis

Epic II – Hatis

Director I – Hatis

Cellular Phone Amplifier – Plantronics

Watchminder 2 – Watchminder

VibraLite 3 – Global Assistive Devices



Cellular Phone Amplifier by Plantronics

Pathfinder Watch – Casio

Workplace/Office

Remote Handset Lifter – GN Netcom

Bluetooth Headset – GN Netcom

Mobility/Seating/Positioning

Up Easy Lift Cushion – Uplift Technologies ■

Desk Job Proves to be Painful for Some

Dan Fendler, AT Specialist
Sussex County ATRC

Do you have arthritis? Has working with your computer become frustrating or painful? If you answered yes to either one or both questions, you should be aware that there may be tools or techniques available that can help.

First, Look at Your Work Area

Is your space ergonomically designed? Ergonomics, also known as human design, is intended to maximize productivity by minimizing operator fatigue and discomfort. For anyone with arthritis, minimizing discomfort is crucial.

Many of us with computers on our desks, either at work or at home, put the monitor and keyboard wherever there is room, with little thought given to our comfort. Placing a monitor and keyboard on an inadequate space can cause a lot of discomfort, even for someone without arthritis. If you sit in front of a computer for an hour or more a day, you may want to rethink its placement. The monitor should be placed so that you can sit comfortably in front of it, at eye level. The keyboard should sit where there is enough exposed desk top to provide some arm support.

One of the most common mistakes people make is setting their monitor too high. The monitor should be at eye level so that you don't need to strain your neck to see it. The older CRT monitors (big, clunky, and TV-like) take up a lot of space, and have limited adjustability. If using your computer causes you discomfort, you may want to consider replacing the old monitor with a flat panel monitor. Flat panel monitors take up considerably less space on a desk and have a much greater range of height adjustment. They have also gotten much more affordable.

Another comfort area to consider is your office furniture. Make sure that the chair you use fits you. You should be able to sit with your feet flat on the floor and your body weight should be supported by the entire length of the back of your legs, not just the "sitz bone." Your desk should also be at a comfortable height. There are many different ergonomi-

cally designed chairs and adjustable height desk options available. Use of one of these chairs and/or desks may help reduce discomfort.

Keyboards and Mice

There are many different keyboard and mouse options available as well. The keyboard that came with my last desktop computer carried this warning on the back: "Warning! Use of a keyboard or mouse may be linked to serious injuries or disorders!" The warning is relative to repetitive stress injuries (carpal tunnel syndrome and other musculoskeletal disorders).

But use of a keyboard and mouse can cause even more discomfort in people with arthritis. Consider using an ergonomically designed keyboard and mouse—devices that are designed to accommodate your hands, instead of your hands accommodating the devices. There are many different options available.



Kinesis Advantage USB keyboard features a contoured shape.

If your arms need some additional support, consider using arm supports. There are a number of different options available that may help you feel more comfortable.

If using a keyboard causes you pain, you may want to consider voice recognition software, like **Dragon Naturally Speaking**. This software program can be "trained" to understand your voice and convert it into text on your computer. The training only takes about 15 minutes or so, and the recognition rate (how well it recognizes your voice) can be quite high if the pitch of your voice doesn't fluctuate too much.

If you have any questions related to the equipment discussed above, please call your local resource center. ■

DATI Equipment Loan Policy

DATI has a wide variety of equipment at the Assistive Technology Resource Centers for the primary purpose of demonstration and short-term loan. The policy for the loan of the equipment is as follows:

The standard loan period is two weeks, defined as the day borrowed (e.g., Monday the 10th) to the same day two weeks later (e.g., Monday the 24th). Loans may be extended providing there are no names on the waiting list and/or that an extension will not interfere with an existing reservation. The maximum loan period is four weeks.

A maximum of four devices may be borrowed during any single loan period. However, combinations of devices may be treated as a single device if the components are interdependent—either operationally, or because one component is required for the user to access another. Equipment loans across state lines are not permitted. Equipment must also remain in Delaware throughout the loan period. ■



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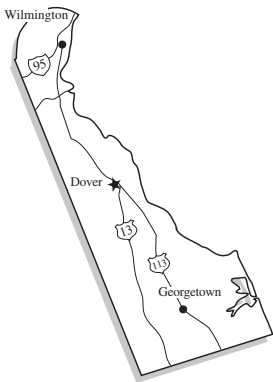


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