



# The AT Messenger

bringing technology to you

Delaware Assisive Technology Initiative (DATI) • Volume 16, No. 1 • Winter 2008



## Homegrown in DELAWARE

*This is the debut of our newest regular column, which will feature products, projects, or services created right here in the First State. Let us know if there's a local AT innovation that we should spotlight in a future issue of The AT Messenger. Special thanks go out to Keith Heckert, Senior Art Director for the Office of Public Relations at the University of Delaware, for the creation of the "homegrown" logo.*

Is it a camp chair, wheelchair, or both? That is the question.

Richard "Dick" Harrison and his brother-in-law are the brains behind the design, development, and distribution of **Strolleasy: The Lightweight, Portable Transporter**. The idea came to them when they noticed that their parents tired quickly after walking only a few hundred yards. Their parents did not respond well to the idea of using a traditional wheelchair, so they went about designing a lightweight, collapsible, easy-to-transport chair that was ready at a moment's notice. University of Delaware mechanical engineering students and a retired mechanical engineer assisted in the development of



this product. With ingenuity and the assistance of others, **Strolleasy Transporters** were created.

Each **Strolleasy Transporter** weighs in at a mere 14.5 pounds, collapses to 8" by 9" by 34", comes with its own carrying bag, and can be unfolded in about 30 seconds. The **Strolleasy** is currently sold for \$199 at [www.strolleasy.com](http://www.strolleasy.com). You can also reach the company by phone: (302) 239-3121, fax: (302) 239-5857, or email: [info@strolleasy.com](mailto:info@strolleasy.com). We encourage you to learn more about the **Strolleasy Transporter**. It is a unique product that meets a growing need. ■

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# Telephone Captioning Services? Not in Delaware

*Daniel Atkins, Legal Advocacy Director  
Disabilities Law Program,  
Community Legal Aid Society, Inc.*

For many years, the primary mode of telephone communication for people who are deaf and hard of hearing has been TTY (telephone typewriters) and the Deaf Relay system. While TTY and Deaf Relay represented significant progress a decade ago, in the 21st century their limitations seem significant. Consider the time it takes to type a conversation on a TTY machine or the intrusion posed by an operator facilitating a private conversation between two people. It is not surprising that the use of TTYs and Deaf Relay have declined recently around the country. E-mailing, Instant Messaging, and video relay have increased, along with a new telephone technology called CapTel.

CapTel is a captioned telephone that looks and works like a telephone an office worker might use. It has a screen above the key pad that displays every word a caller says throughout a conversation. Suppose a person who is hard of hearing places a call to a colleague. The caller presses the caption button. When the receiver of the call picks up, behind the scenes, the CapTel captioning service uses voice recognition technology to transcribe everything that is said by the participant who has not pressed the caption button (the call receiver in this case, or it could be both parties if both press their caption button). The caller can hear what the other party is saying but can also read (almost simultaneously) what he is saying on the display on her telephone.

CapTel offers much more natural and less intrusive communication for both the caller and the receiver. It is analogous to television captioning, which once seemed novel and now is ubiquitous. First, the person who is communicating with the person who is deaf or hard of hearing will not be slowed down by having to type, or waiting for an operator to type, what she wants to say. Second, the intrusiveness of having a third party actively participating in the conversation is mitigated, if not completely eliminated (while the technology is operating, there is a

human being, silently in the background, overseeing the transcription to make sure it is accurate). Third, the person who is hard of hearing has two ways of receiving the communication—both verbally if she has residual hearing and visually if she can read in the language of her choosing. Fourth, it levels the communication playing field for people who may not be able to afford a computer. The phone is much less expensive than a computer. Fifth, the service could help many more people than those who are deaf or hard of hearing. For instance, people who have vocal/voice problems could use the service to make their voice heard by the other party.

Perhaps the best feature of CapTel is that the service is free to users as part of the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) funds, which originate from Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act. CapTel has spread rapidly across the country. It is currently offered as part of Relay Service in every state except Alaska, Louisiana, Massachusetts, and Delaware. Why it is not yet offered in Delaware comes down to money. Without state legislation (which is being drafted) requiring the service to be funded in Delaware, it will not happen. As a result, consumers and advocates interested in seeing Delaware join the 21st century with regard to telephone communication for people with disabilities should contact their local Senate and House representatives and urge their support of this emerging initiative. ■

## Upcoming Training: Adult Services and Supports in DE

Training is available for those interested in learning more about services and supports available from the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS).

Please contact The Arc of Delaware for additional information: (302) 996-9400; Mid-Del chapter, (302) 736-6140; [www.thearcofdelaware.org](http://www.thearcofdelaware.org).

# Prosthetic Parity Insurance Legislation

*Gloria Price, Founder/Director  
Amputee Support Group of Delaware*

The Amputee Support Group of Delaware, in collaboration with the Amputee Coalition of America—the leading national advocacy group for amputees—is spearheading a statewide initiative called "Prosthetic Parity Insurance Legislation." Our state coalition is seeking to pass mandated insurance legislation to reverse the negative reimbursement trends that erode coverage and access to proper prosthetic care. At present, people living with the absence or loss of a limb face daunting obstacles when attempting to obtain appropriate prosthetic care. Prosthetic care, here, specifically relates to the replacement of artificial legs, arms, and eyes. Currently, it is difficult, if not impossible, for most amputees to obtain more than one prosthetic device in their lifetime through insurance, regardless of the fact that such devices have a typical life of between three and five years.

The coalition has a lot of work ahead of it and is seeking volunteers who are interested in making a difference and improving the quality of life for people living with limb loss in Delaware. If you are interested in participating in the coalition, or want more information, please contact me, Gloria Price, at (302) 778-2227.

You can also help by simply making a phone call or sending an email to Delaware State Representative Mike Castle's office. Representative Castle is being urged to co-sponsor a federal bill for the Prosthetic Parity Insurance Legislation. You can also send a message via Representative Castle's online form found at <http://www.house.gov/form-castle/IMA/zipauth.html>. It is hoped that your phone call or email will send a strong message that Delawareans are in support of this initiative.

For more information about the Amputee Coalition of America, as well as the Amputee Support Group of Delaware, go to [www.amputee-coalition.org](http://www.amputee-coalition.org). You will need to click on the "In Your State" button on the left side of the page to access information specific to Delaware. ■



## In Case of Emergency, ICE for Short

Are you aware that your cell phone can help you in an emergency even if you can't help yourself? There is a movement, of sorts, that seems to be sweeping the nation. This movement began when a British paramedic realized that many people he was serving had cell phones with stored numbers that might be of use in an emergency. However, there was a problem—how would emergency personnel know which number to call?

The idea is for each of us to add one or more emergency contact numbers into our cell phone under the name of "ICE", which stands for "In Case of Emergency." You can have several "ICE" numbers saved in your cell phone: "ICE 1," "ICE 2," and so

on. Numbers can also be listed as "ICE" and someone's name (i.e., ICE Dad).

Of course, this practice should not replace other forms of preparation such as carrying medical alert identification with you and informing someone of your plans. You can learn more about ICE on the US government website, <http://usasearch.gov>, and type "ICE in case of emergency" into the search field. You will find many references to the use of ICE around the country and abroad. Please consider taking steps to ensure that emergency personnel and others will be able to assist you in a time of need. ■

# Announcing the 14th Annual Inclusion Conference...

## Designing Environments for Successful Learning

Thursday, May 8, 2008

8:00 am - 3:15 pm

Sheraton Dover Hotel & Conference Center  
Dover, Delaware

### Keynote Address: Designing Environments for Successful Learning

Participants will become familiar with the characteristics of inclusionary schools, rationales for change, organizational and instructional strategies to support inclusionary schooling, and successful examples from elementary, middle and high school.

Richard A. Villa, Ph.D., has worked with thousands of teachers and administrators to develop and implement organizational and instructional support systems for educating all students within general education settings. His expertise arises from his work as a classroom teacher and an administrator. As the author of 100+ publications and a presenter at national and international conferences, he has gained a reputation for his informed, insightful, and humorous style of information exchange.

### Full-day Workshops (10:15-3:15, one-hour lunch on site)

#### 1) Differentiating Instruction for All in Mixed-Ability Classrooms, *Richard Villa, Ph.D.*

Participants will learn and apply both a retrofit and universal design for learning (UDL) approach to differentiating instruction (DI). Specific strategies for enhancing the success of diverse learners will be provided which are not only research-based but are also practical and teacher-tested. Techniques for integrating DI with collaborative planning and co-teaching will also be provided.

#### 2) Effective Behavior and Instructional Supports, *Carol Sadler, Ph.D.*

This presentation focuses on an innovative, district-wide model that combines Positive Behavior Support (aka Effective Behavior Support—EBS),

research-based academic support (with an emphasis on reading), and special education evaluation using Response to Intervention (RTI). The model was partially supported by a grant in 2000 received in Tigard-Tualatin School District in Oregon from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, developed and directed by the presenter, Dr. Carol Sadler. The model, called **Effective Behavior & Instructional Support (EBIS)**, has received considerable national attention over the past seven years, and is currently being used as the model process taught to other districts via the Oregon RTI initiative. Over the years, implementation of the model in the Tigard-Tualatin School District has deepened at the elementary school level and scaled upward to all grade levels, inspiring more effective reading instruction, progress monitoring, and support for literacy in the district's middle and high schools. The presentation will describe the district's implementation of EBIS, and its components (EBS and RTI), highlighting outcomes as well as specific procedures and implementation challenges. Ample opportunities for questions and discussion will be incorporated into the presentation.

**3) AIMing for Achievement! Accessible Instructional Materials for Students with Print Disabilities, *Joy Zabala, CAST; Karen Jones, DOE; Beth Mineo, Dan Fendler, and Marvin Williams, DATI***

Federal law emphasizes access to the general curriculum for all students, but this can be challenging for students with print disabilities because so many assessment and instructional materials are print-based. IDEA 2004 mandates that students with print disabilities be provided with core curricular content in specialized formats, and this has far-reaching implications for schools as well as students. Joy Zabala, Ed.D., who leads a national effort focused on accessible instructional materials, will: 1) review the legal mandate for print access and its implications; 2) discuss specialized formats for the delivery of print-based content; and 3) emphasize the role of the IEP team in addressing and accommodating students' print access needs. Print access initiatives underway in Delaware will also be discussed.

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# 14th Annual Inclusion Conference (continued)

## 4) Sharing Books with ALL Children Ages Birth to Five, *Patsy Pierce*

Current evidence points to the necessity of interactive book reading and sharing with young children in order to develop essential early oral and written language abilities. Participants will learn about the importance of interactive shared reading and strategies to help children with and without disabilities to participate in conversations related to books.

**Registration is required.** The cost is \$25 per person; \$12.50 for full-time students. A limited number of stipends are available for parents and child care providers who need this support in order to participate. Registration and payment must be completed by April 21, 2008. Register early, as space is

limited. Go to <http://www.dati.org/events> to register online or download a complete brochure. Only check or credit card payments will be accepted. For more information, call (302) 856-1081.

**Continuing Education Units:** Conference attendees may earn up to 5.0 professional growth hours with the Department of Education. Application has also been made to the Office of Child Care Licensing Board, and to Delaware's Professional Boards of Regulation for Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and Registered Nurses for continuing education credits.



## The AT Bargain Basement

*Marvin Williams, AT Specialist  
New Castle County ATRC*

Hello, True Believers, and welcome to yet another edition of the *AT Bargain Basement!* I'm Marvin Williams, your host for this assistive technology bargain jamboree. This is the place where I try to find you all of the lovely assistive technology bargains I can that cost \$100 or less. Also, if you happen to find something that you think would be of value to the group, please feel free to send it along to me. I'll put it in a future issue of the *Bargain Basement*.

Sometimes I get people asking me about the items I have listed. They'll say, "Hey Marvin, I like the stuff in *The Basement*, but how exactly is it assistive technology?" To answer that, let's look at the working definition of assistive technology we use here at DATI, which we get from the amended AT Act of 1998. In the Act, an assistive technology device is defined as any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities. As much of a mouthful as that is, it's a very broad definition for a good reason. By leaving the definition so broad, it can cover a large number of items. So,

while this does cover a \$30,000 wheelchair, it also covers the \$1 roll of shelf liner that is used as a place mat for the one-handed diner who, without it, would be chasing a plate all over a table. The big point of the *Bargain Basement* is to get everyone thinking about the different pieces of assistive technology we see every day but take for granted because they're in **Target** or are advertised on TV without an "AT" label on them. I hope that helps to clear up any of the confusion, and if it hasn't, let me know and I can see if I can help make things more clear. So without further ado, let's get to the bargains!

My first item is the **Page Up Porta-Book**. Now, you may not be able to guess what it is from the name, but it is a pretty handy little device. It's actually



*Page Up Porta-Book*

several devices in one. First and foremost, it's an angled book holder. It folds in on itself, creating almost a pyramid effect. You can lay a book on one side for reading. You can also use it for writing if you have difficulty writing with

*continued on page 6*

# The AT Bargain Basement (continued)

the paper flat on the table or desk. Next, you can use it as a clip board, providing a firm writing surface when one isn't readily available. You can also use it to hold pens, papers, rulers, and other little things you may need to take with you on the go. Do know that the more you use this for storage, the harder it becomes to use the angle function. The device is nice, and at \$5 (not including shipping), it's a deal. The **Porta-Book** can be ordered from **Portables Plus**. They have both internet and telephone ordering available.



*Jumbo Universal Remote Control*

My second item is the **Jumbo Universal Remote Control**. Now, this one was brought to my attention by DATI's own Beth Mineo. It's a nice little—I use that word loosely as it is anything but "little"—find from **Innovage Products**

that can control up to eight devices. The buttons are large and easy to press, and the price is reasonably low at \$9.99.

Now, Beth found ours at **Bed Bath & Beyond**; however, I've seen them at **Home Depot**, **Ross**, **Happy Harry's**, and **RiteAid**. The prices at the

different stores have been pretty consistent. If the buttons on that remote aren't big enough, there is the **Tek Partner Universal** which is a little more expensive, but it does have buttons that are a little bigger and light up, too.



*Tek Partner Universal*

This remote retails for \$39.99 and is available from **Radio Shack** as well as online retail outlets. DATI has both remotes available in its inventory if you'd like to try them before buying one.

My next item is a timer for the hearing impaired—the **Triple Tell Timer** by **Shake Awake**. This nifty little timer not only rings when it goes off, but a light flashes on the top of the unit, and it vibrates for a tactile alert.

The display on the unit is nice and large and the

buttons are pretty easy to use. While it isn't useful at a distance, it's great if you don't mind putting your timer in your pocket or keeping it otherwise close to you. It comes with a magnetic clip for easy storage/carrying options. It is battery operated, and a nice little bargain at \$14.99 from **MaxiAids**. **MaxiAids** offers both telephone and Internet ordering for its products. The DATI Assistive Technology Resource Centers (ATRCs) also have these available for loan if you'd like to see if it might make the difference for you or someone in your life.



*Triple Tell Timer*

My fourth item is **WordTalk**, a free plug-in for **Microsoft Word** that allows it to change text into speech. This can be handy for someone who needs text read to them for comprehension. The software will read text by the word, sentence, paragraph, or selection, depending on what the user needs. It also highlights the text as it reads along, allowing a user to visually follow along with the text. Unfortunately, this product does not feature speak-able menu items, so it's not of much use to those with severe visual impairments. Still, this software is very handy for the user with a learning disability who may need the assistance of having text read for comprehension. The price (free!) can't be beat either! The software is easy to use, and the user interface is pretty intuitive so it doesn't take a long time to figure out how to make it talk. For more information on the software and to download it, go to [www.wordtalk.org.uk](http://www.wordtalk.org.uk).

And that will bring to a close another informative installment of the *AT Bargain Basement*. Join us next time when we'll be looking at more bargains and trying to discover the secret to really great coffee. In the meantime, if you know of any great bargains, hints, or tips, please send them along. Until next time, remember... just because it's a bargain doesn't mean it's cheap! ■

## 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 equipment loans 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. ■



## Please Keep Us Posted!

Has your address changed? Are you receiving duplicates? Would you prefer to receive the newsletter via email?

If the address we have for you is incorrect, please type or print your correct address on the form below and forward it to DATI along with your current mailing label or the first page of your electronic newsletter. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, visit [www.dati.org/news/unsubscribe.html](http://www.dati.org/news/unsubscribe.html) or contact our central office.

Do you know a friend or family member who would be interested in receiving the newsletter? Please provide him/her with the subscription form below.

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### The AT Messenger Subscription Form

- I am a Delaware resident; please sign me up to receive *The AT Messenger*
- Please cancel my subscription to *The AT Messenger*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (check one):  Business  Residence \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (check one):  Business  Residence \_\_\_\_\_

Format:  I have provided my email address above, please send me an electronic version (large print, plain text, PDF, and HTML versions are available).

I prefer to receive a print version of *The AT Messenger* through the mail.

Indicate if an alternate format is needed:

- audio tape       Braille       large print

I am a:  person with a disability (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

family member of a person with a disability

friend/advocate/colleague of someone with a disability

professional (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

interested citizen

other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_





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(302) 651-6794 (TDD);  
(302) 651-6793 (fax)

Kent County ATRC  
Easter Seals Kent County Center  
100 Enterprise Place, Suite 1  
Dover, DE 19904-8200  
(302) 739-6885; (302) 739-6886 (TDD)

Sussex County ATRC  
20161 Office Circle, Suite C  
Georgetown, DE 19947  
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*The AT Messenger* is published quarterly by the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI). Dissemination of this newsletter to other people, association newsletters, and electronic mailing lists is encouraged. Information contained in this publication may be reprinted without permission, although attribution to the author and DATI is required.

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DATI is funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) of the U.S. Department of Education, Grant #H224A050008 to the University of Delaware. This publication does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of RSA/ED, and no official endorsement of the materials should be inferred. The University of Delaware is an equal opportunity employer and prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, age, national origin, marital status or disability in conformity with applicable laws.

