

Intro to Assistive Technology & Overview of CT Tech Act Project

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CT Tech Act Project

Agenda



- **Intro to Assistive Technology Devices & Services**
- **AT for Education and Employment**
- **Trends in AT**
- **Overview of CT Tech Act Project**

The CT Tech Act Project is a program within the Dept of Aging and Disability Services



Who am I?

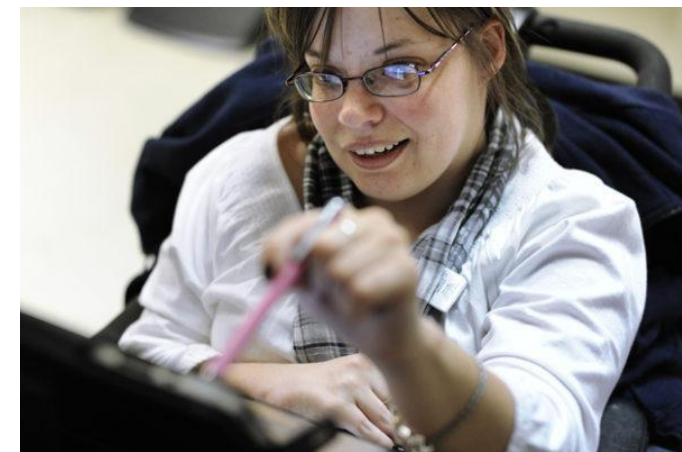
- Former American Sign Language Interpreter
- Former Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
- All around Technology lover and adopter
- Assistive Technology Consultant for Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, and
- Program Director for the CT Tech Act Project



Intro to Assistive Technology (AT)

“*Assistive Technology (AT)* device is *any item*, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified or customized, that is used to *increase, maintain, or improve* the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.”

- 21st Century AT Act



AT Continuum



From low to mid to high tech AT cost, mechanics & complexity increase as you move through the continuum.

First start with low tech as potential solutions.

Example of AT Continuum





Examples – AT for Education



Scenario – AT for Education:

Tyler – High School student with communication barrier. He had been given a large communication device which he refused to carry around school and use.

Recommendation: iPod Touch with an app, SpeakIt (\$1.99).

Results: He came out of his shell, used device to interact with peers, told jokes, increase class participation and felt like the other students with their cell phones. After a loan of the device, school purchased it for him.



Scenario – AT for Adult Education:

Do you have a scenario with AT that was a success or that you want to brainstorm?

Scenario?

Recommendation?

Results?



Examples – AT for Employment

Scenarios – AT for Work:

Camry – manual wheelchair user, small stature: worked with BRS for an On the Job Training experience (OJT) and we conducted an AT Evaluation on job site

Recommendation: BRS purchased AT (i.e.: telescoping hook) & rented a power wheelchair. The employer provided workplace accommodations (i.e: changed a deadbolt lock to a keypad lock).

Results: She was Hired and BRS purchased the power chair.



Examples – AT for Independent Living





Scenarios – AT for Community

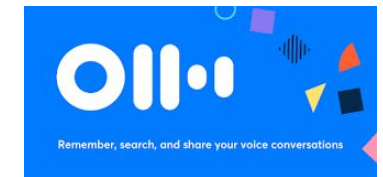
Joshua – moved into an apartment for independent living. He often forgot to take his medications. He received an AT Demo of the Med-Minder to alert him when to take his meds. It's locked so he can only take the meds he needs at the specific time and can't accidentally take the wrong medication.

Recommendation: After the demo, Josh was provided with the Med Minder which was filled with his medication monthly and programmed for him.

Results: Josh was able to confidently & independently take his meds as prescribed with no mistakes and as a result, could live independently.

More AT Examples: Apps & Others

- Ava App (:35 – 2:03)
- Liftware spoon (:00-1:47)
- Noteability app
- Otter app
- Seeing AI app (Full video, 3:27)
- Text Grabber app
- Built in apps: Reminders, Notes, Clips, Photos
- Live captioning in Teams or Zoom
- Built in Accessibility on phones & computers



Trends in AT

- Smart Home Technology
- Wearables



Smart Home Tech – A Game Changer



Smart Homes are Game Changer for People with Disabilities (1:11- 3:56)

More Trends in AT

- Robotics
- Accessible Gaming
- Virtual Reality



AT Services

“Assistive Technology (AT) Services refers to “any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the *selection, acquisition or use* of an assistive technology device.”



- 21st Century AT Act

AT Services includes:

- Evaluation of need
- Device Trials
- Designing, customizing, fitting, adapting the AT device
- Training & Follow up
- Maintenance or Repair

- 21st Century AT Act

Who Pays for AT Devices & AT Services?

- Insurance
- Dept of Developmental Services
- School Districts (K-12) & Colleges
- Adult Service Agencies – i.e.: BRS, BESB, DDS, DOL/AJCs, State Unit on Aging
- Dept of Social Services Waiver programs, i.e.: ABI, Community First Choice.
- Employers
- Centers for Independent Living
- Area Agencies on Aging

Other funding resources

- **Grants**
- **Financial Loans, i.e.: CT Tech Act Project's AT Loan Program**
- **Out of Pocket purchases**

- **NOTE: Ownership doesn't always transfer to the individual.**

Connecticut Tech Act Project Overview

Our Mission is to increase independence and improve the lives of individuals with disabilities through increased access to Assistive Technology for work, school and community living.

Our Core Service

- AT Demonstrations
- AT Lending
- AT Recycling
- AT Financial Loan
- Public Awareness
- Information & Assistance
- Training & Technical Assistance

AT Demonstrations

Have a chance to interact with & compare device(s), learn about the features

Make an informed decision about whether the device is the right one



CTTAP Partner Agencies

- ACES – soon
- CREC
- EASTCONN
- NEAT Center
- Meriden ATECH
- SERC
- UCP of Eastern CT

AT Device Loans

- **Provide an opportunity to use device in the environment it's needed, i.e.: work, school, home, for a specific amount of time.**
- **Person can determine if device does or does not work as expected based on experience with the device**
- **This allows us to maximize funds – for person, employer, school or state agency**

CTTAP Partner Agencies

& Other Resources

- Libraries
- Senior Centers
- Loan Closets

AT Device Recycling

- **Allows individuals to recycle & donate devices they no longer need**
 - **Allows individuals to find good, used devices at a significant cost savings – sometimes free**
 - **Examples: power wheelchairs, scooters, bath chairs, communication devices, etc.**
-

**FY2022:
438 Devices, resulted in \$237,969 cost savings**

AT Financial Loan

- **Individuals with disabilities & family members can borrow funds to purchase AT devices and/or services**
 - From \$500 to \$30,000
 - Up to 10 Years (for new vehicles)
- **Grants & other funding sources**
 - In FY2022 – we loaned \$88,000 and helped secure an additional \$75,000 from grants, consumer fundraising, and nearly \$85,000 from state programs.
- **www.CTtechact.com/loan**





Access Through Technology

- Provides a range of telecommunication devices –at no cost – to individuals with a combination of Deafness & Blindness (or low vision & hearing loss).
- Includes:
 - Assessment,
 - Free equipment,
 - Installation & Training

• www.CTtechact.com/att

Bridging the Digital Divide



- Provide 1 on 1 or group training / technology supports to adults with disabilities and individuals 60 & older to help increase access to community, virtual programming & telehealth to reduce social isolation via mobile / tablet technology.
- Training & supports to organizations & staff to help them support their clientele.

www.CTtechact.com/bridging-divide

New Website

- www.CTtechact.com
- Blog / e-newsletter
- Calendar of Events

WELCOME TO THE CONNECTICUT TECH ACT PROJECT

Increasing independence & improving the lives of individuals with disabilities through access to Assistive Technology for work, school and community living.

LEARN MORE

Resources:

- AT3 Center – Explore AT: <https://exploreat.net/>
- Helpful Smart Devices for People with Disabilities
<https://www.mobilityworks.com/blog/helpful-smart-devices-for-people-with-disabilities/>
- Job Accommodation Network: www.askjan.org
 - ADA information for employers and individuals
- Bureau of Rehabilitation Services www.DisabilityWorksCT.org

Contact Information

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