Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources (WATR) is authorized under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as reauthorized in 2004 (AT Act). The AT Act allows for funding to programs that provide greater access to assistive technology. WATR was established in 2005, and it is one of 60 AT Act programs, with one in each state and territory. WATR activities include device demonstrations, loans, training, technical assistance, information, and assistance. WATR activities also facilitate device acquisition through device reuse and a financial loan program.

2015–2016 Activities

Device Demonstrations

One of our most valuable services is the demonstration of assistive technology devices. Many individuals who could benefit from assistive technology may not be aware of specific solutions or what devices are available. WATR arranges customized demonstrations of potential solutions on an individualized basis, providing an opportunity for individuals with disabilities, caregivers, professionals, employers, or anyone with a curiosity about assistive technology to see a wide range of devices.

Open Lab is held on scheduled Wednesdays and Thursdays at the WATR lab or through video conferencing technology. Attendees can learn about and have hands-on experiences with assistive technology. WATR offers devices to the public through our six-week loan program, as well as devices for sale in our reuse program. WATR welcomes assistive technology users, students, instructors, community members, and anyone who wants to learn more about assistive technology and WATR resources to attend Open Lab.

Ninety-one percent of individuals report that WATR device demonstrations resulted in devices that met their needs and increased their ability to live, play, or work independently.

All our devices are listed on the AT4ALL website, wy.at4all.com.

Device Loans

WATR device loans offer a wide variety of assistive technology for Wyoming residents interested in borrowing a device for trial. Loan periods are typically six weeks and offer people the opportunity to try devices so that they can make informed decisions prior to purchase. All loans are made at no-cost; the borrower is only responsible for return shipping fees. WATR loans devices to individuals, school districts, employment agencies, hospitals, and others interested in trialing assistive technology.
Device Reuse

Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources (WATR) has a reuse program that provides networking opportunities for individuals to exchange, sell, and recycle lightly-used assistive technology throughout the state of Wyoming. Sale profits allow WATR to buy, update, and maintain new assistive technology devices. At wy.at4all.com, individuals can search for lightly-used devices that are for sale at low or no cost. Individuals may also create an account and list their devices on the AT4ALL website.

Information and Assistance

WATR provides information regarding assistive technology devices and services, funding, and other disability-related topics by e-mail, to walk-in visitors, on our website, through our toll-free phone number, at disability conferences, and though our various publications.

WATR publications are one of the most effective ways to reach Wyoming residents—approximately 1,377 per month. DispATch, WATR’s electronic bulletin, includes links to upcoming WATR events, quick project updates, and regional activities. Additional publications include WATR Waves, Wyoming’s only assistive technology magazine for AT users and professionals. WATR Waves features AT success stories, book reviews, articles on current policies, and featured devices. Our publications are available in accessible electronic formats. To be added to our WATR mailing list, please e-mail watr@uwyo.edu.

Device Financing

Wyoming Technology Access Program (WYTAP) is a collaboration between Wyoming Institute for Disabilities, Wyoming Independent Living, and First Interstate Bank of Laramie. The specialized financial loan program offers interest buy-down for individuals who want to purchase assistive technology and an extended pay-back period.

Training and Technical Assistance

In 2015 and 2016, the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities offered UW ECHO in Assistive Technology as a component of the UW ECHO in Education network. The goal of this network is to build capacity for assistive technology in education, health, and disability services. Throughout the sessions, an interdisciplinary team of individuals working in specific related areas, connect weekly to learn more about assistive technology and best practices for use in their own settings. By 2016, 812 individuals had received training.

Visit uwyo.edu/wind/echo for more information about UW ECHO.
Success Stories

Success Spotlight: Device Demonstrations

In May 2016, WATR hosted an in-person event in Cheyenne at Laramie County Community College to support assistive technology for post-secondary students. There were 68 individuals in attendance, 62 of whom were students at LCCC. All attendees surveyed were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with the demonstrations.

Success Spotlight: Device Reuse

In May 2016, the WATR Reuse Program coordinated a free device exchange between the Wyoming Brain Injury Alliance in Casper and the Special Education Program at the Lincoln County School District #2 in Afton. The Lions Club transported the assistive technology devices no longer being used in the school district to the Wyoming Brain Injury Alliance in Casper, allowing those devices to benefit brain injury clients and caregivers.

Success Spotlight: Device Loan

January 4, 2016—A Laramie County resident with a vision disability borrowed an iPad that had vision, learning and daily living apps downloaded on it for trial:

I just want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for allowing me to use the iPad Mini for the past few weeks. I have learned a great deal by having first hand use of your equipment, and I am truly grateful for that opportunity. I am in the process of applying for a unit just like the one you sent me . . . . Your knowledge of the device is great, and your willingness to share your knowledge has truly made my beginning experience very rewarding.

—Laramie County AT user
Success Stories

Success Spotlight: Training

WATR staff provides several trainings each year to students at the Casper College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program on assistive technology devices, which are then made available for short term use in their demo center. Staff also provides information to the students about WATR services that are offered throughout Wyoming. Participants include individuals, families, and over 40 other interdisciplinary team members, including speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, administrators, and paraeducators in general and special education.

Assistive Technology program specialists provide multiple trainings each year to the UW and LCCC Intro to Special Education Programs on WATR and Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) services and assistive technology available for short term loan through the WATR program.

In July and October of 2016, WATR held two one-hour trainings, in collaboration with Protection and Advocacy System, Inc. (PAVA) to educate voters with disabilities about their voting rights. PAVA provided two accessible voting machines for participants to try, and WATR demonstrated devices that can be loaned for use at the voting booth.

“I was advocating for supports but not implementing them in my previous job but now I am in the trenches helping teachers implement supports properly and successfully.”

“This is my outlet for getting up to speed and helping grow my knowledge in what AT is now available and how I can best assist and advocate for our students in our district. This is a great format to gain and share information not only within our state, but across the globe with knowledgeable professional colleagues.”

—UW ECHO in AT participants

Success Spotlight: Technical Assistance

In February of 2016, WATR provided on-going frequent technical assistance between our speech-language pathologist and a client assisting a family member with a disability:

They have supported me in every aspect of finding appropriate assistive technology for my recently disabled family member. They provided knowledge about resources that might be helpful, helped me gain access to those resources to try for a specified period of time, contacted me in a prompt manner, communicated clearly and effectively with me regarding policies of using the technology, and were generally helpful and pleasant to work with. I have told many of my colleagues and friends about this amazing resource in the event they ever find themselves in need of assistive technology for a friend or family member. I truly appreciate this resource in our state.

—Laramie County family member of an individual with a disability

“Felicia was extremely helpful in furthering my knowledge about technologies to help enhance learning; I like how most of the assistive technology can also be used to assist average students. I feel like some of these tools can even benefit me!”

—A student in the UW EDEX course
Affiliated Projects and Partnerships

Wyoming Accessible Educational Materials Clearinghouse

The Wyoming Accessible Educational Materials Clearinghouse coordinates the requests and provision of accessible educational materials for eligible Wyoming students with disabilities. Through a contract with the Wyoming Department of Education, the clearinghouse works with districts to meet the requirements of the 2004 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. WATR assists with the provision of AT devices and strategies to access digital and specialized formats.

Wyoming iCanConnect Program

Wyoming’s iCanConnect program provides communications technology free of charge to low income people of all ages who experience both vision and hearing loss. This program distributes communications equipment to qualified individuals and provides equipment installation, training, and support to help recipients make the most of this technology.

WIND Mission

The mission of the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND) is to assist individuals with developmental and other disabilities and their families by promoting and supporting full community inclusion, community membership, independence, productivity, and social participation. Over the next five years (2017-2022), WIND will strive to improve outcomes for individuals in the areas of health and wellness, education, early intervention, employment, and assistive technology. WATR is a core program of the Wyoming UCEDD (University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities), dedicated to improving independence, productivity, and social participation through the consideration and use of assistive technology.