

Assistive technology provides daily living solutions for 86-year-old man

By Brittany Mohler, WIND Information Services Intern

Leland Messman, of Cheyenne, Wyoming, would not consider himself a technologically savvy individual at 86 years old. However, since losing his sight nearly a year ago he has been using assistive technology devices to do daily tasks.

Messman was diagnosed with glaucoma at the age of 14 and had low vision for most of his life. After trying many drops and surgeries he became blind at the end of October 2013. By November he made a trip to Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources (WATR), at the University of Wyoming, to learn about what some of his options were to access his world and maintain his independence. Not long after the meeting with Wendy Alameda, a WATR assistive technology specialist, he ordered his first iPad and has been using it ever since to complete daily tasks he would not be able to do otherwise.

Messman said he initially reached out to WATR because he knew about the State Assistive Technology Act programs; WATR is Wyoming's designated program. With the help of his son, they did some research on the Internet about what is offered and decided to visit WATR. Messman had in mind a few things he really needed when he first went to WATR to help him do daily activities. He wanted a device to hold information for him in a convenient manner,

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Messman using his iPad with customized cardboard cutout.



Letter from the director

This fall we approach Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources' (WATR) tenth anniversary, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank those responsible for so many program accomplishments. We have made significant progress since the Assistive Technology Act was amended in 2004. The WATR program began without a staff and with just a small closet of outdated devices. Now the program activities and services we provide are results of the WATR faculty and staff members' dedication and passion for helping meet your needs. Each member of the WATR assistive technology team maintains a clear focus on your goals for education, employment, recreation and independence. We still have much more to do to make sure individuals have the assistive technologies from which they can benefit. However, knowing future developments are in these competent and caring hands, we can truly become a world-class program. Thank you to Barb, Canyon, Darcy, Gisele, and Wendy. You are helping improve the lives of individuals with disabilities in Wyoming.

—Sandy Root-Elledge

Daily living solutions Continued from page 1

rather than constantly relying on a computer. He also considered a computer with voice recognition, but found they were too expensive and difficult to get. However, after finding out the options with an iPad he said, "I was pleasantly surprised by all that it was able to offer me."

The iPad has endless apps for people requiring special assistance and can be very overwhelming. To alleviate this Messman stated, "You need to figure out what you need to do and then find your apps accordingly." When asked about his top five apps for daily use he listed: text grabber, money reader, audio labels, timer, and calendar. Each of these allows him to live more independently. One of the best things about the iPad is how customizable it is for each individual. "Even though it is a very customizable device, sometimes it requires a little thinking outside the box," said Alameda. Messman, for example, created a cardboard cutout that fits the screen of the iPad, with small holes in it designated for certain controls in the apps to help him navigate it.

Another assistive technology device Messman uses is much more simple than the iPad, but generally just as useful. He uses a small voice recorder, which is easy to carry around with him. He uses it to store phone numbers, what he needs at the grocery store, or even when the lawn was last mowed. Additionally, he uses a white cane for navigation, has a phone that announces who is calling while it rings, a clock that announces the time every hour, along with current indoor and outdoor temperature, and his computer reads E-mails and the newspaper.

Messman believes that part of his successful adjustment was how quickly he began looking for resources. He decided he didn't want to waste any time, but rather get his new life started. When Alameda asked him what one piece of advice he would give to people who are in a similar situation he explained, "Contacting the Department of Health as well as other agencies, like WATR, or organizations to show you what resources are available is a great way to get started. You shouldn't stop looking until you find what best fits your needs."

Book review

The Tough Kid Toolbox

By Darcy Regan M.A.,CCC-SLP, WATR Speech-Language Pathologist

It is no secret there are “tough kids” in today’s classrooms. What is a “tough kid” you ask? According to Dr. Jenson (2009), a tough kid is “non-compliant, argumentative, verbally or physically aggressive, and unprepared socially.” Chances are educators will have a “tough kid” in class, or maybe parents live with a “tough kid”. New teachers spend on average of 30 percent of their day attending to a “tough kid.”

Dr. William Jenson, Dr. Ginger Rhode, and Dr. Ken Reavis, authored a series of books titled *The Tough Kids* by Pacific Northwest Publishing. One of my favorite books in the series is titled *The Tough Kid Toolbox*. *The Tough Kid Toolbox* is an easy to read, superb behavior management resource for educators. *The Tough Kid Toolbox* provides strategies in dealing with “tough kids” by providing examples of positive, fun, and effective behavior management systems. Teachers will find themselves more excited about discovering this book than a table full of free organizational office supplies in the teacher’s lounge...because it is just that good...and funny too!

There is no secret recipe or set law of teachable virtues that you can order over the counter for dealing with “tough kids.” Disciplining children takes time and effort. Unpleasant behaviors are often easily noticed and difficult to handle, but need to be corrected immediately. Even good behaviors are learned behaviors. *The Tough Kid Toolbox* provides a wealth of resources on how to use positive procedures to change student’s behaviors. The book recommends incentives such as having the teachers serve the student’s lunch on white linens with china to microwaving edible boogers! The book describes “Mystery Motivators” as incentives that are written on paper and placed in an envelope. A high-school student could earn any of their favorite rewards with a behavior contract from home: money, extended curfews, pizza, or sleeping past their alarm. The book describes how easy it is to fall into the trap of offering bribes. These bribes are an attempt to reward good behavior; but, in reality, are natural expectations the child should be following anyway. For example, “If you keep the house clean all day, I will pay you five bucks!”

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An illustration from *The Tough Kid Toolbox* (2009) showing how students respond to their favorite rewards.

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The Tough Kid Toolbox is full of illustrations that highlight Dr. Jenson's jovial humor in writing about "tough kids." For example, the book reminds us to be careful when choosing incentives; it shouldn't be "busy work." An incentive is something that shouldn't take too much time, can't cost too much money, and can't be too complicated. An easy incentive might include earning sticker dots like frequent flyer miles. The better the student behavior, the more dots they will earn. A student can use those dots on a test to cross-out any problem he or she doesn't want to do! Caveat: be careful...kids know what store to go to buy dots!

The Tough Kid Toolbox includes step-by-step instructions on how to make behavior management tools right away! Jenson's book also includes a CD

with reproducible tools in English and Spanish. I loved the fact that I didn't have to read the whole book first; I just started using the tools right away!

Try anyone of these clever, rewarding, and positive behavior management techniques in *The Tough Kid Toolbox* and watch your office referrals go down, recoup your lost instruction time, and increase that on-task behavior! *The Tough Kid Toolbox* includes sound evidence-based behavior interventions, data tracking forms, and effective strategies to incorporate into Individualized Education Plans (IEP). Try it out today or host Dr. Jenson for an on-site training to learn more about "tough kids," and the least-restrictive behavioral interventions: djenson@ed.utah.edu, (801) 581-6508.



Gisele Knopf assists with many WATR events and correspondence.

Meet Gisele Knopf

Gisele Knopf works as a project coordinator assistant with Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources program (WATR). Gisele also updates the Wyoming AT4ALL website, assists with data collection, publishes the Wyoming Accessibility Center monthly DisPATch bulletin, sends notices of upcoming WATR events, and fulfills device loan requests. You may know Gisele's name from DisPATch or her frequent communications about WATR!

Gisele has been with Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND) for eight years. Her favorite part of the job? "No one day is the same!" she says.

In her spare time, Gisele loves to ride her Harley in beautiful Wyoming. She is a mother of four grown sons, grandmother of three young granddaughters, and an animal lover of three rescue cats and one rescue dog. Gisele also likes to garden and work on remodeling projects at home.

US Court of Appeals rules digitizing textbooks as Fair Use

Learn how this decision impacts accessible instructional materials (AIM) for students

By Sara DiRienzo, WIND Information Specialist

A recent U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit decision concluded the creation of accessible, digital text from copyrighted materials (textbooks, workbooks, etc.) is considered fair use and is not a copyright violation.

The importance of this decision, as stated by Jim Fruchterman, President & CEO of Benetech and founder of Bookshare, “Individuals, schools and for-profit companies are often called upon to make their materials accessible, and fair use creates a framework that makes much of that work legally possible.” There is now a legal basis to create digital text (AIM) for students with print disabilities. An example of this process would be scanning a textbook and uploading into a literacy software such as Kurzweil 3000 or Read & Write Gold. It also allows digital text from a textbook to be placed on an iPad or other mobile device. You or your school district might be doing this already. If so, you might have seen the warning that comes with literacy applications, such as Kurzweil and Read & Write Gold, which states that you need to have permission from the copyright holder before you upload any copyrighted material into their product.

Although this process has been in the “gray” area since the Chafee Amendment to Copyright Law of 1997 and the ADA of 1990, it is now becoming clear that the creation of accessible formats for people with disabilities supersedes the needs of copyright holders.

Barrington D. Parker, Circuit Judge stated, “In the Americans with Disabilities Act, Congress declared that our ‘Nation’s proper goals regarding individuals with disabilities are to assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for such individuals.’ 42 U.S.C. § 12101(7). Similarly, the Chafee Amendment

illustrates Congress’ intent that copyright law make appropriate accommodations for the blind and print disabled.”

The Wyoming AIM Clearinghouse can help educators navigate the creation of digital text (AIM) from copyrighted materials. We provide trainings and technical assistance to all Wyoming educators who are serving students with print disabilities. Check out some of our training videos at:

<http://www.uwyo.edu/wind/nimas/modules/> or contact us by E-mail or phone at: nimas@uwyo.edu, (307) 766-5770.

Read more about this decision

The National Federation for the Blind

www.nfb.org/national-federation-blind-applauds-ruling-authors-guild-v-hathitrust

Bookshare Blog

<http://bookshareblog.wpengine.com/2014/07/haititrust-fairusevictory/>

<http://benetech.blogspot.com/2014/01/the-case-for-copyright-exceptions-and.html>

Sheridan County School District #2

Assistive Technology Journey

By Jami Brenner Clifford, Special Education Compliance Facilitator for Sheridan County School District #2

Sheridan County School District #2 (SCSD#2) spent the last year developing a district-wide process to ensure that all students with disabilities have access to the assistive technology necessary to be successful in their educational setting.

Our assistive technology journey began in collaboration with the Wyoming Professional Learning Community in Assistive Technology (WY PLC in AT), spearheaded by Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources (WATR). Anne Baures, staff member from SCSD#2, has been a member of the WY PLC in AT since the beginning and brought ideas back to Sheridan to assist in the development of our program. An Assistive Technology Process document was drafted by the district's AT team outlining Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirements and definitions, considerations for AT, and incorporating the SETT framework. This is a working document, which will continue to evolve along with our knowledge in this area.

A page dedicated to assistive technology was created on the SCSD#2 staff Intranet, allowing all staff members access to the assistive technology process. In addition to this document, staff can browse AT resources, view classroom deviation ideas to assist all students, and information referring students to the district AT team for further consideration. The district AT team consists of staff members across disciplines, which promotes thinking outside the box and allows the team to problem solve difficult cases.

Last spring, the district AT team took on two pilot cases, one at the elementary level and one at the high school level. Both students were experiencing frustration and difficulty in school, and the team felt assistive technology could assist. Through trial and error, the team was able to find tools to assist these students and they are currently experiencing success and independence at school.

In addition to the two pilot cases referred to the district AT team, members of the WY PLC in AT

presented three separate cases to the University of Wyoming Project ECHO in Assistive Technology. The cases ranged from assistance with writing difficulties to supporting a non-verbal student's communication needs. The feedback received through Project ECHO assisted with the implementation of additional assistive technology resources in each of the three cases. As a result of the recommendations provided by ECHO, our district has been able to implement additional tools and resources with a number of similar students across the district.

This year, the AT team will expand its efforts to reach more students across the district. With the ChromeBook 1:1 initiative at our junior high school and the integration of ChromeBooks and iPads at our elementary schools, we will continue to explore opportunities to incorporate assistive technology for our students. Some of our current initiatives include:

- ▶ training staff on the use of word prediction and text to speech software to allow students with disabilities better access to general education curriculum and provide them more independence in the classroom
- ▶ expanding our assistive technology intranet page to provide more resources for teachers
- ▶ focusing on assistive technology in both the elementary resource PLC and the intensive education PLC
- ▶ supporting teachers as they complete assistive technology classes offered through Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND). Enroll for these courses on the WATR website at: www.uwyo.edu/wind/watr/training.html.

As a district, we are very excited about what we have accomplished in this crucial area and are excited about our continued journey with assistive technology.

Featured device for reutilization

Braille and Low Vision Monopoly

Individuals who are blind or who have low vision can enjoy a game of Monopoly with friends or family on this 20-inch square gameboard. The Braille and Low Vision Monopoly game features a special molded overlay to identify all the spaces and the locations of the game's properties. The perimeter of each game space is labeled five cotangent in braille. This game comes complete with braille instructions, braille dice, large print and sized braille playing cards, and braille board. Play Monopoly today! This game is for sale for \$15 on Wyoming AT4ALL. Visit www.wy.at4all.com and search for ID#70223 or by name.



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Please accept my/our gift to the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities Assistive Technology Program:

- \$100 will pay for communication device app
- \$100 will pay for one hour of assistive technology intervention for a person with a disability
- \$325 will pay for one scholarship for WIND's Foundations in Assistive Technology course
- \$750 will pay for an i-device, customized with apps for individuals' needs
- \$750 will pay for an individual with a disability to have an assistive technology assessment
- \$1,250 will pay for a full day of professional training for at least twelve professionals
- \$10,000 will pay for the purchase of a category of assistive technology devices
- Other: \$ _____

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Wyoming Institute for Disabilities

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students, and professionals for 2015–2016. If you would like to increase your knowledge and skills in providing services and supports to children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families. Applications are due May 1, 2015. URLEND is a great opportunity not to be missed! For more information please contact Darcy Regan, WIND URLEND coordinator at ***DRegan1@uwyo.edu*** or (307) 766-2932.

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