



## WYOMING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

### *Stories of Success 2011*

#### WATR'S NEW PLC DIVES INTO AT WORK AROUND WYOMING

Wow, overly excited, ecstatic, adventure—would you believe these were the words the members of the WATR Professional Learning Community used to describe their training? Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources (WATR) recently concluded the inaugural meeting of the new Professional Learning Community, or PLC, for Wyoming educators and education professionals on assistive technology (AT).

The initial PLC cohort is made up of eight individuals from all regions of Wyoming. Together, the community works toward the common goal of improving their ability to identify and implement AT with students in the state of Wyoming. Separately, each member works in his or her respective community to implement their new skills and to share their successes, triumphs, and difficulties with one another through a collaborative blog and listserve.

The training was facilitated by Gayl Bowser, a nationally-known and widely published assistive technology consultant. Bowser has extensive experience with AT in education and shared information, best-practices, experiential knowledge, and resources with the team. The PLC also worked closely with WATR faculty and staff to explore the AT program in Wyoming and the support that WATR can provide out in the community.

Each day of the intensive training week, participants focused on in-depth, interactive, and hands-on learning. PLC members discussed barriers they have encountered with AT and to share strategies for effectively meeting the needs of the students they work with in their particular schools or districts. The teaching style was progressive, with information from earlier days building upon the next—and



The first WATR PLC cohort, 2012. Top Row: Gayl Bowser (Trainer); Chris Victor, Big Horn; Alivia Bingham, Teton; Casey Widhalm, Fremont; Kathy McWhorter (WATR), Eric Freeman, Natrona; Pat Casey, Albany. Front Row: Karen Thayer, Platte; Katie Harmon, Sweetwater; Kristi Hibbert, Sublette; Barb Locke (WATR).

then reinforced by spending time using low-and high-tech AT.

The PLC members reflect this same enthusiasm for their upcoming work at home. This fall is busy for the PLC members as they implement the actions plans they developed during their training in Laramie in June. Just a few of the goals that they are working on include identifying the AT specialists with their districts, providing an overview for principals and other administrators of AT services, and writing an AT statement of need for their districts which cites IDEA law and improving IEPs by providing a set of global AT considerations. Group members currently work collaboratively through an online blog and member listserve—where they are sharing successes and tackling challenges together. The blog is being used to post resources that will support their efforts. Additionally, they are networking with families, administrators, colleagues and others in their schools districts who are interested in AT and direct classroom implementation.



# WYOMING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

## *Systems of Success*

### WATR: WYOMING'S ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT PROGRAM

WATR is Wyoming's Assistive Technology Act Program, staffed by University of Wyoming faculty and staff who hold credentials in assistive technology as well as in their areas of expertise. WATR provides a continuum of activities that can help increase appropriate AT implementation and integration. Individuals can establish confidential and trusting relationships with highly qualified AT professionals for seamless AT information and services.

Many people can benefit from the AT continuum of services. For example, a soldier with a traumatic brain injury could hear about WATR at the Wyoming Wounded Warrior conference. He may call to find out more about our services and schedule a demonstration of several devices that assist with memory recall and hearing. He may borrow one or more devices to try out at home and at work, and then decide to purchase the assistive technology that best meets his needs.



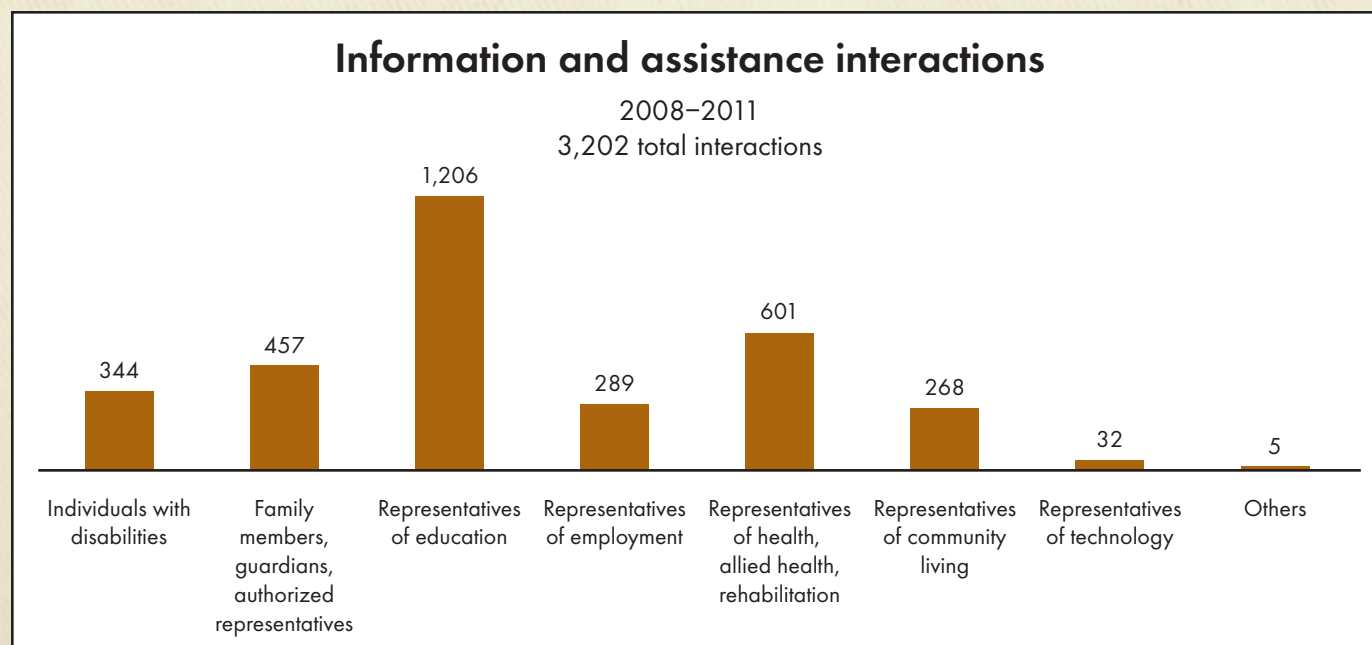
	Public awareness	Information and assistance	Device demonstration	Device loan	Financial assistance	Training and technical assistance
<b>The AT ACT continuum</b>	Individual or representative learns about AT that can help her meet her educational, employment, or independent living goals.	Individual or representative contacts WATR with a question about an AT service or device. Quality information about devices, services, vendors, and WATR program is provided.	WATR staff, credentialed in AT, demonstrate appropriate devices to help the individual make a decision about assistive technology.	Based on input from demonstration, individual borrows devices from WATR or vendor for 30 day trial to help make a decision about assistive technology.	Wyoming Technology Access Program can provide a low interest loan to purchase a selected assistive technology device or service.	Educators, employment specialists, or independent living specialists can receive staff training and/or technical assistance about assistive technology.



# WYOMING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

## *Measures of Success*

### Information and assistance

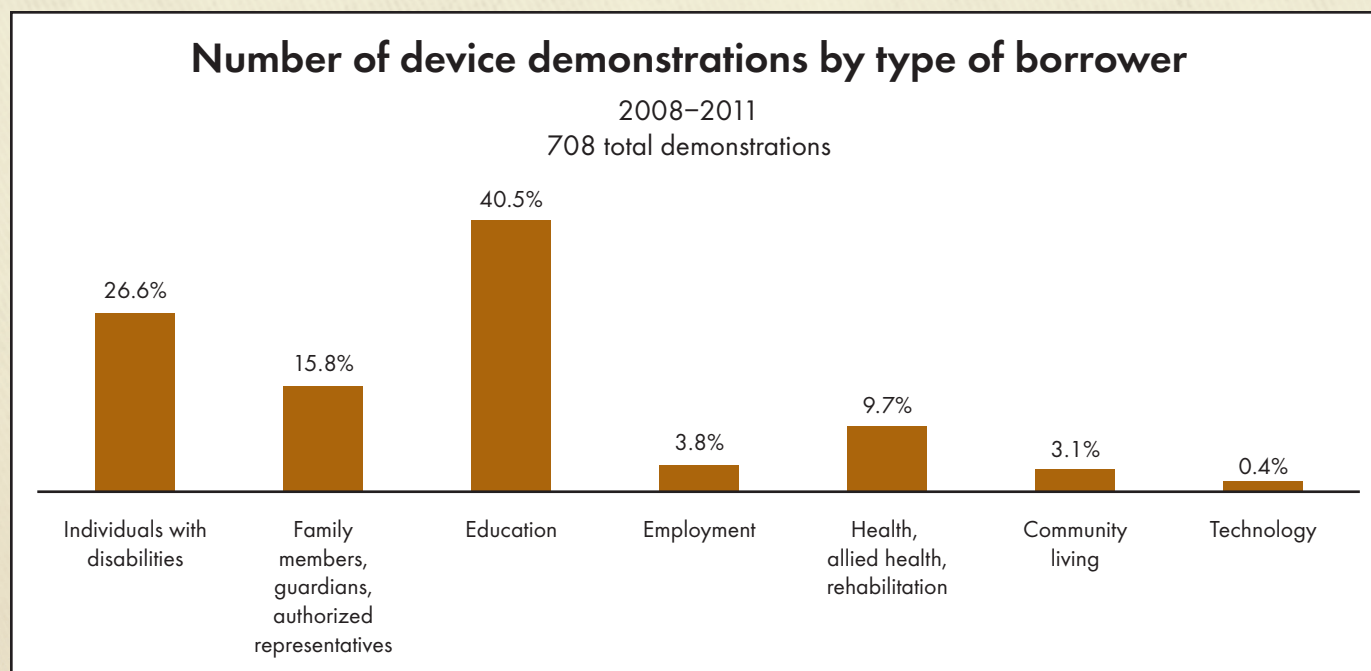




# WYOMING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

## *Measures of Success*

### Device demonstrations



In 2011, WATR introduced Demo Days, an expo-style event to showcase some of the assistive technology we have available for loan to individuals with disabilities, families, professionals, and the public. The goal of Demo Days is to allow more people to try out our devices, talk with our professional staff, and find devices for each need. Demo Days provide excellent opportunities for participants to explore supported technologies and effective strategies for AT integration.

*“We’ve shared some amazing stories of successes and solutions with people all over Wyoming at our Demo Days events. I am always looking forward to the next one.”*

—Kathy McWhorter, WATR project manager

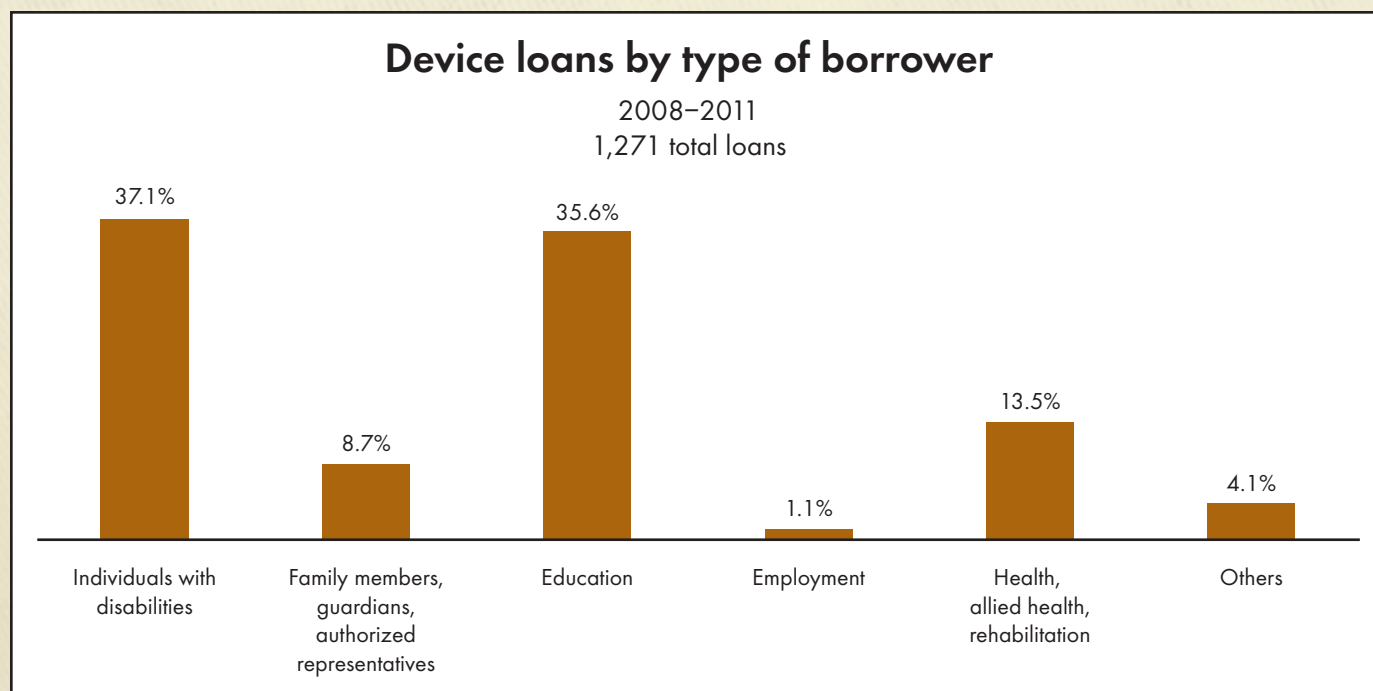




# WYOMING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

## *Measures of Success*

### Device loans



*“It was so nice that my son had a chance to use the iPad as he is practicing on a touch pad when he gets speech therapy. I am also excited at this technology. Thanks a lot!”*

—Comment from a Wyoming parent

*“I borrowed Talk Time with Tucker and the Pocket Go-Talk for my son who has speech issues. I have always wondered what kind of AT equipment could help him communicate. I think these items are very good for him.”*

—Comment from a Wyoming parent

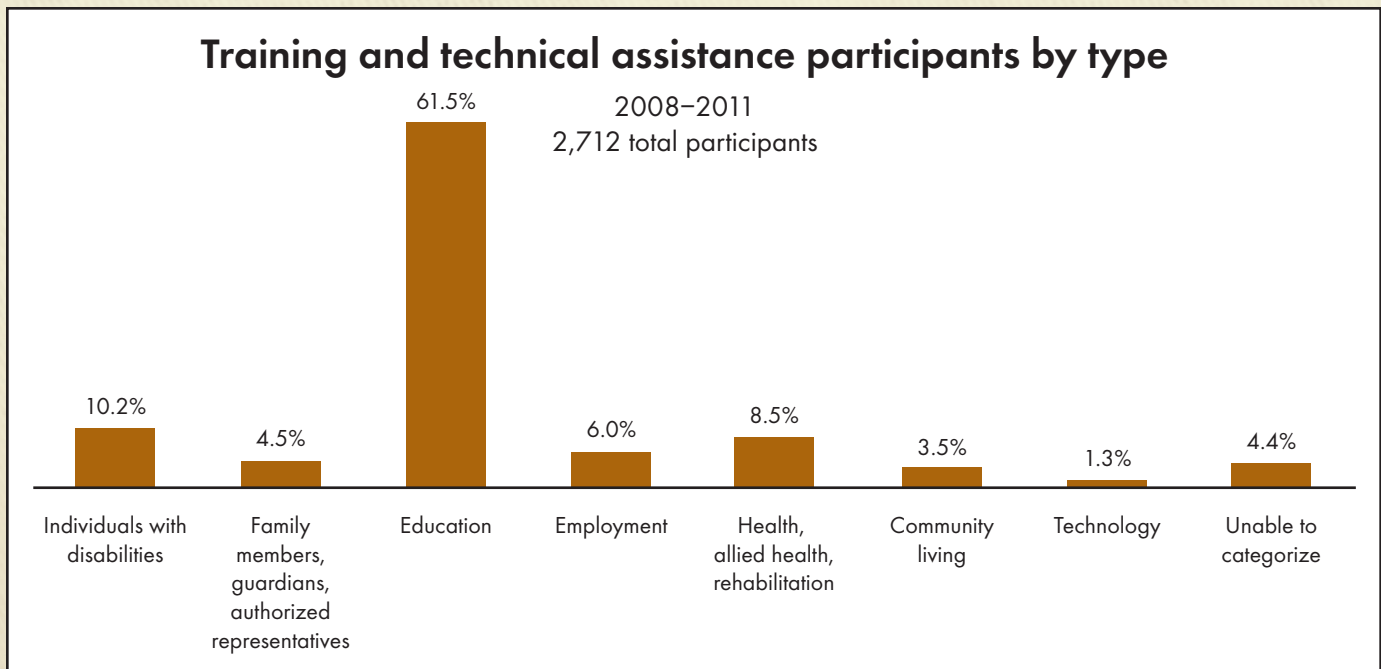




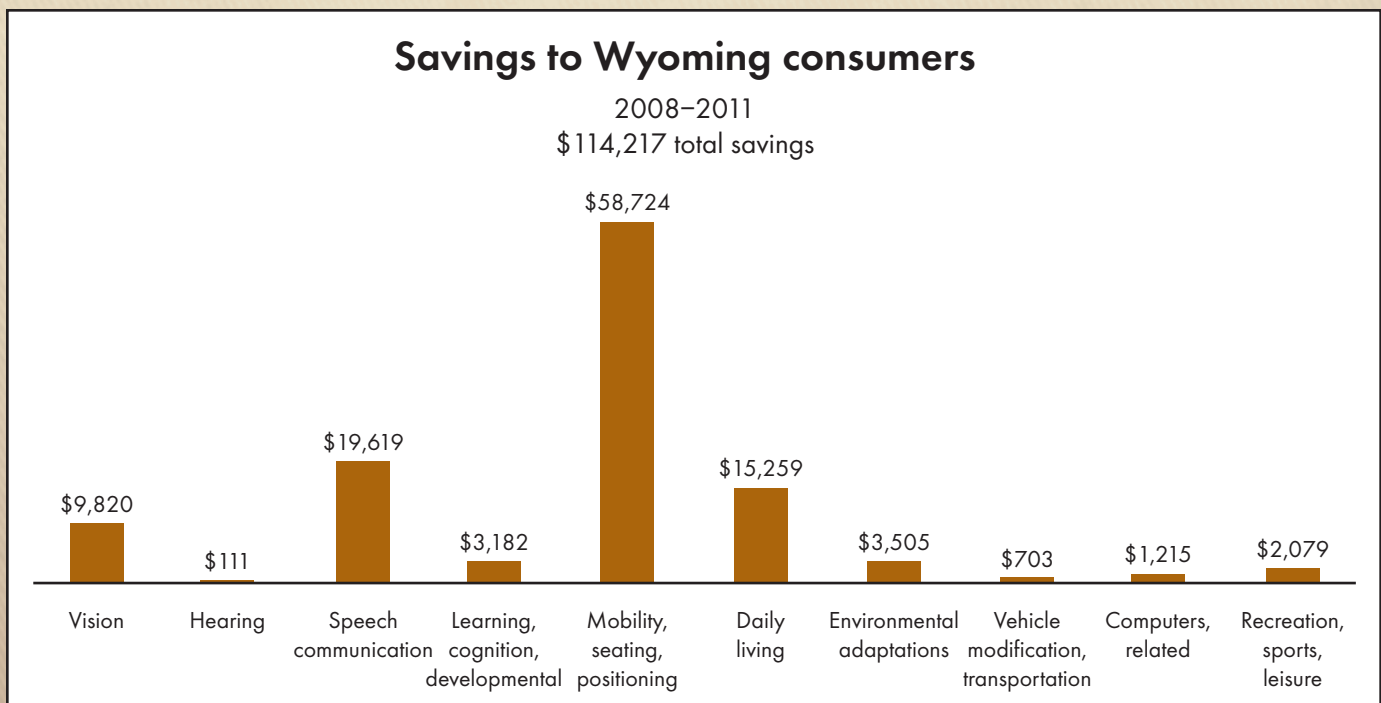
# WYOMING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

## *Measures of Success*

### Training and technical assistance



### Savings to Consumers





# WYOMING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

## *Partnerships of Success*

### WYOMING INSTITUTE FOR DISABILITIES (WIND)

The Wyoming Institute for Disabilities is Wyoming's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), located in the College of Health Sciences at the University of Wyoming. WIND works to assist individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, professionals, and University of Wyoming students through education, training, community service, and information.

### WYOMING TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (WYTAP)

In 2004, WIND, Wyoming Independent Living Rehabilitation Inc., and First Interstate Bank of Laramie partnered to develop a program offering people with disabilities an opportunity to finance assistive technology devices and services. WYTAP loans make it easy to borrow money for an AT device that will improve mobility, accessibility, or quality of life. Loan counseling and assistance are available at

no cost throughout the application process as well as throughout the life of the loan.

### CASPER COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM

Through a partnership with University of North Dakota at Casper College, WATR works with the Occupational Therapy program to provide instruction to students about specific assistive technologies. Once the students understand the uses and potential application of devices, they demonstrate a select number of devices to individuals in the community.

### WYOMING LIFE RESOURCE CENTER

In 2010, WATR collaborated with the Wyoming Life Resource Center and the Anna Marie Weston Lending Library to inventory assistive technology devices at multiple sites. The combined collection of technologies is listed on the WATR reutilization website and are available for long-term lending to any Wyoming resident.





# WYOMING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

## *Partnerships of Success*

### COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCES (CEAS)

The College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, through funding from a National Science Foundation grant entitled “Undergraduate Design Projects to Aid Persons with Disabilities,” collaborates with WATR to design unique or low-cost assistive technology devices for people throughout Wyoming. Additionally, CEAS works with WATR to offer hands-on, single switch construction workshops that teach caregivers and professionals how to modify toys or equipment with switches.

### WYOMING AGRABILITY

Wyoming AgrAbility is a program of the University of Wyoming’s College of Agriculture’s Cooperative Extension Service. The program works with WATR to provide on-site assessments, assistive technology expertise, and outreach. Wyoming AgrAbility focuses on promoting independence and success in agriculture, so that individuals with disabilities and their families may continue to ranch and farm.

### WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (WDE)

The Wyoming Department of Education provides funding to WATR to sponsor our Demo Days events and our Professional Learning Community through the Wyoming State Personnel Development Grant. The WDE works with WATR in making assistive technology a priority in all Wyoming schools.

### ACCESSIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS (AIM)

The Wyoming Clearinghouse for Accessible Media and Materials coordinates the requests and provision of accessible instructional 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 other specialized formats.

### WYOMING ACCESSIBILITY CENTER (WAC)

The Wyoming Accessibility Center provides fee-for-service training, technical assistance and assessments to improve the access of individuals with disabilities to education, training, and employment. Services include assistive technology assessments, transcription and conversion of conference materials to braille formats, conversion of books and materials to audio and digital text formats, tactile graphics, closed captioning, and website and course accessibility review.



A FORCE FIGHTING FOR  
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources

### Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources (WATR)

University of Wyoming • Dept. 4298 • 1000 E. University Ave  
Laramie, WY 82071 • (307) 766-6187 • Fax (307) 766-2763  
Toll free (888) 989-9463 • TTY (307) 766-2720  
watr@uwyo.edu • www.uwyo.edu/wind/watr