



“...Whether acquired off the shelf, modified, or customized...”

Many people who work with children with disabilities will recognize that phrase from the definition of assistive technology (AT) in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA). This month the Family Center turns its newsletter focus to an icon of the AT industry, someone who has spent several decades modifying and customizing devices to serve the needs of the broadest range of children with disabilities – RJ Cooper.

Digital era lore has enshrined the creative garage toolings of early computer wizards Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak. Much less has been written about the early pioneers of the assistive technology world - amateur and professional engineers who cobbled together home-made devices in their own garages and basements, for their own children or for neighbors' children whose parents were at a loss as to where to go for assistance. Some of those early ventures resulted in today's most creative AT companies, among them RJ Cooper and Associates, Inc. (<http://www.rjcooper.com/>). For more than two decades those hands-on AT developers have offered inspiration and guidance to families, educators and disability professionals, seeing possibilities where others may see only obstacles. They see hope in small increments

- 1 “...Whether acquired off the shelf, modified, or customized...”
- 3 Matching Individual Needs with AT Options
R.J. Cooper - RJ Cooper & Associates
- 10 Resources
- 12 Knowledge Network Members



of accomplishment, in the glimmer of recognition and in the moment of contact with a child on the cusp of epiphany.

RJ Cooper, Research & Development Pioneer, Speaks

A regular presenter at assistive technology and special education conferences, RJ Cooper crisscrosses the country, demonstrating his ability to match AT with the needs of children with disabilities. In workshops attended by family members, teachers, and therapists, in school classrooms, conference rooms and auditoriums, there is an electric energy, as customized AT solutions are improvised on the spot.

As an Electrical Engineering major first (with Digital Emphasis -- at the University of Utah in the early 1980s, RJ was present at the beginning of two confluent eras: the modern AT era and the advent of the personal computer age. The IBM PC had only recently become available and the Apple IIe was the only mini-computer that had made it through the fray of all the personal computer entries. "Things were happening so fast back then," he says, "that I thought the computer had already been perfected to its limit. I thought I'd missed the revolution! I had no clue that we had only gotten our toes wet."

It was then, he says, that he glimpsed the potential of computers to aid individuals with disabilities in a way that was non-traditional. "I wanted to use the electrical engineering and digital skills I was learning to help people," he recalls. He approached the Utah Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the University of Utah Medical Center Rehabilitation Center.

"People at both facilities agreed that computers would certainly be helpful but were unable to pinpoint how." In short, he notes, "I saw a need that turned into a niche. But I was a student, not a business person, and the notion of a niche was alien to me."

Almost immediately he found himself pulled in four primary directions. "I was pulled toward the Rehab Department, which assigned me to a seven-year post-coma patient." The patient, he recalls, was in her mid-20s. She had been hit by a drunk driver when she was 17. "When she awoke she thought it was the day after the accident." Neither the doctors who assigned him to the young lady nor Cooper knew what approach he was going to take. "She took to the computer immediately. Within a week she was using a large keyboard and some speech feedback on the old Apple IIe to type words and simple sentences."

He was then pulled, he remembers, towards the Granite School District, Hart Viggen Special Needs School. The principal there had become familiar with RJ's work at the Medical Center and offered him an assignment at his school, which was attended by 207 special education students. According to RJ, the principal "gave me a budget, a classroom, computers and the run of the school for one year." RJ was still an undergrad with no background in special education other than that which he acquired at the university medical center. "This was a perfect introduction to the world of special needs specifically and school districts in general."

RJ was then invited by the University of Utah's Speech Pathology & Audiology Department to speak at a graduate symposium in which

he, an undergrad, would collaborate with Ph.D. candidates. "I knew just enough to make things work," he says. "That's how under-populated the field was then."

His fourth opportunity was also with that same department. "It was my first consumer case," he remembers. "The department did not know how to approach pervasive development delay (PDD). In other words, no one knew why the child in question was experiencing a delay." The child was non-verbal but had no physical disabilities. "I brought in a computer and a program I'd written in which, when the student would correctly make the sounds, Eee. Ah, Ph, Ow a rabbit would move around a maze displayed on the computer screen." RJ took out a small ball microphone, placed it in front of his mouth and demonstrated to the boy how pronouncing the Ahhhhhhhh sound made the on-screen rabbit move. "I then placed the 'mic' in front of the boy's mouth. He opened his mouth and I thought, 'This is going to work!' Then he inserted the entire ball 'mic' into his mouth so that only the microphone stem protruded. That's when I decided to return to school so I could learn more about this field. Upon moving to California, I made the switch from Electrical Engineering to Developmental Psychology."

After earning his B.A., RJ continued his research at the R.H. Dana Exceptional Needs Facility in Dana Point, CA and was for a time chief programmer for another AT pioneer, Don Johnston, Inc. RJ continues to research and develop special needs materials for children with mild to severe disabilities in response to requests by parents and professionals that support people with special needs, as well as

persons with challenges themselves.

Supporting our interview with RJ are resources related to the customization of AT. We also feature members of our Knowledge Network. We invite you to contact these members for further information. Please share this newsletter with other organizations, families and professionals who may benefit from it. We invite you to visit us at <http://www.fctd.info>. We welcome feedback, new members and all who contribute to our growing knowledge base.

Matching Individual Needs with AT Options

*An Interview with RJ Cooper,
AT Pioneer, Educator and
Founder, RJ Cooper & Associates*

"The parents of the profoundly disabled kids I help, as well as other children whose disabilities are less severe, regard computers as a means to an end for their child, the end being increased equality and integration with society," declares RJ Cooper. "So does the school district. The kids, however, regard computers not as a part of their life but as life itself." Often, he notes, a computer represents a child's first and ultimate lifeline to the world. Without it, learning, communication, and/or socialization might not be possible.

"In the case of AAC (Alternative and Augmentative Communication), I'm not teaching these young people to speak; I'm teaching them a

new way of speaking. It's almost like teaching them a foreign language versus a language they were born to. After sufficient practice, the goal is not to translate their thoughts into the new language, but to use the new language alongside their thinking," he points out.

Finding Megan

RJ works with the full spectrum of children with disabilities, from those with emotional disorders and learning disabilities to those who are severely and profoundly disabled. Most of his efforts, however, are dedicated to children who are the most disabled. Megan was such a child. Megan had no face.



RJ Cooper & Jack

"At a trade show in Atlanta years ago I had passed by a booth run by two parents. Their daughter was with them. Megan was probably 11 years old then. As I walked past the booth I realized that her face was very 'different'. Upon further inspection I realized that she didn't have a face. She had two tiny slits for her nose. The rest of her face was just skin. Her face was very difficult to look at. I've since been exposed to many disabilities but I met Megan early in my career and thus her appearance put me off. Three days of the trade show passed. I saw her many times."

Each time he caught a glimpse of Megan he reminded himself, "I should go to her parents' booth and at least try to do something." Yet

each time he approached the booth he procrastinated. "Finally, on the last day as the show was closing down, I said, 'I have to do this or I'll never forgive myself.'"

RJ introduced himself to Megan's parents. "They told me they had seen me all weekend working with kids and wondered if Megan was going to get a chance to work with me too. But they were not going to bring her to me because they had been rejected too many times before due to her appearance. I said to them, 'I've looked at her for three days and I'd like to try to help.' I then asked, 'What else is going on with Megan beside the physical deformity?'" They replied, 'We don't know if there is anyone in there. She doesn't exhibit much behavior.' I invited them to my booth before I broke the booth down so we could experiment a little."

It turned out, he explains, that Megan was in there. "She was very physically disabled but, I discovered, she could push her left cheek against a button. Using auditory information only, she was able to time the switches and hit the switch without prompting. During her first session with the computer she was able to make some simple selections about what she liked and disliked. This was very exciting for me. I was the only one there, along with Megan and her parents."

He declares: "I have long said that if anyone comes to me with a need I'll find something for that child or create something."

That Magic Moment: Contact – Then, What Next?

For RJ Cooper there is almost always a magic moment when he is working with a child, that split second of epiphany when the child begins to understand what is being asked of her and how to respond. It's the moment, RJ says, "when the child emerges from the dark."

That initial moment of contact, he explains "is an epiphany for everyone involved, especially the child but also for the special needs directors, doctors, parents and other professionals in attendance. It's very dramatic."

Unfortunately, however, that moment is just a moment. For RJ Cooper the major question becomes, "How can that moment be sustained after I leave?"

That's a question for which he still has no answer, he admits. "Because of the way I conduct my workshops I meet lots of kids for short periods of time, 30 minutes per child. What I unfortunately lack is the luxury of longitudinal guidance and observation."

He continues to hope, however, that parents will contact him to let him know how their children are doing and whether they've been able to sustain the breakthroughs they made with him. He has concerns about the fidelity of implementation of the techniques he has introduced and would like to know that those who work with the child on a regular basis are following through on his recommendations.

The Challenge of Building an AT Industry

RJ Cooper believes that society has been slow to embrace assistive technology in all environments – home, school, and the workplace. When asked why he thinks that is, RJ responds with an anecdote. "In 1986, I recall having a campout with an occupational therapist friend of mine near the University of Utah, where I was attending. He and I, as far as we knew, were the only people in Utah doing anything with computers and special needs. I asked him, 'When is this stuff going to catch on?' With a poker face, my OT friend replied, 'When you can buy the equipment at Radio Shack.' Little did I know how prophetic that response would be. Even today you can not walk into any retail store anywhere in the world and find any hardware or software directly related to special needs or AT. It has never caught on. I don't know if it ever will."

Adding to the problem, he says, is the lack of AT instruction at colleges. "Even graduate level courses in AT have failed to catch on," he notes. "There are only 5-10 post-grad courses in AT nationwide and it has been that way for at least 10 years. In a growing field you'd expect to see more post-grad-level courses, but that has not been the case."

In his travels, RJ has seen a pattern of bias against technology designated as "assistive." "I think there may be a stigma about any devices that are associated with special needs. I've had parents, usually fathers, say to me at baby expos after I'd explained my special needs based roots, 'My kid is not special needs.' They shut down. There is a real stigma."

Thirteen years ago, he recalls, "I had an infant daughter. I saw that my equipment, which was designed for kids with her level of cognition and physicality, might be useful for her to get a head start. My colleague and I took that equipment to every able-bodied baby expo in the country.

"I always had two booths in order to be very visible. We made the same big buttons that we use in AT buttons and had very easy to understand software running on large monitors, hoping that mothers would wheel up their babies, who ranged in age from two months to three years old. Their children would be able to whack at the buttons and fun things would happen on the computer. We were certain this would be a big crossover hit. I invested several tens of thousands of dollars toward this effort with, as it turned out, zero return. Once again I was left scratching my head and wondering, 'Why can't this cross over?'"

The Stuff of Champions

Although many experts extol the need for a team approach when considering the AT needs of a child, RJ feels that "when the chips are down it is usually a single individual who emerges to champion a child's AT cause, not a team." He adds, "When parents say, 'I'm not happy with my school district. What can I do to get things going?' I always respond the same way: 'It takes one person, and you never know

who that one person will be. You never know who will take your child's AT 'career' to task!' The folks at the district said they were going to adhere to your child's IEP. Unfortunately, the success of this approach involves dependency on the good will, experience, proficiency, and even what AT equipment they have been exposed to and have in their inventory, of the people on the IEP team. But when that one person emerges, things start to move, most of the times, forward!"



That person, he explains, can be an OT, SLP, an AT specialist or a special education director – "but for some reason one individual emerges out of the fray to become the prime mover." This individual, RJ says, attends the conferences, subscribes to the journals, searches online and experiments with AT tools. "These individuals go way beyond the call of duty. They make something happen. They take immediate action and and keep pushing until something works."

Such an individual emerged recently, he says, when RJ was working with a nine-year-old girl named Paige. "Her parents invited me in to work with her in front of school personnel after seeing me work at a United Cerebral Palsy event three weeks earlier. It was summer, so the only person to attend, of those who had been invited, was the Special Education director. With just the five of us there, I suggested that we postpone the session to a date in the near future when we could get the OT and

the PT, the SLP and the Special Ed. teachers in the room at the same time so I could demonstrate the techniques Page's parents saw me present and liked. The Special Ed. director rose to the occasion. She said, 'No, Well, we're all here, and you have your equipment. I'd like to see what you can do with her now. I rigged Paige up with a switch and assigned her tasks that were clear-cut. Paige fulfilled every assignment. Her Special Ed director was visibly moved. Right there, right then, she became that person, the one individual who will be Paige's staunch advocate.'

Early in his career RJ says he made an effort to spot these potential "heroes." Now, however, "I try to hook up parents and professional staff with local resources, which I've catalogued throughout the nation. I learned that I can't arrange the appearance of a hero like Paige's Special Ed director. Usually, they emerge on their own out of the blue. When they do it's always a happy surprise."

He cautions parents, however, that whether the hero is singular or plural, an individual or a team, there is a time limit attached.

"This summer I participated in a summer camp workshop in Alabama for the University of Alabama. Things were going well with the technology training. The staff was open to new ideas. I told a mother whose child was a camp participant, 'You have a great staff working with you this year.' She did a double-take. She asked, 'What do you mean this year?' I replied, 'In a couple of years or so you will have to work with an entirely new team because these people won't be there for you. They will have new kids and as your child grows you are going

to have to find new people to do as great a job as your current team.' I was immediately sorry I said that because her face just fell. It brought back to her how difficult it was to assemble the current team. I had to remind her that she would have to do it again, and again and again."

Start with Success but Not with Quiet

In his workshops, RJ emphasizes that he chooses activities he is certain the children can perform and enjoy. "I want the kids succeeding almost instantly and then I'll nudge them a little further toward the goals that others have for them."

Some, he remarks, "believe that my approach can be effective only in a quiet, no-distractions environment. That is a fallacy. The fact is that life is busy and full of distractions. I try to get the children into a real-life environment as quickly as possible, whether it's a special day environment or community environment or the workshop environment. Whatever the environment, I don't try to avoid distractions. I try to reduce them at first but then I want to have the child in an environment that's as natural as possible."

Such an environment, he says, often includes interaction between the children and audience members. "Many of the kids enjoy visiting with the audience. If increased socialization is one of the goals pre-established for them (and it almost always is), I'll encourage them to spell out the word 'friend' on the computer, using their best abilities (cognitive and physical) and then I'll walk the child to someone special in the audience and warmly interact. The audience loves this and so do the kids."

“Necessity is the Mother of...”

RJ says he has found that “people are very adaptive when there is no other choice. That is, someone that has options, such as a person with RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury) will always choose the ‘best’ (easiest, fastest, etc.) technology. However, someone with fewer options, such as a quadriplegic, will adapt to that technology that best suits their needs, even if it’s slow or challenging.”

Adaptations for special needs are not limited to the computer or AAC devices. Popular consumer items also fall into the category of assistive technology. And the items that do are those that are popular with mainstream society. RJ states, “We have seen, of late, digital music players, recorders, cameras, camcorders, and phones, to name just a few. I note that parents tend to ask for adaptations for those items that are already popular with able-bodied persons. And they are ‘trend’ oriented, also!”

The next popular technology trend, he predicts, is the digital camcorder followed by video capability in phones (the latest iPhone just incorporated this feature). “The video camera itself has gone completely digital and is in the realm of affordability. A year ago I could not have said that.” Within the past year, he notes, at least three companies have made video cameras in a digital format with the same filming capacity – two hours – as regular video



cameras. You have seen TV shows showing funny or captivating video. These were all shot with regular video cameras. But the age of the *digital* camcorder is almost here and when a person can whip out a pocket sized camcorder, video online and on TV will boom!

“And those are the type of requests I get for adaptations, whatever is popular in the mainstream. Within the past year, we started adapting digital still cameras and recently added digital camcorders to our inventory of adapted consumer products. We look at what people want – even it’s only for one person – and adapt. I had an individual who wanted a dog feeder adapted for her daughter recently. She wanted her daughter to be able to give her dog a treat. So I purchased several electric dog feeders, chose the smallest and adapted it for single-switch.”

“Whatever the trend is – whatever people want to do – guides me. I don’t wonder, ‘What else can I invent?’ I am always surprised at the ideas people come up with but cannot do anything about it because they lack the means to bring to reality. The truth is that not many manufacturers of off-the-shelf technology are responding to individual requests or needs. However, if you call someone like me something will be done about that idea within a week.”

“What Do You Want Your Child to Do That

He Is Not Doing Now?"

"With each parent that accompanies their child during my popular Roadtrip visits around the country, I always start by asking: 'What is it that you'd like your child to do that she is not doing now?' Most parents, and even professionals, are somewhat taken aback by this seemingly simple question. Evidently, no one has been this direct with them, so they may lack a quick response. Sometimes I'll have to make a suggestion to get them started."

Once started, however, parents can often make a significant contribution during the brainstorming process. One parent, RJ says, knew exactly what he wanted from the outset. He contacted RJ with a specific request: He wanted his son Philip to be able to operate his computer by using the big toe on his right foot.

The parent envisioned a box with 10 buttons on it, each the size of a quarter. And each would be operated by Philip's right toe. All buttons would be connected to computer functions, like moving a cursor. Other buttons would take Philip to a website or other web destinations.

The parent initiated the process with an email. Remembers RJ: "I asked him to give me a day. Twenty-four hours later I had created what he needed. The box I created had 10 buttons, square rather than round. I said to him, 'I'm shipping this out today.' He asked what he owed me. I replied, 'Nothing. Let's see if it works first. '

A week later the parent informed RJ that the device was a success. He also sent photos showing RJ the equipment in action. "I was leery about whether Philip could memorize

the position of these 10 buttons which were placed outside his range of vision. But Philip's dad made a graphical legend for him located within Philip's view so each button's function was visible to Philip. Philip loved that contribution. Together his dad and I made something that Philip could use that week!"

Later, RJ recalls, "The dad came across my track ball on my website and suggested using that. He bought one. They used it for two weeks before Philip went back to the little button box."

"User Control is Paramount"

To RJ, both computer, and consumer technology such as the iPod, is useful in a special needs environment only if the child controls it. "If the child is only on the receiving end, either the technology hasn't been investigated enough, or the parent/professional is still searching for a good control method (choice or position of a switch). Even though the kids may like the technology, I personally want more from it. If the kid is not controlling the equipment it's just another way of Mommy singing to the child."

In his direct work with children, RJ touches on all aspects of AT. "But I usually must focus on communication and/or academic goals because I only have 30 minutes with each learner and I have to make something great happen within that time frame. Recreational use of the AT for purposes of relaxation (TV, music...) or to play a game is not as practical during my sessions as pushing the child outside of his comfort zone on the computer, that is, getting him to do something today that he didn't do yesterday. I don't discount recreational use of the computer. It is very important. Both uses

of AT, computer (communication/academic), and recreational (TV, music, games, etc.) are equally important."

The upside to the popularity and proliferation of devices like the iPod, RJ observes, "is that with the iPod and the Wii we have a stimulus. Before the iPod we had no real stimulus for letting special needs kids have, create or control their own music in the real world. The current trend has created the needed stimulus. Parents email me and ask, 'How can I get my child to participate in Xbox 360 games?' This development, he remarks, has stimulated parents and sometimes teachers to investigate options.

Remember, he cautions, "the recreational aspects of AT usually involves parents much more than professionals. When I use the expression 'trend' I use it on a popular level. The trend to have a child on the xBox 360 creates a stimulus for the parent to ask, 'How can I have my special needs child participate in it? She loves watching her brothers play it but she's not doing anything. What can we do?' This creates a stimulus on the part of the parent to do something to involve their child in that trend."

Whatever technology trends finally emerge for special needs children, though, RJ Cooper insists he'll judge their usefulness as he did during the 1980s: Will they help a child to do more today than yesterday?

RESOURCES

Articles

Tar Heel Typer

By Daniel Parker and Gary Bishop
University of North Carolina/Chapel Hill, Computer Science Department (2007)

An alternative pencil, the Typer aids children who are unable to write using conventional writing implements. The Typer application can be used online in an Internet browser or as a stand-alone app when downloaded. In addition to basic user preferences for backgrounds, text color and font size, as an alternative pencil the Typer provides word prediction with custom word list options and multiple input choices, including Braille, text and switch modes. The Typer also offers several output choices, including ASL, custom pictures, big text as well as additional options for sound customization. When the Typer online version is used, email functions are also included. To use the Typer application, in either mode, visit <http://www.cs.unc.edu/Research/assist/TarHeelTyper/index.html>. To download the free Mozilla Firefox open source browser go to <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/>.

MathType

Design Science

This software program aids those who struggle with paper and pencil math calculations but are efficient with a computer. Users can type and solve mathematical equations in Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, most publishing software and in web-based software. MathType installs toolbars into these programs, enabling users to insert mathematical

notations. The toolbars are similar to those with which most users are familiar but can be customized. Typical users are those needing high level mathematical equation symbols unavailable in the limited Microsoft Equation Editor, which is part of the Microsoft Office software but must be custom installed. Cost: \$97. For more information, contact:

Design Science, Inc.

140 Pine Avenue, 4th Floor

Long Beach, CA 90802

Phone: (800) 827-0685 (toll free)

<http://www.dessci.com/en/products/>

Communicate: Webwide

Widget Software (2008)

Communicate: Webwide is a symbol-supported web browser designed to enhance web browsing accessibility for children with disabilities who have difficulty accessing text-based English language websites. This subscription web-based service enables users to access web pages via normal view, simplified layout or symbol support. Users can customize web pages according to the users' browsing style. Customized viewing options include full speech support. A program is installed on the user's computer facilitating a log-in entry into the network-based system. All upgrades to the program occur on the network, enabling the user to automatically obtain the benefits of these changes upon log-in. Lists of URLs easily accessible to symbol readers are available at the web portal. The software is available in a 30-day free trial version. Subscription fee is \$119.50 for the first year, \$104 thereafter.

<http://www.widgit.com/products/webwide/index.htm>

TypeTrainer4Mac

By Valentin Vassilevsky

Home and Learning Downloads (2006)

TypeTrainer4Mac is a freeware, multi-lingual basic typing tutor created for the Mac OS X operating system. The tutor, a basic typing program minus game capability, presents a string of symbols, words or sentences and tracks errors, which are re-presented for correction. This program is effective regardless of keyboard, language or layout. The language and keyboard layout are selected via the option feature as input. It is a free resource.

<http://www.freemacware.com/typetrainer-4mac/>

Podcasts

Kurzweil, Language, UDL and RDI

By Daniel Davies

ConnSense Bulletin (2008)

The interviewee in this podcast is the founder of AbleLink Technologies, Daniel Davies. Mr. Davies speaks about his company's cognitive support technologies for users with a range of cognitive impairments. Products include supports for computer access and use. The supports help individuals who cannot read or write, to browse the web and use email via scrolling and drop-down menus. Mr. Davies also describes phones that employ pictures for dialing and receiving incoming calls. He discusses portable prompting technologies and the use of video, audio, and pictures to provide step-by-step instructions. These technologies, Mr. Davies asserts, are customizable via authoring tools that enhance user sequencing and other memory-related skills. RealPlayer is required for podcast access.

<http://www.connsensebulletin.com/csb044.mp3>

Videos

Laura Ann Oliver's Short Film on Assistive Technology

Laura Ann Oliver (2007)

Narrated by Laura Ann Oliver who is legally blind, this brief YouTube video spotlights aspects of her disability. Topics include her customized wheelchairs as well as computers, walkers and canes. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUA5BuPDvVw>

Catalogs

Limited Dexterity Switch Adapted Game Controllers

Broadened Horizons, Inc. (2007)

This online catalog highlights adaptations for game systems, especially switch-adapted joysticks and other game controllers appropriate for users with limited hand dexterity. Controllers listed are available for use with all the popular game systems, including Play Station 2 and 3, X-Box and X-Box 360, Nintendo Game Cube and Wii, and PC-USB. Other products include foot switches, one-handed controllers, sip-and-puff, and twitch-type switches. The website emphasizes the manufacturer's ability to communicate with Spanish-speaking consumers. Cost: \$289.96-\$329.95 for adapted controllers. For additional information, contact: Limited Dexterity Switch Adapted Game Controllers

15382 80th Place North
Maple Grove, MN 55311

Phone: (621) 851-1040

Fax: (601)767-0612

Email: sales@BroadenedHorizons.com

www.gimpgear.us/limiteddexterityjoystick.htm

KNOWLEDGE NETWORK MEMBERS

RJ Cooper & Associates

RJ Cooper & Associates
Software and Hardware for Persons with Special Needs



RJ's company creates customized computer software and hardware products for children and adults with special needs. The company's catalog features a variety of custom adaptations ranging from switches to modified video cameras. There is a particular emphasis on alternative and augmentative communication. Founder RJ Cooper conducts AT workshops nationwide for audiences consisting of parents, educators, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists and others. For further information, contact:

RJ Cooper and Associates

2760 Forbes Road, Suite 39

Laguna Niguel, CA 92677

Phone: (800) 752-6673; (949) 582-2572

Contact: RJ Cooper, Founder

Email: info@rjcooper.com

<http://www.rjcooper.com/>

Access Services of Northern Illinois



Access Services
of Northern Illinois

Via its service coordinators, Access Services of Northern Illinois links children with developmental disabilities and their families to community resources and federally-funded services. The organization's early intervention services system provides developmental

screenings and evaluation to children age three and under. Services include:

- Information and referral
- Assessment/eligibility determination
- IFSP completion
- Support/service linkage
- Authorization for service funding via the Illinois Department of Human Services
- Advocacy
- Family support
- Parent-to-parent linkage and support

For more information, contact:
 Access Services of Northern Illinois
 7399 Forest Hills Road
 Loves Park, IL 61111-3974
 Phone: (815) 282-8824
 Fax: (815) 282-8835
<http://www.accessni.com>

Discover Technology Inc.

This not-for-profit company creates and administers computer labs for persons with disabilities. Computer lab participants are encouraged to select from among programs offering the following:



- Learning computer techniques
- Using educational software designed for persons with disabilities
- Playing with appropriate fun and games software researched by Discover Technology
- Surfing the Internet
- Sending e-mail to family and friends
- Composing poetry
- Creating reports and presentations
- Writing and publishing class newsletters.

In addition, lab participants are encouraged to communicate with other children with disabilities through the "Discover a Pal" pen pal e-mail program on the company's website, which features a directory of links to hundreds of sites of interest to persons with disabilities.

For further information, contact:

Discover Technology, Inc.

2707 Westgrove

Houston, TX 77027

Phone: (713) 626-4504

<http://www.discovertechnology.com/>

Simon Technology Center (STC)



Affiliated with the Pacer Center, STC is dedicated to making the benefits of technology more accessible to children and adults with disabilities. The center's AT services include:

- Technology consultations
- A lending library
- Individualized training sessions
- SUPER services for AT, which connects AT buyers and sellers
- In-services and workshops

Among STC's projects are:

- KidSmart
- Project KITE
- Leadership Academy
- Universally Designed Technology in Schools
- Tech Contact
- Microsoft Accessibility Resource Center

For additional information, contact:

Simon Technology Center

8161 Normandale Blvd
Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044
Phone: (952) 838-9000 (952) 838-0190 (TTY)
Fax: (952) 838-0199
Contact: Bridget Gilormini, Coordinator
Email: bridget.ames@pacer.org
<http://www.pacer.org/stc/>

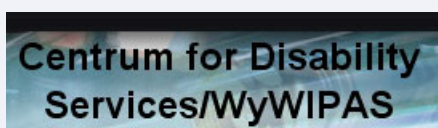
Children's Rehabilitation Engineering Team

This group helps to meet the assistive technology needs of individuals with disabilities in the Alabama counties of Mobile, Baldwin, Choctaw, Clarke, Escambia, Monroe and Washington by coordinating services and networking resources. Since its 1988 founding, the team has funded the building of accessible playgrounds, awarded many technology grants and completed several design projects.

For additional information, contact:
Children's Rehabilitation Engineering Team
2419 Gordon Smith Drive
Mobile, AL 36617
Phone: (251) 450-6360
Fax: (251) 478-2197
Contact: Robert Perry, President
Email: perry1272@bellsouth.net
<http://www.childrensrehabengineeringteam.com/>

Centrum for Disability Services (CDS)

Previously affiliated with the Wyoming Centrum for Assistive Technology, CDS provides statewide AT assessments for schools, waiver clients, the Veterans Administration and the state Department of Vocational Rehabilitation.



DSC also provides assistive and adaptive technology to school districts, Wyoming Medicaid Waiver clients and state DVR clients. For further information, contact:
Centrum for Disability Services
915 S, David Street
Casper, WY 82601
Phone: (307) 268-4407
Fax: (307) 268-4704
Contact: Joe Schaffner, Executive Director
<http://www.centrumwy.org>

Collaborative Center for Assistive Technology and Training (CCATT)

Affiliated with the Hampshire Education Collaborative (HEC <http://www.collaborative.org/>), the CCATT Center conducts AT evaluations with a multidisciplinary team of AAC and adaptive curriculum solutions specialists. Evaluated students range in age from pre-K to 22. Students have the opportunity to evaluate devices, software and hardware. Consultation services are available. Customized consulting services help schools implement participation- and inclusion-enhancing programming that aids students in meeting IEP and curriculum goals via technology. Staff training introduces current adaptive/assistive technology and augmentative communication. Workshops and courses using Windows and Macintosh platforms offer educators, professionals and parents the opportunity to experiment with AT tools. HEC provides teacher training for school districts owning Kurzweil 3000 software. For additional information, contact:

CCATT
97 Hawley Street
Northampton, MA 01060
Phone: (413) 586-4900, X156

Fax: (413) 586-4253

Contact: Karen Kenny, Project Director

Email: kkenny@collaborative.org

<http://www.collaborative.org/content/view/96/92/>

Adaptive Technology: a Division of Perkins Products

The company, newly affiliated with Perkins



School for the Blind, offers consulting services and a range of products, support and training for individuals who are blind, have low vision, or who have learning disabilities. Adaptive Technology provides services to individuals, schools, libraries, universities and businesses throughout New England. Programs and services include: training, equipment demonstrations, technology assessments for education, low vision evaluations, evaluations, software testing and web accessibility. For further information, contact:

Adaptive Technology: a Division of Perkins Products

175 North Beacon Street

Watertown, MA 02472

Phone: (617) 972-7306

Fax: (617) 926-2027

Email: perkinsproducts@perkins.org

http://support.perkins.org/site/PageServer?pagename=store_homepage

Kern Assistive Technology Center (KATC)

KATC provides access to state-of-the-art equipment as well as current information regarding AT



devices to residents of Bakersfield, CA and surrounding Kern County. Assessments, training with equipment and consultation regarding device acquisition are administered via a multi-disciplinary approach. Loan equipment is available. For more information, contact:

Kern Assistive Technology Center

3101 N. Sillect Avenue, Suite 115

Bakersfield, CA 93308

Phone: (661) 861-1346

Fax: (661) 328-9940

Contact: Aaron Markovits, Director

Email: katc@kernatcenter.org

<http://www.kernatcenter.org/>

Funding provided by the US Department of Education under grant number H327F080003

Project Officer: Jo Ann McCann

Project Director: Jacqueline Hess

Newsletter Editor: Thomas H. Allen

Design and Distribution: Ana-Maria Gutierrez



Family Center on Technology and Disability

1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20009

Phone 202-884-8068 Fax (202) 884-8441

fctd@aed.org www.fctd.info