Georgia Tech Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation

Understanding Assistive Technology and Disability Awareness

Rachel Wilson, AT Specialist
Sam Peters, Program Specialist
Annabel Joyner, AT Lab Specialist

Tools for Life | Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation | College of Design | Georgia Tech

CREATING THE NEXT®

Overview

The world around us is evolving at an astounding rate. Assistive Technology (AT) developments have been foundational in this evolution and a catalyst for producing positive life-changing results for individuals with disabilities.

This session will take a closer look at:

- CIDI | Tools for Life – AT Act Program
- Understanding Assistive Technology
- Defining “Low/Light Tech” to “Mid/High Tech Solutions”
- Guiding Principles
- Medical Model of Disability and Social Model of Disability
- Value-Laden Language

…all in about 40 minutes!

For Handouts: Visit the Tools for Life Wiki Page – www.gatfl.gatech.edu/tflwiki

Accessibility Made Smart

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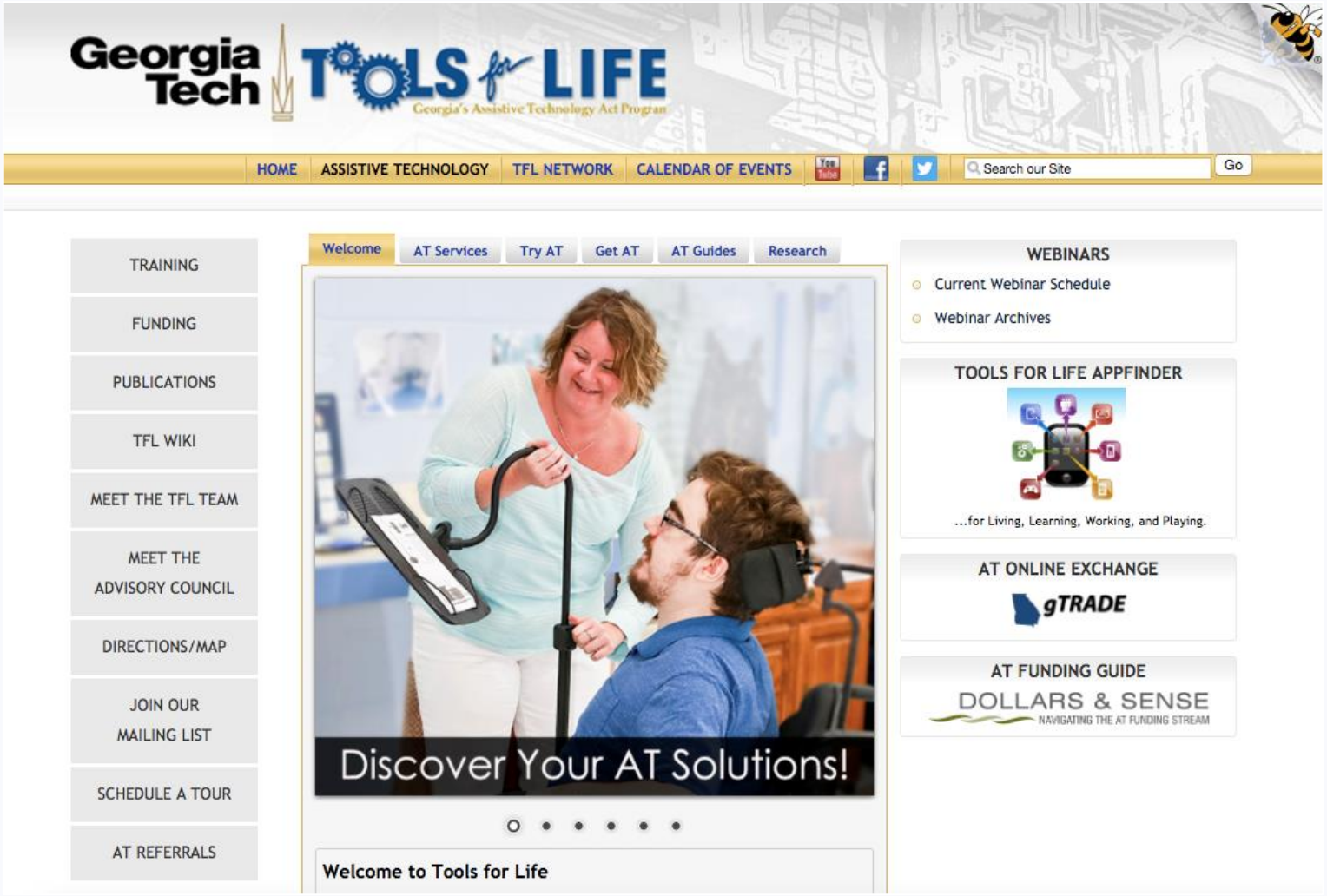
The Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation creates practical solutions that work, with a focus on utility, ease of use, and high quality.

- **Accessibility Consulting** focuses on organizational accessibility needs with evaluation, technical assistance, customer support, and website accessibility solutions.
- **Braille Services** produces customized projects from both print materials and electronic text including partial books and chapters or graphics only using cutting-edge technology.
- **Captioning and Described Audio Services** makes classrooms, meetings, labs and other audio environments fully accessible for deaf or hard-of-hearing and providing audio descriptions of videos and other visual media for those who are blind or have low-vision.
- **Professional E-Text Producers** provide high-quality e-text in many formats such as PDF, DOC, DAISY, and HTML.
- **Certified Assistive Technology team** provides on-site and remote assessments, demonstrations, training and technical assistance for education, work, and daily living environments.

Tools for Life Mission

We’re here to help Georgians with disabilities gain access to and acquisition of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services so they can live, learn, work, and play independently in the communities of their choice.

Tools for Life Website



What is Assistive Technology?

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- Assistive Technology (AT) is any item or piece of equipment that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of life, including at school, at work, at home, and in the community
  - Assistive Technology ranges from no/low/light tech to high tech devices or equipment

Why Assistive Technology?

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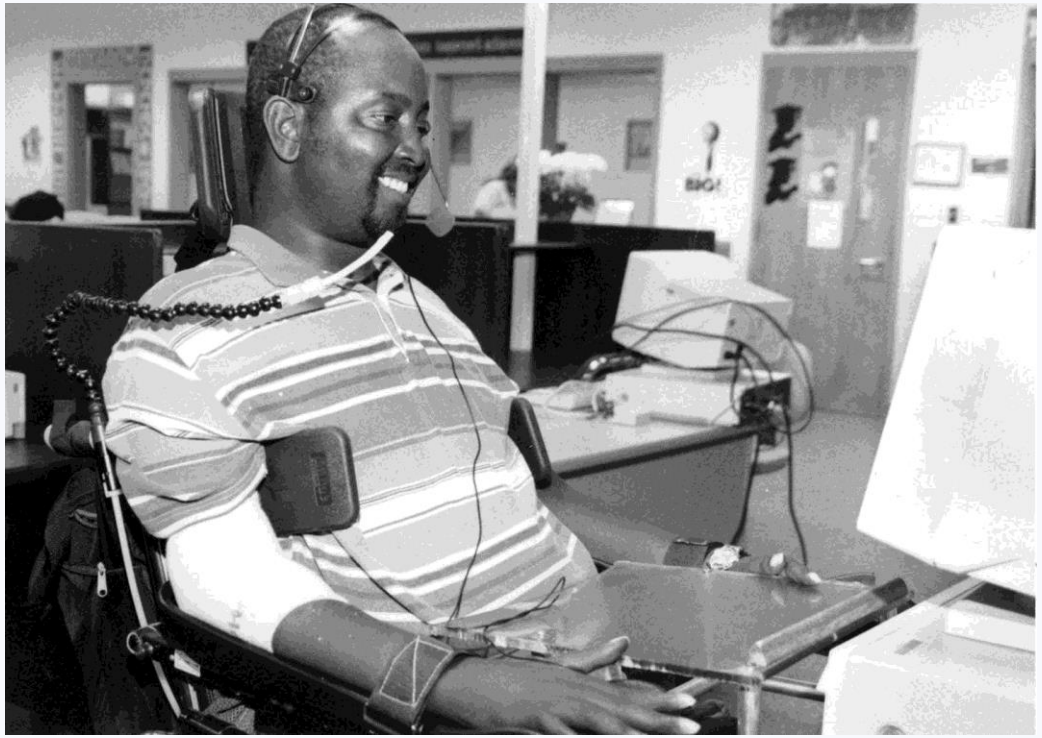
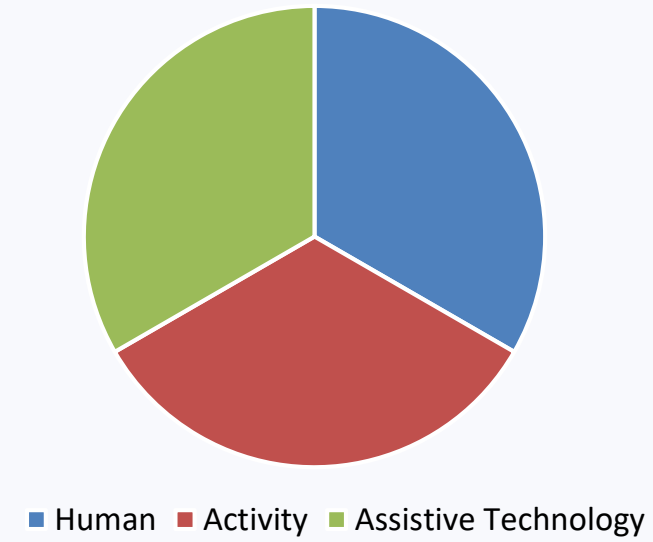
- For a person without a disability, assistive technology makes life easier.
- For a person with a disability, assistive technology makes life possible.



Tip: USE AT! We have yet to meet a successful person who doesn't use any AT.

Human Activity Assistive Technology (HAAT) Model

- **Context:** the setting or social, cultural, and physical contexts that surround the environment in which the activity must be completed



- ***Human:*** represents the skills and abilities of the person with a disability
- ***Activity:*** a set of tasks to be performed by the person with a disability
- ***Assistive Technology:*** devices or strategies used to bridge the gap between the person's abilities and the demands of the environment

Developed by Cook & Hussey

The SETT Framework

S = Student

E = Environment

T = Tasks

T = Tools

Adapted from Joy Zabala

Assistive Technology Continuum

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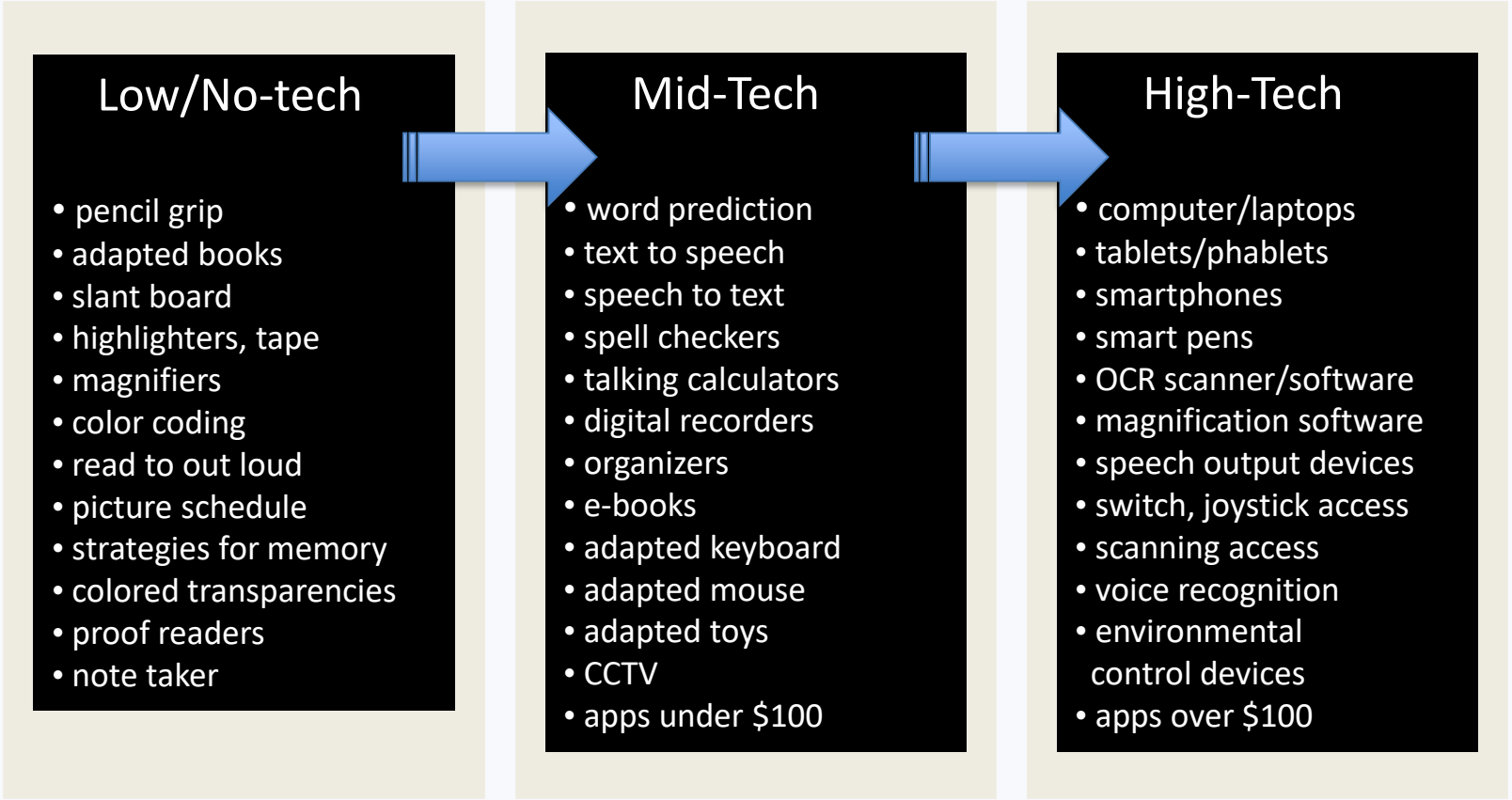
Observations and "Hanging out with Intent"

Assistive Technology is a ***continuum of tools, strategies, and services*** that match a person's needs, abilities, and tasks.



Guiding Principle and Public Law

…disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to:

(A) live independently;

(B) enjoy self-determination and make choices;

(C) benefit from an education;

(D) pursue meaningful careers; and

(E) enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educations mainstream of society in the United States.

Public Law 108-364

Defining the Medical Model of Disability

- Impairments or differences should be “fixed” or changed by medical and other treatments, even when the impairment or difference does not cause pain or illness
    - People with disabilities are to be adapted to fit into the world as it is
- The emphasis is on dependence
- Focus is on the impairment rather than the needs of the person
    - Oftentimes, institutions are the norm where basic needs can be met

Defining the Social Model of Disability

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- Disability is caused by the way society is organized, rather than by a person's impairment or difference
- Views that the position of disabled people and the discrimination against them are socially created and has little to do with impairments
- Explores way of removing barriers that restrict life choices for disabled people
    - When barriers are removed, disabled people can be independent and equal in society, with choice and control over their own lives

Social Model of Disability

- The traditional medical model does not explain personal experience of disability or help to develop more inclusive ways of living
- Encourages people with disabilities to redefine what “disability” means to them
- Perpetuates confidence and self-esteem
- Helping to reconstruct society

The Power of Language

Value Laden

People First Language

Helpful Tips

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What is Value-Laden Language?

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- What you say and write may enhance the dignity of people with disabilities or inadvertently reflect stereotypes and negative attitudes.
- Some words and phrases don't recognize the broad range of capabilities of people with disabilities.
- People with disabilities don't need or want to be pitied, nor should they be deemed "courageous" or "special" as they accomplish daily activities or work.

Value-Laden Language

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Promotes:

Distance

Stereotypes

Pigeon-holes

Reduces sense of:

Self-worth

Power

Self-direction

Value-Laden Language: Creates Categories

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We vs. They

Good vs. Bad

Strong vs. Weak

High vs. Low (expectation)

Sick vs. Well

Superior vs. Inferior

Value-Laden Language: Promotes Distance

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- ✓ Abnormal
- ✓ Afflicted
- ✓ Burdened
- ✓ Defect
- ✓ Deformity
- ✓ Mute (Deaf and Mute)
- ✓ Palsied
- ✓ Spastic
- ✓ Stricken with
- ✓ Sufferer
- ✓ Victim
- ✓ Invalid

Value-Laden Language: Example #1

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Disability-Negative

- the disabled, the blind, the deaf
- crippled, suffers from, afflicted with, stricken with, victim of, invalid
- impaired, impairment
- normal person, healthy, whole, wheelchair bound

Disability-Neutral

- people with disabilities, the disability community, the blind community, the Deaf community
- walks with a cane, uses leg braces
- has a disability
- non-disabled, person without disabilities

Value-Laden Language: Example #2

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Disability-Negative

- The disabled
- The handicapped
- Disabled parking
- Handicapped entrance
- Confined to a wheelchair
- Wheelchair bound

Disability-Neutral

- People with disabilities
- Accessible parking
- Accessible entrance
- Person who uses a wheelchair
- Wheelchair user

Using People First Language is Crucial

People First Language puts the person before the disability, and it describes who a person is not what a person has.

Identity First Language

- Disability is part of a person's identity.
- Modeled after how we talk about other traits of people.
- Frequently preferred by people actively involved in disability culture, pride and advocacy.
- If a person says they prefer a certain type of language, use that when talking to or about them, regardless of your own preference.

The Tools for Life Team

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Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program

Carolyn Phillips
Director, Tools for Life
carolyn.phillips@gatfl.gatech.edu

Liz Persaud
Program and Outreach Manager
liz.persaud@gatfl.gatech.edu

Danny Housley
AT Acquisition Manager
danny.housley@gatfl.gatech.edu

Martha Rust
AT Access Team Manager
martha.rust@gatfl.gatech.edu

Gina Gelinas
Educational Outreach Manager
ggelinas3@gatech.edu

Rachel Wilson
AT Specialist
rachel.wilson@gatfl.gatech.edu

Annabel Joyner
Graphic Design Intern
ajoyner8@gatech.edu

Tori Holder
Outreach Scientist
tori.holder@gatfl.gatech.edu

Sam Peters
Program Specialist
speters37@gatech.edu

DeeDee Bunn
Speech-Language Pathologist
dbunn6@gatech.edu

Ciara Montes
AT Specialist
ciara.montes@gatfl.gatech.edu

Sarah Endicott
Research Scientist
sarah.endicott@design.gatech.edu

Ben Satterfield
Research Associate
rsatterfield8@gatech.edu

Contact Us

Tools for Life, Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program

Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (formerly AMAC Accessibility)

Georgia Institute of Technology

1-800-497-8665

www.gatfl.gatech.edu

info@gatfl.gatech.edu

facebook.com/gatoolsforlife

@tools4life_at

@tools4life_at

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