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:

• Tools for Life Core Activities
• Accessing the TFL Network and Community Partners
• Review Funding Resources
• Understanding Assistive Technology
• Defining “Low/Light Tech” to “Mid/High Tech Solutions”
• Research on AT and Transition

For Handouts: Visit the Tools for Life Wiki Page
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 Services** makes classrooms, meetings, labs and other audio environments fully accessible for deaf or hard-of-hearing.
- **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 (TFL), Georgia’s Assistive Technology Act Program, provides Georgians of all ages and disabilities the opportunity to 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.
As the Assistive Technology Program in Georgia, we are charged with core activities:

1. Information and Assistance
2. AT Assessments
3. AT Demonstrations
4. AT Equipment Lending
5. Training (Individuals and Groups)
6. Funding Education and Solutions
7. AT Reuse
Tools for Life Website

www.gatfl.org
Who Are We Serving? Every 1 in 5

People with disabilities are the largest minority group in America. This group cuts across racial, ethnic, religious, gender and age boundaries. Anyone can become a member of this minority group at any time.
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 educational mainstream of society in the United States.

Public Law 108-364
What is Assistive Technology?

- 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.
Team Approach

Person with the disability
Circle of support/Family of choice
Teachers
Technologist
Occupational Therapist
Speech-Language Pathologist
Physical Therapist
Engineer
Neighbors
Bus drivers
Assistive Technology Services

Assistive Technology Services are any services that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. These services include:

• Evaluating
• Providing devices
• Selecting, Designing, Customizing
• Maintaining, Repairing
• Coordinating
• Training/Technical Assistance – student, family, and school service providers

Public Law 105-394 [29 USC 2201]
AT Assessments

- Comprehensive AT assessment
- Certified AT team
- $450
  - Written report and recommendations

Area of focus:
- Workplace
- Ergonomics
- Hardware/Software
- Strategies
AT Demonstrations

• Free of charge!
• Learn about devices
• What will work best?
  • Assist in making informed choices
  • Consumer’s choice in devices
AT Lending Library

- Try before you buy!
- Loans are usually for 3 to 4 weeks
- Training on items before borrowed, if needed
• Tablets
• Vision items
• Durable Medical Equipment (DME)
• Communication devices
• Gaming solutions
• Software
• Switches and Keyboards
• Aids for daily living
• Environmental Control/Internet of Things
• 3D printed technology
Your TFL AppFinder: What Can I Find?

Search by:
- ✔️ App Name
- ✔️ Categories
  - Books/Reading
  - Education
  - Environmental Adaptations
  - Hearing
  - Vision
  - Navigation
  - Cognition, Learning, and Development
  - Personal Care and Safety
  - Productivity
  - Communication
  - Therapeutic Aids
Funding Solutions and Resources
Credit-Able

Georgia’s alternative financing program for assistive technology (AT)

Thanks to a partnership between Center for Financial Independence and Innovation (CFII) and Tools for Life
Why Credit-Able?

Flexibility
Personal
More accessible
Build/re-build credit
You save money
Eligibility Criteria

Be a resident of Georgia

A person with a disability

AND

A family member/guardian of a person with a disability

AND

An employer of a person with a disability

or

Able to pay back the loan

or

Using the loan for AT
First $STEP Program

For Georgians with disabilities
Small low interest loans to establish
or repair credit
Can be used for anything
4% interest
$1,000 max
Max term of 18 months
Funding Resources

Georgia’s Assistive Technology and Funding Guide

• Centers for Independent Living (CIL)
• Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRC)
• Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)
Training and Outreach
Info and Assistance

Phone
• 404-894-0541

Email
• info@gatfl.gatech.edu

How Can We Help?
• Online form
• Gives us information on what kind of assistance is requested
Outreach Materials

Take-home information
• Services
• Resources
• Contact

Useful swag
• Parking violation
• Jar gripper

★ We think about accessibility on all levels
Smart and Accessible Design

Simple Accessibility Tips:

Typeface
• Use Sans-Serif
• Letters are clearer

Grid
• Align text and images to a grid
• Reading order is simpler, no jumbled layout

Contrast
• Light on dark, or Dark on light
• Benefit those with low vision, color blindness, or other visual disabilities
Social Media

Relevant news

Emerging AT

Conference and webinar announcements

Photos of events and group visits

★ Accessibility is important
  • Alt text now available across all platforms!
Training activities include but are not limited to:

• In person or virtual trainings
• Webinars
• Internal and external partner trainings

Variety of Topics:

• Assistive Technology (specific for disabilities)
• Funding
• Emerging Tech/Trends
• Disability awareness

More!
Tours

All tours are scheduled
Small or large (up to 60) groups

What you see:

• AT Solutions and Access Labs
• Braille production
• Captioning & Described Media Services
• E-text
• 3D Printing

Variety of groups visiting:

• Disability service organizations
• Government agencies
• FEMA
• Office of Civil Rights
• Statewide assistive technology programs
• School Systems
TFL AT Labs on the go!

Tools for Life hosted 17 AT Labs in Georgia and across the country in 2018!

• AT Labs provide an on-site experience for event participants
• On site, one on one demonstrations of equipment
• Provide presentations in the Lab

• Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA)
• Coalition On Adult Basic Education (COABE)
• Abilities Expo
• Institute Designed for Educating All Students (IDEAS)
• HCBS
Statewide AT Conferences: GATE 2019

Georgia Assistive Technology in Education (GATE) Annual Seminar

• Friday, December 6, 2019
• Georgia Tech Student Center
• This event is open to all Georgia educators, parents, students with disabilities, family members and anyone else interested in learning more about assistive technology in education!
Statewide AT Conferences: IDEAS 2019

Institute Designed for Educating All Students (IDEAS)

Week of June 4-7, 2019

St. Simons Island: Epworth

Georgia's only teacher conference supporting the education of students with disabilities.
Assistive Technology Research
According to the *National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS2) - 2012*:

- 99.8% of the students who received AT graduated
  - Only 79.6% of those who did not receive AT graduated.
- 80.9% of students who received AT attended a post-secondary institution
  - Only 40.1% of students who did not receive AT attended a post-secondary institution.
- 80% of those who received AT had a paying job after high school
  - Only 50.8% of those who did not receive AT had a paying job.
Background

- Assistive technology (AT) is proving to be a staple tool that students with disabilities are using to achieve success in post-secondary settings.
- Students who qualify have access to textbooks in electronic format. Students use computer and tablet-based software to help them read their textbooks and gain comprehension.
- It has been assumed that students who have learned to use these AT tools while still in high school may have a distinct advantage over students who come to college without having experience with these tools.
- However there is little evidence to confirm this assumption.
Research Questions

In order to examine this assumption and to gain insight into the use of AT by college students, we propose to invite students who have made use of the CIDI services since 2014 to take part in a survey to determine the following:

• What percentage of students with disabilities who are referred to CIDI are coming prepared to use AT?
• How successful are these students in college?
• How does the success of these students who come prepared to use AT compare to the success level of students who are not prepared to use AT?
• Have the AT services provided by CIDI been effective and helpful to these students?
What percentage of students referred to CIDI are coming prepared to use AT?

In the CIDI study:

- 57% coming to post-secondary education expressed a level of mastery of their AT.
- 43% coming to post-secondary education did not report mastery of their AT.
Research: Mastery of AT in High School

Change in GPA from High School to Post-Secondary among students who mastered AT in high school:

- GPA went up: 47%,
- GPA showed no change: 41%,
- GPA went down: 11%
Change in GPA from High School to Post-Secondary among students who had not mastered AT in high school:

- GPA went Up: 27%
- GPA showed no Change: 7%
- GPA went down: 67%
Among students with high incidence disabilities:

- Definitely 58%,
- Probably 18%,
- Maybe 13%,
- Not 3%,
- No Answer 8%
What AT is the Right AT?
Assistive Technology Continuum

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.

Low/No-tech
- pencil grip
- adapted books
- slant board
- highlighters, tape
- magnifiers
- color coding
- read to out loud
- picture schedule
- strategies for memory
- colored transparencies
- proof readers
- note taker
- dry erase board

Mid-Tech
- word prediction
- text to speech
- speech to text
- spell checkers
- talking calculators
- digital recorders
- organizers
- e-books
- adapted keyboard
- adapted mouse
- adapted toys
- CCTV
- apps under $100

High-Tech
- computer/laptops
- tablets/phablets
- smartphones
- smart pens
- OCR scanner/software
- magnification software
- speech output devices
- switch, joystick access
- scanning access
- voice recognition
- environmental control devices
- apps over $100
It’s Not About You

• Ask!
• Environmental factors
• Placement
• Low tech options are just as important as mid/high tech (also more affordable)
• Spatial considerations
• What has the student already used?
Asking Avoids Abandonment
Predictors of Assistive Technology Abandonment

- Two hundred twenty-seven adults with various disabilities responded to a survey on device selection, acquisition, performance, and use.
- Results showed that 29.3% of all devices were completely abandoned.
- Mobility aids were more frequently abandoned than other categories of devices, and
- Abandonment rates were highest during the first year and after 5 years of use.
- Four factors were significantly related to abandonment—lack of consideration of user opinion in selection, easy device procurement, poor device performance, and change in user needs or priorities.

Study by B. Phillips and H. Zhao
Examples of Assistive Technology!
Inexpensive and Reliable Options
Learning Aids - Spelling

- Spelling
  - Personal spelling list
  - Hand-held spellchecker
    - Franklin Talking Dictionary
  - Word processing program with built-in spell checker
    - Microsoft Word
Learning Aids - Writing

• Learning Aids (continued)
  • Writing
    • Graph paper
    • Pencil grips
    • Adapted tape recorder
    • Talking word processor
    • Word prediction software
• Learning Aids (continued)
  • Writing
    • Outlining and webbing software
    • Online Grammar Checkers
      • Grammarly
      • Ginger Software
    • Voice recognition software
      • Dragon Naturally Speaking
      • Microsoft Word 2000 or later
Learning Aids - Math

• Learning Aids (continued)
  • Math
    • Number lines
    • Graph paper
    • Calculator
    • On-screen electronic worksheet
    • Equatio by Texthelp
Learning Aids - Reading

- Learning Aids (continued)
  - Reading
    - Personal word list
    - Colored overlay
    - Hand-held spell checker/talking dictionary
    - Audio-taped textbooks
    - Talking word processing program
    - Advanced Reading Aid
Access
Computer Access

• Computer Access: Input
  • Keyboard adaptations
    • Keyguard
  • Adaptive pointing devices
    • Hand-held pointer
  • Keyboard alternatives
    • Enlarged keyboards
      • Big Keys Keyboard
    • On Screen keyboards
      • Windows 10
Computer Access (2)

- Computer Access: Input (continued)
  - Mouse Alternatives
    - Trackball
    - Joystick
    - Switch Access
    - Voice Recognition
Ergonomics

• Humans present with unique physical characteristics and abilities

• Goal is to fit the task, equipment and environment to the person
  • Design tasks
  • Work spaces
  • Tools/Equipment
  • Lighting
Contributing factors for poor positioning (Classroom)

- Non-adjustable desks; the layout of the desk does not fit the user
- Lack of knowledge on how to set up the desk properly according to the user’s needs (both physical needs and job tasks)
- Poor working habits that remain uncorrected
- Fatigue and vision issues
Poor Sitting Posture

• Inhibits blood flow
• Creates muscle shortening
• Stresses back muscles and compresses spine
• Can inhibit focus
• Compresses diaphragm
  • Affects breathing
  • Voice quality
Minimum features of an adjustable task chair

- Padded arms, adjustable and removable
- Lumbar support
- Waterfall front edge
- Height and tilt adjustable back and seat
- Easy to reach controls
- 5-caster base

www.lni.wa.gov
Recreational AT

• Recreation is a necessity
• Numerous benefits – Cognitive, Mood, Physical, etc.
• Recreation comes in many forms – Video Games, Card Games, Board Games, Playing Music, Sports, Exercising, Crafts, etc.
• There are options and technologies to make each of these activities accessible.
Playing video games is a wasteful past time with no real benefits and is detrimental to one’s health and mental well being.
Why is Gaming Important?

- Increased Cognitive Function
- Pain Management
- Stress Reduction
- Hand-eye coordination
- Memory
- Attention
- Mood
- Decision Making
- Social Connectedness
Transition
Transition: What’s Next?

• Work
• College
• Technical school
• Home
What are the tasks?

- Reading and comprehension
- Writing
  - Capturing thoughts
  - Spelling
  - Organization
- Note taking
- Getting Organized
Know Yourself?

What are your strengths?
What are your weaknesses?
What strategies do you use to help you be successful?
Questions
The Tools for Life Team

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

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

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

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

Gina Gelinas
Educational Outreach Manager
ggelinas3@gatech.edu

Ben Jacobs
Accommodations Specialist
ben.jacobs@gatfl.gatech.edu

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

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

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

Ben Satterfield
Research Associate
rsatterfield8@gatech.edu

Annabel Joyner
Graphic Design Intern
ajoyner8@gatech.edu

DeeDee Bunn
Speech-Language Pathologist
dbunn6@gatech.edu

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

Sam Peters
Program Specialist
speters37@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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