Greetings Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Community of Practice Members . Below you will find the October Update for the [Wisconsin Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Project](#). Through exciting learning opportunities, the AT Forward Project continues to move Wisconsin forward in the area of Assistive Technology!

Welcome our New DPI Speech-Language and Assistive Technology Consultant!
The following is a message from Dawn Merth-Johnson, DPI's new Speech-Language and Assistive Technology Consultant

I'm excited to work with all of you in my new role at DPI as Education Consultant for speech-language and assistive technology.
My role is to provide support in assistive technology through resources, professional learning opportunities and response to general inquiries.

As a speech-language pathologist, I have 26 years of clinical and supervisory experience primarily in the school setting. I have also worked in long-term rehabilitation and as a clinical assistant professor at the university level. I have utilized a range of assistive technology options in my practice from low tech use of objects, pictures and switches to high tech use of speech generating devices with eye gaze for both children and adults. I have completed my own evaluations, worked with vendors to complete AAC evaluations, and participated in AAC evaluations through the partnership program at CASC. I was part of the WCASS project to develop a guidebook for Wisconsin: "How to Provide Students with IEPs Accessibility to their Grade Level Curriculum Through Text To Speech". I also worked with the Technology Coordinator in my previous school district to promote the use of accessibility features already available on the students' iPads and Chromebooks. I worked closely with my colleagues in special education and occupational therapy to develop visual aids for the students on our caseloads and we provided a district wide presentation on the effective use of visual supports in the educational environment. This is an area I feel strongly about as visual supports draw student attention to "what" is important and assist in communication, memory, organization, and task completion. The use of visuals also helps to increase the level of independence for students which is the ultimate goal! Contact me at dawn.merth-johnson@dpi.wi.gov.

What is AT Forward?
The Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Project works with educators, practitioners, caregivers, and families to increase student autonomy in utilizing Assistive Technology tools to support access, engagement, and progress in learning. The AT Forward Project provides a variety of resources and learning opportunities, including [Community of Practice (CoP) meetings](#), [micro-credentialing](#), and monthly email updates. To become a

member of the [AT Forward CoP](#), please visit the [AT Forward Registration page.](#) From AT beginner to expert, the AT Forward CoP welcomes all knowledge level backgrounds!

Please mark your calendars for the upcoming October and November CoP meetings:

October 4, 2022, 4:00p.m.-5:00pm.: <u>AT Forward Micro-Credentialing</u>
November 1, 2022, 4:00p.m.-5:00p.m.: <u>Assistive Technology for Administration</u> with Dr. Penny Reed.
November 17, 2022, 4:00p.m.-5:00p.m.: <u>Literacy for Students with Significant Disabilities</u> with Kelly Fonner.
November 30, 2022, 4:00p.m.-5:00p.m.: <u>Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) in Wisconsin; Are You Ready?</u>

The table of contents is designed so you can quickly jump to various sections of this update; you can also search this document using the command "Control F," with a keyword to search for specific information. All monthly AT Forward [Updates](#) are stored electronically as resources on the AT Forward website.

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Micro-Credentials: The Assistive Technology (AT) Forward is excited to provide free supported micro-credentials and macro-credentials for assistive technology learning opportunities. Micro-credentialing is an opportunity for educators to learn on their own time, pace, and place. Learning is structured in an online platform and is supported with email and video conference communication to enable clarity and success. As participants complete their micro-credentials, they receive feedback to assist in clarifying their goals and earn a digital badge. Digital badges can be added to your email signature to show others your commitment to assistive technology. For the 2022-23 school year, we are excited to announce new learning opportunities around Accessible Educational Materials (AEM), Early Childhood, and AT for Administrators .

Micro Credential status:
We are pleased to announce the following celebrations:
140 badges have been awarded to date.
8 educators have earned macro credentials (7+ Badges)
Over 50 educators have participated in the program from over 30 districts/organizations
Congratulations to the following people who have earned one or more micro-credentials in Assistive Technology:

Lindsey Shat: School District of LaCrosse
Kim Lewis: McFarland School District (earned macro-credential)
Kathleen Kasberg: Stoughton Area School District (earned macro-credential)
Erin Lampada: McFarland School DIstrict (earned macro-credential)
Carly Sandgren: Madison Metro School District
Jenny Sikora: School District of Janesville
Angie Kirkpatrick: School District of Janesville
Nina Nelsestuen :Madison Metro School District
Maria Marruffo : University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
Brenda O'Connell: Madison Metro School District
Jill Utz Lebakken: School District of La Crosse
Kathleen Campana : Wauwatosa School District
Amy Snow: Wisconsin School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Ashley Sticha Neis: Whitnall School District
Nicole Swets: Madison Metro School District
Sarah Harke: Oconto Falls School District
Jennifer Paull :Whitnall School District
Jacquelyn Thao: Whitnall School District
Aubrey Rosing: Whitnall School District
Jaycelin Allain: Whitnall School District
Kayla Wigg: Whitnall School District
Eva Groth: New Richman HIgh School
Aubrey Rosing: Whitnall School District

Resource Suggestion:
Podcasts provide great and convenient learning opportunities, especially when time is limited. The Easter Seals in Indiana have an ongoing weekly podcast called, "ATFAQ." Each week, they address several questions they have received from their audience and it allows the listener to search and target their specific needs. The podcasters use easy to understand language and provide real life examples of how assistive technology is changing the lives of their listeners.

Assistive Technology FAQ (ATFAQ) Podcast, Podcasts
At the beginning of a school year, educators often search for an inspirational video, which stresses the importance of perseverance, the power of technology and how important it is for students to learn; this is that type of video! It is a video that was recently brought to the forefront due to the untimely passing away of the speaker, Rich Creech.

Sometimes All We Need To Do Is Start A Conversation….
Have you ever looked at accessibility options that are a part of your phone? It is easy to start a conversation all about cell phones. Recently, more and more applications have been created and/or brought into the universal space for learning when it comes to assisting the deaf and hard of hearing. Within many phone accessibility features, there are specific settings to assist people with hearing impairments. They are often designated

as alerting devices and examples include a sound recognition program (that alerts its user to a specific noise, such as a weather alert or a baby crying) and an alternative to a sound such as an LED flash or vibration.
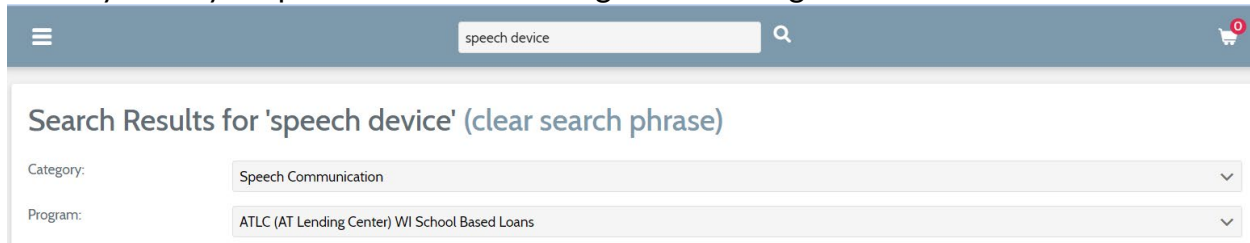
Other stand alone apps, such as OtterAI, provide auto transcription services. Parts of this app are free and others require a subscription fee. Closed captioning helps the deaf and hard of hearing and also assists those with cognitive or dementia issues.

AAC Corner

The ATLC library website has been changed to https://wisconsinat4all.com/.
Please go to this website to register. Go to "Create account". After you are registered, login and click on Speech Communication the Program field should fill in as ATLC (AT Lending Center). All devices will show up or you can search for a specific device. If you have any questions or problems please contact me at donna.hutson@cesa2.org or call 262.473.1449.
Thank you for your patience as we work together to navigate this new website.

Question from the Field: " I am looking for eye gaze technology. What does NuEye mean?"

NuEye is a trademark for the eye gazing bar that PRC has used. The PRC company has a new eye tracking system they call Look Eye. Tobii Dynavox also has an eye tracking system. Their system is called PCEye. If you are looking at eye gaze as a method of access for your user, it is important to try out various systems to see what works the best.

QIAT Question

Have you ever wished there was a place where you could ask a question and get real people who use technology to answer you?
Then Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology is the place for you! .

Question: "I have a special ed student this year who is resistant to using a Chromebook and who goes on multiple sites instead of doing the work he is assigned. I told mom our aim was to get him on the Chromebook like his classmates and we are going to try a variety of different approaches. I am looking to see if you are able to set up his Chromebook so he can only get on one or two sites (tabs I guess). I would like him to be able to get on Schoology and then into word documents I set up and attach through Schoology where he will type reading responses, writing assignments, etc.
Is this possible? If not, is there some kind of assistive tech that would accomplish this? This is a fifth grader, who we are hoping to set up for success in middle school."

Answers from the group: "We use Go Guardian for this sort of thing. It's a screen monitoring platform. Teachers can interact with students' screen by limiting websites, time out, encouraging them to get back to task etc. It's a paid subscription. There are other similar platforms out there as well."

"Our district uses Lightspeed, but I'm not sure how pricey it is."

"Maybe the "stay focused" extension for the Chromebook? I know it will limit the amount of time on specific websites--maybe can block them as well? "

What is a feature match?
Feature matching occurs when you look systematically at what a student needs and the features of various programs. Below is an example of feature matching as it relates to students with reading disabilities.

When completing an evaluation it is important to look at the student's disability-related educational needs. To further assist with this process, explore this resource on the DPI site that looks at the six areas of academic and functional skill. "Specifically, they are intended to serve as a guide for developing, reflecting on, and organizing developmentally and educationally relevant questions when planning and conducting a comprehensive special education evaluation aimed at accurately identifying a student's pattern of strengths and disability-related needs." *Comprehensive Special Education Evaluation: Six Areas of Academic and Functional Skill* | *Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.* (2022). Dpi.Wi.Gov.

When conducting an IEP and having the conversation about "whether the student needs assistive technology services or devices, " consider asking these types of questions listed in the chart below.

Area of Student Concern for Reading Difficulties	Potential Solution Feature Match
Student has trouble attending to task	Visual enhancement of text (visual highlighting of text as it is read,) text read aloud for the student
Student has weak vocabulary skills or difficulties learning new vocabulary	Auditory word processor that reads the word for the student, defines the word, simplifies the word and or gives the student a picture representation of the word
Student who is an English Learner needs assists learning new vocabulary	Word processor that translates text, word processor that adds picture representation of words, word processor that reads aloud in native language

Student has weak stamina for reading	Auto summary of the text, simplification of text, and or have the text read aloud to the student
Student needs to increase reading fluency or compensate for processing deficits	Word processor that reads the text aloud as the students reading/comprehension speed (adjustable)
Student has weak visual tracking skills	Word processor that allows for masking of the text in various colors / contrast, text that is read and highlighted as it is read
Student has weak decoding skills	Text is read aloud to the student

Student is unable to read at grade level	Use a word processor or other similar tool that gives the reader the readability statistics to assess if material is too difficult for the student

Potential resources/suggestions to assist students with reading disabilities or needs:

- Simplish: A website where you can paste text into it and the program will rewordify it or simplify it.
- Wordtune: Wordtune Read is an AI reader that summarizes long documents so you can understand more, faster.
- Screen Mask app: Screen Mask is a website or web document reading tool that follows your mouse to assist with reducing page distractions so that you can focus on reading and comprehension.
- Read&Write: App that assists students with reading, writing and research related tasks.
- Snap&Read: App that assists students with reading, writing and research related tasks.
- Immerrsive Reader: Auditory word processing app.
- Apple IOS Built-In features iPads and other IOS devices have many built in free resources that will read text.

Together we can move AT Forward!!

If you have any questions or comments about the AT Forward Project, please contact Kathy White at Kathy.White@CESA2.org or Stacy Duffy at stacy.duffy@cesa2.org.