



# CTTAP NEWS

Written in partnership with the  
**RESC Alliance for Assistive Technology**



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**Introduction** *By Arlene Lugo, Program Director, CT Tech Act Project*

## Happy 2010!

Hope you are enjoying a very Happy New Year! At the Connecticut Tech Act Project we continue to be very busy increasing access to Assistive Technology devices and services for individuals with disabilities, family members, educators, employers, and other professionals.

## What's New?

This year we are going **green** and only sending out electronic versions of our newsletters. If you need a printed copy for accessibility reasons, including large print or another accommodation, please let us know and we will be happy to provide it to you.

Another change to our newsletter is that the Connecticut Tech Act Project is partnering with the RESC Alliance (Regional Education Service Centers) for new Assistive Technology-related content in our newsletter. We plan to have a Featured Article, an AT Spotlight to highlight a new or innovative AT device, local AT related events, free AT resources and more. We hope you find the newsletters more informative and educational! As always, we are open to feedback or article suggestions, please feel free to contact us at 860-424-4881 or by email through our website: [www.CTtechact.com/contact](http://www.CTtechact.com/contact).

In 2009, we opened a new Assistive Technology Demonstration Center in Willimantic, CT. The Eastern Connecticut Assistive Technology Center is open 2 days a week for individuals with disabilities, family members, employers and educators to be able to view a variety of AT and make an informed decision about the AT that can help to remove or reduce barriers at work, at school or in the community. Call 860-423-8400 ext. 319 for more information on hours of operation or to schedule an appointment. If you live in the Eastern Region, we hop you will stop in to visit the center. If you don't live in Eastern CT but would like an AT demonstration, please visit one of our other partner agencies: the NEAT Center, Vision Dynamics or the Disability Resource Center of Fairfield County.

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.

IDEA 97 mandated that assistive technology (AT) devices and services should be considered for all students with disabilities. This mandate caused IEP teams to have many questions about how to consider AT for each student. The Quality Indicators in Assistive Technology (QIAT) Consortium, [www.qiat.org](http://www.qiat.org), created a list of indicators that help IEP teams to define the key elements of effective AT consideration. The Quality Indicators for Consideration of Assistive Technology Needs include:

- AT devices and services are considered for ALL students with disabilities, regardless of the type and severity of the disability.
- During IEP development, the IEP team uses a consistent and collaborative decision-making process that considers each student's possible need for AT devices and services.
- IEP teams collectively have the knowledge and skills need to make good decisions about AT and will seek assistance when appropriate.
- Decisions regarding the need for AT devices and services are based on each student's goals and objectives, access to curricular and extracurricular activities and progress in the general education curriculum.
- To appropriately consider a student's AT needs, the IEP team should gather and analyze data about the student, customary environments, educational goals and tasks.
- When assistive technology is needed, the IEP team explores a range of assistive technology devices, services, and other supports that address identified needs.
- The assistive technology consideration process and results are documented in the IEP and include a rationale for the decision and supporting evidence.

Results of assistive technology consideration are limited to four possible outcomes which are listed below:

- The student does not require AT because he/she is able to complete tasks and goals within the instructional and/or access areas with standard tools.
  - AT is not required because the student can accomplish tasks and goals within the instructional environments with accommodations and modifications.
  - The student requires AT that has already been put into place and is educationally necessary to complete tasks and goals within the instructional and/or access areas. This AT should be documented in the IEP and monitored over time for effectiveness.
  - The student cannot accomplish the required tasks within the relevant instructional or access areas with modifications, accommodations, and/or assistive technology that is currently in place.
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- a. If potential assistive technology solutions are known to the IEP team, trial use of the identified assistive technology solution may be documented in the IEP and implemented.
- b. If the IEP does not know of potential AT devices and services that will support the student, the team may choose to access outside help/consultants who can assist the team in addressing assistive technology or refer the student for an assistive technology evaluation or. A trial use period may be recommended at the end of the consultation or evaluation.

Consideration is a relatively quick and simple, yet important part to the IEP process. Many states currently have a process for AT consideration delineated for their IEP teams. Click on the links below to see how other states are considering assistive technology for their students with disabilities as well as to find additional assistive technology consideration resources.

- Georgia Project for AT: <http://www.gpat.org>
- Quality Indicators for AT services: [www.qiat.org](http://www.qiat.org)
- Wisconsin AT Initiative: [www.wati.org](http://www.wati.org)
- Montgomery County Schools in Maryland's AT consideration process: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/hiat/FAQs/consideration.shtm>
- Texas Assistive Technology Network: [www.texasat.net](http://www.texasat.net)
- The SETT Framework by Joy Zabala: [http://www2.edc.org/NCIP/Workshops/sett/SETT\\_Framework.html](http://www2.edc.org/NCIP/Workshops/sett/SETT_Framework.html)

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## **AT Product Spotlight: *Live Scribe Pulse Pen***

*Contributed by Carolann Cormier, ccc-SLP, MS, ATP, CREC IPM*

The Pulse Pen has been available for approximately one year, though recently there has been increase talk about it on various listservs including [www.qiat.org](http://www.qiat.org) (Quality Indicators in Assistive Technology).

This is a pen that works in the traditional manner, with ink, but can also be used for a variety of other purposes. The pen (which is a little thicker than traditional pens, but still easy to use) contains 1 to 4 GB of memory and comes equipped with a camera built into the ink tip area. When you turn the pen on and use specialized paper, the pen will digitally record a picture of your notes, that can be downloaded to a computer and transferred into e-text. It can also do audio recordings, by pressing the record icon printed on the paper.

This allows a person to record conversations or lectures while taking notes. The recording can be played back at any time in the future by touching the text with the pen tip. Any recording that occurred at that point in the writing will be played back.

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When downloading your writings into a computer, any audio recorded with the writings will also be downloaded and can be played back. The text and audio can be uploaded on the web to share with others.

The price of the pen is around \$169 for the 2 GB pen (\$199 for the 4 GB) and comes with one 100 page 3 ring notebook, an extra ink refill, a small external microphone, the docking station, a stylus and the USB computer cord. It is Macintosh and PC compatible. It can be purchased at Best Buy, Target, Apple stores, Costco's, BJ's, or from the company's website store at [www.Livescribe.com](http://www.Livescribe.com).

In addition to recording the written text and the verbal recordings, additional applications are being developed and can be explored on the company's apps store website at [www.livescribe.com/store/20070723002/c-106.htm](http://www.livescribe.com/store/20070723002/c-106.htm). The application categories include education, games, music, entertainment, utilities, reference, travel, productivity and sports. The price of the apps vary and some are free.



The company has some excellent videos on it's website, including an introductory video on how the pen works and ideas on other uses for the pen, including as an AAC device, in education at [www.livescribe.com/education/index.html](http://www.livescribe.com/education/index.html).

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## Promising Practices

*Contributed by Carol L. Magliocco and Amy Norton, EASTCONN*

For the past several years, Linda Bates, a 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade special education teacher at Pomfret Community School, has been integrating assistive technology into the learning strategies she utilizes with her students. Among the assistive technology applications that have had a lasting impact for her students has been the use of the Start-to-Finish books from Don Johnston, Inc. Start-to-Finish literature and core content materials offer books for older students reading at grade 2-3 and 4-5 reading levels in formats that include paperback, audio and computer books. Ms. Bates notes that, "Using these computer and audio books has given students a ray of hope that they can read and learn." By utilizing Start-to-Finish books in parallel with the general education curriculum, students have boosted their self-esteem and been able to accomplish their academic work with greater independence.

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- Don Johnston and I shared a vision that all kids can learn!
- Struggling readers need high interest topics to keep them engaged.
- Struggling readers want to read the same books as their peers read
- Titles and topics complemented the required curriculum
- Content matched lexile reading levels.”

One of the most positive experiences that Ms. Bates has had with her students has been their participation in the Don Johnston Building Wings Reader’s Theater contest three years ago. Don Johnston’s book, *Building Wings: How I Made It Through School*, describes Don’s personal journey as a struggling learner. Through the students’ participation in the project, the students embarked on a journey of self discovery, became comfortable sharing their own experiences and engaged in exploring strategies that allowed them to experience success. Three years later, this project and the continued use of the book, *Building Wings*, helps Ms. Bates to give her students the opportunity for self – discovery and acceptance. Ms. Bates and her students continue to be in touch with Don Johnston. Students have written letters to Don Johnston himself, engaged in conference calls and received t-shirts from the company. This school year, Ms. Bates and her colleagues from Pomfret Community School were invited to present their project in October at the Assistive Technology Industry Association Conference in Chicago. The students at Pomfret received pictures and email updates from the conference. The excitement this project generated and the self-confidence it inspired in the students continues to grow. You can learn more about this project on the Don Johnston website at:

[http://www.donjohnston.com/building\\_wings/rt\\_winner/readers\\_theater\\_winner.html](http://www.donjohnston.com/building_wings/rt_winner/readers_theater_winner.html).

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## Free Resources!

*Contributed by Laura Giovanetti C.A.G.S.CC-SLP, ATP, Project Coordinator, Cooperative Educational Services*

Everything in one place! **Region 2 Digital Library:** <http://region2library.org/home.htm>

Thanks to a tip from my colleague and co-worker Ashley Tremblay, this website, a project from assistive technology specialists in Central Florida, is huge with an infinite amount of free resources in a variety of curriculum areas. Many pages have links to additional resources so the “free” is endless! I liked the literacy resources. There are specific links to Classroom Suite activities, BoardMaker Activities and Smartboard resources as well as PowerPoint tutorials on how to use each of these.



**Dragon Dictation:** <http://appshopper.com/business/dragon-dictation>

Just like Dragon Naturally Speaking for your computer, with Dragon Dictation for the iPhone you can dictate text and it gets typed into an email, tweet, Facebook update or note. The best part is its free!!!

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Have you had your OATS today??

**OATS Open Source Assistive Technology Software** <http://www.oatsoft.org/>

This website offers free open source AT software in a variety of AT areas. Users can download and provide feedback to the developers. Many of the same features in software products you purchase can be found in the Open Source Software on this website.

**Locabulary Lite** <http://appshopper.com/social-networking/locabulary-lite>

A simple voice output communication app for the iPhone or iTouch. This lite version includes quick phrases, basic needs and two restaurant menus. Navigation is easy, voice output might need a small speaker. Newer versions will allow for customization of vocabulary and location specific communication options. There are a few picture symbols in the Lite version but it is primarily a text based communication system.

**Online brainstorming: Bubbl.us brainstorming made simple....** <http://bubbl.us>

I'm sure that there are many of these free online webbing/concept mapping sites. Here's one, if you haven't seen it yet. On Bubble.us you can create colorful mind maps online, share and work with friends, embed your mind map in your blog or website, email and print your mind map and save your mind map as an image. Their version 2.0 beta has a friendlier and easier user interface.

**Practice, practice, practice!!!** <http://www.ixl.com/math> **IXL Math practice**

I wasn't going to include any links that were just free trials which then required membership but this one is worth taking a look at. There are over 1000 math topics that correlate to state standards covering pre-k through 6<sup>th</sup> grade math skills. It also generates progress reports. Students love to use it with the Smartboard! There are varying costs for membership depending upon whether it is used for home or school.

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## Local Assistive Technology Happenings:

*Contributed by Nancy Shuster, Coordinator ACES Assistive Technology Services*

The first edition of the *Guidelines for Assistive Technology* was completed in 1999. At the request of the CT State Department of Education, the Connecticut Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Council and the State Education Resource Center are collaborating to create a new task force regarding Connecticut assistive technology procedural guidelines. The recommendations by this task force will be incorporated into the second edition of Connecticut's *Assistive Technology Guidelines*. Task force meetings have been scheduled to occur between January 2010 and July 2010. As this task force progresses, additional information will be presented in this newsletter.



*Look for upcoming AT-related events in this newsletter and at*  
[www.CTtechact.com/calendar](http://www.CTtechact.com/calendar)

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## The AT Exchange Recycles AT & Saves Money!

By Arlene Lugo, Program Director

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Last year the getATstuff recycling website helped consumers throughout New England save over \$630,000. Recycling AT devices works. It helps to get good devices that are not being used into the hands of people who need it, at a lower cost and sometimes for free. Visit [www.getATstuff.com](http://www.getATstuff.com) to see the AT devices that are available for sale or for free. If you do not have a computer, call the CT Tech Act Project at 860-424-4881 and we will be happy to search through the listings or post an AT device for you. Here are just a few items that are currently available on [www.getATstuff.com](http://www.getATstuff.com)



ID	Category	Item Name	Price	Location
104	Daily Living	<a href="#">Speaker Telephone</a>	FREE	New Milford, CT
1459	Daily Living	<a href="#">Hoyer Lift, Virtually New, with Seat</a>	Best Offer	Wilton, CT
1446	Daily Living	<a href="#">Lift Chair</a>	\$679.00	Fairfield, CT
1178	Daily Living	<a href="#">Folding Walker</a>	\$32.00	Hartford, CT
1367	Mobility, Seating & Positioning	<a href="#">Heavy Duty Power Wheelchair Barely Used</a>	\$1000.00	New Haven, CT
1347	Mobility, Seating & Positioning	<a href="#">POWER WHEELCHAIR</a>	\$2700.00 or Best Offer	Stratford, CT
1457	Mobility, Seating & Positioning	<a href="#">Motorized Standing Wheel Chair By Stand Aid</a>	Best Offer	Wilton, CT
274	Mobility, Seating & Positioning	<a href="#">Quad Cane</a>	\$16.00	Hartford, CT
1458	Mobility, Seating & Positioning	<a href="#">Quickie 2 Wheelchair, Motorized</a>	Best Offer	Wilton, CT
517	Mobility, Seating & Positioning	<a href="#">Ramp</a>	\$100.00 or Best Offer	Newington, CT
1346	Mobility, Seating & Positioning	<a href="#">STAIRLIFT</a>	\$999.00 or Best Offer	Stratford, CT
1548	Speech Communication	<a href="#">Communication iChat</a>	Best Offer	Gales Ferry, CT
879	Speech Communication	<a href="#">Communication Device DynaVox V</a>	\$6500.00 or Best Offer	Gales Ferry, CT
1461	Transportation and Vehicle Modifications	<a href="#">Conversion Seat for SUV, For Disabled Access</a>	Best Offer	Wilton, CT
945	Vision	<a href="#">Reading Magnifier</a>	\$1000.00 or Best Offer	Ellington, CT

*Achievement through Technology*