Disability Awareness: Building Bridges for an Inclusive Community

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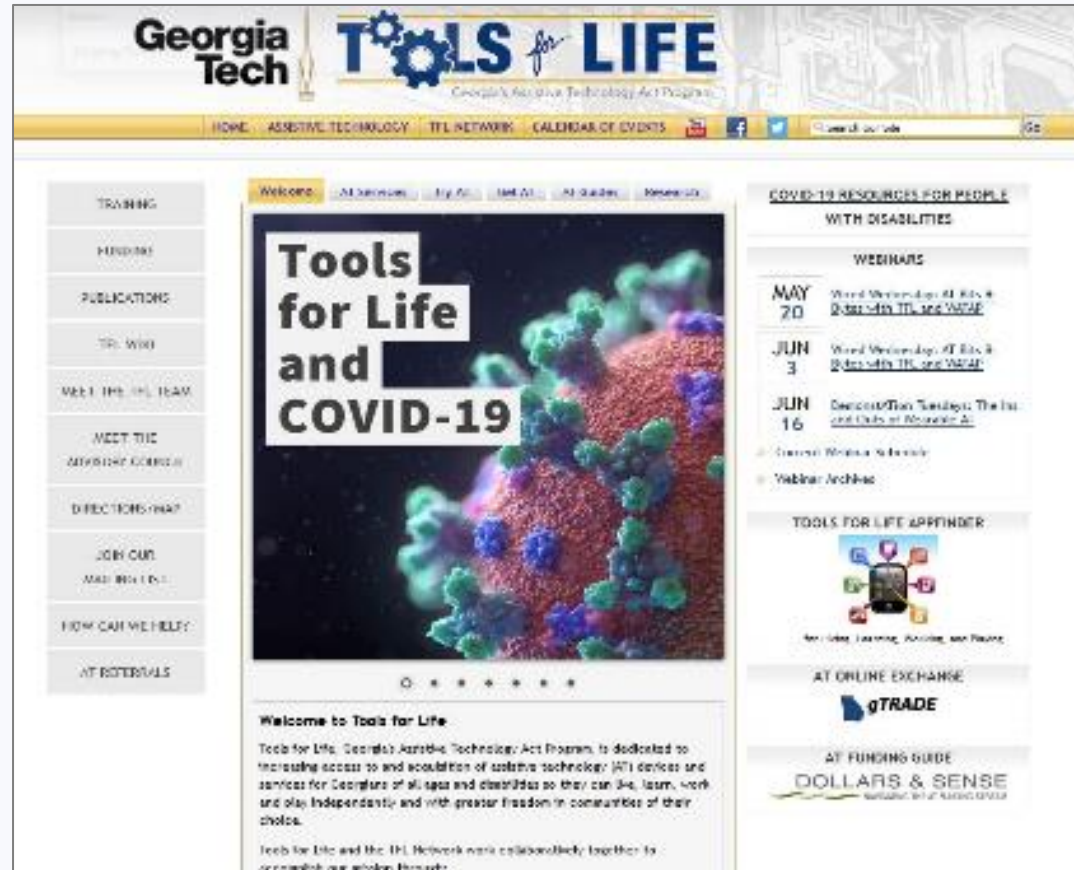
Atlanta Regional Commission
November 4, 2021

Georgia Tech: CIDI

The Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (CIDI) focuses on services and research in the world of accessibility. Research initiatives focus on accessible education, accessibility in the workplace, assistive technology, technology and aging, and much more. Services include Braille production, captioning and described media, digital accessibility, E-text, and assistive technology services (TFL).

Georgia Tech: TFL

Tools for Life (TFL), Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program, increases access to acquisition of assistive technology devices and services so Georgians of all ages and disabilities can live, learn, work, and play in the communities of their choice.
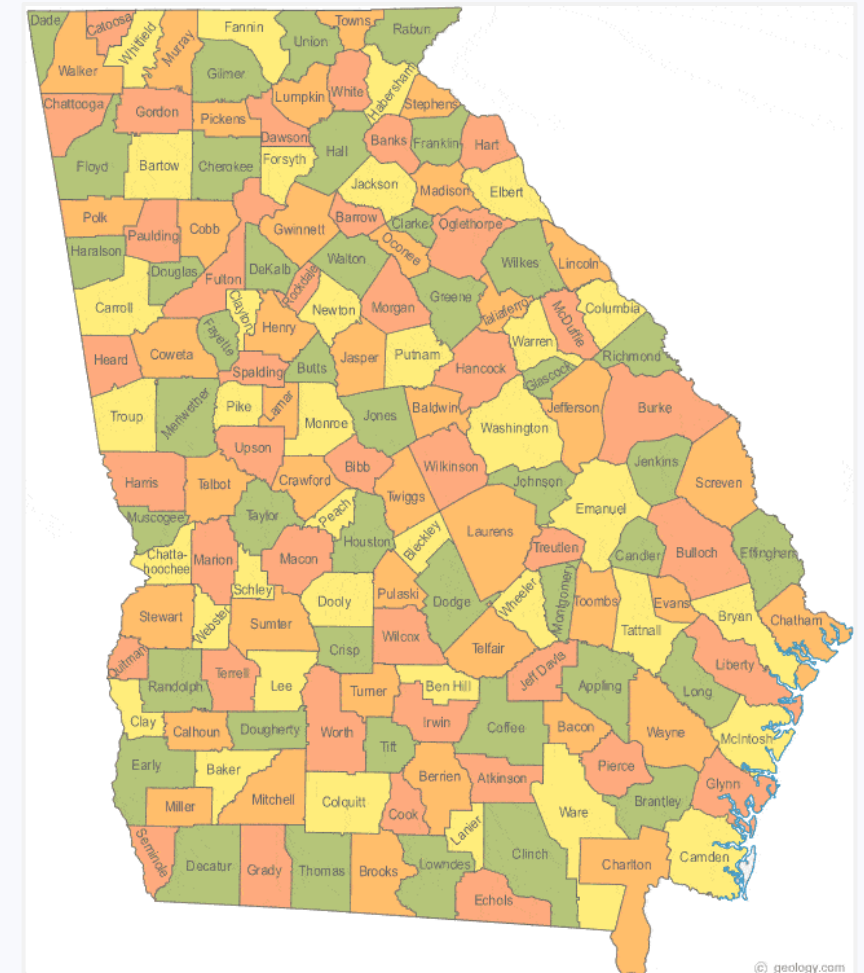
Tools for Life Core Services

As the Assistive Technology Program in Georgia, we are charged with core activities:

1. **Information & Assistance** – (404) 894-0541, info@gatfl.gatech.edu
2. **AT Assessments** – Formal Assistive Technology Evaluations (currently on hold)
3. **AT Demonstrations** – Make informed choices about AT
4. **AT Equipment Lending** – Try Before You Buy AT
5. **Training** (Individuals and Groups) – Webinars and presentations on various topics
6. **Funding Education & Solutions** – Funding resources and connections
7. **AT Reuse** – Where to access and donate gently used durable medical equipment

Tools for Life Network

- Assistive Technology Resource Centers

- Outreach Centers

- Centers for Independent Living

- Aging and Disability Resource Centers

Information, Assistance, and Training

- 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

    - ✓ Demos
    - ✓ Funding resources
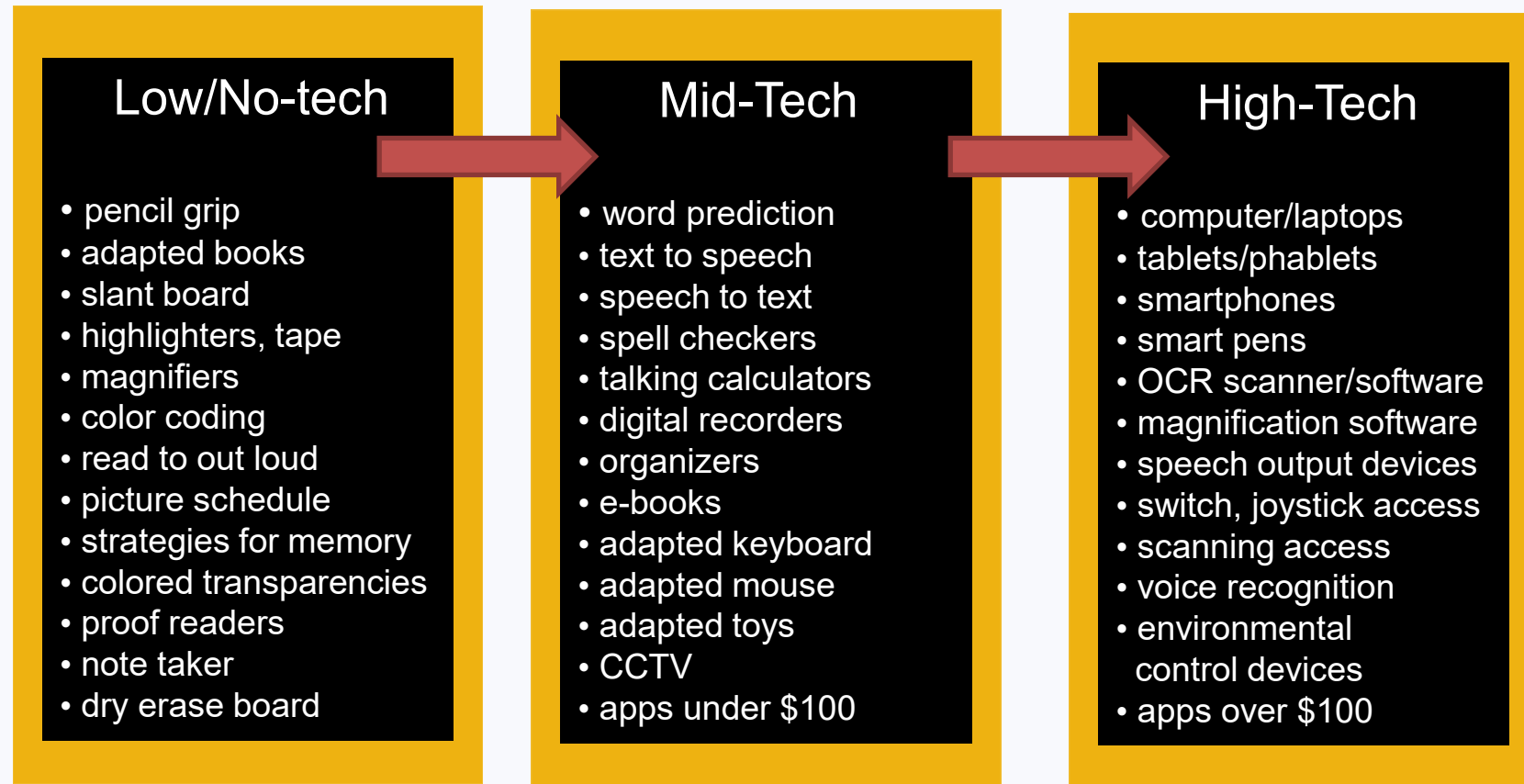   - ✓ Trainings

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 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	Mid-Tech	High-Tech
• pencil grip	• word prediction	• computer/laptops
• adapted books	• text to speech	• tablets/phablets
• slant board	• speech to text	• smartphones
• highlighters, tape	• spell checkers	• smart pens
• magnifiers	• talking calculators	• OCR scanner/software
• color coding	• digital recorders	• magnification software
• read to out loud	• organizers	• speech output devices
• picture schedule	• e-books	• switch, joystick access
• strategies for memory	• adapted keyboard	• scanning access
• colored transparencies	• adapted mouse	• voice recognition
• proof readers	• adapted toys	• environmental control devices
• note taker	• CCTV	• apps over $100
• dry erase board	• apps under $100	

Innovations - "Curb-Cuts"

- **Technological innovations and modifications originally intended for people with disabilities, but that end up benefiting many more, are often called "electronic curb-cuts".**

- The development of early computer protocols led to what is now called the Internet. Dr. Vinton Cerf, who had hearing loss, was married to a woman who was deaf, and frequently corresponded with her using text messaging – eventually becoming the precursor of the World Wide Web.

- Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, was a teacher of deaf students and his wife was also deaf.

- The Segway, a high-tech scooter-like device was born when inventor Dean Kamen, known for a series of disability related inventions, was working on a wheelchair capable of climbing stairs and in a standing position. In the process, he realized that they could build a device using very similar technology that could impact how everybody gets around.

Why Assistive Technology?

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.

The Importance of Disability Awareness

- There are more than one billion people with disabilities in the world who must overcome challenges every day, including stigmatization. As a society, we are all different and must recognize the importance of acceptance.
- **Disability awareness is important when it comes to breaking stereotypes and overcoming preconceptions regarding disabilities.**
- Learning about disabilities, the ADA, and taking part in awareness activities and events is a step towards breaking these barriers and promoting change.

Every 1 in 4 or 26%

- 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:

- live independently;
- enjoy self-determination and make choices;
- benefit from an education;
- pursue meaningful careers; and
- enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of society in the United States.

Public Law 108-364 of the Assistive Technology Act of 2004

https://www.congress.gov/bill/108th-congress/house-bill/4278

Understanding Attitudinal Barriers

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- People with disabilities face many barriers every day–from physical obstacles in buildings to systemic barriers in employment and civic programs.

- **Often, the most difficult barriers to overcome are attitudes other people carry regarding people with disabilities.**

- Whether born from ignorance, fear, misunderstanding or hate, these attitudes keep people from appreciating–and experiencing–the full potential a person with a disability can achieve.

Defining Types of Attitudinal Barriers

- **Inferiority** - Because a person may be impaired in one of life's major functions, some people believe that individual is a "second-class citizen."

- **Pity** - People feel sorry for the person with a disability, which tends to lead to patronizing attitudes.

- **Hero worship** - People consider someone with a disability who lives independently or pursues a profession to be brave or "special" for overcoming a disability. The disability is there; the individual has simply learned to adapt by using his or her skills and knowledge, just as everybody adapts to being tall, short, strong, fast, easy-going, bald, blonde, etc.

- **Ignorance** - People with disabilities are often dismissed as incapable of accomplishing a task without the opportunity to display their skills.

- **The Spread Effect** - People assume that an individual's disability negatively affects other senses, abilities or personality traits, or that the total person is impaired.

Types of Attitudinal Barriers

- **Stereotypes** - The other side of the spread effect is the positive and negative generalizations people form about disabilities. Aside from diminishing the individual and his or her abilities, prejudice can set too high or too low a standard for individuals who are merely human.

- **Backlash** - Many people believe individuals with disabilities are given unfair advantages, such as easier work requirements. Employers need to hold people with disabilities to the same job standards as co-workers, though the means of accomplishing the tasks may differ from person to person.

- **Denial** - Many disabilities are "hidden," such as learning disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, epilepsy, cancer, arthritis and heart conditions. The ADA defines "disability" as an impairment that "substantially limits one or more of the major life activities."

- **Fear** - Many people are afraid that they will "do or say the wrong thing" around someone with a disability. They therefore avert their own discomfort by avoiding the individual with a disability.

The Power of Language

- Language is continually evolving, and that includes language related to people with disabilities.

- Staying current is important, not to show that you are "politically correct" but to communicate effectively and with respect.

What is Value-Laden Language?

- 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.

Value-Laden Language

- **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

Value-Laden Language – Handicapped

- "Handicapped" is an archaic term that evokes negative images of pity, fear, and more.

- A legendary origin of the "H-word" refers to a person with a disability begging with his "cap in his hand."

Value-Laden Language (2)

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

has a disability, is a person with a disability, has a physically disability, walks with a cane, uses leg braces

has a disability

non-disabled, person without disabilities, uses a wheelchair

"The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug."
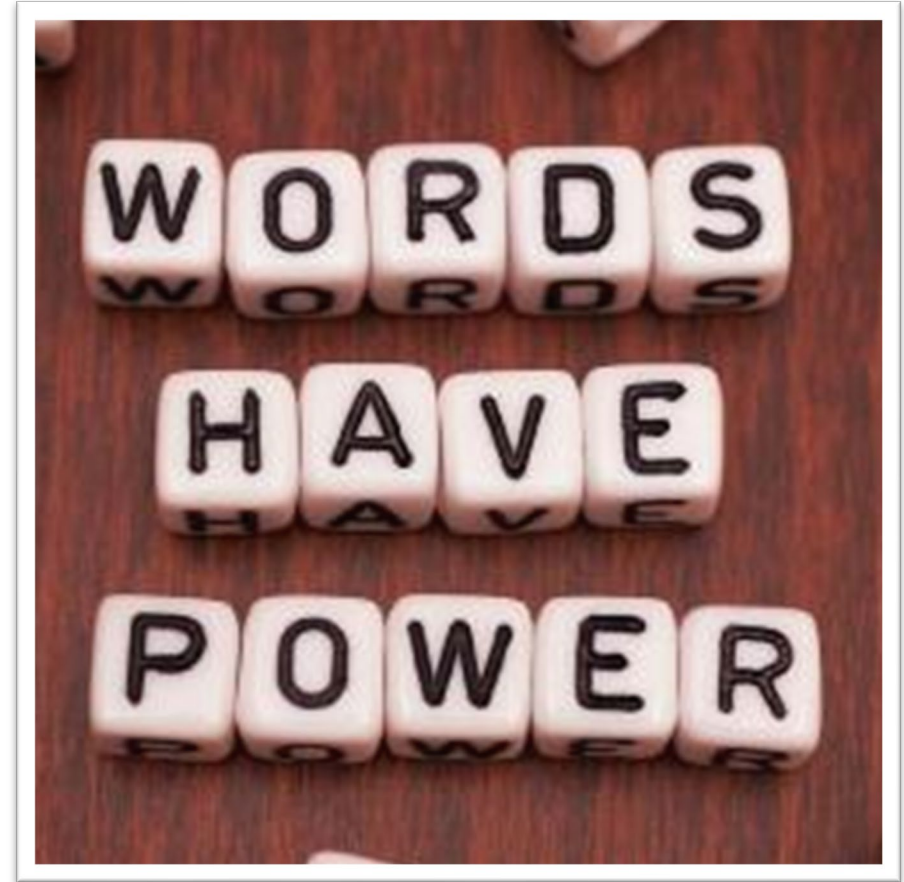
Mark Twain

Avoid Words that Evoke Pity or Fear

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burden	deformed	disfigured	imbecile
maimed	moron	palsied	pathetic
pitiful	poor	spastic	stricken with
suffers from	tragedy	victim of	cripple
invalid	incapacitated	deaf and dumb	slow or retarded
lunatic	challenged	physically challenged	afflicted with

People First Language

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

Person First Language

- Designed to stress personhood
- Person with ____
- Person who ____
- More common approach, frequently preferred by most.

HELLO
I am NORM
REDEFINING NORMAL, PROMOTING INCLUSION
www.IamNorm.org

Language Do's

If a person says they prefer a certain type of language, use that when talking to or about them, regardless of your own preference

HELLO
I am
NORM

REDEFINING NORMAL, PROMOTING INCLUSION
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"The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind."

William James

Questions?

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The Tools for Life Team

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We Appreciate Your Time!