



MassMATCH NEWS Quarterly

Maximizing Assistive
Technology in
Consumers' Hands

Winter 2012:
MassMATCH Goes
Global

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MassMATCH Goes Global with Assistive Technology

This past November, Karen Langley, director of Assistive Technology and Community Support Programs (of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services) joined a group of advocates and individuals with disabilities from Iraq, Oman, Yemen, Kuwait and Jordan.

The group was sponsored by the U.S. State Department and hosted by WorldBoston (a non-profit that works to raise awareness about issues of global concern). Langley joined MRC Commissioner Charles Carr, among others, to discuss a variety of disability-policy related issues. Topics included the growth of movements for Disability Rights and Independent Living within the United States, and the impact and potential of assistive technology on the lives of individuals.



In his compelling [blog post](#) about the day, Commissioner Carr reflects on how attentive the group was despite their

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UN Convention
Provides New
Opportunities for
Assistive
Technologies



Axel Leblois provides insight on how the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is energizing the agenda of the Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies (G3ict)

The idea that international treaties or the United Nations could have a positive impact on access to assistive technologies would seem bizarre at best... yet this is exactly what has happened on a global

hectic schedule and use of an Arabic translator. "Questions came readily, such as 'tell me more about the ADA' and 'how did assistive technology change your life' and 'what organized sports do Americans have access to?'" Carr notes that while the questions varied, all understood the progression of working to transition individuals with disabilities into community living to then successfully into the workforce. "We ended the forum with the realization that all of our communities, including the United States, have a lot of work to do before we ever see full community integration and acceptance. This small event was truly a global effort to develop an agenda for monumental change."

For Langley, a highlight of the afternoon was a visit to MassMATCH's Assistive Technology Regional Center in Boston (operated by Easter Seals). "It was moving to see how taken many of the delegates were by the technology. They wanted to buy Dragon Dictate before they left!" (Dragon is voice recognition software). "They also really loved the robots, and loved learning about the MV1 accessible van."

This was the first international delegation received by ATRC Co-coordinator Kristi Peak-Oliveira. "It was so inspiring to meet with people working to create the first AT programs for their entire countries" she says. "They were so friendly and appreciative to be here. Some were also really playful. We demonstrated Eye-Gaze [Tobii communication device that is controlled by the user's pupils], and one visitor kept using it to ask for my email address!"

Langley notes that the delegates were also eager for information about peer-learning and mentorship models, as well as how consumer-rights movements organize. "It was a remarkable afternoon," she reflects, "and a reminder of what we have accomplished in the U.S. and need to share."

For more about efforts in the Middle East to improve access to assistive technology, check out the [November "Global Edition" of the Friends of ATIA newsletter](#) (PDF). Among the articles is one by David Banes, deputy chief executive of Mada, the Qatar assistive technology and accessibility center.

[Read Commissioner Carr's blog post, "Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Goes Global"](#)

How Can MassMATCH Help You?

Now more than ever technology is helping to transform lives. MassMATCH is dedicated to linking individuals with disabilities with the assistive technology (AT) that can help them to better live, learn, work and play. Whether you are an individual with a disability, a family member, advocate, educator, therapist, employer,



Massachusetts residents enjoy the day on a tandem

scale since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) by the United Nations General Assembly. No one could predict this outcome, but the Convention has been signed, to-date, by 153 countries--including the United States--and ratified by 106, which means that it is legally enforceable in countries representing more than 75% of the world population: a stunning success and one of the fastest rates of adoption of any international treaty in history.

So what's in it for AT users and vendors?

[Read the rest in the November "Global Edition" of the Friends of ATIA newsletter.](#)

Coming Soon: Wheeled Mobility Clinic in Amherst



Some users of wheeled mobility have difficulty getting comfortable and functional seating in their wheelchairs. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will customize seating and controls for their clients, but other people with disabilities have little access to this kind of

or another professional, MassMATCH has programs and resources to help you learn about and gain access to AT.

- o **AT Regional Centers (ATRCs)**



The ATRCs are the cornerstone of MassMATCH services. MassMATCH partners with Easter Seals in Boston, and United Cerebral Palsy in Pittsfield to provide two ATRCs

serving the eastern and western regions of Massachusetts. The Centers provide an opportunity to see, touch, and try assistive technology devices and are funded to demonstrate a range of devices for use by children, adults and seniors. Everything from magnifiers and assistive listening equipment to alternative keyboards, smart pens, iPads and apps are on hand. Loaner equipment is available for up to 4 weeks so that you (or your client) can "try before you buy" or fill a short-term need. If you decide to purchase, ATRC staff can help you navigate funding sources and providers. Educators, employers, therapists, as well as family members and AT users are welcome at AT Regional Centers. Learn more about the ATRCs (and search the inventory of the device loan library!) at this [MassMATCH Web page](#).

- o **AT Loan \$ Program**



The Massachusetts AT Loan Program gives individuals with disabilities and their families access to low-interest cash loans to buy the assistive technology devices they need or

want.

Operated by Easter Seals (in partnership with the Sovereign Bank), this alternative financing program often provides loans to persons on limited incomes and/or with less than perfect credit histories. If you are a person with a disability, elder, or family member, are tired of waiting lists, have been denied by another funding source, or are just looking to afford a device or AT service, the AT Loan Program may be for you. Learn more at [MassATloan.org](#).



Ergoquest work station.

- o **Long-Term Device Loan Program**

Another great resource is the Long-Term Device Loan Program. Easter Seals partners with MassMATCH to provide income-qualified applicants with equipment valued at under \$500 for as long as they need it. Top priority is given to individuals who need AT for health and safety reasons, or for their primary means of communication, or for living at home after being discharged from a skilled nursing facility. Learn more about the Long-Term Device Loan Program at [MassATloan.org](#).

- o **Get AT Stuff**

individualized support. To address this service gap, MassMATCH is partnering with staff at DDS and the Stavros Center for Independent Living to create a pilot adaptive seating and mobility clinic set to launch this spring.

The mobility clinic will be held in Amherst at Stavros. It will address the needs of individuals Stavros identifies as having significant seating issues. Seating customization and fabrication services will be provided by expert (OT/PT) fabricators and designers from DDS's Northampton AT Center.

If the pilot proves successful, this collaboration may serve as a model for expanding mobility services elsewhere within the state. It may also serve as an example of how state agencies can share resources to better serve more residents with significant disabilities!

AT School Share UPDATE



MassMATCH encourages the sharing of assistive technology among Massachusetts schools and school systems. Our project, the AT School Share (formerly the AT School "Swap"), has now registered 12 participating school entities. The goal of the AT School Share is to create and coordinate a



Looking for an affordable power or manual wheelchair? A specialized magnifier? A used accessible van? Try the Assistive Technology

Exchange in New England! This is the online "Craig's List" of assistive technology and durable medical equipment. Here you can browse equipment available among the six New England states, post a device you have to sell, loan, or give away, even post a "device wanted" ad. Learn more at GetATStuff.org.

o **AT Funding Guide**

Everything you ever wanted to know about how AT and Durable Medical Equipment is (and isn't) funded in Massachusetts. The online [AT Funding Guide](#) covers public and private sources, from MassHealth to the Lion's Club. Advice is given for appealing denials and who to go to for assistance. Also check out the [AT Advocacy Guide](#) for finding expert help and advice with your specific funding issues.

o **Ask the Expert**

Have a question about AT, AT services, or funding? You can also contact MassMATCH for help (or a targeted referral) through this [MassMATCH Web page](#).



o **AT Services Directory**



Looking for a particular AT service or training opportunity in your area? Search the [AT Services and Training Directory](#). MassMATCH has partnered with the New England INDEX (Information on Disabilities Exchange) to create this online tool. Services are searchable by region or town.

Remember there's even more at www.massmatch.org!

Under Construction: A Global Leadership Network of AT Centers



Last month, MassMATCH News Quarterly had a chance to attend the AT Centers Leadership Network Forum held at the ATIA 2012 conference in Orlando. The Forum's goal was to interest attendees in the formation of an advising body for the development of AT Centers around the world, a network of advisers to uncover and share best practices, policies, and experiences for furthering AT use.

Axel Leblois, executive director of the Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and

community of schools, districts, and collaboratives to share their unused AT devices; in this way students will acquire what they need more quickly and districts will better afford the technology that can make a real difference for learners with special needs. ATSS is also a means for members to keep track of their AT devices and a forum for school professionals to share AT know-how.

In federal fiscal year 2010, MassMATCH received a \$45,000 grant from the Shapiro foundation to pilot the ATSS within the Greater Boston area. As of this writing, 8 of the 12 registered entities are within that geographic area, 4 of which were added during FY2010. To help get participating schools to inventory their AT equipment, MassMATCH is partnering with Physical Therapy graduate students at Northeastern University. These students are learning about AT and school issues while helping interested schools catalog their AT and determine what may be available for sharing. In the coming fiscal year, MassMATCH will also be convening registered ATSS school personnel to discuss barriers for sharing and brainstorm systemic solutions.

Think AT School Share is a great idea? Know a school or school system you'd like to help get involved?

Contact: [Kobena Bonney](#)

Communication Technologies (G3ict)--an advocacy effort of the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development--launched the session with a review of the progress of the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (see article in sidebar). The Convention, he informed us, has gained considerable traction, and is now ratified by over 100 countries. As result, many nations are now obligated to develop access to AT and information and communication technologies, in addition to policies and legislation similar to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Network is looking for members from the global community of professionals with experience developing and managing AT Centers. ATIA Executive Director David Dikter summed it up this way: "AT Centers, no matter where they are--Brazil or Qatar or Italy--we all have to do the same work: provide services, supports, awareness. And we all have to break through the same barriers: the Dept. of Education, Department or Ministry or Council of Labor, whatever! And so why shouldn't we collaborate? I'm hoping you will join in and make this possible."

Forum panelists included David Banes of Mada, the Assistive Technology Center in Qatar; Lou Orslene of the Job Accommodation Network in the U.S.; Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf of the Emilia Romagna Regional Center for AT in Italy. Together they presented the Network's vision, mission, and charter.

The Network was founded by the G3ict and Mada. Interested? Visit the [G3ict Web site](#). Also review the [AT Centers Leadership Network Forum presentation](#) which includes information on membership.

AT Advisory Council Welcomes New Members

MassMATCH is advised by an AT Advisory Council made up of community members and professionals who understand the importance of assistive technology for people with disabilities. A majority of the council members (not less than 51%) are individuals with disabilities who use assistive technology or are family members or guardians of individuals who use AT. Other council members are representatives of state agencies concerned with creating better access for people who would benefit from AT. Of course many members do not neatly fit just one of these council categories! Here are our newest members:

Tory Dixon is an Advocate/Peer Counselor at Stavros for Independent Living in Amherst Massachusetts. When she started working at Stavros in 1994 she was the Outreach Specialist for the Assistive Technology Project. One of her primary roles back then was getting the word out to the disability community and the general public about what Assistive Technology is and how individuals can



MassMATCH coordinator and School Share administrator

Learn more at the [School Share Web site](#)

Upcoming Events

Join the iCrowd! Get the most from your iPad/iPod

February 21, 2012

Time: 9:30 am to 12:30 pm

Cost: \$75

Location: Easter Seals
89 South Street, Boston MA

Contact [Jeff McAuslin](#)
508-751-6448

February 22, 2012

Time: 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm

Cost: Free

Location: United Cerebral Palsy Association of Berkshire County
208 West St, Pittsfield MA

Contact [Dawn Matthews](#)
413-442-1562

What does the ATRC have to offer you?

March 7th, 2012

Time: 1:00pm to 3:00pm

Cost: Free

Location: United Cerebral Palsy Association of Berkshire County
208 West St, Pittsfield MA

Come and visit the ATRC, learn what the center is all about and what services are available to individuals with disabilities. Check out all of the technology that allows an individual to promote their independence, loan a device to trial it at home.

Contact [Dawn Matthews](#)
413-442-1562

Summer Camp and Recreation Expo

benefit by using AT in their daily lives. Currently she assists consumers of Stavros with applying for the Assistive Technology (financial) Loan Program.

Tory Dixon

Tory uses AT in her professional and personal life. She is married and has three handsome young boys. Her eldest volunteers with her at AbliltyPlus, an adaptive ski program out of Mt. Snow in VT. As a child and young adult she swam competitively, and she is a two time Paralympian. Tory says, "I am always excited to learn about new technology that helps to improve everyone and anyone's quality of life."

Paul Remy has Cerebral Palsy and is a wheelchair user. He uses AT to live independently and to do volunteer work for several organizations to help people with disabilities. A Sharon resident, Paul has also designed websites (www.kikotimaal.org and www.fallrivermasscod.org) for two of the organizations. Besides being a client of Society for Human Advancement through Rehabilitation Engineering, Paul raises hundreds of dollars wheeling in this organization's annual Walk-A-Thon. He also loves to wage fierce battles on virtual reality chess boards at chess.com. Paul strongly believes that all people with disabilities must have access and use AT to maximize their full potentials.



Paul Remy



Jeffrey Dougan

Jeffrey Dougan is the Assistant Director for Community Services at the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) and has worked there for about 11 years. Jeffrey's role at MOD is to offer technical assistance on the many disability related laws, both federal and state, and to assist state government, municipalities, and

individuals in understanding those laws and how they interact. As an expert for the built environment, his job requires that he travel throughout the Commonwealth to meet with the 160 Commissions on Disabilities as well as state and local officials to educate people on the various codes that impact people with disabilities. Jeffrey, a resident of Scituate, also chairs the local Commission on Disabilities there.

To see a complete list of Council members, information on membership, and the minutes of past meetings, please visit this [MassMATCH AT Advisory Council Web page](#).

Get AT Stuff Highlights



getATstuff

Assistive Technology
Exchange in New England

for Children with Special Needs

March 11, 2012

Time: 12-3pm

Cost: free

Location: Framingham High School Cafeteria 115 A Street, Framingham, MA

Presented by: Framingham Special Ed Parent Advisory Council

Contact [Sue Hewlett](#)

Website: www.f-sepac.org

Employment and Training Services

March 15, 2012

Time: 3:30pm to 5:00pm

Cost: Free

Location: Easter Seals Technology and Training Center, 256 Union Street, New Bedford, MA

Learn how Assistive Technology can help employers find qualified applicants who are equipped to meet the needs of their organization and who will increase the diversity within their workforce.

Contact Michelli Ruffinelli by phone 508-992-3128

Website:

www.eastersealsma.org

TAP IT Demonstration

March 21 2012

Time: 1:00pm to 3:00pm

Cost: Free

Location: United Cerebral Palsy Association of Berkshire County

208 West St, Pittsfield MA

Come and see a demonstration of the newest educational tool and we have it!

This device is the first ADA compliant interactive learning station designed to

GetATStuff--the New England "Craig's List" for AT--currently has hundreds of items available for sale or free throughout the six New England states.

As of this writing, GetATStuff highlights include:

13 Vision-related items

including a free Patriot Low Vision Reader in Lowell, MA!

2 Hearing-related items

including an FM System for sale for \$500 OBO in Woonsocket, RI

21 Speech Communication-related items

including a free Zam Communication Device in Boston

5 Learning, Cognitive, Development related items

including a new "7" netbook laptop for \$199 in Hartford, CT

340 Mobility, Seating, and Positioning related items

including a Stokke Tripp Trapp Chair for sale for \$150 OBO in Millbury, MA.

316 Daily Living related items

including a fully adjustable computer station for \$75 in Watertown, MA

69 Environmental Adaptation related items

including a Hoyer Lift for best offer in Manchester, NH

53 Transportation and Vehicle Modification related items

including a 2000 Dodge Caravan SE rear entry for 1 wheel chair for Best Offer in Quincy, MA.

8 Computer related items

including an Extreme Reader by Guerilla Technologies for \$500 OBO in Boston

10 Recreation, Sports, and Leisure related items

including a tricycle for \$500 in Sudbury, MA

Go to www.getatstuff.org to search items by category or geography or to list what you need. Go to the [MassMATCH AT Swap and Shop web page](#) to learn about additional AT reuse sites.

provide accessibility to all students. Join us and be a part of the revolution.

Contact [Dawn Matthews](#)
phone 413-442-1562.

Technology Supports for Youth Leadership

Date: April 12, 2012

Time: 3:30pm to 5:00pm

Cost: Free

Location: Easter Seals Technology and Training Center, 256 Union Street, New Bedford, MA

Learn how technology can play a role in Youth Leadership activities. Learn how to use social media, video presentations and other technologies to develop self-advocacy strategies around school transition and other important issues.

Contact Michelli Ruffinelli
by phone 508-992-3128
Website:
www.eastersealsma.org

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