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MN Regions 5 & 7 Assistive Technology Community of Practice

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Sponsored by MN Regions 5 & 7

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Calendar of Events

2015-2016 REGIONAL MEETINGS

Benton-Stearns Ed District Office, Sartell MN

9:00 A.M. – 11:30 P.M.

September 15—Processes in AT: SETT, Consideration, Assessment

October 7—Sample Language for Processes in AT

November 4—Components & Issues for Technology: Writing & Keyboarding

December 2—Components & Issues for Technology: Early Childhood

January 6—Components & Issues for Technology: Reading & Literacy

February 3—Components & Issues for Technology: Math

March 2—Components & Issues for Technology: Transition

April 6—Components & Issues for Technology: App Evaluation Systems

May 4—Components & Issues for Technology: Content Areas

33rd ANNUAL CLOSING THE GAP CONFERENCE

Minneapolis MN

Pre-Conference Sessions: October 12-13, 2015

Conference Sessions: October 14-16, 2015

CHARTING THE CS CONFERENCE

Arrowwood, Alexandria, MN

Pre-Conference Sessions: April 24, 2016

Conference Sessions: 25 & 26, April 2016

AT Information: Listservs

AT Listserv

The AT Listserv is a wonderful resource for educators who work with students who use technology for learning. Members ask questions, share information, and discuss topics that are relevant to our day-to-day work with students ages birth through 21.

How to Join: To subscribe, visit <https://webmail.mnet.state.mn.us/mailman/listinfo/assistive-tech> or send a message with the word “help” in it to the request address, assistive-tech-request@lists.statemn.us for further instructions.

To Post on the Listserv: Send message to assistive-tech@lists.state.mn.us. Complete the subject line identifying the topic of your post. Type your message and send it. Remember confidentiality when posting!

QIAT Listserv

The Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT—pronounced quiet) listserv is a place to share resources, questions ideas, and problem-solving in an on-going email discussion (there are archives and a website of resources to assist you, too). To sign up, go to the following website <http://qiat.org> and follow the links to join the listserv.

Accessibility

Accessibility is a real concern in the age of ever-changing devices and digital formats. As school districts move to “paperless” curriculum, it becomes more important for general education and special education staff to understand what makes a book, test, article, worksheet, etc. accessible—or not. Creating the document in an accessible format is the first step. It is much easier than redoing an existing document to make it accessible—more efficient for everyone!

Accessibility isn’t an issue just for students with vision and hearing impairments. Students with physical, cognitive, or learning disabilities also need to have accessible documents and materials. Minnesota has a website that will help school districts and their staff learn to create accessible educational materials (AEM) for all. That website link is [MNIT](#).

MNIT

The MNIT website offers information and training modules regarding accessibility for:

- Electronic Documents
 - Microsoft Office
 - Adobe PDF Documents
- Implementation Toolkit
 - “Guidance, tools, templates and sample plans to get your organization started on the path to accessibility.”
- Meetings (applicable to classes)
 - Presentations
 - Participation options
- Multimedia
 - Video
 - Podcasts
 - Webinars
 - Other multimedia
- Standards for IT Accessibility
 - State laws and technology standards governing accessibility
 - Policies and Standards
- Websites and Applications
 - “Tools, training and testing information to help you create accessible websites and applications.”
 - District websites must be accessible for students to use them
 - The internet accessibility

Under the Electronic Documents section, the areas include tabs for learning: Overview, Word Documents, PDF Documents, PowerPoint Presentations, Excel Documents. Each of these tabs have modules and training materials to assist staff in creating accessible documents. Each area also has an “Accessibility Quick Card” to be printed out for quick reference.

These accessibility features in documents will assist students with learning, physical, and visual disabilities. Students with hearing impairments require other adaptations for AEM. The student may use an interpreter on site, real time captioning, speech to text/sign, electronic notetaking, closed captioning, etc.

Please remember that apps and software purchased by the school district should be accessible.

Please share this information with your administrators and your technology specialists in your district. Students all need to have every opportunity for information and educational access possible.

Rewordify.com

This website is great for creating accessible text for students with cognitive or learning disabilities. On the website/web app, you enter the text to be read or is giving the student difficulty reading in the yellow box. Sentences or full chapters can be copied and pasted into the box. Rewordify then uses its software to rewrite the text in much more basic language. The changed words are highlighted in yellow so the student (and you) know what is changed. Students can click on words to hear them pronounced and find out their meaning.

Rewordify will also let you create vocabulary lists with and without definitions, word bank quizzes, matching sheets for terms and definitions, quizzes, Cloze activities, etc.

On this free site, you can also set up student accounts to “easily monitor your students’ reading and learning progress. Get actionable learning and error analytics as your students read and learn from any document you post, or from any document or web page they want to read.”

Source: [Rewordify](#)

Readability

Readability is both a website and an app. It is a free Chrome add-on and allows the user to eliminate the clutter on a webpage. The articles from the internet can be stored using Readability for later use. It works on a computer, iPad, iPhone, and Android.

Source: [Readability](#)

Tar Heel Reader

The Tar Heel Reader is a “free library of accessible, beginning level readers for students of all ages.” It was developed and is hosted by the University of North Carolina literacy project. The books are created and posted by teachers and students across the country. Most of the books are PowerPoint books with pictures and repetitive line text.

Source: [Tar Heel Reader](#)

Within Tar Heel Reader is the Exemplar Text Supports section, “a collection of open-source, accessible texts that were created to provide students with significant cognitive disabilities with access to the content of Exemplar Texts listed in Appendix B of the Common Core State Standards at a complexity level that will help them develop learning skills.” The materials are actually on the Dynamic Learning Maps Professional Development website. Novels commonly used at specific grade levels have been recreated using the Tar Heel Reader approach. These materials are free.

Source: [Exemplar Text Supports](#)

Apps of the Month

Book Creator for iPad—Red Jumper Limited

\$4.99 on iTunes
Requires iOS 7.0 or higher
iPad

“Book Creator is ideal for making all kinds of books, including children’s picture books, comic books, photo books, journals, textbooks and more.”

The books you make can be shared or published to the iBooks Store.

GoBook—Attainment Company

\$80.00 from Attainment Company--\$79.99 on iTunes
Requires iOS 8.0 or higher
Updated July 20, 2015
iPad

“GoBook Teacher is a tool to author interactive lessons. You create GoBooks page by page in the Teacher version. Build a page by writing, pasting text, or importing a PDF. Add freehand drawings or shapes using art tools. Place images on a GoBook page from the photo roll, our image library, or the built-in Internet search. Then bring the page to life with Magic Buttons! When tapped, they play video and recorded audio, read and highlight text, jump to another page, or link to GoTalk NOW. Store images, sounds, videos, and PDFs in the Shoebox for easy retrieval.”

“Share your GoBooks with students, parents, and teachers via AirDrop, email, or iTunes File Sharing. Any iPad with the Student version can display GoBooks with its interactivity and media intact. Assessment data is stored on the student’s iPad and sent to the teacher. Student profiles and results may also be set up in GoBook Teacher; it can work as a standalone app for without the need for GoBook Student.”

Story Buddy 2—Tapfuze

\$2.99 on iTunes
Requires iOS 7.0 or higher
Updated February 6, 2015
iPad

“Create, read and share multi-page ePub & PDF stories right on the iPad.”

“Draw directly on the iPad’s screen with your finger as you create your very own picture book - page by page. Add customizable text with the built-in keyboard. Import images from your photo album for that personal touch. Even add beautifully crafted paper styles to each page.

“Compile your story and experience the excitement of interacting with its pages like a real book. Listen to your very own audio narration for each page.”

Books can be published through iBooks Store.