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STAR and its partners are proud to offer free device demonstrations and device loans to Minnesotans statewide.



# Constellations

Fall 2010

## The Americans with Disabilities Act: 20 years and moving forward!

Twenty years ago on July 26, 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law by President George H.W. Bush. Today the original intent of the Act remains: promote equal access and protect the rights of people with disabilities. Indeed, during the past twenty years the ADA has transformed lives and communities by breaking down architectural barriers, prohibiting discriminatory employment practices, gaining access to public transportation and public accommodations, as well as, requiring telecommunication equipment and services to be accessible and usable by people with disabilities. Thanks to technology, our ability to implement the ADA continues to grow. Whether its automatic door openers, specialized software, or Smartphones that doubles as navigation and communication devices, we see the evidence of technology's powerful ability to enhance our lives at home, school, work, and in the community. STAR and other Assistive Technology Act programs around the country leverage the power of technology to help people with disabilities assert their rights and independently participate in everyday activities.

As we move forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the ADA looks to expand its regulations and respond to current needs of people with disabilities. The Department of Justice announced on July 23 its plan to publish four new ADA proposals. The public is invited to visit <http://www.ada.gov/anprm2010.htm> and comment on these new proposals, which address:

- ◆ web accessibility to ensure that people with disabilities are able to access information, goods, and public services provided by state and local governments, schools, businesses and other entities covered under the ADA;
- ◆ improve and increase captioning and video description in movies shown in movie theaters;
- ◆ ensure the ability of 9-1-1 centers to take text and video calls from individuals with disabilities; and,
- ◆ the production of accessible equipment and furniture such as medical exam tables, talking ATMs and interactive kiosks.

To learn more about the Americans with Disabilities Act online visit <http://www.ada.gov>.



## STAR Spotlight

Discover what activities STAR and its partners are working on around the state.

STAR's statewide device loan partners have been busy loaning devices and adding new devices to their inventory. Here are a few items our partners recently added to the statewide device loan program.

### Partner News

#### Access North, Center for Independent Living

218.262.6675 (Hibbing): ONYX Deskset – Portable video magnifier assists with document and distance viewing.

#### Ability Building Center, People Achieving Change

through Technology 507.535.7101 (Rochester): iPad and accessories – Mobile access to learning and communication apps.

#### PACER Center, Simon Technology Center 952.838.9000

(Bloomington): Pogo Stylus – Slim pen-like device for interacting with iPod Touch, iPhone, or iPad when gloves or other barriers prevent direct touch.

UCP of Central MN 320.253.0765 (Saint Cloud): Switch assessment kit – Wide-range of switches for evaluating alternative access needs.

UCP of Minnesota 651.646.7588 (Saint Paul): Lightwriter SL40 – Communication device converts typed text to speech.

### STAR Sightings

STAR continues to travel around the state meeting with Minnesotans. Want to know if STAR is going to be in your area? Check out STAR's Upcoming Events page at <http://www.starprogram.state.mn.us/events.htm>.

### STAR Statistics

Below is a breakdown (by user) of individuals or entities using STAR's statewide device loan and demonstration services during 2009:

- 19% Individuals with disabilities
- 9% Family members and guardians
- 23% Representative of education
- 3% Representative of employment
- 35% Representative of health, allied health & rehabilitation
- 4% Representative of community living
- 5% Representative of technology
- 2% Other



## AT a Glance

Here is a quick glance at assistive technology (AT) that provides FREE alternative access to online information and more.

**Camera Mouse** was developed by researchers at Boston College and Boston University. This program works with a Web Cam and Windows computer (Windows XP, Vista or Windows 7) to provide hands-free mouse control by tracking the user's head movement. To learn more about or download this program visit <http://www.cameramouse.org>

**NVDA (Non Visual Desktop Access)** is a free open source screen reader for Windows operating system that provides users with Braille and synthetic speech feedback of onscreen text. If preferred, NVDA can run entirely from a USB drive with no installation. To learn more visit <http://www.nvda-project.org>.

**MyStudyBar** is a collection of free open source applications that support learning. RSC has packaged these applications in a convenient toolbar that is free to install for use on Windows XP, Vista, and Windows 7 operating systems. The toolbar contains six buttons for quick access to applications that assist with planning, reading, writing, vision, and provide access to speech recognition and help. To download MyStudyBar visit <http://www.rsc-nescotland.ac.uk/eduapps/mystudybar.php>

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Are you a social worker, educator, counselor, or other professional working with people with disabilities? Are you an employer looking to hire or retain employees with disabilities? Contact STAR to see how we can help.

# Regional Updates

## AT Real Time Band

**STARTE**  
Reusing Assistive Technology!  
[www.mnstarte.org](http://www.mnstarte.org)

The AT Real-Time Band is made up of ten clients from the Lifeworks Eagan program. This newly formed band creates music with assistive technology devices. Band members play traditional band instruments and adaptive instruments using switches or communication devices. Their first musical performance will be at the National "Closing the Gap Conference" in Bloomington, MN in October 2010.

## "Mission Possible: Empowered to Work, Live, and Advocate in the Community" The Arc of Minnesota State Conference

A weekend full of education, relaxation, and inspiration in the beautiful Brainerd Lakes Area. Workshops on employment, assistive technology, public policy, independent living skills for self-advocates, and support for parents of all ages. The Keynote Address will be given by Erin Reihle, Director of Project Search, an innovative program that works with businesses and agencies to provide onsite training, experience, and placement of people with disabilities into competitive jobs at competitive wages. The conference will be held at Breezy Point Resort, October 8-9. For more info visit [www.TheArcOfMinnesota.org](http://www.TheArcOfMinnesota.org) or contact Karen at [karenq@arcmn.org](mailto:karenq@arcmn.org) or 651-523-0823, ext. 109. [STAR will be exhibiting at this event.]

## Mark Your Calendar

Events labeled with an [E] indicate STAR will be exhibiting at this event. Events labeled with a [P] indicate that STAR staff will be presenting at this event.



### September

*Minnesota Social Services Association Northwest District Conference* (September 15-16) Moorhead, MN [E] [P]  
<http://www.mnssa.org>

*Northern Plains Conference on Aging & Disability* (September 28-30) Fargo, ND [E]  
<http://www.northernplainsconference.com>

### October

*PACER Center's Annual Simon Technology Center Open House* (October 2) Bloomington, MN [E]  
<http://www.pacer.org>

*Minnesota Occupational Therapy Association* (October 8-9) Duluth, MN [E] <http://www.motafunctionfirst.org>

*Minnesota Social Services Association Metro Conference* (October 21) Minneapolis, MN [E]  
<http://www.mnssa.org>

*St. Louis County Health Fair* (October 4-5) Duluth, MN [E] [P] <http://www.co.st-louis.mn.us>

*Closing the Gap* (October 21-23) Minneapolis, MN [P] <http://www.closingthegap.com>

### November

*2nd Annual Minnesota Statewide Disability and Employment Conference* (November 15-16) Earle Brown Heritage Center, Brooklyn Center, MN [E] <http://www.mn-epi.org>

### December

*Assistive Technology Across the Lifespan 2010 Conference* (December 2-3) Stevens Point, WI  
<http://www.atacrosslifespan.org>

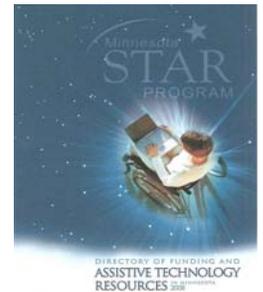


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## Stay Informed!

- Request a free copy of our 2008-2009 Funding and Assistive Technology Directory
- Subscribe to STAR Point and receive emails on assistive technology news and events
- Subscribe to Constellations, our quarterly newsletter
- Visit our Web site [www.starprogram.state.mn.us](http://www.starprogram.state.mn.us)
- Become a registered user of STAR Technology Exchange at [www.mnstarte.org](http://www.mnstarte.org)



For more information, contact STAR by calling 651.201.2640, 888.234.1267 (toll-free) or send an email to [star.program@state.mn.us](mailto:star.program@state.mn.us). Minnesotans with a hearing or speech disability may call us through the Minnesota Relay Service at 711 or 800.627.3529.

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When you are done reading this newsletter, please share with others or recycle. Thank you!

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## All STAR materials are available in alternative formats

This document can be made available in alternative formats, such as large print, Braille, audio tape or disk by calling 651.201.2640 or 888.234.1267 (toll free). Consumers with a hearing or speech disability may call us through the Minnesota Relay Service at 711 or 800.627.3529, or by sending an email to [star.program@state.mn.us](mailto:star.program@state.mn.us).

¡FOLLETOS EN ESPAÑOL! STAR ha empezado traducir folletos en Inglés a Español. Actualmente, STAR tiene dos folletos en Español: "Directorio de Recursos de Financiamiento para Tecnología Asistiva en Minnesota" y "El Programa STAR: Un Sistema de Tecnología para Lograr Resultados."

The System of Technology to Achieve Results (STAR) program is Minnesota's Assistive Technology Act Program, located within the Minnesota Department of Administration. STAR receives funds from the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended. The contents of this newsletter are educational in nature. It should not be assumed that the identification of any product, individual, or agency implies endorsement by the State of Minnesota, STAR, or the U.S. Department of Education. This newsletter was financed with federal money.