

# OTAP

Oregon Technology Access Program  
1871 NE STEPHENS  
ROSEBURG, OREGON 97470  
541-440-4791 • 541-957-4808 (FAX)  
WWW.OTAP-OREGON.ORG

# NEWS

April, 2009

## AIM Focus of AT Interagency Meeting

Fifty-five Assistive Technology providers met in Wilsonville March 12 and 13 to discuss IDEA '04's Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) provision and its implications for Oregon school districts. Dr. Joy Smiley Zabala, with CAST, Center for Applied Special Technology, presented a day-long talk on Thursday. Dr. Zabala is the Project Director for the AIM Consortium of 15 states which are developing systems to implement AIM for their students. On Friday, the providers discussed how AIM is currently being implemented in Oregon school districts and how OTAP can assist with this process.

The AIM provision and the NIMAS standards are a part of IDEA '04. Under IDEA, AIM must be provided to any student who needs it, as determined by the IEP team (OAR 581-015-2060). NIMAS, or National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards, is a technical standard used by publishers to produce source files (in XML) that may be used to develop multiple specialized formats for students with print disabilities. NIMAS file sets of textbooks and other core instructional materials are made available in formats, such as Braille, Large Print, audio, or DAISY files, which can be read aloud using a text-to-speech program on a computer, such as Read:OutLoud.

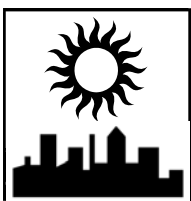
To qualify to receive NIMAS files, a special education student must be certified by a competent authority to be Blind or Vision Impaired, or to have a reading disability due to a physical limitation or Organic Dysfunction. The law specifies who can act as a competent authority for each condition.

To access NIMAS files for their students, districts must contact an Authorized User which has been designated by the state Department of Education to act as a liaison with the National

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## Take Your Technology on Vacation: OTAP Assistive Technology Summer Institute

August 10, 11 & 12, 2009, Northwest  
Regional ESD, Hillsboro



OTAP's Assistive Technology Summer Institute moves to town this summer! The Summer Institute offers three days of intensive classes on ways to use assistive technology to help your students with disabilities to participate more

fully and be more independent in the classroom and beyond. New this year, is the option to take half-day, or full-day classes each day. Sessions are taught by highly-skilled practitioners from throughout Oregon and the nation. Hands-on labs, along with classroom-style lectures provide information and ideas to help educators integrate technology use throughout a child's day. Review the enclosed flyer for program information, then go to the OTAP website for more in-depth session descriptions. This year's Institute will take place at the Northwest Regional ESD in Hillsboro. Hillsboro is an upscale Portland-area community with dining and shopping opportunities close at hand. A hop on the MAX rail line will take you directly to downtown Portland in minutes, or even to the Portland airport! Register now for one, two, or all three days of the Summer Institute. Registration information is included with this newsletter. For more information see the OTAP website at [www.otap-oregon.org](http://www.otap-oregon.org), or contact Karen Daniels at [karen.daniels@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:karen.daniels@douglasesd.k12.or.us).

**Shar Burgoyne** • Assistive Technology Resource Specialist/Trainer

[shar.burgoyne@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:shar.burgoyne@douglasesd.k12.or.us)

**Kim Philpott** • Equipment Manager

[kim.philpott@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:kim.philpott@douglasesd.k12.or.us)

**Terry Christenson & Karen Daniels** • Office Support

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Instructional Materials Accessibility Center (NIMAC), where NIMAS files are housed. Anyone can search the NIMAC online to find a needed textbook or core instructional materials. If a file is not yet in the NIMAC, the Authorized User may contact the NIMAC on behalf of a qualified student, to request that a file be made available as a NIMAS file set. The AU then requests that the file set be sent to an Accessible Media Producer (AMP) for conversion into student-ready file formats which can then be used with students utilizing the appropriate software or device. Digital Right Management (DRM) of NIMAS files under copyright law, requires that files must be kept secure, and used only by the individual qualified student for whom the file was requested.

To request a text or core instructional materials in specialized formats for their students, districts typically appoint a person to manage the files for their district or building. In some districts, school librarians are assuming this responsibility. This primary contact person is responsible for requesting files for qualified students and ensuring DRM.

#### **Authorized Users in Oregon:**

- For students who are Blind or Visually Impaired, the Oregon Textbook and Media Center, at Willamette ESD in Salem, is an Authorized User. OTMC is also an established Accessible Media Producer, converting NIMAS files into Braille, large print materials, or audio recordings, and sending them to qualified students by district request. For information about OTMC, go to <http://www.willamesd.k12.or.us/> and click on Special Programs.
- OTAP has also applied to be an Authorized User, providing technical assistance and training about AIM, establishing a district process to acquire AIM, how to access files in specialized formats and how to utilize them with students. OTAP is beginning work to develop technical assistance materials and training for implementation next school year.
- Bookshare.org will be a third Authorized User for Oregon. Because Bookshare is also an Accessible Media Producer (AMP), requests for books in student-ready specialized formats may be made directly to Bookshare. If Bookshare does not currently have a book in their collection, the district can request that it be made available. Anyone can search Bookshare's collection online at [www.Bookshare.org](http://www.Bookshare.org). Information about Bookshare, which students qualify, and how to access Bookshare book files is also available on the website. Bookshare files are free to qualified students under a grant with the national Office of

Special Education. Bookshare also offers free downloads of Victor Reader and Read:OutLoud software for use with Bookshare files.

Information about NIMAS and AIM may be found at:  
the **NIMAS Technical Development and Assistance Center** website,  
[www.NIMAS.CAST.org](http://www.NIMAS.CAST.org)  
or  
the **AIM Consortium website** at  
<http://aimConsortium.CAST.org>.

Establishing systems for acquiring AIM and making it available to students is a challenge for Oregon school districts. Many of OTAP's activities in the coming months will focus on helping districts to develop district processes for evaluating, acquiring and implementing AIM effectively for students with print disabilities. Since AIM has been a part of special education law since 2004, many districts have already developed processes for delivery of AIM on their own. OTAP will be inviting input from the field about what works well and what challenges should be addressed for delivery of AIM to Oregon students. If you have questions about AIM or NIMAS, contact Diana Roberts or Shar Powell at the OTAP office.

#### **AIM: Level of Need in Oregon**

Attendees at Joy Zabala's presentation on Accessible Instructional Materials responded to the following survey questions regarding anticipated level of need for AIM (textbooks or other core instructional materials in specialized formats) among students on their caseloads. Of the 22 people who responded to the survey, the majority were AT providers, special education teachers, SLP's, or OT's. Average caseload was 67 students.

**Q** - What percentage of students on your caseload would you say need AIM under IDEA '04 NIMAS provisions (students in special education)?

**A** - Average 46%

**Q** - What percentage of students on your caseload would you estimate need AIM but would not qualify under IDEA/NIMAS?

**A** - Average 10%

Students who do not qualify for AIM under IDEA may still need access to core instructional materials in specialized formats. "School districts must ensure the timely provision of instructional materials in accessible formats to children who need instructional materials in accessible formats, including those who are not blind or print disabled." (OAR 581-015-2060)

## OTAP Loan Library

The OTAP Assistive Technology Loan Library is a highly-used statewide resource. If you would like a print copy of the catalog and/or addendum, contact Terry Christenson at 541-440-4791 or by email at [terry.christenson@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:terry.christenson@douglasesd.k12.or.us). The OTAP website, [www.otap-oregon.org](http://www.otap-oregon.org) features the catalog in PDF format and in a searchable database. The collection may be searched by category, by item name, or by viewing the entire list. If you experience problems with the website, please contact Shar Powell at 541-440-4793 or email her at [shar.powell@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:shar.powell@douglasesd.k12.or.us).

## Featured Items from the OTAP Library

### Intelliswitch P 180

Simply install the driver software, plug a switch into one of IntelliSwitch's five switch ports, and plug the receiver into your computer's USB port. Users can then access switch software with one or more switches - wirelessly! With over 25 functional switch presets, IntelliSwitch is one of the most comprehensive switch interfaces on the market.

### Kurzweil Ver.11 Laptop with Scanner C/SF 880

Kurzweil 3000™ is the comprehensive reading, writing and learning software solution for

struggling readers, including individuals with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, attention deficit disorder or those who are English Language Learners. The software can access virtually any information, whether it is printed, electronic, or on the Web. With the aid of visual and auditory feedback, the software helps students keep up with assigned reading, and also facilitates active reading which includes: highlighting, text circle tools, annotations, Bookmarks, Voice Notes and Extract in order to create outlines, study guides, or word lists.

## Summer Loans from the OTAP Equipment Library

OTAP loan library equipment is available for checkout for the entire summer. This can be especially helpful for students who may need a longer equipment trial period, for parents who want to become familiar with the equipment their children use at school, and for professionals who want more time to learn or practice with an AT device or application. To borrow an item from the OTAP loan library for the summer, contact Kim Philpott at [kim.philpott@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:kim.philpott@douglasesd.k12.or.us) or 541-440-4759. After June 18, contact Shar Powell at 541-440-4793 or [shar.powell@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:shar.powell@douglasesd.k12.or.us).

## Tech Tips: Our Favorite Websites

**Ginger Software** at [www.gingersoftware.com](http://www.gingersoftware.com)

By successfully tackling even the severest spelling mistakes, Ginger's revolutionary spell-checking technology helps to level the playing field for children and adults. As the user works on a regular text editor, such as Microsoft Word, Ginger Software automatically detects and corrects unusual spelling mistakes, misused words, and grammatical errors. Users can review alternative corrections accompanied by sample expressions. Ginger provides unprecedented accuracy in error correction, as corrections are based on the context of the sentence and only the alternatives with high semantic and grammatical fit are selected. The result is error-free text.

## Stimulus Dollars for AT

School districts should be receiving federal stimulus dollars as soon as late April or early May. One permitted use of these one-time funds is to purchase state-of-the-art Assistive Technology and conduct subsequent professional development in its use. AT providers may be asked to assist districts in decision-making, selecting, acquiring and providing training on AT purchases. It is important to keep in mind that stimulus dollars may be used to supplement, but not to supplant, funds to provide services that the district is required by law to make available. For questions about using stimulus funds for AT, contact your district special education director or your local Regional Program specialists. At OTAP, Diana Roberts or Shar Powell, will also be happy to talk with you about AT and professional development.

**OREGON ASSISTIVE  
TECHNOLOGY SUMMER  
INSTITUTE** • August 10-12, 2009 •

*Northwest Regional ESD,  
Hillsboro, OR.* Registration materials included with this newsletter. **Need to register by July 10, 2009.** For further information, go to our website at [www.otap-oregon.org](http://www.otap-oregon.org) or contact Karen Daniels at 541-440-4776 or [karen.daniels@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:karen.daniels@douglasesd.k12.or.us)

**QIAT SUMMIT** • June 23-24, 2009 • *Minneapolis, MN.* Join your colleagues and the QIAT Leadership Team (QILT) to continue the work of the QIAT community. During the two-day work session, participants will work collaboratively in large and small groups to expand support for the development and delivery of quality assistive technology services. For further information, contact Joan Breslin-Larson at [joan.breslin-larson@state.mn.us](mailto:joan.breslin-larson@state.mn.us).

**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY BASICS FOR ADMINISTRATORS** • Fall Term, 2009 • *On the Web.* Two credit class pending through Portland State University. For more information contact Terry at 541-440-1791 or [terry.christenson@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:terry.christenson@douglasesd.k12.or.us).

**CLOSING THE GAP** • October 15-17, 2009 • *Minneapolis, MN.* The Closing the Gap Conference is one of the nation's largest conferences on technology

## Coming Events

in special education and rehabilitation. A large number of the sessions focus on technology for children. Pre-conference sessions are held on Tuesday and Wednesday with shorter sessions on the final three days of the conference. The vendor display arena is enormous! Check for the latest conference news at <http://www.closingthegap.com/conference/>.

**OTAP ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TEAMS PROJECT** • January, February & March, 2010. The OTAP AT Teams project provides intensive training for up to eight teams from school districts and education service districts throughout Oregon. The purpose of the Teams Project is to help education agencies develop the resources they need to provide high quality, legal, ethical and cost efficient AT services for all students who need assistive technology. For further information or to obtain an application, contact Diana Roberts at [diana.roberts@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:diana.roberts@douglasesd.k12.or.us) or call 541-440-4791

**ATIA 2009 CHICAGO!** • October 28-31, 2009 • *Renaissance Schaumburg Hotel and Convention Center, Schaumburg, Illinois.* Tenth Anniversary ATIA will offer even more opportunities for AT education and networking. Check the website for further details at [www.atia.org](http://www.atia.org)

RETURN ADDRESS REQUESTED

