

The Connection



www.eastersealstech.com • 317-466-2013 or 888-466-1314

Spring 2008

Welcome to INDATA Project

In 1979, Easter Seals Crossroads partnered with Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services to establish the first assistive technology program in Indiana. The original program also included collaboration among the University of Indianapolis, IBM, National City Bank, Mayflower and other community-minded organizations. This original project focused on assisting eight individuals with disabilities to become successfully employed computer programmers. The project included training and job placement services and was Easter Seals Crossroads' first experience with providing assistive computer technology services. That program was very successful and set the tone for what has become Indiana's premier provider of assistive technology services.

Since 1979, our assistive technology program has grown a lot, and we've learned a lot. We've increased our expertise to include high-tech, low-tech and no-tech solutions. We've developed many important partnerships with universities, businesses and other organizations. We have won some national awards. We opened regional assistive technology centers throughout Indiana and even started a satellite assistive technology program in Las Vegas. We started the first 24-hour assistive technology technical support hotline. We've introduced tele-rehabilitation to the assistive technology industry in Indiana. We've presented at conferences on both coasts and in Europe. In our first year, we served eight individuals. In 2007, our AT-related programs served more than 1,000 people.

In 2007, Easter Seals Crossroads was awarded the Assistive Technology Act funding for the state of Indiana. This program will serve to greatly expand the assistive technology program that has become Indiana's hallmark for serving the technology needs of Hoosiers with disabilities. We have named this new endeavor the INDIana Assistive Technology Act Project (or INDATA Project). You will learn a great deal about the state-wide services that INDATA Project offers. You will learn about training opportunities of AT users and professionals. You will learn about the availability of assistive technology equipment

see **WELCOME** page 3

Debit Card Users ... Beware!

You keep your identification and other confidential information in your purse or wallet for safe keeping. While in the grocery line, you ask your attendant to swipe your debit card and enter your PIN to pay for the groceries. You have entrusted your PIN with this individual because there is no way for you to physically enter it. The groceries are bagged and your card is returned to you.

Imagine receiving a call from the bank two days later and being told that your account has been overdrawn. A discussion takes place through which you learn that someone has used your debit card to make purchases at several different stores that you know you have not visited. Imagine how it feels when you learn that you are responsible for all charges, including overdraft fees, and you have no recourse. You immediately question whether the trusted individual that is in your home several times a day "caring" for you, really returned the debit card after visiting the grocery store. Or, perhaps he stole it from your purse after putting you to bed that night.

A debit card is an ATM card with a VISA or MasterCard logo on it. Debit cards are riskier than password protected (PIN-only) old-fashioned ATM cards because a debit card can be used with a PIN or can also be used with only a signature, (without a secret PIN or password) just like a credit card, over the phone or in a store. The rules of a debit card are different than the rules of a credit card. With a debit card, you usually cannot dispute a transaction like you can with a credit card. With a credit card, your liability is usually capped at \$50 (depending on the card), but a thief can drain your entire debit card bank account, and you will have no recourse. The federal Electronic Fund Transfer Act (EFTA) protects you from errors, loss or theft of your

see **BEWARE** page 3

One of my favorite parts of my job is seeing the expression on peoples' faces when they suddenly encounter some cool technology that is going to really impact their lives. That experience is only slightly more gratifying when someone encounters some absolutely absurd technology that, in the end, turns out to be more useful than anyone imagined.

If you've ever taken a tour of our assistive technology center at Easter Seals Crossroads, you've probably heard Candy Morrison, Director of Marketing and Communications, refer to the highly technical instruments and devices in our lab as "Gizmos and Doodahs!" Although I could endlessly argue that the terms "Gizmo" and "Doodah" somehow diminish the impact of assistive technology, I'm going to spend my time doing something more useful, namely, writing about technology.

So, without further ado, welcome to our first installment of "Gizmos and Doodahs," a review of some emerging assistive devices as well as some absurd technologies that might turn

out to be more useful than anyone previously thought.

1. ClaroRead Plus – We just received a copy of ClaroRead Plus which is a software application designed to allow individuals with learning disabilities and literacy challenges to benefit from a multi-sensory presentation on information on their computers. This program claims to be closely integrated with Microsoft applications, easy to use and an affordable alternative to other similar products. Retail price: \$395 For more information: www.enablemart.com/ClaroRead-Plus

2. TankChair – It may look like a cross between a tank and a La-Z-Boy, but it's actually the latest development in allowing wheelchair users to travel in some pretty hard-to-get-to areas! The manufacturer of this custom beast tells readers that this chair will allow users to traverse streams, mud, snow, sand, gravel and even stairs. For each 10 chairs sold, the manufacturer promises to donate one to a rural fire department to be given away to someone who can't afford one. Retail price: Varies. For more information: www.tankchair.com



3. Talking Flyswatter – No, you didn't read that wrong. This device doesn't offer any sort of adaptive targeting device or guarantee that you'll be able to swat any additional flies, but it does offer five ridiculous pre-recorded sound bites that are designed to accurately and adequately express your emotions at that moment. At 18 inches long and with an on/off switch to ensure that you don't waste batteries, this harbinger of insectile outcry comes in assorted colors to match your décor. Retail price: \$19.95 For more information: www.maxiaids.com (product #: 303292)

If you have suggested "Gizmos" and/or "Doodahs" that you'd like to see mentioned in future installments of this feature, please send information to Wade Wingler at wwingler@eastersealscrossroads.org.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Since 1979, Easter Seals Crossroads has been Indiana's premier provider of Assistive Technology Services. These clinical services are available statewide and are the hallmark of our program. In October 2007, Easter Seals Crossroads was awarded the Indiana Assistive Technology Act grant (INDATA), which consists of state and federal funding targeted to increasing the availability of assistive technology to Hoosiers with disabilities. There are 56 programs of this type in the United States and U.S. territories. These services are available throughout the state of Indiana at no charge.



**Easter Seals
Crossroads**

**For more information,
call us at
317-466-2013
888-466-1314
www.eastersealstech.com**

Employee Spotlight

Emily Abel,

*Education and Outreach Coordinator
for the INDATA (Indiana Assistive
Technology Act) Project*



Emily Abel began working as an assistive technology specialist in 1988 and has worked with individuals of all ages and abilities. She holds a bachelor of science degree in electronics and computer technology from Indiana State University, with a minor in biomedical electronics. She owned and operated a business providing assistive technology outreach services for 10 years prior to reuniting with the Assistive Technology Center at Easter Seals Crossroads. In addition to overseeing all collateral communication materials and the INDATA Web site, Emily coordinates numerous trainings including the Quarterly Assistive Technology trainings, the Annual Assistive Technology Conference, and AT Hour (a one-hour overview of assistive technology).

WELCOME continued from page 1

demonstrations and loans. You will learn about many different ways that Easter Seals Crossroads and Project INDATA can help increase the independence of individuals with disabilities through technology.

Next year marks the 30th anniversary of our assistive technology programs. While many things have changed, a few important key items have remained the same: We've learned that the most important service we can provide is to facilitate a relationship between a highly trained, competent service provider and an individual who can become more independent by utilizing assistive technology in their life. While technology can be a key tool to success, the information, expertise and relationships between our professionals and the people who utilize that technology are just as important as any particular piece of equipment.

As Project INDATA continues to grow and offer an expanding array of Assistive Technology services throughout the state of Indiana, I encourage you to tell us how we're doing and what we can do better. I encourage you to let us know how we can better serve the ever-changing assistive technology needs of Hoosiers with disabilities and make Project INDATA a valuable resource and example of excellence in Indiana.

M. Wade Winkler, ATP
Director of Assistive Technology
317-466-2013 • 888-466-1314
wwinkler@eastersealscrossroads.org

BEWARE continued from page 1

debit card; however, the law limits liability to \$50 only if the debit cardholder notifies the bank within two business days of discovering the theft. If you don't notify your bank within those two days, you could lose up to \$500, or perhaps more. If you use debit cards, take advantage of online banking to check your account activity regularly. To get more information about your debit card rights and responsibilities, contact the FDIC. Call toll-free 1-877-275-3342 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Eastern Time. U.S. PIRG is an advocate for the public interest. Contact uspirg@pirg.org if you have lost more than \$50 in a debit card dispute with a bank, savings and loan or credit union.

What you can do to protect yourself against debit card fraud:

- 1) Never write down your PIN (personal identification number). Memorize it.
- 2) Don't give out your bank account information over the phone or the Internet unless you initiate the contact and know who the person is or that they are a true representative of the company you are contacting.
- 3) Don't fall for phone calls or e-mail scams claiming to be your bank and asking you to verify your account information or PIN. A true representative of your bank will never ask for your PIN; they have your account information.
- 4) If you use your debit card at a restaurant or store counter, watch the clerk scan your card. There are electronic devices called "skimmers" that can capture your information to be used in duplicating a card.
- 5) If you use your card to shop online, be sure to use current antivirus and spyware protection and a personal firewall on your computer.
- 6) If you do not use online banking, be sure to look at your bank statements as soon as they arrive.
- 7) Urge Congress to enact legislation to change the Electronic Funds Transfer Act law so that debit card liability is legally the same as credit card liability.

Online Resources: www.federalreserve.gov, www.pirg.org,
www.ftc.gov, www.fdic.gov

If you have a story to suggest for our newsletter, please contact Emily Abel at eabel@eastersealscrossroads.org.



4740 Kingsway Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46205



Ewart Solomon is the Information and Referral/Funding Specialist for the Indiana Assistive Technology Act (INDATA Project) at Easter Seals Crossroads.

Ask Ewart

Q: Someone told me I could get a free computer through your program. Can you tell me more about this?

A: The INDATA Project accepts donated computers. We pick up computers from donors, wipe them clean of all previous data, refurbish and deliver them at no charge to individuals with disabilities who live in Indiana who have no other means of obtaining a computer.

Q: How do I sign up for a free computer?

A: There is a form to complete. It will be reviewed and then, depending on availability, you will be contacted to receive the computer. You can get the form online for both donating computers and receiving computers at www.eastersealstech.com.

Events

What: PATINS 2008 TECH EXPO

When: Wednesday, April 16, 9 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Where: Junior Achievement Building of Central Indiana
7435 N. Keystone Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46240

Who should attend: Any interested Indiana teachers, special educators, administrators, instructional and assistive technology specialists, parents, students and pre-service students.

Contact: Glenda Thompson 317-227-8501
www.patinsproject.com

What: INDATA Training "Assistive Technology for Individuals who are Blind"

When: Friday, May 23, 2008

Where: Easter Seals Crossroads, 4740 Kingsway Drive,
Indianapolis, IN 46205

Who should attend: Individuals who are blind or visually impaired, vocational rehabilitation counselors, teachers, parents, occupational and physical therapists, speech language pathologists, advocates and anyone interested in assistive technology products for individuals who are blind.

Contact: Emily Abel, 317-466-2013 or 888-466-1314
www.eastersealstech.com

What: RESNA 2008 Annual Conference

When: June 26 - 30, 2008

Where: Arlington, VA

Who should attend: Service providers, researchers, educators and consumers interested in assistive and rehabilitation technology.

Contact: www.resna.org