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## Inside this issue

Page	Article
1	Critical UAAACT Information
2	Team Equipment Budget  Mini Grants  Team Training Budget
3	Team Training Plans  Substitutes  CSUN for Team Leaders  Beaumont Grants  Loaner Computers
4	UAAACT Calendar of Events
<b>Pull Out Section</b> Assistive Technology Outcomes  UAAACT Team Equipment Order Form	

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# UAAACT News

Utah Augmentative Alternative Assistive Communication and Technology Teams

Editor: Julie Brown  
UAAACT Web Site: <http://www.uaaact.org>

## **What Inquiring Minds Need To Know...**

Just by carefully reading the UAAACT newsletter, you can acquire equipment for your team. In May, the new UAAACT web site was introduced with a bright yellow post card and the offer to provide a DANA for each UAAACT team who requested one. The DANA is a new product by AlphaSmart and runs on the Palm operating system. Several teams have not received a Dana because no one on their team has made a request. If your UAAACT team has not yet contacted Lynn, Scott or Craig at The Computer Center for Citizens with Disabilities (CCCD) to request a Dana you may still do so.

This month, we are offering a USB Switch Interface. If your team can use a USB Switch Interface, contact a CCCD staff member and make your request. These freebies (Dana and USB Switch Interface) won't last forever through . . . all unclaimed equipment will be added to the UAAACT Central Inventory after November 1<sup>st</sup>. These freebies will not always be announced on the front page of the newsletter. In the next issue of the newsletter, plan to dig a little deeper to find free equipment offers.

## **UAAACT Website**

The UAAACT Website has been redesigned by Scott Baggaley. Since the changes have been made, there have been well over 650 hits. Included on the website are printable copies of the current UAAACT Policies and Procedures Manual, UAAACT forms, WATI forms, and a UAAACT calendar of events. If your team has its own website and you would like to have a link to your website from the UAAACT website, contact Scott. See: [www.uaaact.org](http://www.uaaact.org)

## **Calling All UAAACT Members!**

The Computer Center needs UAAACT members current e-mail addresses as well as other contact information. The necessary form (UAAACT Team Member Information Update) is located on the website. Simply go to [www.uaaact.org](http://www.uaaact.org) and click on the [UAAACT Team Forms](#) link at the UAAACT web site. Then double click on the PDF or Microsoft Word format of the form. This information is crucial for expense reimbursement and providing timely information to members. If you have not yet completed one of these information forms, please mail, fax or email the information to Lynn Marcoux at CCCD. Lynn's email is: [lmarcoux@utah.gov](mailto:lmarcoux@utah.gov)

## Team Equipment Budget for 2003-2004

Many UAAACT members have asked about their team equipment budget. Remember that a team equipment budget is based on your team report of hours and students served from the previous school year. To insure your team has a robust equipment budget in the future, provide lots of service to students this year and keep good records of your hours of UAAACT service.

There are two dates for submitting team orders; December 15, 2003 and April 1, 2003. If you order equipment in December, you will have it available to use during second half of the school year. Items ordered in April may not be received and labeled until June or July of 2004. With that in mind, you are encouraged to use the bulk of your team equipment budget in December. Please use the enclosed "Equipment Order Form" to place your order.

Team A.....	\$3,027.00
Team B.....	\$ 949.00
Team C.....	\$1,241.00
Team D.....	\$3,001.00
Team E.....	\$2,012.00
Team F.....	\$1,036.00
Team G.....	\$3,138.00
Team G2.....	\$2,229.00
Team H.....	\$1,126.00
Team I.....	\$1,716.00
Team J.....	\$ 500.00
Team K.....	\$1,019.00
Team L.....	\$1,585.00
Team M.....	\$1,232.00
Team O.....	\$ 896.00
Team P.....	\$ 500.00
Team Q.....	\$ 974.00
Team R.....	\$ 941.00
Team S.....	\$ 974.00
Team T.....	\$2,298.00

## UAAACT Equipment Mini Grants

If you have a team equipment budget under \$1500, have spent all of your current team equipment budget, and still have a need for equipment for a student or for an assessment, you may want to consider writing an equipment mini grant request to the UAAACT Leadership Council. The request could be as simple as writing one or two paragraphs describing your equipment need and why you feel the use of UAAACT funds is justified. Since all teams currently have funds in their equipment budget, mini grants requests would most likely be considered after January 1, 2004.

## Team Training Budget for 2003-2004

The other really popular question is concerning each team's training budget. This now is determined by each individual team member's competency level at the end of the school year. Each level one member garners his/her team \$250.00, each level two member garners his/her team \$500.00, and each level three member garners \$750.00 for his or her teams training budget.

Team A Training Budget.....	2,250.00
Team B Training Budget.....	3,250.00
Team C Training Budget.....	2,250.00
Team D Training Budget.....	5,000.00
Team E Training Budget.....	4,000.00
Team F Training Budget.....	3,750.00
Team G Training Budget (2 Teams).....	6,250.00
Team H Training Budget.....	3,500.00
Team I Training Budget.....	1,500.00
Team J Training Budget.....	3,000.00
Team K Training Budget.....	3,000.00
Team L Training Budget.....	3,500.00
Team M Training Budget.....	4,000.00
Team N Training Budget.....	2,500.00
Team O Training Budget.....	3,000.00
Team P Training Budget.....	1,250.00
Team Q Training Budget.....	3,250.00
Team R Training Budget.....	2,250.00
Team S Training Budget.....	1,500.00
Team T Training Budget.....	3,000.00

## Pull Out Section

### Assistive Technology Outcomes

Roger O. Smith PhD, OT, FAOTA

What outcomes information do we need and what do we do with it even if we have it? Our need to measure and document the outcomes of assistive technology devices and services seems to be "duh uh!" Depending on your viewpoint, words like, accountability, satisfaction, cost-benefit, consumer selection, best practice, evidenced-based practice, or best product make the need for outcomes obvious.

However, maybe the fact that we all have our own perspectives about why assistive technology outcomes are needed is exactly why it turns out to be a complex task. There are many issues related to what types of outcomes should be measured, how much time and money we should invest into the measurement process and what do we do with the outcomes data, even if we can collect all we want. And of course this all depends on your perspective.

To prod our thinking, I am going to be controversial and make some statements that can be well-defended, but might not feel like the right answers.

What outcomes do we need to measure? We are discovering that there are many different types of outcomes related to assistive technology. Each type of information is a little bit like looking out of the window on different sides of the house. Each view is real, but each one is only part of reality. A recent task force from the ATOMS Project (Assistive Technology Outcomes Measurement System) identified ten different types of data. These are:

#### A. Outcomes Data

- 1-Change in performance/function (body & activity)
- 2-Change in participation in school and community activities
- 3-Usage of assistive technology (or lack of use)

- 4-Device user satisfaction of services and devices
- 5-Goal achievement
- 6-Quality of life

#### B. Cost Data

- 7-Cost of devices, services, and individual's time investment

#### C. "Ingos" Data

- 8-Demographic information about the individual and the history of the individual.
- 9-Services and devices provided, including other concurrent services provided
- 10-Environmental context

These are broken into three major type of data needed for measuring outcomes: a) outcomes, b) costs, and c) "ingos." The outcomes are the results of interventions. The costs explain what resources are expended (or saved) by the intervention. The "ingos" are an important flipside of the outcomes we often miss. In order to examine an outcome we need to know what the intervention was and what other interventions are occurring. Otherwise, the outcomes we measure could be the outcomes of some other happening in the person's life.

For example, if Johnny shows improvement in the school classroom after receiving an augmentative communication device, how do we know it was because of the device and not due to Johnny's general education teacher who takes the time to communicate with him, a new classmate of Johnny's, Johnny's new skills in vocalization, or the teacher aide who has been helping more? Furthermore, let's say we know the device made the difference. We still need to know what all went into the assistive technology intervention to know what worked. For example, how much training was provided, what vocabulary was programmed into the device, which team members participated, how much support was provided in the home, etc. We know that the success of an assistive technology device can be greatly facilitated by one team process or

hampered by another. So which process was used with Johnny?

Or as another example, perhaps we discovered a new power wheelchair system that helped Sally become completely functional in all settings, in all activities, with everyone she encounters, and she was extremely happy about how it worked. Later we discovered that this wheelchair system, besides its initial expense, was extremely costly because it required frequent tune-ups and repairs from the service center that was based in a metropolitan area, two hours and a half from where Sally lives. We wouldn't have a complete picture of the outcome of this particular assistive technology system without follow-up and comprehensive outcomes data.

So, if we really want to know how well an assistive technology device works; we need substantial outcomes data from a variety of outcome domains.

How should we measure the outcomes of assistive technology? There are literally hundreds of assessments related to assistive technology assessment. Many are devoted to the process of selecting the best assistive technology device. Disappointingly, today, few have an outcomes focus. While new assessment resources are being developed, what do we do in the meantime? Consider the following simple idea. If we want to know how assistive technology works, we must at a minimum:

Log exactly what interventions were provided (devices and services) and in what context.  
Measure at least two of the 6 types of outcomes. One of them should be some type of specific performance that was expected to change.  
Measure a baseline before the assistive technology intervention and then later use the same measure after the intervention.  
Measure performance outcomes of the student with and without use of the assistive technology.  
How do we find the time to measure the outcomes of assistive technology?  
Today, if we asked any assistive technology service team member (including family members

and the individual with a disability) how much time they had to measure outcomes, they would respond either by saying virtually no time, or maybe even negative time. If this is the case, how do we go about measuring outcomes? We know we need to understand what assistive technology devices and which assistive technology services work best under what circumstances.

Today's system makes it very difficult for us to find time for measuring outcomes. Perhaps a better question might be, "If measuring outcomes of assistive technology devices and services was mandated as a part of the process of receiving assistive technology devices and services, then how much time might be available?" If special education and rehabilitation program coordinators and supervisors assumed that measuring outcomes was part of the job and a percentage of time was automatically allocated for documenting outcomes wouldn't this change the scenario? We know that measuring outcomes takes resources. If those resources were made available or it was assumed that measuring outcomes did take time, the answer might be a little different.

Assistive technology interventions need a mandated format for measuring appropriate outcomes. One mechanism might be to expand the notion that assistive technology devices and services must be "considered." In the school systems we know that IDEA requires that assistive technology must be considered. Perhaps it also needs to require that outcomes must be measured. A perfect place for this is in the existing IEP. A mini-assistive technology plan could be called an ITIP for "Individualized Technology Implementation Plan". This plan would require goals for the assistive technology intervention and repeated measures of goal achievement. This strategy could also apply to non-school-based assistive technology services and for all age-groups. A structured ITIP process could not only help document outcomes, but it could also facilitate continuity of services across agencies and the lifespan of a person with a disability.

We know on one level that this conceptual model might be able to work. The state of Ohio is currently in the process of distributing over \$9 million to the students in their state who require assistive technology devices to meet goals within their IEP. As a part of the contract for these special education teams to receive the funds to purchase assistive technology devices, they need to provide relevant IEP's and measure the outcomes of the assistive technology intervention. While all of this takes time, special education team members understand that they need to be accountable and document how the assistive technology funds are being used.

The question still remains, however, "What is an appropriate amount of time an assistive technology team should devote to measuring the outcomes of assistive technology interventions?" Perhaps a way to think about this might be in percentages. The time invested in evaluating and identifying the need for assistive technology, the time procuring the device, the time setting it up, time training the user how to use the device, and the time spent making sure that the device works the way it should could be described as the assistive technology implementation time demand. Perhaps it is reasonable to assume that 15-25% of this time should be spent measuring and documenting the need and the outcome of the intervention.

What would we do with the outcome data if we had it?

Administrators, special education coordinators, rehabilitation program supervisors, special education teachers, general education teachers, therapists, parents, friends of people using assistive technology and the assistive technology users are some of the constituents of assistive technology devices and services. Each of these groups has their own reason for wanting assistive technology outcomes information. What do we know about what each one of these groups wants to do with the outcomes data if they had it? Some of the uses of outcomes data could be:

Comparing one device to another to decide which one to purchase. Identifying what types of devices have been used before by people in similar situations; and what worked and what didn't. Examining a list of assistive technology teams and how they were organized differently, and looking at how the outcomes varied among them.

Since virtually no outcomes data are handy today, this question points toward the future. What if you had a magic wand and could have access to any outcomes information you wanted. What information would you want to see, what would it look like, how would you access it? The future is created by vision. The outcomes system of the future will be driven by today's dreaming.

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Dr. Smith is Director of the Center for Rehabilitation Sciences and Technology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in the College of Health Sciences and on faculty in the Occupational Therapy program.

Three projects of Dr. Smith's are particularly relevant to assistive technology outcomes. First, Project IMPACT (Integrated Multi-Perspective Access to Campus Technology) focused on the technology-related services on a post-secondary campus for students with disabilities. Second, Project OATS (Outcomes of Assistive Technology in the Schools) has focused on the assessment instruments that special education teams use for assistive technology outcomes evaluation. Lastly, Project ATOMS (Assistive Technology Outcomes Measurement System) is currently examining the need for better assistive technology outcomes measures, exploring new methods of assessment and examining the issues of device "abandonment."

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## **UAAACT Team Training Plans**

As stated in the UAAACT Policies and Procedures Manual, "Team leaders will develop an annual team training plan in consultation with team members. Training funds will not be expended until the Leadership Council or its designee has had an opportunity to review the team's proposed expenditure of training funds. The training plan should include the names of team members who will be attending training, the name of the training event, and the anticipated cost of each member attending training (including ground and air travel, parking, meals, lodging, and conference registration fee). If UAAACT members plan to attend a training event outside the State of Utah, they must submit a letter of support from their special education director/coordinator along with the annual team training plan."

If any member of your UAAACT team is planning to attend training with financial support from the UAAACT project, team leaders must submit their team training plan. The next UAAACT Leadership Council Meeting will be held on Friday, November 21, 2003. Please submit your team training plan prior to that date.

### **Do you Need a Substitute for a UAAACT Training Event or Student Evaluation?**

UAAACT members who need a substitute in order to attend a UAAACT training or to participate in UAAACT evaluations may be eligible to have the UAAACT project cover the cost of the substitute. Call Craig Boogaard to learn how your school district can get reimbursed for your substitute expense when you are away from the classroom for UAAACT business.

### **CSUN for Team Leaders**

Team leaders should reserve March 17-20 to attend CSUN, the California State University Northridge Conference on Technology and Persons with Disabilities. . If the team leader is unable to attend, they may send another UAAACT team member to CSUN in their place. At this point, UAAACT Teams should determine

which team member will attend CSUN and get permission from special education director to attend the conference. More information will be provided as CSUN provides their conference announcement and registration forms. If you need more information, see [www.csun.edu/cod](http://www.csun.edu/cod) or contact Craig Boogaard.

### **Beaumont Foundation Grants**

The Beaumont Foundation of America (BFA) is a non-profit philanthropic organization who plans to grant approximately \$350 million to provide state-of-the-art technology equipment to community organizations, public, private, parochial and charter schools throughout the United States. BFA has three distinct grant programs including: individual, schools and community. The BFA makes awards to about one-half of the United States each year. The 2004-2006 grant cycle will include the state of Utah. For more information and to apply for a grant online, check the website at: [www.bmtfoundation.com](http://www.bmtfoundation.com)

### **Loaner Computers for Students**

Students with disabilities who are 14 years and older may be eligible for a loaner computer through The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation. When a student reaches their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, they are eligible for transition services from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Of course they must apply for those services through their local VR office. If eligible for VR services, they will be assigned a VR counselor. Students or their parents could then talk with the VR counselor about the possibility of getting a loaner computer. If the counselor feels a student needs a loaner computer to prepare for their employment goals, the counselor may request that a loaner computer be provided. Tom Jackson administers this computer loan program at The Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT). For more information, contact your local VR Office, Tom Jackson at UCAT (801-887-9536) or see the following web site: <http://www.usor.utah.gov/>

## UAAACT TRAINING

All training activities are at The Computer Center for Citizens with Disabilities, 1595 W. 500 South in Salt Lake City. Register for **Dynavox** workshops by calling Dynavox at 1-800-344-1778 ext 322. To register for all other workshops call The Computer Center at 887-9380 or toll free at 888-866-5550.

Writing Aids for Students with Disabilities . . . . .	October 24, from 1:00 – 3:00 pm Instructor: Scott Baggaley
Dynavox “Getting Started” . . . . .	October 30, from 9:30-2:30 pm Instructor: Rick Archer
IntelliKeys, IntelliTalk II and Overlay Maker . . . . .	November 14, from 1:00 – 3:00 pm Instructor: Craig Boogaard
Dynavox “Breakthroughs” . . . . .	November 20, from 9:30-2:30 pm Instructor: Rick Archer
Boardmaker for Windows . . . . .	December 12, from 1:00 – 3:00 pm Instructor: Scott Baggaley
Speaking Dynamically Pro . . . . .	January 8, from 1:00 – 3:00 pm Instructor: Craig Boogaard
Dynavox “Using Dynavox to Communicate” . . . . .	January 22, 2004 from 9:30-2:30 pm Instructor: Rick Archer
Software Potpourri	February 13, 2004 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm Instructor: Scott Baggaley

UAAACT members may request specific AAC device training, training on computer access products, or software training for their UAAACT team by calling Craig or Scott at CCCD. For information on training activities after February 13, 2004, see: [www.uaaact.org](http://www.uaaact.org)

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