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MN Regions 5 & 7 Assistive Technology Community of Practice

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Calendar of Events

2017-2018 REGIONAL MEETINGS

Benton-Stearns Ed District Office, Sartell MN

9:00 A.M. – 11:30 P.M.

September 20—AT Teams and AT Processes

October 4—AT Consideration/Assessment?

November 15—Feature Match

December 6—AT Trials and Purchasing AT Devices and Services

January 24—AT Inservice/Training; AT and IEPs

February— NO MEETING

March 21—Using AT Devices and Services; Progress Monitoring

April 18—Repair and Maintenance of AT; Updating AT

May 16—PACER, AbleNet, etc. Visit

**Note: Schedule will likely change to accommodate visit to PACER, AbleNet, etc. with P/HD CoP.

35th ANNUAL CLOSING THE GAP CONFERENCE

Double Tree Hilton, Bloomington, MN

Pre-Conference Sessions: October 16 & 17, 2017

Conference Sessions: October 18-20, 2017

CHARTING THE CS CONFERENCE

Arrowwood, Alexandria, MN

Family Sessions: April 21, 2018

Pre-Conference Sessions: April 22, 2018

Conference Sessions: April 23 & 24, 2018

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 or send a message with the word “subscribe” in it to the request address, mn.at@mailmanlists.us for further instructions.

To Post on the Listserv: Send message to mn.at@mailmanlists.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.

Google Classroom

Mike Marotta, ATP, Inclusive Technology Solutions, LLC presented a training session on Google Classroom at MDE on September 15, 2017.

Defining Google Classroom

“Google Classroom is a learning management system that is integrated into the G Suite for Education platform. This tool is designed to streamline classroom sharing, learning and communication. Now Google Classroom is available to everyone!”

The training was a BYOD (bring your own device) session to “explore the features of the platform, including how to share documents, manage student work and promote a classroom culture of learning.” The session included discussion regarding the “accessibility supports available to students with disabilities and tools/supports to facilitate access for ALL students.”

The Google site is “home base” with all documents and materials “living” there. We have to be creative to make Google tools work for all students.

Changes in Access

The biggest change in the use of computers in the past few years involves how we use tools. In the beginning, we installed software to create a tool for our students to use for access or productivity and that tool was limited to the computer where the software was installed. Now, supports for access or productivity are not necessarily found on the computer but are apps and extensions or subscription software that is available on a number of devices in a variety of locations when the user logs in to their account. The Chromebook is an example of such a device that has no software loaded on it.

Think about this: *Having more technology is not better.*

User Experiences

Most browsers can be used on any platform (Mac, PC, iOS). The G Suite experience is different from device to device.

On a laptop/Chromebook, all tools work within the browser and all apps and extensions can be utilized.

On a mobile device, apps and extensions don't all work and productivity will look different than on a laptop.

The iPad doesn't play with G Suite.

Chromebooks

Newer Chromebooks can now run Android apps (some schools block Android apps). The older Chromebooks will eventually be updated to run Android apps.

Voice Dream Reader now works on a Chromebook. Users will still have a better experience on mobile devices.

Software, like JAWS, works on a PC through Chrome work better than on a Chromebook.

Always ask: *What are we doing? Consider the task not the tool first.*

Accessibility

Any device should be maximized for the student to use the accessibility features that fit the task that student is doing. The Settings/Control Panel of the device should be the first stop—look for the “gear” icon. Use the built in supports to the point they can address the need, if the need requires more, then consider apps and extensions.

Apple products and Chromebooks have the depth of supports that meet most needs. The team needs to understand what support can do for the student and what the limitations might be for the student.

Some settings for accessibility may be locked by the school technology department. If the school manages devices through school email addresses, students will not likely be able to gain access to the accessibility features they need unless the technology department gives the student access. Teachers will not have the ability to change access allowances without the technology department's involvement.

On a Chromebook, advanced accessibility can be managed so the accessibility features show up in the Settings menu (through the technology department if school managed).

Onscreen keyboard

The onscreen keyboard built in features have some word prediction available. There is usually a microphone icon to allow for dictation. The word prediction box cannot be enlarged. Can't change the contrast or layout on the onscreen keyboard.

Google Docs uses the same speech engine as other dictation platforms. Google Docs also has word prediction in other languages.

Enlarging text

Ctrl+ enlarges and Ctrl- decreases font size.

Contrast

All platforms allow contrast changes. Chromebooks have only one choice built in.

Magnification

Very basic and must move the magnifier around the screen. Navigation ability is necessary.

ChromeVox

ChromeVox is a Chrome extension that functions as a screen reader. The user must search and select text to activate ChromeVox. Most students are touch-navigators.

Voice

Mac uses VoiceOver. PC uses Narrator (built-in), but Narrator does not have much depth. Narrator tells you what the computer is doing but often ignores portions of text. In Google Docs, users can use VoiceOver or ChromeVox.

Recognize what is needed by the student and what the system is capable of doing!

Accessible Documents

Documents must be created in an accessible format to be accessed by a screenreader. Once a teacher creates a document of any kind, the document stands as accessible or not accessible. All documents should be created with accessibility built in to them using the universal format of styles.

Apps and Extensions

Apps are software like. You must look for them and apply them.

Extensions follow the user's log-in address to be used wherever the user is logged in.

District technology managers give rights to students to use apps and extensions by:

1. Kiosk puts availability of apps and extensions on a set group of devices
2. Group (puts certain email addresses in a group that is authorized to use)
3. Pushing into the student account (giving access to only that student's address)
4. Creating a "white list" of approved apps or extensions for students in general

ChromeVox

Free screenreader extension in Chrome.

Doc Hub

Allows student to edit online PDFs. The student can sign, annotate pages, insert images, manage fields, whiteout text, merge PDFs, use templates, highlight, underline, strikeout, stamp, comment, etc. on the document.

Kami—PDF and Document Markup

Kami allows you to annotate PDFs and work with Google Drive and Google Classroom.

Snap & Read Universal

This is a Don Johnston product that reads accessible and inaccessible text aloud. It works with Google Drive, email, websites, Kindle Cloud Reader, and PDFs.

Read & Write for Google Chrome

“Text-to-speech or hear words, passages, or whole documents read aloud with easy-to-follow dual color highlighting. Text and picture dictionaries.” Students can also dictate with speech-to-text to proofread. Highlighted areas can be gathered for summarizing. Voice notes can be created. Word prediction is included. Text can be simplified.

Symbaloo

Gathers visual symbols to create a gallery of your favorite bookmarks.

To Do List

Add or remove tasks, re-arrange by dragging and dropping, color schemes, labels to highlight on this free Chrome extension.

Google Keep

This Chrome extension saves ideas and websites or notes that you want to categorize for later access.

OneTab

For those who open multiple tabs on the Chrome browser, OneTab converts your tabs to a list. Great for distribution to students for research.

Mercury Reader

This “Chrome extension removes ads and distractions, leaving only text and images for a clean and consistent reading view on every website.” Typeface and text size can be changed using Mercury Reader.

Fluency Tutor® for Google

Fluency Tutor works well with Google Drive and Google Classroom. The teacher chooses from “fluency passages based on content, lexile level or reading age.” Classroom materials can also be used. Students can read the passages when they have time and feedback is immediate.

Google Classroom

The teacher and student pages are similar but different. Content can be streamed or posted. The teacher can determine where the content will be placed and shown to students. The new content will automatically go to the top of a page.

The teacher can now send content to specific students and can differentiate what is sent to each student in this manner. There is generally a title and description with a due date. The document is then attached. Topics should be included to help the student navigate the materials quickly or find the information later.

Management can be completed through View, Edit, Copy, and Share to the student drive.

Creating a Google Classroom

Students are given a join code or invited to join by adding their email addresses. Co-teachers or multiple teachers now can work together on a Google Classroom.