One in five people in the U.S. lives with a disability. How can we make life easier?
As technologies merge, blurring the lines between computer and telephone, television and browser, book, camera and media player, tremendous opportunities have emerged to assist people with disabilities to lead more fulfilling and independent lives. Never before has such computing power, capacity, portability and declining cost offered the opportunity to develop truly revolutionary tools to communicate, contribute, access and participate.

Because of this convergence, people with disabilities have more – and better – options to utilize technology to reach their highest potential at home, school, work, play and community. But these opportunities come with challenges – as miniaturization, feature bloat and inadequate software can put these technologies further out of their reach, just when the need is greatest.

Technologies as assistive tools will become more important as members of society grow older and require ways of maintaining sight, hearing, mobility and cognition. Veterans will require means to acquire new skills, and continue to be productive after sustaining injuries in conflict. Children who, in the recent past, would not have survived into adulthood are seeing full lifespans. All these people can lead longer and more-fulfilling lives if they are able to “age in place” and remain with their families and in their homes, schools and communities.

For technologies to be effective in this way, prospective users need access to comprehensive information about available options, the means to identify those that can help them, training in their effective use and help adapting them for specific needs. Collectively, these devices, interfaces and software are known as Assistive Technology (AT). Making it possible for people with disabilities to optimally employ these tools is the mission of Assistive Technology Partners.
Breaking Barriers. Changing Lives

The work performed at Assistive Technology Partners (ATP) defines the leading edge in research, design, testing and application of appropriate technologies for persons with cognitive, sensory or physical disabilities. Our faculty has created and developed the most comprehensive program in the field for identifying, evaluating and testing these technologies, and for helping increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of those with disabilities or limitations due to aging.

What is Assistive Technology?

In short, AT is anything that helps a person with disabilities function more effectively. This can include off-the-shelf items, either stock, modified or customized, or solutions designed and built for a specific individual. These technologies are used to assist people in performing everyday tasks such as getting dressed, moving from place to place, controlling their environment, accessing curriculum in school, reading print at work or participating in recreational activities.

AT can be as simple as a pencil grip or a zipper pull, or as complex as a communication device for someone who cannot speak. Specialized software and prompting systems can assist individuals to perform complex tasks, allowing them to be employed in more-engaging and productive work. Positioning devices can make a person more comfortable while sitting or sleeping, enhancing concentration and stamina while working or studying. There are AT technologies for infants at play, that allow senior citizens to continue to live independently in their own homes, and for every situation and stage of life that lies between. ATP provides the convergence between the person and the technology.

Assistive Technology Partners employs a comprehensive suite of services to accomplish our mission:

- CLINICAL SERVICES
- OUTREACH & INFORMATION
- RESEARCH & ENGINEERING
- PRODUCT TESTING
- BUSINESS SERVICES
- EDUCATION
Evaluating the Client’s Needs: CLINICAL SERVICES

Since 1995, we have provided one-on-one assessments and training on the use of technology to enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities. With the client, family and caregivers as essential members of the team, the first step is a comprehensive review of needs in every environment in which they are engaged. Our faculty clinicians have expertise in a wide range of highly specialized disciplines and can meet the AT needs of each individual, regardless of functional limitation or complexity.

The experience gained through this activity has made our faculty among the most knowledgeable in the world regarding the issues facing people who must live, learn, work and play with disabilities.

Clinical Services Include:
- AUGMENTATIVE & ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION (AAC)
- COMPUTER ACCESS
- ELECTRONIC AIDS FOR DAILY LIVING (EADL)
- LEARNING/COGNITIVE AIDS
- NIGHTTIME POSITIONING
- WHEELCHAIR SEATING AND MOBILITY
- WORKSITE ACCOMMODATIONS & ERGONOMICS

Getting the Word Out: OUTREACH & INFORMATION SERVICES

No matter how impressive a piece of technology may be, it can’t help someone unless the prospective user knows about it—and can get access to it. Many of these technologies and devices are available in the marketplace, but opportunities to learn about them, much less acquire objective reviews and comparisons, are limited and widely scattered.

Over a million individuals throughout the U.S. and the world have been directly served through our comprehensive knowledge base and the outreach programs it supports. Emphasis continues to be placed on reaching underrepresented populations, including Native Americans, Hispanics, the elderly and those in rural areas. In addition, outreach includes repurposing of assistive technologies and assistance with acquisition of funding for devices and equipment through our AT Finder and AT Funder sections of the website.
Innovation for Disability:  
**RESEARCH & ENGINEERING**

Consistent with our program goal to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities, the research and engineering faculty designs, develops and conducts research that generates important new scientific knowledge for the field of Assistive Technology. These projects range from product/device development, to therapeutic trial investigations and include comparative effectiveness trials and outcomes measurement. Often this work is moved to the private sector through technology transfer. Much of this work is federally sponsored. Assistive Technology Partners also leads the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for the Advancement of Cognitive Technologies (RERC-ACT), and collaborates with numerous other research initiatives across the nation.

Building it Right:  
**PRODUCT TESTING**

Recent government mandates require compliance with accessibility standards for all persons with disabilities. As the Baby Boom generation ages, more and more individuals will grapple with vision, hearing, cognition and mobility losses that are a normal part of getting older. Taking these and other issues into account, forward-looking manufacturers are recognizing the need for specialized, high-quality product testing that can help them design and build products that meet the unique needs of people with disabilities and an aging population.

As part of our role as a world leader in Assistive Technology, we help businesses acquire statistically-significant, meaningful and actionable knowledge about product usability for people with disabilities. We are unique in our position as an organization that can provide the experience and skills – and an appropriate testing population – that are critical for successful product testing for users with disabilities and their families.
Welcome to the Workplace:

BUSINESS SERVICES

Access to Assistive Technology has allowed many persons with disabilities to become more productive and self-reliant, and these individuals are eager to enter the workforce. Employers who appreciate their potential often need assistance in selecting and acquiring appropriate enabling technologies and in navigating the legal and regulatory landscape that accompanies the inclusion of employees with disabilities.

Workplace accessibility issues can include the built environment—ramps, railings, doorways and signage—and the use of electronic devices, software, prompting systems and seating and support. Our faculty and staff can streamline the evaluation and acquisition process for employers, reduce the complexity and expense of compliance, and shorten the interval between hiring and productivity.

Staying Ahead:

EDUCATION

Because of its reliance on emerging technologies, Assistive Technology is a constantly-changing field that requires ongoing education efforts for all the audiences involved: the general public; users of AT; families and caregivers; faculty, clinicians and supporters; employers and students who are entering the field. Our faculty offers the most comprehensive array of cross-discipline expertise, and are specialists in applying and integrating AT in the full spectrum of settings – from home to school to the workplace and anywhere in between.

Training is provided both on-campus and through distance learning and teleconferencing. Graduate coursework is available through the University of Colorado – Anschutz Medical Campus. Many of ATP’s faculty are considered to be the foremost in their field of expertise and are in demand as speakers across the country and around the world.
Information for Accessibility:

RESOURCES

The center maintains one of the largest repositories of literature, research findings, technical information, AT devices and educational materials available. This information is open to anyone who can benefit from AT, including clients, family, caregivers, medical professionals, teachers, the general public and students.

These resources can be used to locate clinical services, compare AT alternatives, and locate funding sources. Clients can acquire plans for do-it-yourself, low cost AT solutions, download free software and learn how to modify web browsers for greater ease of use.

Our comprehensive website provides thousands of resources and links for individuals with disabilities, their families and those who serve them. The site also features a section titled The Accessible Home – a collection of equipment, devices and examples of home modifications that can be employed to make everyday living more accessible.

Dedication and Professionalism:

STAFF/EXPERTISE

Comprised of 27 faculty and staff from the allied health, engineering and education professions, our team brings expertise from the fields of Physical and Occupational Therapy, Speech Language Pathology, Early Intervention, Allied Health, Education, Special Education, Assistive Technology, Telecommunications and Web & Graphic Design. Engineering disciplines include electrical, mechanical, biomedical, computer and rehabilitation engineers and computer scientists. The team has over 350 cumulative years of experience in intervention, research, development and engineering.

Core faculty have appointments in several departments within the School of Medicine, University of Colorado – Anschutz Medical Campus. Faculty members from the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation have appointments in several divisions including Physical Therapy, ATP and the Department of Pediatrics, with pending appointments in our newly launched Bio-Engineering Program.

Cathy Bodine PhD, CCC-SLP
Executive Director, Assistive Technology Partners
Associate Professor and Section Head, Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Dr. Bodine began her career in Assistive Technology in 1985. She joined the faculty of the University of Colorado – Anschutz Medical Campus in 1996. Today, she is internationally recognized for her leadership in the field of AT and vigorously pursues her passions for new product design, research, service to families and persons with disabilities and the professional Assistive Technology community.
There is much more work to be done, and you can help.

Assistive Technology Partners has an ongoing need for current technology such as computers, cell phones, digital pads and e-readers. Those in the business community can assist with in-kind contributions of technical knowledge, marketing experience, fundraising help and other business skills.

Financial contributions will help us provide appropriate Assistive Technologies to persons with cognitive, sensory, and/or physical disabilities so they can reach their highest potential at home, school, work and play.

Please contact us at (303) 315-1281 to make a contribution by phone.

By mail (please do not send cash), make checks payable to:

CU Foundation/Assistive Technology Partners
601 East 18th Avenue, Suite 130
Denver, CO 80203-1493

We thank you for your generous support.