Creating and AT Lending Library

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T-n-T research studies have identified opportunities for borrowing and trying a device or adaptation as one of the most important resources to support early effective use of AT with infants/toddlers. Lending libraries have been established within local public libraries, as free standing entities, within EI programs or agencies, and as programs that loan through the mail Some are supported by state and federal funds, and some are privately funded. This *Resource Brief* describes strategies and resources to ensure that devices/adaptations are available for families and children across a state.
http://www.sandbox-learning.com/default.asp?page=29—state-by state list of resources that provide lending libraries.
http://www.resnaprojects.org/nattap/activities/deviceloans.html—lots of information on starting device loan programs.

How can I create a lending library in my community?

First, decide on your mission and specify how the program will make loans. Decide about the program's focus and procedures. For example, will individuals try out different devices short- term (2,4,6 weeks; extensions as needed on an individual basis) before they commit to purchasing the device? Who will be eligible to borrow? What devices will be loaned? How will the devices get to the person borrowing? Will the program include other features such as demonstration, evaluation, training, and assessment?

Second, decide on what type of library you would like to set up.

	Plusses	Challenges
Online Sharing Community	Easy to sign-up with established web sites (BillMonk/Neighborrow/Facebook)	Shipping & packaging must be handled by the lender/borrower
	Information on items quickly available	Dependent on self-monitoring of the web users
	Can post resource information to share tips on using items	Users need some minimal knowledge of how to upload their information to the websites
	Can include an entire state on one web-sharing network	Items limited to what is immediately on hand
	Location is not a hindrance	
Center-Based Lending Library	Users can visit the central location to see items with their therapists	Cost of manning a central location to store items
	Items can be cataloged and listed online for easy review	Cost of hiring staff to clean, store/catalog, package and mail items
	Information on items quickly available	Shipping must be handled by the lender/ borrower
	Can post resource information to share tips on using items	Library organizer is responsible for adding new items
		Items limited to what is immediately on hand

Other things to consider:
- Will the services include training on how to use the device(s)? If so, will it be in the form of a web-video, printed materials, accompanying DVD, cheat sheet, or simply a web-link to the manufacturer's site?
- Will there be sample lesson plans about how to use the devices at childcare/at home?
- Can professionals/teachers borrow items for training purposes?
- Do borrowers have to register as members of the lending library before they can access items, or is it open to the public in general? (Membership is recommended to ensure commitment to protocol.)
- Location: If setting up an office with the equipment in a common place that will be packaged and shipped to borrowers from this central location, it may be worthwhile to consider enlisting the services of local group homes/ adult training facilities to provide low-cost help in packaging/cleaning/storing items. For an example, see http://www.tadpole.org/about_us/index.html

I'd like to go with an online website option, with a network of providers/ consumers who share what they can spare. What do I do next?

If you use an existing website to manage items, individuals register on the site as users, list their items and respond to requests to borrow items independently. The site keeps track of the items. The transaction itself (shipping/ handling/packaging) is between the individuals who are borrowing and loaning.

- First, contact interested AT providers and consumers in your community to assess interest in a lending library.
- Meet with other therapy providers and AT consumers to decide what kind of library to start, and what items are currently available within the group.
- Each participant inventories materials; the inventories are shared within the borrowing community.
- The items remain with the owners until requested, then are returned to the owner after the term is completed.
- All borrowers register as users and sign a contract by which all abide.
- Decide on a code of ethics for people to follow. For instance, items should come back clean and unbroken. If there are damages, the borrower must pay to replace/repair the loaned item.
- In small communities, items may be picked up/dropped of personally. If shipping is necessary, there will be a cost included with each transaction.
- Lending communities can apply for grants to help cover the costs of shipping. [Please refer to the financial assistance information at the end of this document.]

Three online community sharing websites that are already available to the general public are described below:

Site#1: BillMonk—https://www.billmonk.com/

BillMonk is a free service that allows users to keep track of books, DVDs, or other items that they have loaned or borrowed from their friends.

After entering the items onto the site, you can download an Excel spreadsheet that lists all the items in your library.

(The following questions are taken from the Frequently Asked Questions section of BillMonk.)

Can I record that I'm borrowing something from a friend, even if it's not in their library?
Yes! In the "check-out" process, you can add a new item to your friend's collection and borrow it. (Note that your friend must verify it before it's shown to everyone else).

Can I record that I'm lending or borrowing with someone who doesn't use BillMonk yet?
Yes! In the "check-out" process, when we ask you "Which friend?" you can select the last option, "Other…", and type in your friend's email address. We'll email them an invitation, and then they'll be in our system.

What if your friend loses your stuff?
The danger of lending your stuff out is that it can be lost or damaged. How you deal with this issue is between you and your friend. Since BillMonk makes it easy to sell your stuff to a friend, you could convert lost or damaged things into monetary debts.

You decide which of your friends may browse the contents of your library; your friends decide the same about you.
- You can request that a friend share their library with you; they will see this request when they log in.
- Requesting access does **not** send an email.
- Even if you're not sharing your entire library with a friend, you can still check individual things out to them.

Site#2: Neighborrow.com—http://neighborrow.com/about.html

Save money and the environment by or borrowing; trade things you need. List things easily, and lend them out to people in your networks. Meet people in your community or keep transactions completely anonymous. No shipping & no waiting when you get things locally, from existing networks on your CAMPUS, at your COMPANY, in your COMMUNITY.

Site#3: Facebook—http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=7306691734

Facebook has a community sharing tool to help create a sharing community within registered users. Benefits are that Facebook is an established and popular website with which many people are already familiar.

Other online options

Create your own website community and invite others to participate. This will require a web-developer's assistance. Benefits will include reduced exposure to internet viruses and unnecessary cookies, and lesser opportunities for phishing.

Microsoft has free software called <u>Windows SharePoint Services </u>(WSS) to help catalog items:
http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=89514708-e33c-4ea7-8af2-c04b3657b27b&displaylang=en

WSS is provided as a free download from Microsoft for Windows Server 2003 Service Pack 1 or later and is added to the Microsoft .NET Framework. WSS 3 is an object model for creating web pages and developing web based collaboration, document management, and content publishing. WSS is only provided for Microsoft servers and cannot be deployed on any other OS.

The Lending Library application template helps people manage the physical assets in an organization's library. The application template tracks general properties about the physical assets and which user has currently checked out the asset. It also provides a librarian dashboard to help identify currently available and overdue assets. Automated e-mail

I'd like to try setting up a central location to house items that can then be sent to borrowers as they make requests.

This system will require an administrator/staff to help coordinate the gathering of items for lending and how the items are stored and shared.

Examples of institutions and agencies that have established AT lending libraries

Features	Pennsylvania's AT Lending Library	Generations Tadpole	Lakeville AT Lending Library	Matthew's Lending Library	WATI
Web site	http://tiny.cc/temple283	http://www.tadpole.org/	http://tiny.cc/Lakeville	http://tiny.cc/MLL	http://library.wati.org/
Public/Private	Public non-profit	Private non-profit	Public schools	Public non-profit	Public non-profit
Location	Temple's Inst of Disabilities & 9 statewide locations	North Carolina	Minnesota	Ohio	Wisconsin
Funding	State	Private foundation	State/Schools	Private donations & grants	State
Fees	none	none	none	none	none
History	1996	Started 1992	Not listed	Started 1991	1993
Number of items	6000	1300	Not listed	Not listed	
Collaboration	Statewide network of organizations ; PaTTAN; established by state law	Rehab Therapy Inc., Murdoch Center, Kate B Reynolds Charitable Trust	School districts	Not listed	School districts
Publications	Newsletter	none	none	none	Online newsletter
Shipping	UPS delivery and pick-up	UPS delivery and pick-up	Not stated	Not stated	Return mail paid by recipient
Packing/ Handling	HGA Center employees	Residents at Murdoch Center	School district	Family-to-family sharing	School district
Recipients	People with disabilities or older residents; service providers	People with disabilities, service providers	School district students on IEP	Families of children with disabilities	School district students on IEP
Purpose	Trial use, training	Loan, training	School use	Recycle & share AT equipment	School use

Features	Pennsylvania's AT Lending Library	Generations Tadpole	Lakeville AT Lending Library	Matthew's Lending Library	WATI
Loaning Limits	2 items for same function and/or 5 items for different function	Not listed	Not listed	Not listed	
Loan period	2-6 wks + 2wk extensions	3 wks	While enrolled in school	Not listed	
Support	Can be requested by recipient or provided by ATRC	Limited	School district staff; extensive	Not listed	Extensive
Website	Yes for each branch but not limited to AT info; image inventory online	Web registration to set up account; image inventory online	Many resources; online inventory (no pictures)	Limited info	Extensive
Requests	Must be mailed or faxed by law	Web requests	E-mailed	Phone/e-mail	E-mail
Item info	Limited feeding utensils, hygiene , size & weight considerations.	Low-tech and toys, Braille	Good variety, education/focus on school use	Not online	
Staff	Multiple staff members	3 staff members	Staff at each school	Not listed	Staff at each school

Is consultation available?

LEKOTEK (www.lekotek.org) provides web-based resources that clients and providers nationwide can assess and utilize. Currently, LEKOTEK does not provide toy/equipment lending without play sessions (which requires one-on-one contact), so it is only available as an online resource that does not ship out any toys/equipment. LEKOTEK does provide email/phone support to families or professionals who have a specific toy/play related questions. This service is offered free via email at lekotek@lekotek.org or the Toy Resource Helpline – 800-366-PLAY.

For a fee, LEKOTEK does provide consultation to programs about how to set up lending libraries. The consulting fee/time is individualized to meet the specific needs of that program/agency.

What Devices Should go in the Lending Library?

AblePlay (www.ableplay.org) is a FREE online resource that provides information on rated and reviewed play products. Families and professionals can get info on specific products with info on play value and ideas for adapting play to fit the needs of a specific child. AblePlay also has a blog http://ableplay.wordpress.com/. This resource may be helpful in selecting play materials for inclusion in a lending library but does not cover other AT applications such as mobility or communication.

Where can I buy devices to have in my lending library?
AbleData is a resource site that lists, by state, companies that sell AT products

Once I collect all the AT equipment that will be a part of the lending library, how should I catalog everything?

I recommend keeping a list of subject headings you've used so that the terminology is consistent throughout the catalog. Decide on your subject headings and arrangement before you begin adding information to the online catalog - it saves lots of time going back and changing things later.

Cataloging advice from:
http://www.savingadvice.com/blog/2007/07/09/101604_how-to-start-a-lending-library-for-your-organization.html

How do I manage the circulation?

To manage the circulation (keep track of what's checked out), you may either choose to set hours of operation and have volunteers staff the library, or you may design a self-checkout system that allows people to access the library at any time. If you choose the latter, it's unlikely that you will be able to collect any fines, but you should still decide on and post guidelines for how long an item may be checked out so that no one has to wait too long for a popular book or DVD.

If you choose a self-checkout system, you might also consider holding orientation sessions (especially when the library is new) to let people know what's available and how to check it out.

You should also consider how you will handle donations and/or budget to buy new books, as well as how you will hold library users responsible if they do not return an item. (Will you expect them to pay to replace it with an identical item, ask them to donate a similar item, or just tell them to keep it and enjoy it?) Think, too, about what you will do if the library grows too big: will you weed out old books or find more storage space?
Deciding on all those policy things in advance and making sure everyone knows them is important too: who will be allowed to borrow? how many books at one time? how long can the books be borrowed for? do you collect fines for overdue or lost books? honor system or volunteer supervisor? It really helps to have thought out all these things in advance.

Cataloging advice from:
http://www.savingadvice.com/blog/2007/07/09/101604_how-to-start-a-lending-library-for-your-organization.html

What happens if a device is broken or needs to be repaired?

Devices in a lending library are always at risk of being damaged or needing repair. It is important to create policies and procedures for your library that will address this problem. Below are resources that deal specifically with this issue.

National AT Technical Assistance Partnership
http://www.resnaprojects.org/nattap/activities/demo/manual0807.htm#equipment
Information on insurance, warranties, maintenance and repair, and updating equipment.

Pennsylvania's AT Lending Library
http://www.resnaprojects.org/nattap/activities/devices/paletter.doc
An example of a warning letter to borrowers of assistive technology devices that have been returned with missing items with a value of over $50.
http://www.resnaprojects.org/nattap/activities/devices/painvoice.doc
An example of an invoice letter to borrowers of devices that have been returned with missing items.
http://www.resnaprojects.org/nattap/activities/devices/papolicies.doc
Page 12 of this document deals with the management of missing, damaged items, and overdue items.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ON FINANCING TO HELP PAY FOR SHIPPING EXPENSES AS WELL AS FOR PROCURING ITEMS FOR MY LIBRARY?

National AT Technical Assistance Partnership—Budgeting for your loan program
http://www.resnaprojects.org/nattap/activities/demo/manual0807.htm#budgeting

U.S.A. TechGuide—AT equipment purchase grants
http://www.usatechguide.org/links.php?catid=123

U.S. Department of Education: Office of Educational Technology—Grant Programs
http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/os/technology/edgrants.html

United Cerebral Palsy—Assistive Technology Resources Guide
http://www.ucp.org/ucp_channeldoc.cfm/1/14/86/86-86/3934

Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA)
http://www.resna.org/content/index.php?pid=136

DisabilityInfo.gov—Grants and funding
http://www.disabilityinfo.gov/digov-public/public/DisplayPage.do?parentFolderId=5106

Virginia Department of Education—Training and Technical Assistance Center
http://www.ttac.odu.edu/Articles/minigrant.html