

# ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assistive Technology (AT) devices and services are used by individuals with disabilities and/or chronic health conditions to complete tasks that might be otherwise difficult or impossible to do. Universal design is a term that refers to devices that were developed so they can be used by a wide variety of people with different abilities. For example, an individual may decide to use a phone with large buttons to dial or may choose to use a cell phone that allows them to voice dial numbers. The first device was designed for people with physical or vision disabilities while the phone with voice dialing was developed for people who want to be “hands free.”



## Categories of assistive technology include

Vision	Daily Living
Hearing	Home and Worksite Modifications
Speech Communication	Vehicle Modifications
Learning, Cognition, Developmental	Computers and Related (hardware & software)
Mobility, Seating, Positioning	Recreation, Sports, Leisure

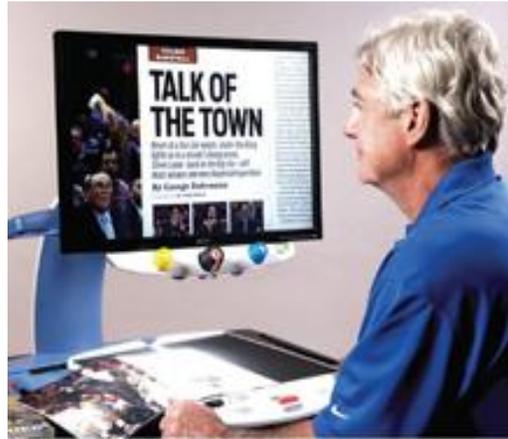


An individual with a vision loss may need an assistive technology solution from more than one category depending on his needs. Most individuals are interested in devices that help them read and write, but AT devices can help individuals organize their schedules, manage their medication, find a nearby restaurant in a new neighborhood, manage their money, and much more.

Of course, individuals who are blind or have low vision do benefit from AT devices designed specifically for their needs. Some examples of common AT solutions for vision loss and blindness include:

- Reading - video magnifiers, screen magnification software, screen reader software, CCTVs, DAISY books and readers
- Writing – 20/20 pens, CCTVs, Brailers
- Cooking – hot shot pot, splatter guards, talking microwave
- Personal Care – talking blood pressure cuff, talking scales, talking glucometer
- Travel – Mobile GEO, Trekker Breeze, BrailleNote GPS
- Organization – BrailleNote, Pac Mate, Voice Sense
- Recreation – textured dominoes, Braille bingo cards, beep balls, partner scopes

An AT Specialist with experience in the area of vision-related AT devices will listen to what the individual wants to do, demonstrate a range of devices that might meet his needs, and may arrange a short-term loan of a device to help make a decision. Some AT devices may require a prescription to be sure that person gets a device that meets his needs.



Individuals with vision loss, independent living counselors, case managers, family members and others can get help from their regional AT access site. Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK) has five AT sites. ATK staff is happy to help you learn of more AT devices that might meet the needs of individuals with any disability, of any age, and who live anywhere in Kansas. AT devices continually change as technology develops. You can learn about current AT devices and prices by contacting your regional AT access site.

Call 800-KAN DO IT (800-526-3648) to get information about AT devices or to schedule a demonstration. You can go to the ATK website at [www.atk.ku.edu](http://www.atk.ku.edu) for more information about AT device demonstrations, short-term loans, and other services available from the AT access sites.