

ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assistive technology includes electronics, computer programs or other mechanical devices that assist a person with special needs in doing specific tasks. Assistive technology helps individuals with disabilities conduct everyday tasks needed to increase independence and enhance their quality of life.

Some of the most common assistive technology terms are explained below.

Assistive Technology Glossary

- Alternative keyboards, also called ergonomic keyboards, conform to the shape and movements of the wrist and hands and reduce repetitive motion.
- Alternative pointing devices include trackballs, ergonomically designed mice and touchpads, which provide better positioning and require less motion for those who cannot use a standard mouse.
- Assistive listening devices make conference rooms and auditoriums accessible for individuals with impaired hearing, and assist with communication and cognition.
- Augmentative communication devices use bright, colorful symbols to communicate using digitized text-to-speech capabilities, and provide a virtually unlimited vocabulary.
- Braille displays provide Braille output from the computer screen one line at a time and are used in conjunction with screen readers.
- Braille embossers produce Braille hard copy output from a computer.
- Scanner/readers convert typewritten or typeset material into clearly spoken synthesized speech.
- Screen magnification software automatically enlarges the size of type and images on a screen to make it easier for a person with vision impairments to see.
- Screen reading software operates a speech synthesizer, which audibly voices the content of a computer screen.
- Teletypewriters or TTYs are used with telephones to print the words spoken by the other party when calling someone with a hearing impairment.
- Voice amplifiers enable users to make their voices louder so others can understand their speech.
- Word prediction software suggests words based on terms recently typed and the frequency of word usage by the typist. It is used by people with a variety of special needs.



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