



Technology Assistance for Dyslexics



Helpline

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www.dyslexiasw.com

Introduction

This pamphlet will cover some of the various types of technology available to assist dyslexics. It is Dyslexia Scotwest policy to not recommend one company or product over another so this pamphlet will simply describe the types of technology available, rather than individual products. Contact details of a number of companies providing these products can be found at the end of this pamphlet so people can investigate their options further.

There is now a lot of technology available for dyslexics. Obviously each individual will benefit from different types of technological assistance, so some experimentation may be required to determine which works best for you.



Software

There are many different types of software you can use with your computer. These include:

- **Voice Recognition Programs:** software, that when combined with a good microphone, will enable you to speak into the computer, rather than type into it. The general quality of this type of software has improved drastically over the years, and most programs are now highly efficient. This type of software is useful for dyslexics who have trouble writing, or getting their thoughts down on paper.
- **Text / Screen Readers:** This software reads the words off of a computer screen aloud for you, rather than you having to read it yourself. Text readers are useful for dyslexics who have trouble reading and is good for proofing work. This type of software is limited though by the quality of the soundcard in the computer being used.
- **Mind Mapping:** Mind mapping programs allow people to organise ideas on screen in front of

them. This is a tool which has been found to be extremely useful for dyslexics, and there are numerous software packages available. Mind mapping is particularly useful for dyslexics who have trouble getting started or getting their thoughts in order.

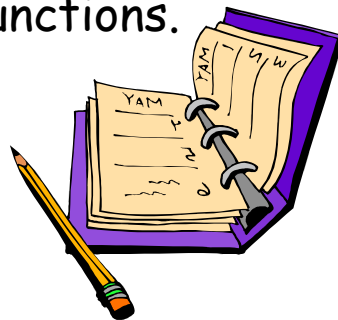
- **Accessibility Programs:** There are a number of programs available which provide the ability to change font, text, size and colour of information presented on-screen, to make it as palatable as possible. A good example of this is provided by the toolbar at the top of the page on the Dyslexia Scotwest website (www.dyslexiasw.com). Accessibility programs are good for dyslexics who also suffer from visual stress (Meares-Irlen).
- **Educational Programs:** There is a plethora of educational software available for students of all ages, from those just starting school through to high school and university. Programs cover almost all subjects, can be serious or light hearted, and you should be able to find something to suit almost every

need. These can make a huge difference to a child's education and it is worth putting in some time to investigate the various options available.

Hardware Options

There are numerous hardware options, representing both high and low technology. These include:

- **Diary or Personal Organiser:** An old fashioned diary can make a world of difference for dyslexics, helping them to keep organised and remember things like appointments. There is a vast range of diaries available, from the old fashioned paper type to high tech versions such as PDAs and Palm Pilots. These electronic versions are especially good because they can also incorporate alarms, voice recorders, word processing and spell-checking functions.



- **Reading Pens:** Small hand held electronic pens that you can run over difficult words, which will display the word in large characters, provide a definition of the word, and if properly enabled, read the word aloud. You can also get pens which will scan and store text to study later. Reading pens are particularly useful for dyslexics that are poor at spelling or who struggle to recognise words.
- **Hand Held Spell Checkers:** These are useful for checking the spelling and definition of words.
- **Portable Word Processors:** Smaller than a computer or laptop, these provide portable word processing functions. These are particularly useful for dyslexics who find handwriting difficult.
- **Dictaphones:** These are available in tape and digital recording formats and allow you to record lectures, meetings, presentations etc, for review later. Particularly good for dyslexics with short term memory problems

and difficulties processing large amounts of information.

What Else?

New technology is being invented every day and we anticipate that there will be many new products produced which will be useful for dyslexics. It is worth investigating the wide range of products available, and seeing what works for you.

Contacts

You can investigate the variety of technology available through the following companies:

- Iansyst, specialising in technology for dyslexics,
Phone: 0800 018 0045,
Web: www.dyslexic.com,
email: swsales@dyslexic.com
- Don Johnston, specialising in educational products for "diverse learners".
Phone: 01925 256 500
Web: www.donjohnston.co.uk

- Abilitynet, company dedicated to helping the disabled use computer technology
Phone: 0800 269 545
Web: www.abilitynet.org.uk
- LDA, specialising in educational products
Phone: 0845 120 4776
Web: www.ldalearning.com
- Topologika, specialising in educational software
Phone: 01326 377 771
Web: www.topolgika.com
Email: sales@topologika.com

Dyslexia Scotwest can demonstrate the following software packages to members, by appointment only:

- Dragon Naturally Speaking
- Write Out Loud
- Co-Writer
- Fine Reader Professional 6.0

- Texthelp Read and Write Gold 7
- Word Bar
- Clicker 4
- Touch Type
- Inspiration 7.5
- Word Shark 3
- Number Shark 3
- Zoombinis (Maths)
- Talking Clocks Plus
- Scally's Letters and Nouns
- Scally's World of Verbs
- Scally's World of Problems
- Scally's Numbers and Sums (counting)
- Word Mania
- Math Mania
- Selladore Tales (reading and meaning)
- Text Thing (textboard activities)
- Stig of the Dump (Adventure story)
- Speaking for myself plus (word vocabulary)
- Music Box 2
- Jigsaw Maker (Art & Design & Problem Solving)
- Lifestyle 40,000 Photos
- Creativity Educational Images

Taking Time

Technology can be life changing for dyslexics, but in most cases requires time and practice to become proficient in. It is unrealistic to expect to just pick up a new piece of technology and for it to change your life instantly. This may indeed be possible but in most cases you will need to put in some time practicing before you get good at using it. But remember, perseverance usually pays off.

Following consultation with our Service users our leaflets are prepared in Comic Sans font, size 14 on coloured paper as this is considered to be the most dyslexic friendly format.

Open daily

Monday to Friday

9.30 am till 4.30 pm

Please phone before visiting our office to ensure that someone is available to see you

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