

# Free Adaptive Technology



## Independent Living Resource Centre

*"Your Disability Resource Centre"*

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# Adaptive Technology

Adaptive or Assistive Technology (AT) refers to technology, either software or hardware designed to help people with disabilities in their everyday life. It allows people to use their computer independently and overcome technical barriers.

## Types of Adaptive Technology

### Hardware:

Alternative Keyboards and Mice: There are many different designs of keyboards and mice that make them easier to use. Hardware components usually cost money and are thus not included in this booklet. There are however some virtual keyboards and mouse tools that are free to download.

### Software:

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) programs are designed primarily for people with visual impairments. OCR is designed to translate images of handwritten or typewritten text into text that can be edited on the computer.

Voice Recognition Systems work by using voice commands.

Screen Readers will read aloud what is displayed on-screen and what is entered on the keyboard.

Screen Magnifiers enlarge the information on-screen and are mostly used by people with visual disabilities.

## **Trial Demo's**

Many companies who make software programs offer trial versions so that people are able to try out the program before they spend money on it. This is a great way to make sure the program is really what you are looking for. Here are a few links to free trial versions of some popular AT software:

JAWS 10.0 -

<http://www.freedomscientific.com/downloads/demo/FS-demo-downloads.asp>

Kurzweil 3000 -

[http://www.kurzweiledu.com/downloads\\_kez3000.aspx](http://www.kurzweiledu.com/downloads_kez3000.aspx)

Zoomtext 9.1 -

[http://www.aisquared.com/zoomtext/more/download\\_zoomtext\\_trial/](http://www.aisquared.com/zoomtext/more/download_zoomtext_trial/)

WordQ –

<http://www.wordq.com/cgi-bin/download/download.pl>

ReadPlease 2003 -

<http://www.readplease.com/english/downloads/>

## **Screen Readers**

### **NaturalReader**

NaturalReader is a voice output program that converts any text, directly from other applications such as Microsoft Word, Webpage's, PDF files or emails into spoken natural words without copying or pasting. NaturalReader can also convert any written text into audio files such as MP3 or WAV for your CD player or iPOD.

<http://www.naturalreaders.com>

## **ReadPlease 2003**

ReadPlease is a voice output software program with customizable Microsoft voices and speeds. Its features include customizing font and background color, reading text via Windows clipboard from any program by copy and paste and reading email emoticons.

[www.readplease.com/english/readplease.php](http://www.readplease.com/english/readplease.php)

## **Speakonia – Version 1.0.3.5**

Speakonia is a voice output program. Speakonia reads aloud any given text with just one mouse click! The reading can be paused, resumed and can be exported to a wave file. In addition Speakonia is able to fetch webpages through an internal http interface and read them aloud for you. You can even have your mails read to you using the "Clipboard Reading" feature.

<http://www.cfs-technologies.com/home/?id=1.4>

## **WordTalk**

WordTalk is a free tool that can be used with all versions of Microsoft Word (from Word 97 upwards), which can help people with reading difficulties use Microsoft Word effectively. It will speak the text of the document and highlight as it goes. It contains a talking dictionary to help decide which words are most appropriate. It sits neatly in your toolbar and is highly configurable, allowing you to adjust the highlight colors, the voice and the speed of the speech.

<http://www.wordtalk.org.uk/Download/>

## **Thunder**

Thunder is award-winning free screen reader talking software for people with little or no sight. Thunder is a reliable new keyboard driven Screenreader for computer users who cannot see or use the mouse. It is a software tool that makes the computer speak without needing to see the screen. You will be able to write letters and documents, hear what you have typed letter by letter or word by word, change the speed and voice, and repeat what you have just heard and more.

- Thunder will speak all Windows menus and dialog boxes, allowing full control of your computer. It gives full speech feedback for most text-based word processing tasks including editing documents in Microsoft Word, WordPad or Notepad.

<http://www.screenreader.net/index.php?pageid=2>

## **Screen Magnifiers**

### **Aldo Magnifier – Version 2.0**

Aldo's Magnifier zooms 2x to 8x on the area pointed by the mouse. Some of the programs' features include auto location of the window to avoid overlap with the area being magnified, easy activation by clicking the icon in the system tray, capturing to clipboard (Ctrl-C), and printing (Ctrl-P) of screen area in magnifier.

<http://www.aldostools.org/magnifier.html>

### **Dragnifier – Version 2.5**

Dragnifier magnifies the screen area surrounding the mouse pointer. Magnification can be done in whole numbers between 1 and 8 times and with varying sizes and shapes of the magnification area.

[www.halley.cc/stuff/dragnifier.html](http://www.halley.cc/stuff/dragnifier.html)

## **DesktopZoom**

DesktopZoom is a zoom/magnify program with lots of options. It can zoom an area around the mouse, zoom a fixed window or zoom the entire desktop. You can use the mouse wheel or arrow keys to adjust the magnification strength. Show a bigger mouse and/or a crosshair. It also has basic speech support.

<http://users.telenet.be/littlegems/MySoft/DesktopZoom/Index.html>

## **Macnifier – Version 1.1**

Macnifier is a MAC OS X software to expand part of your view for a closer look. Macnifier shows a section of your Apple Macintosh screen to help viewing up close. SubRosaSoft's Macnifier displays a magnified portion of your screen in a separate window. It allows variable zooming, and variable speed refresh. Originally designed as a helper application to assist the visually impaired – it has become an ideal tool for Mac graphic design professionals who need pixel perfect placement and control.

[www.subrosasoft.com/OSXSoftware/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&products\\_id=15](http://www.subrosasoft.com/OSXSoftware/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=15)

## **Magnify – Version 1.0**

Magnify provides magnifier zooming capabilities on the screen area surrounding the mouse pointer. Magnification can be done up to 20 times. Use keyboard shortcuts to zoom in and out.

[www.ravenblack.net/programs](http://www.ravenblack.net/programs)

## **Super Magnify**

Super magnify enlarges portions of your screen up to 15 times with special technology to maintain detail when magnifying.

<http://www.theabsolute.net/sware/index.html#smagnify>

## **KwikLoupe**

KwikLoupe program is a simple screen magnification program which ranges from 2x to 64x with a quick locate option to position the viewing window. The tool magnifies the area around the mouse pointer.

<http://www.fxc.btinternet.co.uk/assistive.htm>

## Other Software

### **RapidSet**

RapidSet is a program that allows quick and easy changing of the background and font colors without having to go through the Screen Properties dialogs.

<http://www.fxc.btinternet.co.uk/assistive.htm>

### **Vu-Bar 4**

Vu-Bar 4 is a unique piece of software that provides an on-screen slotted ruler. Vu-Bar 4 is useful for anyone who tends to skip lines or drop from one line to the next while reading. This version allows the user to select the bar width (25, 50, 75 or 100% of the screen) and set the slot height to the required font size.

<http://www.fxc.btinternet.co.uk/assistive.htm>

### **Sonar 4**

This package provides an expanded ring around the mouse pointer for users who have difficulty locating the pointer. Unlike the Windows XP version, this package places a permanent ring around the pointer. This version introduces the option to vary the color of the sonar ring.

<http://www.fxc.btinternet.co.uk/assistive.htm>

## **mmFollow**

mmFollow quite simply adds a cartoon character to the mouse cursor. It ensures rapid location of the pointer, and adds a little fun to using the computer. In use, the application adds an icon to the Windows Taskbar area. By right clicking on this icon, you can change the character.

<http://www.fxc.btinternet.co.uk/assistive.htm>

## **Edgeless**

This application causes the mouse pointer to wrap around the screen instead of stopping at the edges. It can be configured to start at Windows start-up if required.

<http://www.fxc.btinternet.co.uk/assistive.htm>

## **Readers Pal – Version 3.3**

Reader's Pal is a program intended to ease reading on a computer monitor by displaying text in large fonts and with foreground and background colors of the user's choice. The program can read text from the Windows clipboard, as well as text, HTML and zipped files. Among its features are speed reading, book marking and text-only web browsing.

[www.geocities.com/readerspal](http://www.geocities.com/readerspal)



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