SUGGESTIONS FOR AFFORDABLE SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

 (…) the Adaptech Research Network established a project called "Free and Inexpensive Information Technologies". We have identified, tested and compiled a list of free and/or inexpensive ($200 CAD or less) computer software and hardware that could be useful to people with various disabilities. Some of these are long-term demos (30 days or more), while others are fully functional.

The aim of gathering these products in one place is to give people with disabilities the opportunity to try different computer and information technologies that might be useful. Despite the fact that there are excellent - and often very expensive - technologies on the market, these are generally too expensive for many people with disabilities. For this reason, we believe that these free and inexpensive products are a good start. In this way, people with disabilities do not have to spend a great deal of money only to realize that the expensive product they purchased does not suit their needs.

Our criteria for choosing these products are: (1) that they cost less than $200 CAD, and (2) that they are tested by a member of our team to confirm that they work properly.

We are currently in the process of updating our list and welcome suggestions. People with disabilities and campus disability service providers highly recommended the products you see on our list. Please send your ideas and comments about free and inexpensive (less than $200 CAD) computer and information technologies that could be useful to people with disabilities to Catherine Fichten (catherine.fichten@mcgill.ca). If possible, please also include the name and the website of the product so that we might obtain more information.

Listed below are our favourite products. For information on prices and downloads or to browse through our product list, please visit our website at www.adaptech.org and click "Downloads" or type into your browser the following website: http://adaptech.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/fandi_e.php.

Subsidy programs exist to assist some people with disabilities to obtain adapted computer and information technologies for home use. To learn more, contact the technical support specialists of your rehabilitation center. People with disabilities who are not eligible for programs such as those offered by the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) or by the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST) may be eligible for the Programme ministériel des aides techniques à la communication: <http://www.irdpq.qc.ca/services_clientele/programmations/adultes/PDF/Prg.AT.pdf>

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OUR FAVOURITE SOFTWARES ♥

WordQ:
This is word prediction software: as one starts typing a word, it suggests several words from which one can choose. It can also pronounce the word aloud. This software is often recommended for people with learning disabilities and for those who type slowly.

TextAloud:
This software saves computer sound files in MP3 or WMA format, which can be used with portable devices like iPods, laptops and CD players.

OmniPage:
This is software that is used with a scanner to convert PDF files and text on paper into word processing documents and other types of editable documents which can then be read by screen reading software such as ReadPlease.

Microsoft Office XP language bar:
The Language bar, which is integrated into Microsoft Office, provides voice and handwriting recognition. This software is often recommended for people with learning disabilities and for those who type slowly.

ReadPlease:
This free software reads the text that appears on the screen, in English and in French, and highlights words as it reads. The size of the font as well as the reading speed can be adjusted. This helps people correct their work or listen to electronic text. This software is often recommended for people with learning disabilities and with low vision.

Antidote:
This software corrects grammar and spelling in French.