

## Assistive Technology for Dyslexic Students & Adults

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### What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive technology is defined as any **device, piece of equipment or system** that helps bypass, work around or compensate for an individual's specific learning challenges. Many more options exist today to help students and adults with learning differences make the most of their abilities. Assistive technology is not a cure for dyslexia, but does provide alternative strategies for students and adults to compensate for areas of weakness and capitalize on their strongest talents. For example, a student who struggles with reading but who has good listening skills might benefit from listening to audio books.

Whenever possible, assistive technology should be used in conjunction with remedial efforts and not as a replacement to learning skills that help alleviate deficits. Parents and adults investigating assistive technology should focus on the individual's specific needs when reviewing and considering any technology. The International Dyslexia Association Georgia Branch does not endorse any specific device or system.

The following list and web links are provided to assist you in your search for assistive technology options.

### **FREE Assistive Technology Options**

(This list is not all inclusive. Check back frequently for updates.)

**Bookshare** -- <http://www.bookshare.org/> **Bookshare® is free for all U.S. students with qualifying disabilities**, thanks to an award from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Offers approximately 90,000 digital books, textbooks, teacher-recommended reading, periodicals and assistive technology tools. Bookshare offers two free computer software applications, as well as high-quality voices for Bookshare Members. A DAISY reader from the DAISY Consortium is also available for free. Membership is free with proof of disability. All other individuals may pay \$75 (\$25 one-time set up fee + \$50 annual fee). Organizations that serve adults and students with print disabilities, including all US k-12 schools, colleges & universities may join free.

**Learning Ally** (Formerly known as **RFB&D Audio** by Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic Inc.) offers free Individual Membership for eligible people with visual impairments or dyslexia who experience difficulty in reading print material. To use Learning Ally, membership is required. To learn more and see if you are eligible for membership, please copy and paste into your browser: <http://www.learningally.org/>

**Librivox** -- LibriVox provides free audiobooks from the public domain. LibriVox volunteers record chapters of books in the public domain and release the audio files back onto the net. Their goal is to make all public domain books available as free audio books. There are several options for listening. The first step is to get the mp3 or ogg files into your own computer: <http://librivox.org/>

**NaturalReader 10** -- NaturalReader is a Text to Speech software with natural sounding voices. This easy to use software can convert any written text such as MS Word, Webpage, PDF files, and Emails into spoken words. NaturalReader can also convert any



written text into audio files such as MP3 or WAV for your CD player or iPod. Free Downloadable version available at <http://www.naturalreaders.com/index.htm> ; Expanded versions available starting at \$49.50.

**Audible.com** – Amazon.com driven audio book source. In addition to audiobooks, Audible.com is home to magazines, radio shows, podcasts, stand-up comedy, and speeches from icons who shape our culture, politics, and business world. Claim to feature the best narrators interpreting books by top authors. Monthly membership plans start at \$7.49 after two-week free trial. <http://www.audible.com>

**ProjectGutenberg** -- is a volunteer effort to digitize and archive cultural works, to "encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks." Founded in 1971 by Michael S. Hart, it is the oldest digital library. <http://www.projectgutenberg.org/>



## **FREE or Low Cost Apps Available for Apple iPhone, iPod Touch, & iPad**

Additional Assistive Technology applications are available through Apple, Android, Windows Mobile & Blackberry app stores. The ones listed here are currently downloadable at little or no cost to Apple products unless otherwise noted.

Apple devices come equipped with the **VoiceOver** feature that serves as a screen reader for those with visual disabilities. By touching or scrolling your finger across the screen, you will be told exactly what lies beneath your fingertips. When you wish to write an email or send a text message **VoiceOver** will echo every letter you select and then speak it again to confirm it. With Voice Control you can easily call or play music by speaking the name of the person or artist you would like to hear. The iPhone4 and 3GS understands 21 different languages!

**Dragon Dictation** (Nuance Communications) – voice recognition application allows you to easily speak and instantly see your text or email messages. Works on Apple iPad, iPhone and second and third generation iPod Touch (external microphone required). Available as Dragon Email for Blackberry, and FlexT9 for Android.

**Dragon Search** (Nuance Communications) – accurate way to search online content using your voice. Search queries from a variety of top websites including Google or Yahoo, YouTube, Twitter, iTunes & Wikipedia.

**Note2Self Audio Recorder** (Web Information Solutions) – audio recorder and voice note sharing solution. Notes can be saved or emailed automatically.

**QuickVoice Recorder** (nFinity Inc.) – one touch recording for memos, email, dictation, lists, meetings, classes or entire lectures.



**Audiobooks** (Cross Forward Consulting) – over 3,535 classic audio books, plus a growing collection of newer titles. Paid version also available for \$0.99 to eliminate ads.

**Audiobooks for Your Kids** – free version contains three classic children’s books. \$0.99 version includes 30 titles.

**Free Audiobooks** (from Books in Audio) – best selling and professionally narrated audio books; new premium titles added monthly.

**Best Audiobooks (100)** (Gp Imports Inc. Software) – 100 audio books, titles continuously updated to most popular public domain books.

**Image to Speech (OCR)** -- This application is not free, but listed since it is only \$0.99. Allows you to take a picture, any picture and the application will read out loud the text inside the image.

**MindNode** – Available for MAC users at no cost. Program is a simple-to-use mind mapping application for the Macintosh that help to visually: collect, classify and structure ideas, organize, study and solve problems. Mind maps can be used for many different tasks – including to-do lists, brainstorming, holiday planning, research, writing, project management – and in many different environments – school, meetings, workspace.

**Read It Later** -- a simple text-to-speech program worth exploring as no Internet connection is needed to use it. Upgraded *Read It Later Pro* version available for \$0.99. Available for Apple, Android, Windows Mobile and Blackberry under different names: <http://readitlaterlist.com/apps/mobile>

**Say it and Mail it** -- allows you to record your email then mail it. Record and email voice memos using your iTool. Use it to email reminders to yourself or email messages to anyone. (iTouch will need a mic attached.) Upgraded version available for \$2.99.

**Talk Mail Lite** – Listen to your emails out loud, 2 months free. Reads aloud emails received via Google, MobileMe, AOL Mail — any IMAP-enabled email account. For Microsoft Exchange or Yahoo, sync with Mobile Me or use auto-forwarding. Talk Mail Pro available for \$2.99.

**Typ-O** (Anders Johansen) – Typ-O uses a powerful word prediction engine and sophisticated spelling error model to help you write, even if your spelling isn’t perfect. Available for Apple Mac, iPad, iPhone and iPod Touch at \$4.99.

**Jagamaga Audiobooks Lite** (Andreas Mehrens) – over 50 titles, plus hundreds of free short-fiction; searchable by genre, title, author, and narrator.

**vBookz** -- is a free book reader with voices that are really quite fantastic. What vBookz have done is expand upon Apple’s theme, keeping much of the design and functionality used by iBooks whilst adding one feature that is absent from the iBooks application: text-to-speech. Application available for \$3.99.

<http://vbookz.com/v1/Home.html>



**Web Reader** (Chris Chauvin) -- Web Reader 2.2 for iPhone uses text to speech technology along with web page content recognition to read web pages to you. You can configure web pages to be read as soon as they are loaded, read pages manually after they are loaded, or use Cut, Copy, & Paste to read only sections of text. Available for \$1.99.

**ZenTap** – a word prediction system that allows you to complete words simply typing the first letters. It features: auto completion, spell check, a wider typing screen and the possibility to change the font size. For those who struggle with the iPhone keyboard, this may be a good option. Free ZenTap Pro available for \$2.99. Multiple formats available at <http://www.techrepublic.com/software>

### **Helpful Links**

Assistive Technology is available to help students and adults with a multitude of learning styles. The following websites have additional information available for a broad range of tasks.

<http://www.greatschools.org/special-education/assistive-technology/assistive-technology-for-kids-with-learning-disabilities-an-overview.gs?content=702>

<http://atclassroom.blogspot.com/2010/02/iphoneitouchipad-in-special-education.html>

For additional information about the International Dyslexia Association, please visit our national website at : <http://www.interdys.org/>

And our Georgia Branch IDA site at: <http://www.idaga.org/>



Plus, join us on facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/International-Dyslexia-Association-Georgia-Branch/148082605241943>

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