



Software to Assist Adults with Learning Difficulties

In recent years the computer has become a very versatile tool. The ability to capture images, record and play sounds, attach an assortment of keyboards and mice has enabled the computer to adapt to meet a multitude of needs. An area where this adaptability can add real value is in supporting people with learning difficulties.

Learning difficulties covers a very wide and diverse group of people. We use the term to include those people with a learning disability from birth, as well as people with an acquired learning difficulty, e.g. as a result of a head injury. Specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, is covered on a separate factsheet called 'A Dyslexia Toolkit'.

A number of people with learning difficulties find the standard keyboard and mouse difficult to use. Alternatives to these devices are listed on our factsheet, 'Getting Round – Difficulties with the Keyboard and Mouse'.

This factsheet gives examples of software that is, or can be made, more suitable for an older age group. For convenience, the software is grouped into the following areas:

- Motivation
- Lifeskills
- Literacy
- Memory & Cognition

Motivation

Music Factory

This program is about listening and creating musical compositions from pre-defined sound clips

Price £35

Supplier: Widgit

Switch Connection

Six games for switch training.

Supplier: Sensory Software, Inclusive Technology

Price: £60

Demonstration disk: Available from supplier

K-1

Is a musical kaleidoscope. The colours and shapes can be pre-set or the program can constantly change them.

Supplier: Inclusive Technology

Price: £25

Gamz Jigsaw

A jigsaw program.

Supplier: Gamz

Price: £18

Switch It Patterns

Patterns is designed for those who need visual stimulation and the development of visual skills associated with location, fixing and following.

Supplier: Inclusive Technology

Price: £30

Doodle plus

A paint program.

Supplier: Semerc

Price: £50

Drumkit

The program allows learners to augment music with their own input, e.g. a switch could be used to trigger a simple beat of a drum.

Supplier: Inclusive Technology

Price: £30

Textease

It is a powerful word processing and desktop publishing program.

Supplier: Semerc, REM

Price: £85

Demonstration: Available from website: www.textease.com

Additional Software to Consider:

BrainsBreaker : This is another jigsaw program. Supplier: BrainsBreaker. Price: Free (although there is a charge for some puzzles). Download from website.

Disco: Disco is a basic cause and effect piece of software. Supplier: Inclusive Technology. Price: £40

Project Presenter: This program can be used to create a 'storybook' by combining pictures, sounds and video. Microsoft PowerPoint is similar but more powerful. Supplier: Semerc. Price: £40

Lifeskills

Out and About

A series of lifeskill tasks including Shopping, Banking, Home, Travel.

Supplier: Semerc

Price: £60

Lifeskills: 24 Hours A Day

Users are presented with different everyday scenarios within which they make decisions over the course of the day.

Supplier: Inclusive Technology

Price: £50

Streetwise – Smart Moves

Streetwise aims to support learning in the area of lifeskills, addressing issues such as healthy eating, safety in the home, formal interview techniques.

Supplier: Learning & Teaching Scotland

Price: £40

SwitchIt! Maker

Is a program for creating sequential learning activities. It is appropriate for developing the concepts of cause-and-effect, sequencing and building. Pictures/images can be imported to create appropriate learning and lifeskill activities.

Supplier: Inclusive Technology

Price: £40

Additional software to consider:

Lifeskills: Smart Spender' & Lifeskills: Time & Money'. A way to learn about handling money and telling the time.

Supplier: Learning & Teaching Scotland, Semerc. Price: £40

Literacy

Clicker

Is a writing program that lets you write with pictures as well as words

Supplier: Crick, Semerc, Inclusive Technology

Price: £90

Writing with Symbols 2000

This is an integrated word and graphics processor for those who have difficulty using text.

Supplier: Widgit

Price: £160

ScreenReader

ScreenReader is a program which allows your computer to 'speak out' the text in any windows based application.

Supplier: Texthelp

Price: £30 or £20 (via Website)

Demonstration: Available from Website

Penfriend

Penfriend is a (talking) prediction package. It works alongside your word processor. It tries to predict the word you are about to type.

Supplier: Inclusive Technology, Crick

Price: £60

Demonstration: Available from website: www.penfriend.ltd.uk

Additional software to consider:

Hangman Gold 3.0. Hangman Gold is a computerized version of the word game of the same name. Price: Free. Download from website:

www.zdnet.co.uk/software/free/

All My Words: Is an instant literacy tool. Text based exercises can be set up appropriate to client group. Pictures can be included. Supplier: Crick. Price: £60

Wordbar: Offers writing support when using a word processor. It provides instant access to banks of words and phrases. Supplier: Crick, Semerc. Price: £50

Memory and Cognition

React

React is a program of interactive tasks designed to augment the speech and language therapist's repertoire of therapy materials.

Supplier: Propeller Multimedia Ltd.

Price: £60 (individual modules) to £425 (complete system)

Demonstration disk: Available from supplier

Signs and Symbols

Real-life sign and symbol recognition activities, incorporating visual memory, auditory memory, auditory discrimination and visual perception/discrimination.

Supplier: Semerc

Price: £50

Mastering Memory

A program designed by a speech and language therapist as a tool to improve memory skills. Sequences of pictures and/or words are presented for a set period of time. Clients are then asked to create the same arrangement.

Supplier: CALSC (Communication and Learning Skills Centre)

Price: £130

Demonstration: Available from website, www.calsc.co.uk

Intact

A program designed specifically for dysphasic people. It is generally sold to speech and language therapy departments.

Supplier: Aphasia Computer Team

Price: £300

Colorcards

ColorCards contains activities to reinforce key skill areas such as visual discrimination, problem solving, numeracy and concentration.

Supplier: Semerc

Price: £50

Timely Reminders

A memory program to help users to remember facts and procedures.

Supplier: REM, CALSC (Communication and Learning Skills Centre)

Price: £35

Demonstration: Available from website, www.calsc.co.uk

Additional software to consider:

Bungalow: Bungalow Software provides extra therapy practice to help with speech, reading and writing skills. Supplier: Bungalow. Prices: refer to website. Prices are in US dollars (\$70-\$140). Demonstration: Available from Website

Parrot: Parrot software provides extra therapy to assist people that have had a stroke and other head injuries. Supplier: Parrot Software. Prices: refer to website. Demonstration: Available from Website

B-Puzzle: B-Puzzle is the electronic version of the sliding puzzle game. Supplier: ADC-Soft. Price: \$10. Demonstration: Available from Website

Strategy Games: (*Chess, Bridge, Backgammon*)

Supplier: GSP Ltd. Price: £15

Family Games: (*incl. Draughts, Connect 4*)

Games of logic where the user can challenge the computer. Supplier: GSP Ltd.

Price: £15

Solitaire: This is the card game that comes with Microsoft Windows.

Notes

1. Prices are approximate and exclude Vat.
2. Semerc, Inclusive Technology, REM, AVP have catalogues that illustrate a wide range of software
3. You may find that some software is available on a sale/return basis. Refer to the appropriate supplier.

Suppliers List

ADC-Soft

Web: www.adcsoft.com

Aphasia Computing Team

Frenchay Hospital

Bristol

Tel: 0117 918 6529

Web: www.speech-therapy.org.uk

AVP

Tel: 01291 625 439

Web: www.avp.co.uk

BrainsBreaker

Web: www.brainsbreaker.com

Bungalow Software

Email: info@bungalowsoftware.com

Web: www.bungalowsoftware.com

CALSC

Sutton, Surrey

Tel: 020 8642 4663

Web: www.calsc.co.uk

Crick Software Ltd.

Northampton

Tel: 01604 671 691

Email: info@cricksoft.com

Web: www.cricksoft.com

GAMZ

Malvern

Tel: 01684 562 158

Web: www.gamzuk.com

GSP Ltd

Tel: 01480 496 575

Web: www.gspltd.co.uk

Inclusive Technology

Oldham

Tel: 01457 819 790

Email: inclusive@inclusive.co.uk

Web: www.inclusive.co.uk

Learning & Teaching Scotland

Glasgow.

Tel: 0141 337 5000

Email: enquiries@ltscotland.com

Web: www.ltscotland.com

Parrot Software

Web: www.parrotsoftware.com

Propeller Multimedia Ltd.

Tel: 01896 833528

Web: www.propeller.net/react

REM Ltd

Tel: 01458 254 700

Web: www.r-e-m.co.uk

Sensory Software Ltd

Malvern

Tel: 01684 578 868

Email: info@sensorysoftware.com

Web: www.sensorysoftware.com

SEMERC

Granada Television, Quay Street,
Manchester

Tel: 0161 827 2927

Web: www.granada-learning.co.uk

Texthelp Systems

Antrim

Tel: 0800 328 7910

Email: info@texthelp.com

Web: www.texthelp.com

Widgit

Leamington Spa

Tel: 01926 885 303

Web: www.widgit.com