



Accessibility

A Guide for Educators

Empower students with accessible technology
that enables personalized learning

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About This Guide

Purpose of This Guide

In the era of personalized learning where we shift the focus from what is being taught, to what is being learned, the student's needs and style become more central. Personalized learning requires attention to the unique needs of all students—particularly students with learning difficulties or physical disabilities. As students are encouraged to take greater responsibility for their learning, and for using technology to

Chapter 1: Personalized Learning & Accessibility

Education leaders around the world are focused on preparing students in primary and secondary schools for tomorrow's world, with the objective of helping each one meet his or her maximum potential. This focus, combined with the realization that every child learns in a unique way, is at the heart of "personalized learning." As educators have endeavored to reach this goal, technology has emerged as a key component in making personalized learning a reality.

As personalized learning shifts the focus from what is being taught to what is being learned, the student's needs and style become more central. Personalized learning requires attention to the unique needs of all students—particularly students with learning difficulties or physical disabilities.

As students are encouraged to take greater responsibility for their learning and for using technology to acquire new skills, schools have a responsibility to provide accessible technology that can be personalized for each student's needs.

Microsoft supports the personalized learning vision by providing technology that is accessible to every student—regardless of ability. Microsoft leads the industry in accessibility innovation and in building products that are safe and easy to use.

Providing accessible technology in the classroom to students with disabilities enables all students to have the same educational opportunities. For example, students with vision impairments who cannot read the small text on their screens can adjust the font and text to make it easier to read, providing them with the same content and learning opportunities as their peers.

This chapter introduces accessibility, defines exactly what accessible technology is, and why it is important to ensure all students have accessible technology in schools.

What is Accessibility and Accessible Technology?

In the context of this guide, accessible technology is defined as computer technology

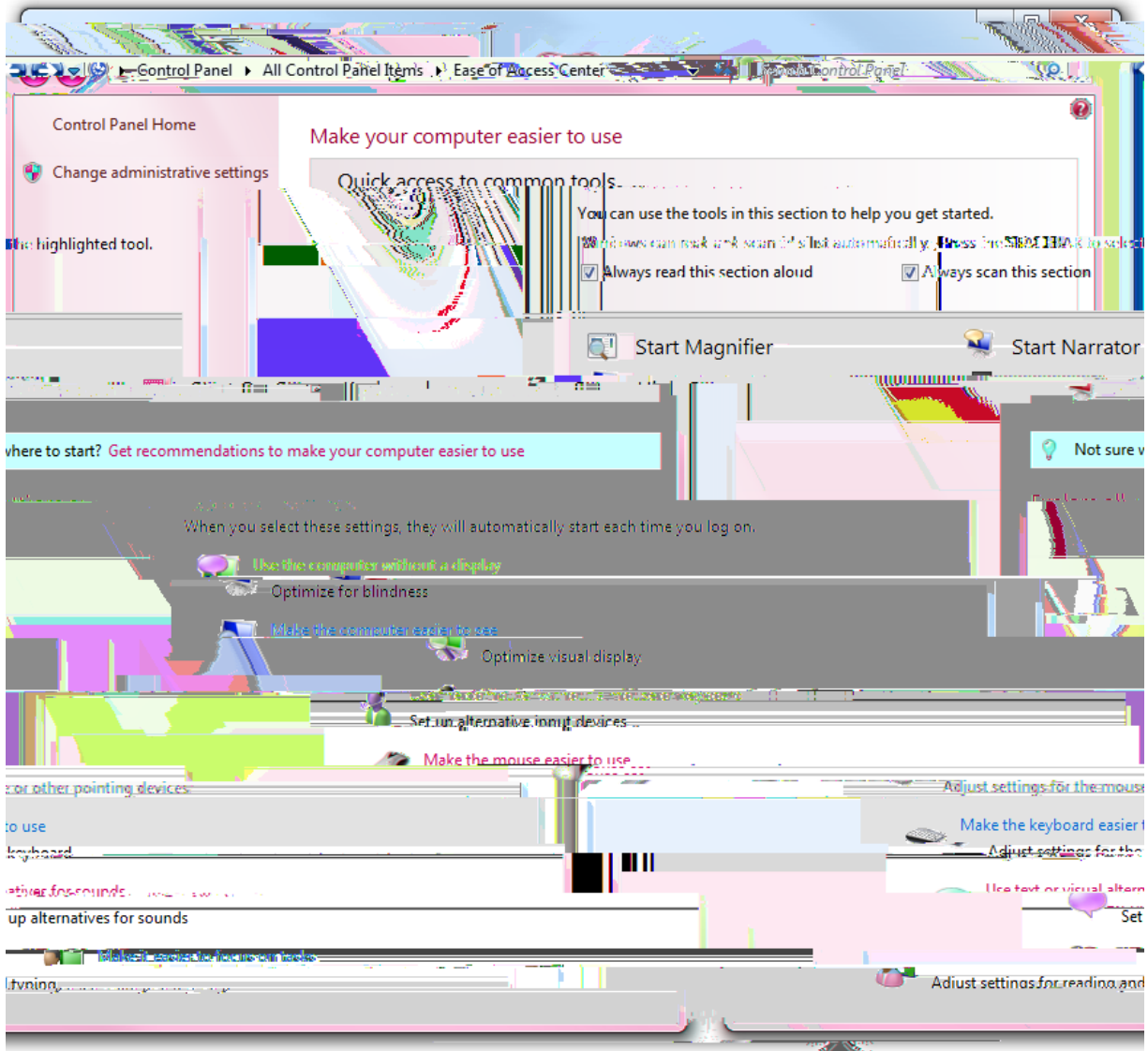


Figure 1-1. Ease of Access Center is found in Windows 7 and Windows Vista

The Need for Accessible Technology in Schools

Accessible technology in schools is important for several reasons. First and foremost, many countries--including the United States--require schools by law to provide equal access to technologies for students with disabilities, which means accommodating those students' disabilities. Among the myriad reasons for legislating equal access is the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

In many developing countries, students with special needs are being integrated into mainstream classrooms rather than schools that focus solely on students with disabilities. This trend created a greater need for schools and educators to understand how accessible technology can benefit the diverse needs of students.

Prevalence of Adults and Students with Disabilities Across the Globe

Although definitions of disability and statistics collected by various organizations vary widely; by any estimate, the number of people living with disabilities worldwide is very large.

The number of children with special education needs has grown the past 20 years due to increased diversity in communities and better diagnostic tools. According to [Organi\(ing\)-e](#)

Chapter 2: Impairment Types & Technology Solutions

In this chapter, the term “disability” is discussed, and the different types of impairments are outlined including vision, mobility and dexterity, hearing, language, learning, and age-related impairments. Specific examples of accessible technology solutions are provided for each type of impairment.

Defining “Disability” and Impairments

A quick Internet search on the question “What is the definition of disability?” is likely to net thousands of matches. Each person who tackles the question does so from a particular perspective and bias. In fact, most of us already have formed our own definition of what disability means to us based on our own frame of reference. In many cases, the definition is all about legal contracts and insurance benefits.

The definition of a disability or impairment, however it is defined, is relevant in this discussion only because we discuss accessible technology solutions for different types of impairments. Before determining how accessible technology can benefit your students, it is beneficial to understand the types of impairments and how those impairments impact computer use.

Vision Impairments

Among computer users in the United States, approximately 1 in 4 (27%) has a vision impairment that


Accessibility Features in Windows


Windows makes it easy to find options helpful for students who have difficulty seeing the screen, or for students who are blind and need to use the computer without a display. Below you will find accessibility features in Windows 7 and Windows Vista organized by how to make the computer easier to see, how to use the computer without a display (or monitor), and by keyboard shortcuts.

Make the computer easier to see

For students who have vision impairments and low vision, start by using the **Make the computer easier to see** page in the Ease of Access Center found in Windows 7 and Windows Vista.

Tip

To go to the Ease of Access Center, press Windows logo key  + U.

1. In Windows 7 or Windows Vista, open the [Make the computer easier to see](#) page by clicking the **Start** button , clicking Control Panel, clicking **Ease of Access**, clicking **Ease of Access Center**, and then clicking **Make the computer easier to see**.
2. On the **Make the computer easier to see page**, you can select the options that you want to use:

Choose a High Contrast theme. This option allows you to set a high-contrast color scheme that heightens the color contrast of some text and images on your computer screen, making those items more distinct and easier to identify.

Turn on or off High Contrast when Left ALT+LEFT SHIFT+PRINT SCREEN is pressed. This option allows you to toggle a high-contrast theme on or off by pressing the LEFT ALT+LEFT SHIFT+PRTSCN (Print Screen) keys.

Turn on Narrator. This option sets Narrator to run when you log on to your computer. Narrator reads aloud on-screen text and describes some on-screen events (such as error messages appearing) while you're using the computer. For more information about using Narrator, see [Hear text read aloud with Narrator](#).

Turn on Audio Description. This option sets Audio Descriptions to run when you log on to your computer. Audio Descriptions describe what's happening in videos.

and the built-

Learning Impairments

Learning impairments can range from conditions such as dyslexia and attention deficit disorder to retardation. Processing problems are the most common and have the most impact on a person's ability to use a computer. These conditions interfere with the learning process.

Many students with these impairments are perfectly capable of learning if information is presented to them in a form and at a pace that is appropriate to them individually. Information that is presented in short, discrete units is often easier to understand. In addition, many individuals with learning disabilities learn more efficiently using their visual abilities rather than their auditory skills. Many are primarily visual or auditory learners, whereas other learners are "ambidextrous." Control over the individual learner's single- or multisensory experience is critical.

Did You Know?

According to the International Dyslexia Association and the Learning Disabilities Association of America, about 15% of the population (close to 1 in 7) has a learning disability.

Accessibility Features in Windows


The simplified interface in Windows 7 and Windows Vista benefits people with learning impairments, as well as people with language impairments, because it helps reduce the number of competing elements on the screen. Complicated user interfaces can interfere with learning. User interface engineers found that an emphasis on a consistent user experience had the greatest positive impact on individuals with processing problems. Consider the student who can't read his own handwriting but can edit for others by using a computer. Additional computer settings such as adjustable text and screen element sizes, speech capabilities, choice of visual or sound warnings for system events, and Internet display options can benefit those with learning impairments.

Features in Windows and Office that might be useful for students with learning impairments include:

- Making it easier to focus on reading and typing tasks
- Checking spelling and grammar in Office programs
- Using AutoComplete in Office

Making it easier to focus on reading and typing tasks

You can use the settings on the **Make it easier to focus on tasks** page in the Ease of Access Center in Windows 7 and Windows Vista to reduce the amount of information on the screen and to help students focus on reading and typing tasks.

In Windows 7 or Windows Vista, open the [Make it easier to focus on tasks](#) page by clicking the **Start** button , clicking **Control Panel**, clicking **Ease of Access**, clicking **Ease of Access Center**, and then clicking **Make it easier to focus on tasks**.

Checking spelling and grammar in Office programs

In Microsoft Office 2010, the **Spelling & Grammar** command is on the **Review** tab. Also on the **Review** tab, are the **Research**, **Thesaurus**, and **Translate** commands which also may be helpful for students.

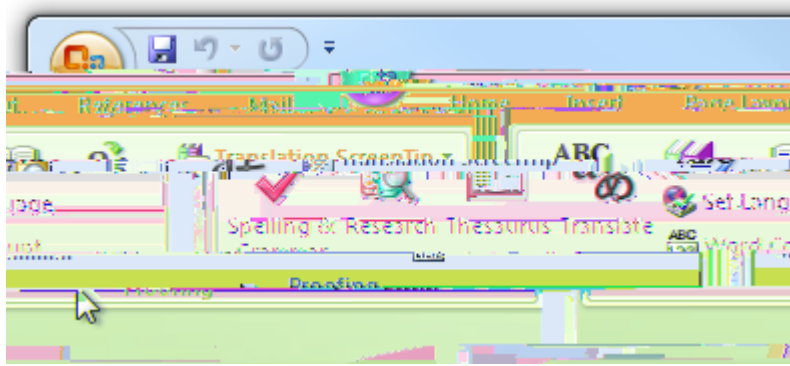


Figure 2-3. Office 2010 Spelling & Gra

multiple keys simultaneously (like CTRL+ALT+DELETE). Still others might strike multiple keys or repeat keys unintentionally. Some students might have use of their hands and arms but have a limited range of motion. All of these conditions can make using a standard mouse or keyboard difficult, if not impossible.


Mobility and dexterity impairments need to be individually addressed to choose the right mix of accessibility features in Windows and assistive technology hardware and software solutions.

There are many types of products available to allow students to use a computer, even if the students can move only their eyes. Outlined below are accessibility features in Windows to make the mouse and keyboard more comfortable. In addition, you can set up a computer for a student who needs to use an on-screen keyboard and other alternative input options rather than a standard keyboard or mouse. Following are examples of assist

altering the scroll wheel speed. In Windows 7 and Windows Vista, open the Mouse Control Panel by clicking the **Start** button , clicking **Control Panel**, clicking **Hardware**, and then clicking **Mouse**.

Make the keyboard easier to use

For a student who has pain or discomfort when using the keyboard, consider a different style of keyboard (options discussed below) and also make sure to adjust the keyboard controls. You can adjust these settings on the **Make the keyboard easier to use** page in the Ease of Access Center.

1. In Windows 7 or Windows Vista, open the [Make the keyboard easier to use](#) page by clicking the **Start** button , clicking **Control Panel**, clicking **Ease of Access**, clicking **Ease of Access Center**, and then clicking **Make the keyboard easier to use**.
2. On the **Make the keyboard easier to use** page, select the options that you want to use:

Turn on Mouse Keys. This option sets Mouse Keys to run when you log on to Windows. Instead of using the mouse, you can use the arrow keys on your keyboard or the numeric keypad to move the pointer.

Turn on Sticky Keys. This option sets Sticky Keys to run when you log on to Windows. Instead of having to press three keys at once (such as when you must press the CTRL, ALT, and DELETE keys together to log on to Windows), you can use one key at a time by turning on Sticky Keys and adjusting the settings. Then, you can press a modifier key and have it remain active until another key is pressed.

Turn on Toggle Keys. This option sets Toggle Keys to run when you log on to Windows. Toggle Keys can play an alert each time you press the CAPS LOCK, NUM LOCK, or SCROLL LOCK keys. These alerts can help prevent the frustration of inadvertently pressing a key and not realizing it.

Turn on Filter Keys. This option sets Filter Keys to run when you log on to Windows. You can set Windows to ignore keystrokes that occur in rapid succession, or keystrokes that are held down for several seconds unintentionally.

Underline keyboard shortcuts and access keys. This option makes keyboard access in dialog boxes easier by highlighting access keys for the controls in them. (For more information about keyboard shortcuts, see below).

Prevent windows from being automatically arranged when moved to the edge of the screen. This option prevents windows from automatically resizing and docking along the sides of your screen when you move them there.

Keyboard shortcuts

Keyboard shortcuts are combinations of two or more keys that, when pressed, can be used to perform a task that would typically require a mouse or other pointing device. Keyboard shortcuts can make it easier for students with all kinds of impairments, particularly dexterity impairments who might find using the mouse tiresome. Memorizing a few keyboard shortcuts makes it faster for students to get to where they need to go.

A list of keyboard shortcuts for Windows is available at <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/Windows7/Keyboard-shortcuts>

Here are a few keyboard shortcuts for the features mentioned in this section:

Press this key	To do this
RIGHT SHIFT for eight seconds	Turn Filter Keys on and off
LEFT ALT+LEFT SHIFT+PRTSCN (or PRTSC)	Turn High Contrast on or off



Figure 2-4. On-Screen Keyboard in Windows 7 with text prediction

Use Speech Recognition. Use this option to control the computer with your voice. With a microphone, you can speak commands that the computer will understand and respond to, as well as dictate text. For more information about setting up Speech Recognition, see [Set up Speech Recognition](#).

Assistive Technology Products for Students with Mobility and Dexterity Impairments

The following list describes assistive technology products used with computers by people with mobility and dexterity impairments.

Ergonomic keyboards and mice. Ergonomic keyboards and mice are designed to be more comfortable than a standard keyboard and mouse. To improve the quality and health of your PC experience, Microsoft designers and ergonomists created industry-leading keyboard and mouse products to encourage healthier hand and wrist positions. Microsoft® Natural® keyboards and mice have set the industry standard for comfort, and can significantly reduce carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms. [Microsoft keyboards and mice](#) also have built-in zoom and magnifier options.

Joysticks can be plugged into the computer's mouse port and used to control the cursor on the screen. Joysticks benefit users who need to operate a computer with or without the use of their hands. For example, some people might operate the joystick with their feet or with the use of a cup on top of the joystick that can be manipulated with their chin. An example of a joystick is the SAM-Joystick.

Trackballs look like an upside down mouse with a movable ball on top of a stationary base. An example of a trackball is shown in Figure 2-5. The ball can be rotated with a pointing device or a hand. People who have fine motor skills but lack gross motor skills can use these devices more easily and comfortably than a traditional mouse. BigTrack is an example of a trackball style mouse that is more comfortable for many people with dexterity issues.

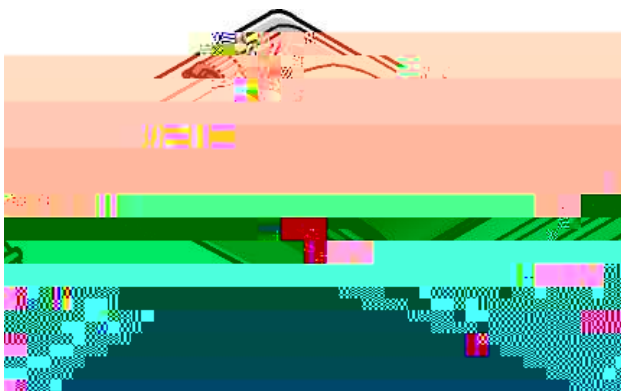



Figure 2-5. Trackball

On-screen keyboard programs provide an image of a standard or modified keyboard on the computer screen. The user selects the keys with a mouse, touch screen, trackball, joystick, switch, or electronic pointing device. On-screen keyboards often have a scanning option. With the scanning capability turned on, the individual keys on the on-screen keyboard are highlighted. When a desired key is highlighted, the user is able to select it by using a switch positioned near a body part that he or she has under voluntary control. On-Screen Keyboard is found in

To adjust overall sound volume in Windows 7 or Windows Vista:

1. Open **Volume Control** by clicking the **Start** button , clicking **Control Panel**, clicking **Hardware and Sound**, and then, under **Audio Devices and Sound**, clicking **Adjust system volume**.
2. Under **Main Volume**, move the slider up or down to raise or lower the volume.


Change computer sounds

You can select the sounds that play when certain events occur on screen. This is helpful for students who have trouble hearing some sounds—high or low-pitched sounds, for example, or sounds associated with other devices. To change sounds in Windows 7 or Windows Vista:

 Open **Sound** by clicking the **Start** button , and then clicking

Use text or visual alternatives to sounds

Windows provides settings for using visual cues to replace sounds in many programs. You can adjust these settings on the **Use text or visual alternatives for sounds** page in the Ease of Access Center.

1. In Windows 7 or Windows Vista, open the [Use text or visual alternatives for sounds](#) page by clicking the **Start** button , clicking **Control Panel**, clicking **Ease of Access**, clicking **Ease of Access Center**, and then clicking **Use text or ves for sounds**

Make it easier to focus on reading and typing tasks

You can use the settings on the **Make it easier to focus on tasks** page in the Ease of Access Center in Windows 7 and Windows Vista to reduce the amount of information on the screen and to help students focus on tasks.

1. In Windows 7 or Windows Vista, open the

Chapter 3: Selecting Accessible Technology

When selecting technology for your school or classroom, it is important to consider accessibility features and assistive technology products that will be helpful to individuals with specific disabilities. It is also important to plan for the onset of temporary disabilities that will inevitably occur.

This chapter includes guidance on how to go about identifying accessibility solutions for students, details about accessibility settings in Microsoft products, a starter guide to assistive technology hardware and software, and a needs assessment tool.

Identifying the Right Mix of Accessibility Solutions

Improving the learning experience can mean different things to different individuals: having a multisensory experience of audio paired with a visual representation may benefit one student, while reducing visual and auditory distractions may be better for another. There are hundreds of types of accessibility solutions available—both built-in features and assistive technology hardware and software products—so it is important to take the time to identify the right mix of accessibility solutions for each student.

Needs Assessments

Identifying the best assistive technology solution often requires an in-depth needs assessment to understand how a difficulty or impairment impacts computer use. It is important to take the time to evaluate a student's needs through an assessment tool or provide assistive technology consultation with an AT expert before purchasing products.

Many schools and districts have accessibility and special education staff for student assessment. If your school doesn't have those resources available, an assistive technology decision tree tool is provided later in this guide to help you. In addition, many accessibility consultants are available through various organizations including those listed below.

Accessibility Consultants

Many assistive technology centers and occupational therapists have accessibility consultants to help individuals identify the right mix of accessibility features and products. Some centers offer computer training and many organizations have lending libraries, so you can try a product before committing to purchase it.

In the United States

Microsoft Accessibility Resource Centers (www.microsoft.com/enable/centers) are available in the United States. These centers provide expert consultation on assistive technology and accessibility features built into Microsoft products.

The Alliance for Technology Access (www.ataccess.org) and the **Assistive Technology Act Programs** (www.ataporg.org/) are other U.S. national networks dedicated to providing information and technology support services to children and adults with disabilities.

The Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America, known as RESNA, (www.resna.org) offers certification programs for assistive technology practitioners. RESNA is another source for identifying AT experts who can assist schools in North America.

In Asia

Tokyo Information Technology Regional Support Center for persons with disabilities (www.tokyo-itcenter.com/) delivers training, organizes IT support, and has an exhibition room for people with disabilities.

Osaka IT Station (www.itsapoot.jp/) provides work-related training, organizes IT support, and has an exhibition room for people with disabilities.

In Latin America

POETA Accessible Centers in Latin America (www.poetaweb.org) deliver training in information and communications technology, civic education, and job readiness to thousands of at-risk youth and people with disabilities across Latin America and the Caribbean.

In Europe

AbilityNet in the UK (www.abilitynet.org.uk/) ensures people with disabilities in the UK, whether as individuals or through supporting organizations, have accessible IT that enables and improves their lives. AbilityNet is the leading UK charity for computing and disability, and has a network of centers. A range of free resources are available from their website. AbilityNet also offers advice on Web and software accessibility including user testing.

ONCE The Spanish National Organization for the Blind (www.once.es) and its foundation, ONCE Foundation for Cooperation and the Social Integration of People with Disabilities in Spain (www.fundaciononce.es), provide work-related training and employment for people with disabilities, and universal accessibility, promoting the creation of universally accessible environments, products, and services.

Enable Ireland (www.enableireland.ie/) works in partnership with those who use its services to achieve maximum independence, choice, and inclusion in their communities. Enable Ireland runs a national assistive technology training service specializing in electronic assistive technology, providing advice and training on AT products to Enable Ireland service users and staff.

Charta 77/PCs without Barriers in the Czech Republic (en.kontobarier.cz/) provides technology knowledge and support to those living with disabilities through 16 PC centers across the Czech Republic.

The Organization of People with Disabilities and Their Friends APEIRONS in Latvia (www.apeirons.lv/) has a goal to integrate people with disabilities into society as well as creating more accepting attitudes towards them from the general public. The organization op1(er)8(v)4(ic)-3(e s)-5(p)(l)-10(4(a)ilabr)5(a2(r)5)JTJETBTem)-4owp

Online Training

In addition, online training and Web seminars are available for learning specific types of assistive technology products. Two primary sources for online training include:

The Assistive Technology Industry Association (www.atia.org)

HP's Guide to Selecting Assistive Technology
(www.hp.com/hpinfo/abouthp/accessibility/atproduct.html)

Accessibility in Microsoft Products

Following is a list of accessibility features of these products:

Windows 7

Windows Vista

Internet Explorer 9

Office 2010

More Info

Demos and tutorials for accessibility features can be found at: www.microsoft.com/enable/

Accessibility features are found in current and earlier versions of Microsoft products including Windows, Office, and Internet Explorer. Find more information at www.microsoft.com/enable/products/.

Accessibility in Windows 7

Windows 7 includes accessibility options and programs that make it easier to see, hear, and use your computer inclu

Explore all settings by category. Instead of looking for accessibility settings in various places, settings are organized so you can explore how to:

Use the computer without a display

Make the computer easier to see

Use the computer without a mouse or keyboard

Make the mouse easier to use

Make the keyboard easier to use

Use text or visual alternatives for sounds

Make it easier to focus on tasks

Speech Recognition

Enables you to interact with your computer using only your voice, significantly

On-screen keyboard

Displays a visual keyboard with all the standard keys. Instead of relying on the physical keyboard to type and enter data, you can use On-Screen Keyboard to select keys using the mouse or another pointing device.

- Filter Keys** Ignore keystrokes that occur in rapid succession and keystrokes that are held down for several seconds unintentionally.
- Visual Notifications** Replace system sounds with visual cues, such as a flash on the screen, so system alerts are announced with visual notifications instead of sounds.
- Captions** Get information via animations and video that some programs use to indicate that activity is happening on your computer.

Replacement for Serial Keys Windows 7 does not include Serial Keys. In previous versions of Windows, Serial Keys provided support so that alternative input devices, such as augmentative communication devices, could be plugged into the computer's serial port. For individuals who used these devices, it is important to install an alternative solution prior to upgrading to Windows 7. Recommended solutions: [AAC Keys from AAC Institute \(www.aac institute.org/\)](http://www.aac institute.org/) and [SKEYS from Eyegaze \(www.eyegaze.com/\)](http://www.eyegaze.com/).

Accessibility in Internet Explorer 9

The Internet is easier to see and explore with accessibility settings and features in Internet Explorer 9. Internet Explorer 9 lets you select text and move around a webpage with the keyboard, makes it easier to copy and paste text from webpages, and lets you zoom in on a webpage. Enhanced keyboard access can also be found in the toolbar buttons, search box items, address bar, and tabs. Find more information including tutorials for how to use these features at www.microsoft.com/enable/products/ie9/.

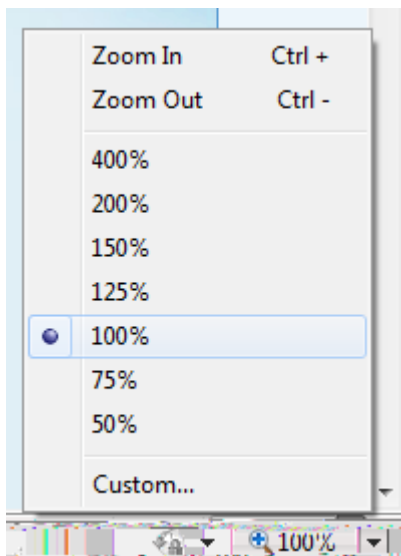


Figure 3.2. Zoom adjustment in Internet Explorer 9

Overview of accessibility features in Internet Explorer 9

Feature	Description
Zoom in on a webpage	Zoom lets you enlarge or reduce the view of a webpage. Unlike changing font size, zoom enlarges or reduces everything on the page, including text and images.
Select text and move around a webpage with the keyboard	Rather than using a mouse to select text and move around within a webpage, you can use standard navigation keys on your keyboard—HOME, END, PAGE UP, PAGE DOWN, and the ARROW KEYS. This feature is called Caret Browsing and is named after the caret—or cursor. This makes it easier to select, copy, and paste text to another document with a keyboard instead of a mouse.
Simplify common tasks with Accelerators	Make tasks like copying, navigating, and pasting easier by using accelerators to save time and keystrokes. Accelerators help you quickly perform tasks without navigating to other websites to get things done. Highlight text from any webpage, and then click on the blue Accelerator icon that appears above your selection to obtain driving directions, translate and define words, e-mail content, or search.
Choose colors used on webpages	Make webpages easier to see by changing the text, background, link and hover colors. Internet Explorer 9 supports the system link color, so High Contrast mode and color preferences you have chosen in Windows will work in Internet Explorer too.
Customize Internet Explorer 9 to work with a screen reader or voice recognition software	Some Internet Explorer 9 features can cause screen readers to give confusing or incorrect information, but you can customize to make them work more smoothly.

Assistive Technology Product Starter Guide

The following tables provide lists of assistive technology hardware and software products by category. Specific examples of the assistive technology products are provided. The table is by no means exhaustive or

Vision

Assistive Technology Decision Tree

UnumProvident's **Assistive Technology Decision Tree**, shown in Figure 3-3, leads you through questions based on the type of impairment to identify assistive technology products that you might consider. By asking questions regarding the extent and type of impairment (including range of motion, quadriplegia, back impairment, vision impairment, hearing/auditory impairment, speech impairment, and psychological

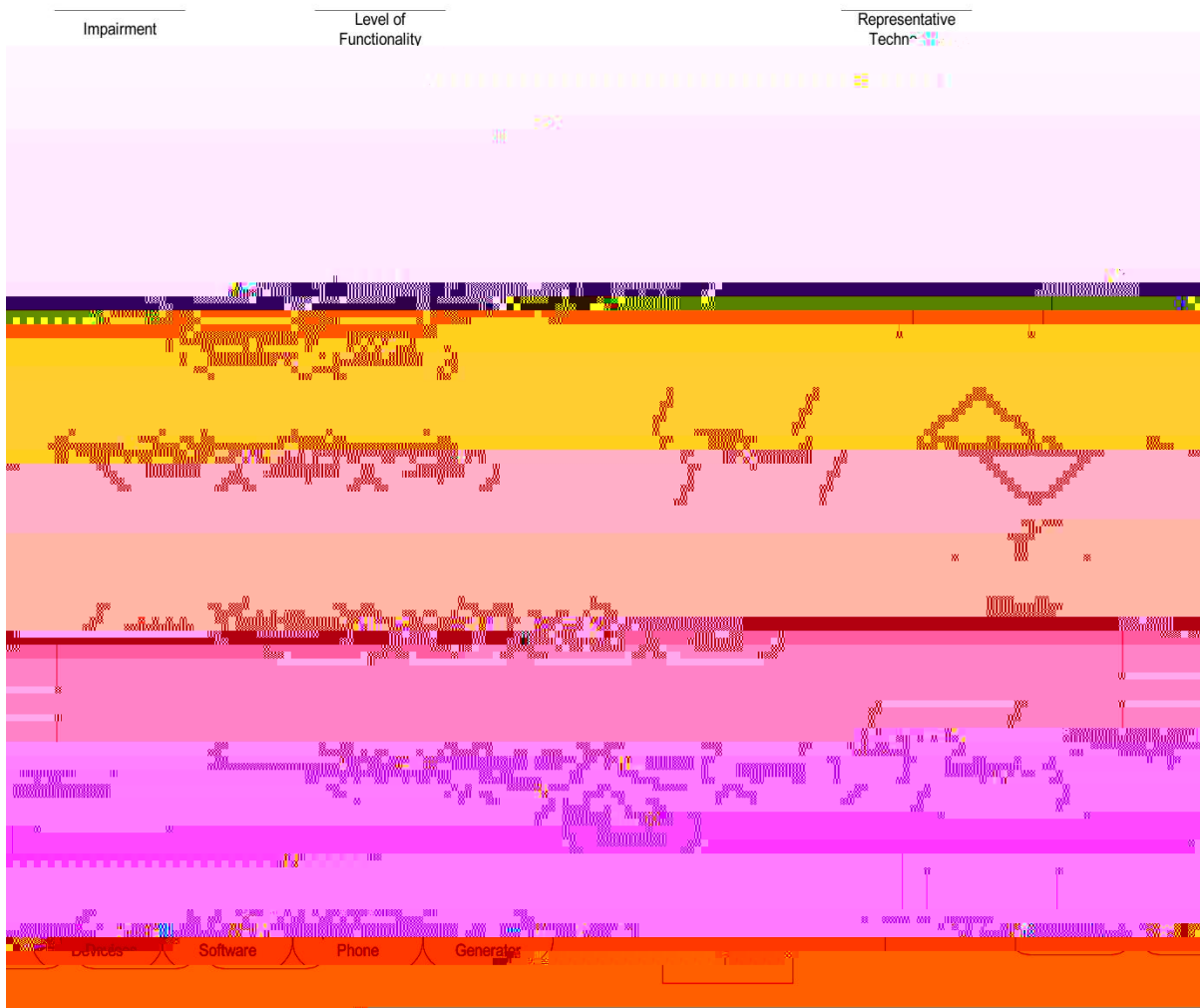
Figure 3-3b. Assistive Technology Decision Tree



Figure 3-3c. Assistive Technology Decision Tree



Figure 3-3d. Assistive Technology Decision Tree



Resources

Resources from Microsoft

Microsoft's mission is to enable people and businesses throughout the world to realize their full potential. Computer technology is an important and powerful tool that enables and empowers individuals of all abilities. At Microsoft, we strive to develop technology that is accessible and usable by everyone, including individuals who experience the world in different ways because of impairments or disabilities.

For two decades, we have been exploring and evolving accessibility solutions that are integrated with our products. Microsoft's accessibility work is a part of Microsoft Trustworthy Computing (www.microsoft.com/mscorp/twc/) business practices which focus on integrity and responsibility.

Microsoft Accessibility Website www.microsoft.com/enable/

Accessibility Update newsletter www.microsoft.com/enable/news/subscribe/

Accessibility in Microsoft Products www.microsoft.com/enable/products/

Accessibility Tutorials www.microsoft.com/enable/training/

Accessibility Demos www.microsoft.com/enable/demos/

Assistive Technology Products www.microsoft.com/enable/at/

Microsoft Accessibility Resource Centers www.microsoft.com/enable/centers/

Additional Resources and Annual Conferences

Teaching Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings

www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/O32revised/index.htm

This toolkit published by UNESCO provides activities for embracing diversity in the classroom.

Annual Conferences about Accessible Technology

The following organizations host annual accessible technology conferences.

Assistive Technology Industry Association

www.atia.org

Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference at CSUN

www.csun.edu/cod/conf/

Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America www.resna.org