

Accessibility Solutions

Newsletter of Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Program

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Learn how to make your computer easier to see, hear, and use.

Computer Access

This edition of Accessibility Solutions focuses on computer access and related technology. Computer access refers to any device, technology, or strategy that allows individuals to control and use their computers more easily and independently. As we depend more and more on computers in our daily lives to work, learn, and play, computer access is an increasingly important aspect of Assistive Technology.

Computer access products can consist of hardware such as alternative pointing devices or keyboards, or software like screen magnifying or speech recognition programs. It can also involve the development process of computer-related technology, for instance designing a website so that individuals with vision impairments who use screen-reading software can access all the information on the site.

Goodwill's Assistive Technology Program maintains an inventory of assistive and adaptive equipment, including many computer access products. To learn more about specific equipment, or about computer access in general, contact the AT Program.

Microsoft Accessibility—Transitioning to Windows 7

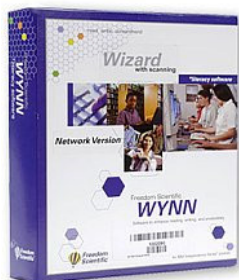
Even though Microsoft rolled out its newest operating system last fall, many computer users find it difficult or inconvenient to upgrade their systems to a new product. Accessibility was one of Microsoft's main focuses when designing Windows 7 and many of its features are easier to use and customize for all users, including those with disabilities. Microsoft provides resources to make the transition to Windows 7 simpler and easier, so that users can take full advantage of its accessible design.

The Accessibility Guide to Transitioning to Windows 7 explains how some of the most prominent features have changed from older versions of Windows—including the Start menu, taskbar, and Windows Explorer. It also describes new elements and provides instructions and tips on how to use them. Visit www.microsoft.com/enable/products/windows7/transition.aspx to view the guide.

Goodwill's AT Program serves as one of several Microsoft Accessibility Resource Centers around the country. If you would like assistance in transitioning to Windows 7, just contact your AT Specialist! And don't forget—the AT Program can help you enhance accessibility for older Windows operating systems and other Microsoft products. Video tutorials, fact sheets, hand-on training, and other helpful resources are available any time!

WYNN Wizard Literacy Software

Upgraded literacy software is now available!



WYNN Wizard is a computer program that is designed to aid individuals who may have difficulty with reading, writing, studying, or comprehension. It enhances learning success by allowing users to see and hear the text at the same time. The program includes valuable features such as study tools (outlining, text and voice notes, highlighting) and writing aids (talking dictionary and thesaurus, spell check, word prediction).

For users who rely on paper documents, pages can be scanned and WYNN Wizard will convert them into electronic format. The program also includes features to help users access and navigate the internet more easily. WYNN Wizard is universally designed for students of any age, who are learning the English language, and who may experience barriers to learning such as ADHD, dyslexia, dysgraphia, or aphasia.

Goodwill's Assistive Technology Program has recently upgraded to the newest version of WYNN Wizard! New features in version 5.1 include:

- Compatibility with Windows Vista operating system
- A redesigned web browsing module with many features that make it easier to access the internet
- Improved file navigation, with a new NavBar feature that organizes all open documents and makes switching from one document to another easier.
- Enhanced speech compatibility and RealSpeak Solo voices in 8 languages, including Spanish and French Canadian

If you are interested in learning more about WYNN Wizard software or would like to experience it hands-on, contact the AT Program.

Free Computer Access Resource: Camera Mouse Software

A hands-free alternative to the traditional computer mouse.



Camera Mouse is a software program that was designed to assist people with disabilities in using the computer more independently. The program is an alternative to the traditional computer mouse or other pointing devices that require movement of the hands and arms. It can also aid users who are not able to use speech recognition software due to poor speech quality or other circumstances.

Using only a standard webcam, the software detects the head movement of the user. This enables the user to navigate their Windows computer hands-free. If the user has a webcam and is able to move his or her head even slightly, then Camera Mouse can be a valuable computer access solution.

And better yet—the Camera Mouse software is completely free! To download the program, or to learn more about it, visit www.cameramouse.org.

Captions Make YouTube Videos More Accessible

The internet and user-driven media are fast becoming essential parts of everyday life. Google and YouTube, which Google acquired in 2006, have redefined how individuals use the internet and share information.

Now, Google strives to increase accessibility for all users. Vint Cerf, Google's Vice President and Chief Internet Evangelist, has used hearing aids since he was 13. He described the company's goal to increase internet accessibility: "Google believes that the world's information should be accessible to everyone."

Taking a step closer to reaching that goal, Google announced last fall that YouTube now has text captions available for many videos. The captions are automatically generated through the use of speech recognition technology.

Text captioning makes videos more accessible to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. But people who prefer both visual and auditory feedback, or people who are not native English speakers, can also benefit from this new feature. Currently, captions can only be inserted on videos that use English speech. However, non-native English speakers can then use the automatic translation system to translate the captions into any one of 51 available languages.

A related service called automatic timing allows any YouTube user to upload a text transcript with their videos. This transcript is then converted into captions on the video, and the timing between the captions and speech is automatically synchronized. This process allows any user to make their videos more accessible to a wider viewing audience.

To learn more about Google/YouTube's automatic captions and automatic timing, you can view a short demo at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTvHIDKLFqc.

"...the world's information should be accessible to everyone."

-Vint Cerf, Google



Alternative formats of this newsletter are available upon request.

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