

## ADAPTECH RESEARCH UPDATE

### **Adaptech Study of Information and Computer Technologies That Could be Useful for Students with LD**

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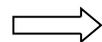
Students are often unaware they have a learning disability (LD) and only experience problems when they encounter heavy reading loads and lengthy written assignment. Both general use and specialized information and communication technologies (ICTs) can help with reading and writing issues.

We recently completed interviews with 58 experts: those with excellent knowledge of both LD and ICTs. This included students with LD who are highly skilled users of ICTs. They told us the main advantage of ICTs for students with LD is that they support academic success. For example, the experts said that ICTs can improve the quality of students' work, including their grammar and spelling, help students edit their work more effectively,

contribute to becoming better organized, assist students to more easily comprehend what they read and, in general, allow them to acquire more skills and techniques for effective learning.



The section on the next page, which is adapted from Chauvin et al. (2010), provides a partial listing of software that can help.<sup>1</sup> Other useful software is described on the "Downloads" section of the Adaptech Research Network web site: <http://www.adaptech.org>



<sup>1</sup> Chauvin, A., King, L., Budd, J., Barile, M., Nguyen, M.N. & Fichten, C. (2010). Brief Review of what the ICTs in Our Study Do. Handout at AQETA 2010. Montréal: Adaptech Research Network.

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**Antidote**: Antidote is inexpensive software intended to improve the quality of the user's writing. It features twelve dictionaries and eleven linguistic guides. It works only in French. Antidote is accessible directly from the user's word processor (e.g., Microsoft Word) with a single click.

**Balabolka**: Balabolka is free text-to-speech software. It can read text files (DOC, RTF, ODT, PDF, FB2, HTML) using any voice synthesis that is available on the user's computer. The software also features screen enlarging options, highlighting options, as well as a spell checker.

**Cmap**: Cmap is free organizational software that enables the user to connect ideas (e.g., diagrams). It also allows users to share the maps they create by posting them on CmapServers. These files are then available for retrieval and modification by any other Cmap user.

**Dragon Naturally Speaking**: Dragon Naturally Speaking is relatively inexpensive dictation software that allows the user to write by talking to the computer. The user talks, and the software writes the words in a word processor (e.g., Microsoft Word).

**Inspiration**: Inspiration is inexpensive organizational software that allows the user to connect ideas. Inspiration also features a tool that helps the user present previously entered information in a complete presentation format.

**Kurzweil 3000**: Kurzweil 3000 can scan documents (with an installed scanner), render the material as digital text using optical character recognition (OCR), and read the text aloud using voice synthesis. The software also allows the user to modify scanned documents and offers editing options. It is a costly, but full-featured program.



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**Médialexie**: Médialexie is multipurpose software. It features a word processor and Cordial (a spell checker used to make dictation more accurate). It also reads text aloud using voice synthesis and has built-in dictation software. Along with these options, Médialexie has many dictionaries to help the user edit text. It is a costly, but full-featured program.

**OmniPage**: OmniPage is relatively inexpensive scanning software that uses optical character recognition (OCR) to convert the user's scanned documents to editable files. OmniPage can also take images from a digital camera and convert them to editable text files.

**ReadPlease**: ReadPlease is free software that can read text. It allows the user to modify the font color and the background color. ReadPlease also enables the user to highlight the words as they are read. Apart from these features, ReadPlease offers regular text-to-speech options including adjustable voice speed, language choice, voice choice and so forth.

**WordQ**: WordQ is relatively inexpensive word prediction software which works within the user's word processor. When the user starts typing a word, the software produces a list of correctly spelled words, allowing the user to choose. The software can also read these words aloud (or the complete sentence) for the user.

**Wynn**: Wynn is scanning and screen reading software. It includes optical character recognition (OCR) to render images into editable text. The built-in speech synthesis enables the software to read text. Wynn also features options such as highlighting spoken words and toolbars to make the options more accessible. It is a costly, but full-featured program.

[www.adaptech.org](http://www.adaptech.org)