THE AFFORDABLE ACCESS GUIDE
AT WORK

Why do people in the workforce use digital technologies?

Employees, managers and self-employed people told us that they generally use different devices for different things. If you are on a budget, then look for a Windows-based computer for productivity and an Android-based smartphone for communication. Common activities for those in the workforce include:

- Creating documents
- Email and web browsing for information and communication
- Using a smartphone to call and message colleagues and contacts
- Organising and attending meetings using productivity software, computers and some budget tablets

How does disability affect you using technology?

There are many disabilities that affect working people in the following ways:

- You may be unable to hear meetings.
- You may not be able to see detail in documents or email.
- You may have difficulty using a computer due to not being able to move the mouse effectively.

Which technologies can help you at work?

Popular computers and mobile phones have accessibility features that can help you. These include:

- **Screen reader:** A text-to-speech application that reads out computer and internet-related information to assist people who are blind or vision impaired.
- **Screen magnifier:** A magnification tool for enlarging screen content.

- **Themes:** High-contrast themes allow people with vision impairments to change the colours to a more comfortable setting (such as white-on-black), and increase the size of mouse pointers and text.
- **On-screen keyboard:** Enables people with mobility impairments to 'type' by using a pointing device to select letters and words on the screen.
- **Alerts:** Visual messages can appear in place of audible sounds to help people who are Deaf or hearing impaired.

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Which products are affordable and accessible?

Most popular mobile devices and computers have accessibility features built in, and you can buy products for under $250.

Windows-based tablets and mini-PCs

Features:

- A Windows-based computer is generally the most commonly used in the workforce.

- Accessibility features include the Narrator screen reader, magnifier and on-screen keyboard.

- The accessibility features can be used with a traditional mouse and keyboard or by touch if it is a tablet.

- Most third-party accessibility software runs on Windows, increasing its accessibility.

- A Windows tablet maximises productivity as it can be used like a desktop computer by connecting a keyboard and mouse.

- Most Windows-based computers provide a one-year free subscription to Office 365, providing key productivity applications such as Microsoft Word.

Affordable Windows-related products include:

- Touch-screen tablets which may be easier to use, and are more portable, such as the Hewlett-Packard Stream models. Prices start at around $200.

- A 'TV box' mini-PC which can work as a simple desktop computer, with mouse and keyboard able to connect through the USB ports or Bluetooth, and the monitor connected through HDMI. Prices start at around $140.

- A 'PC stick', which looks similar to a USB stick but is a full desktop computer, such as the Intel Compute Stick. Prices start at around $140.

Smartphones

Features:

- They generally run the Android operating system at this price point.

- Accessibility features include the Talkback screen reader, zoom features, captioned video playback, switch key support and colour inversion

- Very customisable – you can change the way the phone works to make it easier to use

Products:

- Android-based smartphones are approximately $200 for a good quality phone such as the Moto G, but generic Android-based smartphones can be much cheaper. Make sure the phone runs at least Android version 4.4 so that you get good accessibility features.

- BIG Launcher app: its simplified high contrast interface can make it easier to find and respond to calls and messages on the go. It costs just $12 and can be purchased from the Google Play store.

Where can I buy these products?

Many of these products can be purchased from popular retail stores such as Target, Harvey Norman and Myer. Online retailers also stock a variety of products. For more information on what questions to ask when shopping and details on other great products, visit the Affordable Access website.

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