

THE AFFORDABLE ACCESS GUIDE FOR STUDENTS



Why do students use digital technologies?

Students told us that they are always on the lookout for affordability and mobility as priorities to help stay connected on the go. Social media is considered vital in addition to having devices that can help with study. Common ways students in secondary schools and tertiary institutions use technologies include:

- Using smartphones for keeping in touch with your friends via social media
- Using small computers like tablets to take notes in class or record lectures
- Using desktop computers at home for productivity such as writing assignments and playing games
- Watching videos for entertainment

How does disability affect you using technology?

There are many disabilities that affect students in the following ways:

- You may not be able to hear lectures and video content.
- You may have difficulty hearing or verbally communicating with friends, relying on social media.
- You may have difficulty seeing core learning materials.

- **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.

Which technologies can help students?

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.



THE AFFORDABLE ACCESS GUIDE FOR STUDENTS



Which products are affordable and accessible?

With accessibility features built into most popular computers and mobile devices, you can buy products that are accessible products for under \$250.

Tablets

Features:

- Portable, convenient size to carry and take to class.
- Android tablets are compatible with Android smartphones.
- Windows tablets come with apps that provide good productivity features.

Products:

- Android tablets have similar functionality to Android smartphones and can retail for under \$100.
- Windows tablets generally come with a full desktop operating system such as Windows 10, have the added benefit of being used as either a tablet or as a desktop if a mouse and keyboard are added, and retail for about \$200.

Smartphones

Features:

- Generally runs the Android operating system at this price.
- 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.
- Free apps for all major social media tools including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube.

Products:

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

Desktop mini-PCs

Features:

- Better for productivity with a fully-featured operating system and software.
- Potentially more affordable if you are tech-savvy.

Products:

- Windows desktop mini-PCs such as the 'TV box', or 'stick' computers like the Intel Compute stick, retail for about \$140 with full Windows operating system.
- Raspberry Pi, a credit-card sized computer that can run a full Linux desktop with productivity software, retails for about \$50. This will require good technical knowledge to set up effectively.

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](#).

Note: The Affordable Access website was put together by Media Access Australia with support provided by the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN). The operation of ACCAN is made possible by funding provided by the Commonwealth of Australia under section 593 of the Telecommunications Act 1997. This funding is recovered from charges on telecommunications carriers.