

# Assistive Technology

From SENSible SENCO (@SENDCOSolutions)

For our SEN students working at home trying to use online learning we have a real opportunity to ensure they learn how to use things correctly and support their learning into the future.

Not many teachers will have access to every possible type of device or operating system, however between us we probably have. Double check when setting a piece of work that it works on all the devices children might be accessing. If you are telling them to click top right (on your PC screen) but they are using a mobile phone, then the chances are the button might be somewhere else!

I think of Facebook at this point and the files held in groups. I can guarantee at least two or three times a week someone will ask how to access the files to receive a detailed explanation of someone's laptop to be given and the person responds with – I can't see that on my phone!

Most modern devices have assistive technology built in, and most of it is free. From the simple controls of making the screen dimmer or brighter, to using speech to text or text to speech. Office Lens will take a photo of any text and then read it out loud. And some paid for programs such as clicker@home are currently being offered for free for home use where the school currently has a user licence.

Below is a list of things we can do to support children with using technology.

- Screen readers

- Screen magnification/zoom
- Text Readers/Text to speech (read aloud, speak screen)
- Speech input software/Speech to text
- Alternative input (OK special schools are more likely to be aware of these: head pointers, eye tracking, single switch entry)
- Audio description for videos
- Captions on videos
- Voice over on Powerpoints
- Changing the mouse/tracker settings to be slower or less sensitive
- Programming shortcuts
- Brightness and colour settings, invert colour or removing transparency
- Coloured overlays
- Sticky keys
- Predictive text (typing assistant)
- Spell checkers and grammar checkers
- Office Lens (take a photo of anything and have the text read aloud to you)
- <http://www.visualdictionaryonline.com/index.php> for a visual dictionary (online or app)
- Changing the background colour or adding a tint to the screen (ise colour overlay on Google Chrome)

This website has advice on the different features and how to set them up for the different types of devices (Windows, Android and iOS)

<https://etc.usf.edu/techease/>