



Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility

ICT Accessibility Fact Sheet

Assessing the provision of ICT for Inclusion: Communication and interaction difficulties

This guide suggests where ICT may help and points you to the main sources of advice and information available in this area. It is not meant to be exhaustive but a starting point on where to get help.

More Information

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Free access utilities

A range of utilities are available on the FITA AccessArchives CD-Roms, and the FITA web site at www.fitamalta.eu

What are Language Impairments?

Language impairments include conditions such as aphasia (loss or impairment of the power to use or comprehend words, often as a result of brain damage), delayed speech (a symptom of cognitive impairment), and other conditions resulting in difficulties remembering, solving problems, or perceiving sensory information.

Does the communication difficulty lie in speaking?

Consider you would benefit from using augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).

- Seek advice on whether a VOCA (voice output communication aid) is needed.
- Investigate the benefits of using a sound-activated switch. This can encourage children to vocalise.

Does the communication difficulty lie in writing?

Complex or inconsistent visual displays or word choices can make using computers more difficult.

The list below highlights some of the ICT devices that can help with written communication.

- Portable dedicated wordprocessors
- Commonly used in conjunction with portable computers screen review utilities make on-screen information available as synthesized speech and pairs the speech with a visual

representation of a word, for example, highlighting a word as it is spoken.

- Speech recognition systems, also called voice recognition programs, allow people to give commands and enter data using their voices rather than a mouse or keyboard.
- Overlay keyboards
- Touch screens are devices placed on the computer monitor (or built into it) that allow direct selection or activation of the computer by touching the screen.
- Keyboard filters include typing aids such as word prediction utilities and add-on spelling checkers.
- Speech synthesizers (often referred to as text-to-speech (TTS) systems) receive information going to the screen in the form of letters, numbers, and punctuation marks, and then "speak" it out loud.

Does the difficulty lie in interaction?

A computer can offer persons with autism a successful channel of learning on which they can focus without distraction.

It can also offer the means by which teachers and other learners can join them in their focus of interest.

Where can I obtain equipment to support persons with communication difficulties?

An additional funding route has been available since June 2003. The Malta Community Chest Fund and FITA are collaborating in order to provide a holistic solution to the ICT needs of persons with disability, across Malta and Gozo.