



## Foreword

Welcome to the autumn edition of inSIGHT, a quarterly newsletter published by AssistIT, Consultants and Trainers in Assistive Technology working in partnership with learning, teaching and training providers.

As well as providing assessment and training services our main remit is to provide independent and impartial advice on all aspects of assistive technology.

This newsletter contains features and tips to help you get the best out of assistive technology. We hope you enjoy this edition and will join us for the next edition in January.

If you would like to be included in this newsletter, for example, a short article on how you use assistive technology with learners or have some tips, advice or have heard about new developments or products, please contact:

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## Is WYNN a Winner for Students with Reading and Writing Difficulties?

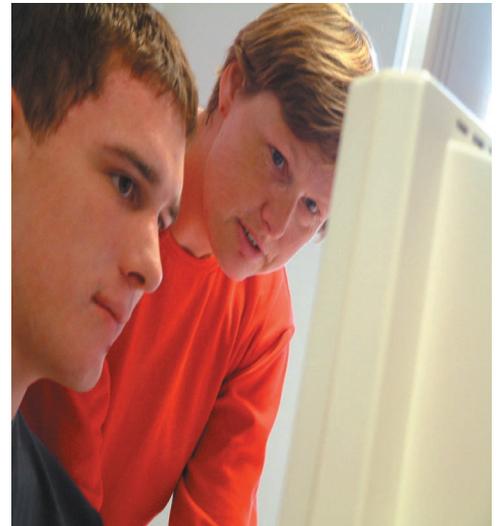
Choosing a program to support students with reading and writing difficulties can be a dilemma, particularly when the price can be as high as £700 (Kurzweil 3000) for one user licence. The cost for a college site licence can be astronomical. Many colleges have chosen TextHELP Read and Write as their primary software program for supporting students who experience dyslexia or other literacy related difficulties.

Undoubtedly, TextHELP 7 (Gold) contains a number of useful features, in particular the way in which it can be set up to reflect individual users' needs. The Teacher's Toolkit, Word Wizard, Fact Folder and TextHELP's ability to read and highlight web pages are my own personal favourites.

So too are the Clipboard History and the Scanning tools but TextHELP's ability to calculate and convert figures in MS Word is extremely impressive and innovative. However, there are many glitches that arise when using TextHELP that can leave you feeling somewhat bewildered. For example, typing the word 'helo' followed by a clicking TextHELP's Spell Check button has unexpected results. Don't be surprised if TextHELP informs you that the 'Spell Check is Complete' and fails to recognise 'helo' as a spelling mistake. Another criticism often voiced is that TextHELP requires a high level of computer literacy, which can often leave some learners feeling slightly overwhelmed or uncertain when using it. This is where knowing how to customise TextHELP to meet individuals' needs is important.

As someone who experiences dyslexia related difficulties, particularly when writing, I find it an invaluable tool for proof reading documents. However, there are times when TextHELP can prove to be very frustrating, particularly as it has a tendency to be intrusive and interfere with other computer programs. Creating a TextHELP short-cut on your desktop or running 'Disk Defragmenter' or even installing a USB device to synchronise a PDA for example, can have devastating effects requiring TextHELP and other related programs to be re-installed.

It was therefore a breath of fresh air when I down loaded a trial version of Freedom Scientific's WYNN, which according to the web site ([www.freedomscientific.com](http://www.freedomscientific.com)) is an 'innovative literacy solution designed to enhance success for individuals with reading challenges and writing difficulties'. The initial feature that appealed to me with the trial version is that it provides two trial options; a standard 30 day trial or a 30 hour trial. If you choose the 30 hour trial it allows you to dip into it over a longer period.



So how does it differ from TextHELP Read and Write? Unlike TextHELP's toolbar WYNN uses a rotating 4 colour-coded toolbar with a simple point-and-click interface. These comprise of a File Management Toolbar, which provide easy-to-use access to features such as , Open, Close, Save, Scanning etc, a Visual Presentation Toolbar that allows users to personalise how WYNN is displayed on screen for example, Text Size, Line and Word Spacing as well as Font and Colour choice.

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## WYNN continued...

The Study Tools Toolbar contains many of the traditional study aids, such as a Dictionary and Thesaurus, Auditory Spell Check, Text Notes and Voice Notes ie, Voice Notes are useful for those with stronger auditory processing skills.

Last but not least is the Writing Tools Toolbar. This toolbar contains many of the common writing and editing tools found in MS Word, such as Cut and Paste, Style and an additional but vital feature, Word Prediction. WYNN also uses FinePrint OCR which is a powerful scanning and recognition program. And, similar to TextHELP, it is possible to setup the toolbars to reflect individual needs.

One of the advantages of WYNN is that the toolbars are very innovative and easy to use and enable the learner to get on with writing without having a high level of computer skills. On the down side I found it difficult to configure the dictionary to English/British and was often confronted with American spelling when carrying out a spell check.

Also, as WYNN uses its own writing environment documents must be drafted from within WYNN. However, if WYNN is set up correctly at the outset, by choosing the 'Custom Setup' it is relatively easy to quickly convert text by a simple click (or save) to MS Word.

After using WYNN for several days it is probably unfair to compare it to TextHELP as many of its features are more akin to those found in Kurzweil 3000, the major difference being in price. WYNN is about £500 cheaper than Kurzweil but comparable in price to the standard version of TextHELP.

There is a trial version on the CD for you to try and draw your own conclusions.

## Useful links

[www.keytools.com](http://www.keytools.com)

(assistive technology resources)

[www.bigbrownenvelope.co.uk](http://www.bigbrownenvelope.co.uk)

(educational ICT resources)

[www.sightandsound.co.uk](http://www.sightandsound.co.uk)

(vision/magnification and literacy software)

Due to a lack of space we were unable to bring you the article on VisualMouse, a freedownload to assist learners with more complex difficulties. However, you can download it from the web site and we promise to review it in the next edition along with any new developments in assistive technology.

## Free CD Rom



As promised in the summer edition of **inSIGHT**, Assist IT is giving away a free CD Rom including a trial version of DATs, Hoolet's Digital Assessment Tasks.

The CD also contains a Microsoft Producer Presentation, a video introduction by Richard Hendry, Managing Director of Hoolet, trial and free software and much, much more. Simply place the CD into your CD drive and wait for the web browser to load.

In order to view the Microsoft Producer please ensure you have the latest Windows Media codecs, 8 and 9 or preferably 10 - [www.microsoft.com/downloads](http://www.microsoft.com/downloads).

## Assist IT Launches Web Site

In early August Assist IT launched its new web site and has since received hundreds of visits from afar afield as Australia and New Zealand. The web site has been designed primarily as a resource for college lecturers and students, although anyone can use it.

It is packed with information, resources, downloads, links and much, much more! Why not try out the video tutorials on Penfriend XP?

Welcome to Assist I.T. Consultancy and Training in Assistive Technology

Home

Assessment and Training

Disability

Reading & Writing Difficulties

Assist On-line

InSight Newsletter

Projects

Resources

Downloads & Links

Assist I.T. works in partnership with learning, teaching, training providers and public access centres to provide the best practice in inclusive learning through the use of assistive and adaptive technology.

Latest News

We have recently updated the Reading and Writing Difficulties section of the site.

It now has a range of new features and free downloads, such as word prediction and text readers, to help a students with reading and writing difficulties. [More>>](#)

Assist IT is a member of the [eLearning Alliance](#)

The site is constantly being revised and updated. Keep a look out for our new Core Skills teaching and learning resources section with innovative ways of using MS Word and Excel to help support students in their learning. You can find our more by visiting: [www.assist-it.org.uk](http://www.assist-it.org.uk).

