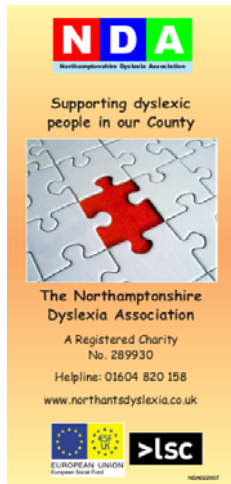




Northamptonshire Dyslexia Association
PO Box 339
Northampton
NN3 7WY
Charity No. 289930
Helpline: 01604 820 158
www.northantsdyslexia.co.uk



Information Sheets

Technology and resources at work

See also the British Dyslexia Association website for guidance on being a dyslexia friendly employer:

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/aboutdyslexia.html>

Dyslexia is still too often misunderstood or overlooked by employers whilst employees may have learnt to manage their dyslexia to a high degree masking some of the problems they still encounter.

There are several steps needed to ensure an employer complies with the law in regard to disability. Technology and other hardware can be amongst the most useful resources an employer can utilise.

Dyslexia can affect an individual's ability to organise or to prioritise their work, to remember directions or tasks; it can sometimes interfere with communication and information processing as well making some everyday tasks such as reading and writing documents challenging. Often though, with the right support, these can be managed effectively whilst the strengths of dyslexia - which can often include problem solving, creativity, team playing and leading abilities - can be brought to the fore.

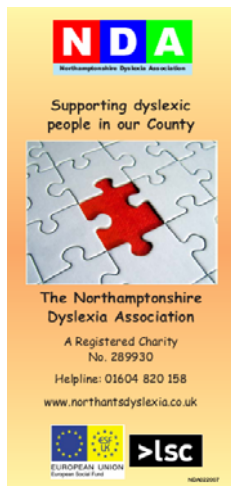
On the following two pages are some practical every day scenarios/technology solutions:

Information
written and
edited by:
Bernard Quinn





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Technology and resources at work (ctd)

Organising: mobile devices such as PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants or Smart Phones) and mobile phones have diaries and calendars with alarm sounds to ensure meetings and tasks are not forgotten; task lists (to-do lists) can easily be written and stored or even pre-typed by the manager and emailed/sent by SMS or Bluetooth to the individual's device.

Microsoft Office/Linux equivalent/Freeware equivalent/Macintosh equivalent software includes tools for organising e.g. calendars, diaries, word processors.

Working with written information and communications: there are software packages that convert text to audible speech and vice-versa including integration with programmes such as Microsoft Word, email etc. Many include sophisticated editing tools to aid spelling, grammar and vocabulary. The use of optical character recognition software and scanners (desktop and pocket size) allows further options for inputting/accessing text; pen readers enable new or unfamiliar words to be 'explained' aloud. Spelling and grammar checkers that include reading the text aloud can be very useful and are available for the PC or as pocket size standalone devices.

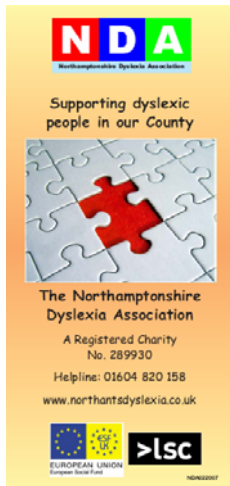
Meetings and note-taking: a key aspect of work is taking part in meetings. This can be especially challenging if you have dyslexia. Using a small digital recorder that can 'take the notes' may allow you to follow the discussion effectively and to contribute more fully. If the recorder is a USB version it can easily be connected to a PC to copy the recordings onto the PC. These can then be replayed or converted to a text file with text to speech software and spelling/grammar checking facility.

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Technology and resources at work (ctd)

Preparing reports and presentations: there are software programmes that allow a more visual (less linear/text) approach that may suit someone with dyslexia. These programmes create visual maps (mind maps) that can easily be converted into text and imported into the word processing programme if required. Electronic interactive whiteboards are becoming more useful in meetings and presentations as they enable supportive software features - as described above - to be used 'live' during the meeting/presentation.

There are a lot of built-in access features in mainstream products such as Microsoft Office and Internet Explorer that can be used to make work more dyslexia/disability friendly. For example changing the background colour of the screen, changing the size and colour of the main text and so on.

Click the following links for more information:

<http://www.northantsdyslexia.co.uk/accessibility.htm>

http://www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility/win/sub_root.shtml

<http://www.microsoft.com/enable/training/default.aspx>

<http://www.abilitynet.org.uk/>

<http://www.dyslexic.com/>

Information written
and edited by:
Bernard Quinn
6/2008

