

What is Computer Access?

When we talk about computers, we refer to hardware and software products that enable people with disabilities to access, interact with, and use computers. Assistive devices in this category include modified or alternate keyboards, input and pointing devices such as large "mice" or switches activated by pressure or some other means, and software, including speech-to-text software. Even if the device is a "generic" product (e.g., a "vertical" mouse or large trackball), the product is considered AT if someone with a disability needs it. Computer operating systems now come with many "built-in" accessibility features that may provide sufficient support when "turned on" and customized for the user.

When do I need to use AT for Computer Access?

AT may be needed at any time and in many places. Whether in school, work, or the community, computer use is essential in all areas of one's life.



Who needs Computer Access AT?

Anyone struggling with the three functional barriers:

- providing computer input,
- interpreting output, and
- reading supporting documentation.

Individuals with motor, sensory, cognitive, or learning disabilities can benefit from AT options.

Why aren't computers more accessible?

Too often, people think of accessibility as an add-on to a device or program. Increasingly today, developers and designers realize that maintenance becomes easier when accessibility is part of the basic design. Many smartphones, tablets, and computers also include screen readers, word prediction, and speech recognition.

Technology has many advantages, but careful consideration is needed to meet an individual's unmet needs in the community, educational, and employment settings. To learn more about navigating the world of Computer Access AT, visit [Computer Access – Explore AT from AT3 Center](#). The assistive technology solutions provided on this site are intended as examples to give an idea of the types of Computer Access AT currently available in today's market.

Also, remember to [contact your AT Act Program](#) to learn more and explore services available to help make an informed purchasing decision and obtain the AT needed.

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