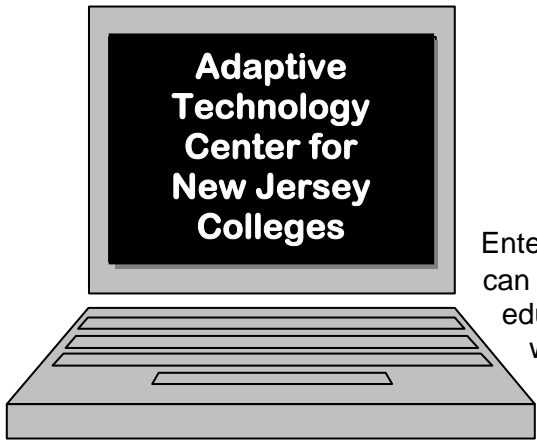


# Assistive Technology Tools for Transition from High School to College

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Entering college is an exciting time for many high school students, but it can also be overwhelming with the increased academic demands of higher education. College courses require significant amounts of reading, writing, research, gathering and organizing information, and expressing ideas clearly. The right technology can help students complete these tasks successfully and decrease the anxiety and frustration often associated with them. This resource sheet provides Internet

resources and sample technology tools that can facilitate the transition from high school to college.

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## Transition Support:

- **AHEAD** (Association on Higher Education and Disability) is the premiere professional association committed to full participation of persons with disabilities in postsecondary education. [www.ahead.org](http://www.ahead.org)
- **DO-IT at the University of Washington** promotes the use of computer and networking technologies to increase independence, productivity, and participation of college students with disabilities. This website offers extensive information about accommodations, universal design of instruction, computer technology and web accessibility. [www.washington.edu/doit](http://www.washington.edu/doit)
- **HEATH Resource Center:** (Higher Education and Adult Training for People with Disabilities) National clearinghouse that provides free information on postsecondary education for people with disabilities. [www.heath.gwu.edu](http://www.heath.gwu.edu)
- **The New Jersey Regional Centers:** Funded by the NJ Commission on Higher Education, eight centers located throughout the state provide direct assistance to college students with disabilities. The centers also provide technical assistance to other colleges and universities in the state. <http://adaptivetech.tcnj.edu/regcenters.html>
- **Students with Disabilities Preparing for Post Secondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities:** This resource from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education explains the rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities who are preparing to attend postsecondary schools. It also describes the obligations of a postsecondary school to provide academic adjustments, including auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that the school does not discriminate on the basis of disability. Revised March 2007. [www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html)
- **Expert Answers Guide: College for Students with LD and AD/HD by Loring Brinckerhoff.** This 27-page download from the Schwab Learning Foundation provides guidance on choosing a college and preparing for the transition. [www.schwablearning.org/articles.aspx?r=1111](http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.aspx?r=1111)

## Reading Solutions:

- **Scan/Read Systems:** Scan/read software, such as WYNN and Kurzweil 3000, reads aloud printed text after it has been scanned into a computer. Textbook pages, class handouts, and tests can be made accessible to students with print disabilities. A clear visual display highlights the text as it is being read. A built-in talking dictionary, a study skills tool bar, and a writing tool bar are additional helpful features.
- **Electronic Text Readers:** Electronic text readers also read aloud and highlight text, but they can read only text that is already in an electronic format, for example, internet sites or word processing files. E-readers do not contain the optical character recognition software that is needed to scan in printed text, but at \$199 they are a low cost solution for reading aloud text.
- **Software Playback Systems:** Software playback systems are the latest addition to digital books software product line. These are full-featured software packages designed to play RFB&D's AudioPlus CD books on a desktop or laptop computer. They are specially designed with the blind and visually impaired community in mind and have a well designed user interface for individuals with learning disabilities. Appropriate for classroom reading labs or for home use, the software playback systems are geared toward students at the middle level and up.
- **Digital Book Readers:** Digital book readers are portable CD players that read DAISY-compatible audiobooks. They provide CD navigation functions and playback features. These portable players are recommended for students and adults in grades 7 and up as an easy way to transport their players between school, work, and home.

## Writing Solutions:

- **Talking Word Processing:** Word processing programs with text-to-speech features read aloud text as students type. This helps students edit and proofread their written work.
- **Graphic Organizers:** These programs are used in the pre-writing stage to help students organize their thoughts. With the click of the mouse, a concept map can be turned into a text outline.
- **Portable Notetakers:** These sturdy, lightweight keyboards are a more affordable option than a laptop computer for taking notes in class. They interface with a student's computer and printer, so files can be transferred and/or printed easily.
- **Word Prediction:** Word prediction software helps students who have significant spelling and/or word finding problems. As a student starts to type a word, the software presents a list of predicted words from which the student can choose. Clicking on the word adds it to the sentence, and typing final punctuation transfers the sentence into an open word processing document. Topic dictionaries can be set up with specialized vocabulary for specific course work.
- **Speech Recognition:** Students dictate into a microphone and their words appear on the computer screen. Speech recognition software requires very powerful computers with a lot of memory, adequate time to train both the computer and the user, and users who are very comfortable with computers.
- **Test Taking:** These programs provide students with electronic versions of tests. Questions and answers can be highlighted and read aloud for students who struggle with reading; answers can be typed on the computer for students who have difficulty with handwriting. The completed test is then printed out for submission.