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**Happy Holidays**

On behalf of the Assistive Technology team of Disability Services Support Unit and the Learning Development Centre-ICTs-Students With Disabilities, I would like to wish all the OnLine readers and their families and friends a happy, safe and restful break and a happy 2007. We thank you for your support and look forward to providing you more OnLine issues in 2007. Special thanks to all those who have contributed articles and information to OnLine during 2006. Your help in making this publication a success is greatly appreciated.

*Jeff Souter*  
*Coordinator, Learning Development Centre-ICTs-Students With Disabilities*



**Nova 5000 – A Stepping Stone From PDA To Laptop**

*Jeff Souter*  
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In recent issues of OnLine we have discussed the benefits and issues surrounding the use of Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) and laptops in providing support for students with special needs. Each platform and device has real benefits for use with students with special needs. PDAs provide excellent portability and alternative access options but fall short when providing the capacity to access USB devices. Laptops provide a PC environment but are not always portable enough to suit some users.

The Nova 5000 could be seen as a device that could bridge portability and functionality. You could describe the Nova 5000 as a system that falls between a PDA and a laptop. While it has the functionality and operating environment of PDAs, it also has many of the capabilities of a regular computer including the use of USB. It also provides a much more portable alternative to a laptop.



The Nova 5000 is available in three models, each model has of course different functions, with a corresponding difference in cost. I purchased the full curriculum version of the Nova 5000 so I could see the full capabilities of the device. This article will cover features of the Curriculum version. Please be aware that some of these features may not be available in other models of the Nova.

In size, the Nova also falls between a PDA and a laptop. Being much smaller and lighter than a laptop it is also not a device that you can place into your back pocket or hang off your belt, as it is not the intention of Fourier Systems which produce the Nova 5000 for it to be a “pocket” device.

**Ports**

One thing is for certain with this device over PDAs is that you will never have any problems with connecting peripherals. There are ports on three sides of the Nova and all are standard computer ports. There are two USB ports, so most regular computer peripherals that connect with USB can run on the Nova. I have tried a number of mice, trackballs and keyboards and all have run on the Nova. This opens up a big advantage over both a PDA and a laptop in that you can have a portable device that allows the functionality of access to peripherals available for desktop technology.



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### ***External Monitor***

The Nova 5000 EX model has a CRT port to connect an external monitor. This is a significant advantage over PDAs that mostly need an additional piece of hardware and software in order to connect to a monitor or to project the screen image with a data projector. One disadvantage that I feel when using an external monitor is that you have either the Nova screen or the external monitor running but not both. This means it's virtually impossible to operate the Nova with the stylus when you are in external monitor mode, otherwise you have to guess where to place the stylus on the black Nova screen. A mouse connected to the Nova makes it much easier to use when the display is through the external monitor.

### ***Power***

The Nova 5000 runs off both AC Power and a battery supply. The standard battery will operate for up to 4 hours and batteries with more capacity can be purchased. Although it doesn't lose its information, I would recommend that it be connected to a power supply when not in use, as is required for PDAs.



*MultiLab Software with sensor input*



*Larger display over PDA to support more effective access to the Internet*

### ***Sensors***

There are literally dozens of sensors that can be purchased for the Nova 5000 that cover most of the measurements you are likely to require in a school environment. Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Health and Physical Education, Technology Studies, Industrial Education, and other curriculum areas could benefit from the sensors that can be purchased for the Nova. Some of the sensors, for example, can measure such things as temperature, humidity, acceleration, conductivity, current, heart rate, lung capacity, light intensity, sound levels, voltage and moisture content.



*Wind speed and direction sensor*



*Sound sensor: Records level in decibels*



*Water flow rate sensor*

This capacity enables students with disabilities to interact with their environment and with the curriculum at a level with their peers and can provide the opportunity to produce work that may not be possible with measuring and monitoring systems.

### ***For Students With Special Needs***

#### ***Lightweight***

Many students with special needs rely heavily on ICTs to enable them to access the curriculum. Although laptops are portable, they are often still reasonably heavy and can cause issues for students that need to take their laptop with them from class to class. The Nova is much more compact and lighter than a regular laptop. The Nova doesn't have the full range of software, memory capacity, speed or functionality of a laptop but it does make the use of ICTs much more portable for students.

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## Larger Screen Size

One of the best advantages of the Nova over a PDA is the size of its screen. Its screen is much larger than a PDA which makes it much easier for users to see information. It also makes for much larger targets when using a stylus to access the screen. The screen is also configured in a landscape format which fits better with a desktop or laptop environment.

## Alternative Input

As was mentioned earlier in this article, most input devices that can be used with a PC or laptop can also be used with the Nova 5000. This enables students to be more consistent with their input. If a student requires a specific type of trackball when working on their desktop computer, they can use the same trackball to access the Nova. Because PDAs and some other portable devices don't have the capacity to take USB devices, this gives the Nova a big advantage over other PDAs when the user needs to access the device through some type of alternative mouse device. It should also be noted that your PDAs do not use a mouse device but instead use the stylus to access the software. The Nova provides both mouse and stylus access, making it a very useful tool.

In testing the Nova I tried a number of more common alternative mouse devices including the Traxsys Roller and Joystick, Macally trackball, Renaissance Mouse and Trackerball Protrack 60. All of these devices displayed the same functionality as was available with a PC or laptop. A Macintosh single switch mouse was also tested and worked well, giving the Nova the capacity for single button mouse use where students may have difficulty with isolating the left and right mouse buttons.

The devices that were tested with the Nova 5000 were all regular Plug and Play devices that did not require the installation of any drivers or software to allow the device to interact. Devices such as the IntelliKeys are unlikely to function with the Nova as additional software is required to be installed. It is expected that this software would at this stage not be compatible with the Nova's Windows CE Operating System.

The Nova also has the additional alternative input of the PDA such as writing recognition, where the user produces handwriting using the stylus and the writing recognition software converts this text into editable text within the application. This facility is becoming more widely used with reluctant writers or for the development of handwriting skills.

## Summary

When we are working and investigating ICTs that can be used to support students with disabilities, there are a number of aspects we need to consider, including input, functionality, portability, ease of use, and inclusivity, to name a few. The Nova has the capacity to address successfully many of these areas of consideration for a wide range of students with special needs. Its reasonably low cost and portability would make it a device worth investigating and considering as an alternative to either a laptop or PDA. As the device is still relatively new, there is a limit to software applications available for the device. This will increase as the device becomes more readily used. It is certainly a device worthy of further exploration.

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# MP3 Players For Students With Disabilities

*Jeff Souter*

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Technology is probably the biggest band wagon in history. Any ICT innovation almost certainly produces dozens of new devices doing very similar things but all in a slightly different way and providing slightly different functions to obtain their part of the market.

MP3 players have a current wheel on the ICT band wagon. As they become more popular and more common, they will undoubtedly make their way further into education. Many schools are already using mp3 players to support literacy, communication, behaviour management and other curriculum areas to support and enhance the learning of students with special needs.

As with any new technology, there are many variations in the functions, size, shape and capacity of mp3 players. Each has the potential to some degree to be used with students with disabilities. Because there are so many mp3 players available it is very easy for teachers or support staff to purchase an mp3 player that may not be suitable for their students. This article will hopefully make the choice a little easier or at least allow you to make more appropriate choices with your mp3 players.

It is not the intention of this article to recommend any particular brand or model of mp3 player, as the choice of mp3 player is dependent on a number of factors which will vary across school settings and the needs of the student. There are hundreds of various mp3 players on the market, each with different functions, memory capacities, etc. This article is to give you a small insight into how the devices can vary and things you might want to take into consideration when looking for an mp3 player you could use with your students.

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## ***Functions***

There are a number of things that mp3 players can do besides playing music. Many of these functions can enhance the learning opportunities for students with special needs. These functions are explained in more details below but can include voice recording, displaying images, playing videos, FM and AM radio. Many mp3 players also have the capacity to store regular files for transferring from one computer to another

## ***Simplicity in Functionality***

This doesn't just mean what the mp3 player can do but what the user has to do to get it to do the various functions. Can you get to each function within one or two button presses or menu selections? If it takes five or six (or more with some mp3 players) menu item selections or presses of buttons to get to the function you want, it may be too complex for some students. It may also be too physically taxing for some students that have a physical impairment or access difficulties.

Look for players that make it very clear how or very easy to access the functions that you want the student to use. Have a good play with the device before you purchase it. Ask the salesperson to show you how to operate the device, keeping in mind the requirements of your students.

## ***Display***

The display screen for mp3 players can vary considerably from a basic monochrome text display similar to the display on a digital watch, to a colour LCD screen that can display images and movies. Of course, the quality of the screen will also have an impact on the cost of the device. The display is important to consider when using the mp3 with students who require visual support, who may have low vision or who have literacy support needs.

## ***Voice Recorder***

It is often very useful and motivating for students with special needs to be able to record their voice for later use. Teachers and support staff also find it valuable to be able to record student voices for evidence or speech, for assessment, or motivation. It could also be used as a basic communication device. Not all mp3 players have the capacity to record voice. Those that do will vary in the quality, volume and clarity of the recording. See if you can sample the voice recording before you purchase your mp3 player if this is a function you think you will use with your students.

## ***Memory Capacity***

The cost of mp3 players is very much reflected by the amount of memory on your mp3 players. The memory of these devices can range from 128 Megabytes to over 4 or 5 Gigabytes. While it sounds good to have lots of memory it is not necessarily something that you may use. Consider how many files you intend storing on your mp3 player and what type of files they are. Movies will take up more space than music files or images. If you intend using the device for storing lots of movies then you might want to consider a larger storage capacity, otherwise anything up to 1Gb should be sufficient for most school applications.

## ***Access and Button Size***

We have had a number of teachers and support staff who have purchased mp3 players with the intention of using the device with their students. Many of them have the functions they required for the students but when it came to the students using the device, they ran into problems. One of the biggest issues with mp3 players is the difficulty of students with fine motor problems to target the small buttons the device might have. It's fine to have a tiny, very light and very portable mp3 player. If the student is unable to press the buttons, however, they become useless for the student. Consider the access to the device functions when researching mp3 players and perhaps consider these questions when exploring the device:

- Are the buttons large enough for the students to access? Small devices will almost certainly have small buttons and will often have the buttons very close together. Make sure the buttons are big enough to allow the student to access one button at a time.
- Are they in a location that enables the student to access the buttons? Some mp3 players have the buttons on the side or front.
- What actions are required to access the functions? Some mp3 players have scroll wheels to move through the files stored on the device. Is this a physical action the student can carry out? If not, is there an alternative way to access the files?

## ***Podcasting***

Without spending too much time explaining the finer details, podcasting is traditionally the process of downloading sound files of the audio content from a broadcast. These broadcasts could include a radio broadcast or the sound from a TV program and were usually associated with a subscription to download these files. Lately podcasts have begun to include sound files of university lectures, recordings of presentations and can include teacher lessons. All these various forms can be useful for students to use the audio information to support their learning and are a very useful tool for students with special needs. All mp3 players have the capacity to use podcasting but the variation lies with the type of mp3 player and how the podcast information is downloaded to the mp3 player. If it is the student who will be downloading the podcast, make sure the process is straightforward. Again, talk to the salesperson to find out how difficult it is to podcast to the mp3 player and if there are any restrictions in the format of the podcast that you will need to consider.

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Vcasting is a new form of podcasting that incorporates video as well as the audio and will in the future provide an additional support to students. This will require larger memory capacity with your mp3 player as video takes up considerably more space than a simple audio file.

### Sound, Images and Movies

Many mp3 players also have the capacity to display images such as photos or to play movies as well as playing and recording sounds. This can be very useful for students who require visual support or whose learning is enhanced by visual media. Where this is the case you will need to purchase an mp3 player that will also display images or movies. Not all mp3 players do this and the cheaper models will usually not have this function. The size of the display will also have an impact on the size of the player itself. Usually a reasonable size would be an mp3 player similar in size to a mobile phone.

### Summary

There is no one model or brand of mp3 player that is going to suit every school environment or meet the needs of every student. Before purchasing a new mp3 player, consider the needs of the student and make sure the device will suit their needs. Otherwise it will end up sitting on the shelf with all those other “Assistive Technologies” that don’t suit. Make sure you put the effort into exploring the various mp3 players as it will give you better value for money and will have a greater impact in the learning of your students. Take the time to talk to the salesperson, as it will make your purchase worthwhile.

## ReadOn Rejoinder

Jane and Phil Mangano  
ReadOn

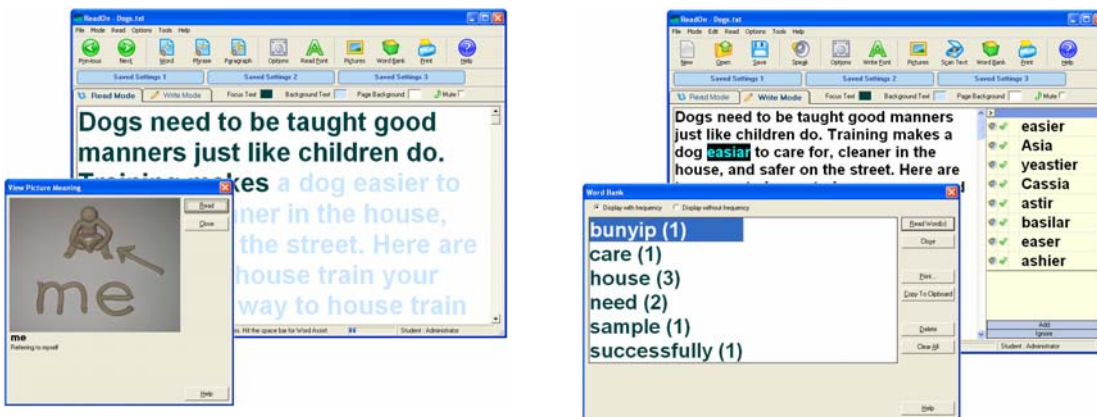
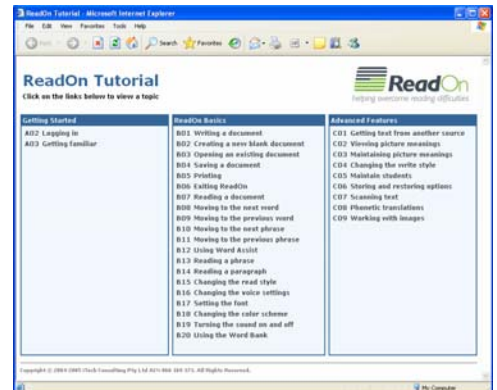
Rejoinder [*re-join-der*] noun : A quick reply to a question or remark.

Ouch! It was pretty difficult stopping ourselves from choking on our breakfast cereal as we read the review of ReadOn in the September edition of Online. Maybe it was the full moon... or perhaps the change of season... but it would seem a few inaccuracies crept into the article.

Where to start... Well, firstly, we need to ensure that readers understand that although ReadOn contains many assistive functions, it is primarily a tool to help struggling readers learn to read. In general terms, this is achieved by handing control of the learning process to the student. The audio visual tutorial is a key component in achieving this. Last month’s issue of Online states “There is a comprehensive tutorial available but you must have access to the Internet in order for it to work.” This is not true. The tutorial is actually installed on your local computer and is available for use whether or not you are connected to the internet.

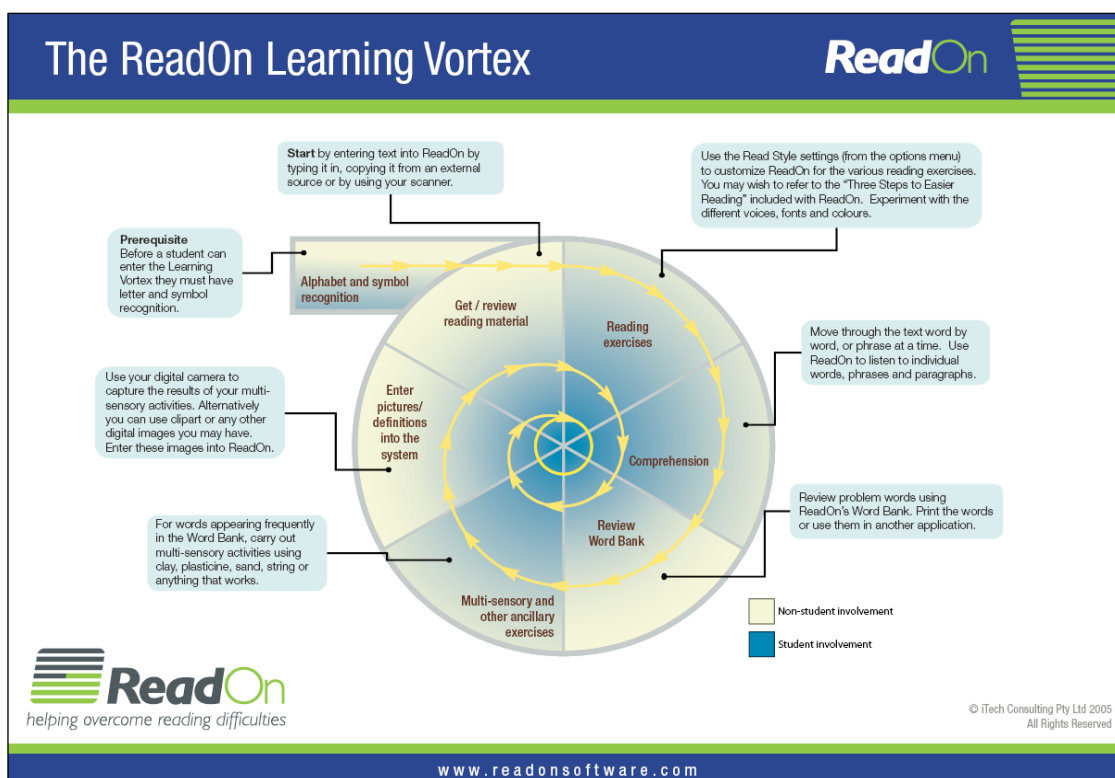
We strongly agree with the review in that if a user does have reading difficulties then the task of reading the user manual would be daunting – which is exactly why ReadOn has the comprehensive audio visual tutorial included with the program.

The section in the review about the highlight of the word and the delay of the reading out of the word had us a little confused. To clarify, ReadOn offers three ways of reading a word. It can simply read a word as the whole word is highlighted, it can highlight each letter individually before reading the word or it can say each letter name before reading the word. The speed of the ‘sweep’ of the word can be adjusted, however, there is no delay between the end of the sweep and the reading of the word. This is an incredibly powerful function for improving decoding accuracy and sight vocabulary. Images, often created by the student, can also be attached to individual words.



The review also states “When reading Dr. in a paragraph, ReadOn pronounced it as drive but when highlighted to read as individual word, ReadOn pronounced it as doctor.” As much as we would like to take credit for the amazing effectiveness of the Australian text to speech voices of ‘Karen’ and ‘Lee’, these are the standard voice engines developed by Nuance® (formerly Scansoft®) used in a growing number of technology products. The voices don’t always get it 100% right, but gee they’re good. Where it does not get it right, ReadOn includes a phonetic translation function which is particularly useful for names of places and people.

We were a little puzzled when we read the ‘anomalies’ section of the review. All of the functions mentioned in this section work as designed. It is these settings that allow students and/or teachers to customise ReadOn to meet individual learning styles. The various combinations of text highlighting and auditory feedback options allow ReadOn to be used in so many different ways both in the classroom and at home. Here is an example of how ReadOn can be used as part of a classroom literacy programme. We call it “The ReadOn Learning Vortex”.



Another example of how ReadOn has been customised to suit an individual’s learning style came from an email we received from a customer in the UK. He writes “I feel compelled to share with you an exciting experience I had recently with an adult client using the ReadOn software. He complained of a glare from the white background against the black text of the book we were reading. I decided to conduct an experiment with ReadOn, because of its versatile facility to select a wide variety of different colours for both text and background. Every few sentences, I lightened the background very slightly. Last week, he came back for a Review session. When I asked him about his progress in reading, he casually commented, ‘Oh, by the way - that glare thing doesn’t happen any more. So I’ve been reading loads from books and newspapers.’” How cool is that!!

If you have a spare five minutes we’d love you to visit [www.readonsoftware.com/overviewau](http://www.readonsoftware.com/overviewau) for a quick tour of ReadOn’s functions. If you have a little more time then you can go to [www.readonsoftware.com/demo](http://www.readonsoftware.com/demo) to view a full copy of the ReadOn tutorial.

For some great ideas on how ReadOn is being used in the classroom you can check out [www.readonsoftware.com/downloads/CaseStudies.pdf](http://www.readonsoftware.com/downloads/CaseStudies.pdf).

If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at [info@readonsoftware.com](mailto:info@readonsoftware.com). We aim to reply to all queries within one working day.

Finally, a big thank you to Jeff Souter for providing us with the opportunity to respond to last month’s article.

# New For You: WAVE hello to DAISY!

Review by Annette Coupland  
Statewide Education Adviser – Assistive Technology  
Disability Services Support Unit.

Digital media is now part of everyday life and digital information is everywhere. More than ever before, there are many options for how we can receive and interact with information. Digital Accessible Information System – DAISY – provides a format for presenting navigable digital audio text. Information in DAISY format can be read aloud using digitised voices and the listener can find their way through the text, locating specific sections such as chapters, heading, paragraphs or sentences, or any part of the text that has been marked as a navigation element. DAISY standards for digital accessible text are becoming recognised worldwide.

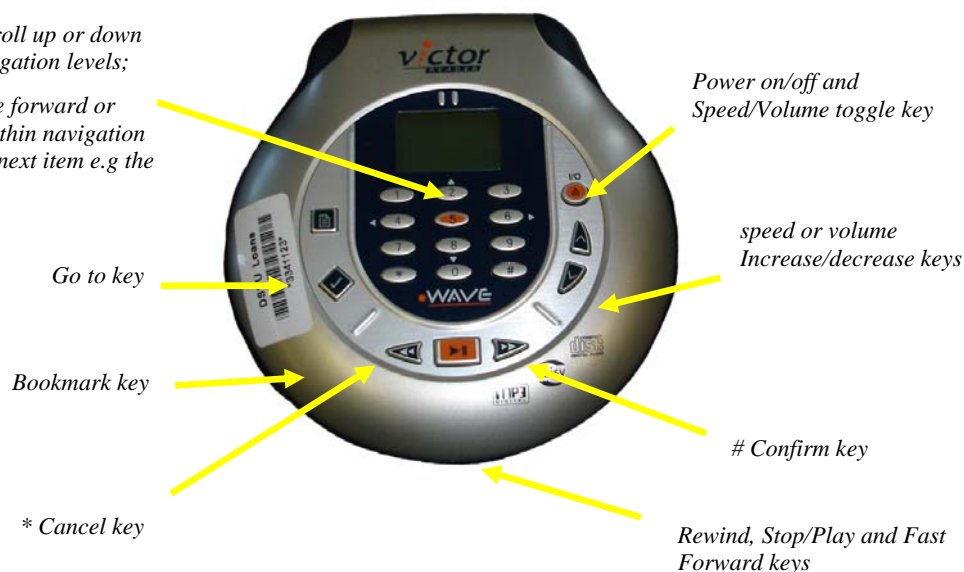
Humanware have produced a range of DAISY readers. DSSU Loans service has several different *Victor Reader* devices now available including the WAVE, Classic, and Classic Plus Recording. This article will review the WAVE - a powerful portable digital talking book player, mp3 and CD player in a 'Discman' style device.

## Description and Features

The WAVE player is a small, lightweight (260g) 'clamshell' style CD player. It comes with rechargeable batteries, earphones, a sturdy neoprene fabric case, AC/DC adapter and a DAISY format User Guide CD.

2 and 8 – scroll up or down through navigation levels;

4 and 6 move forward or backward within navigation levels to the next item e.g the next chapter.



Twenty-nine number, function and control keys are located on the upper surface. The numerical keys are arranged in a 'telephone number pad' layout in the centre with the function and control keys around the outside. Each function key has a relevant graphic symbol and a different shape with tactile support to assist low vision users with identification.

The outside keys control power on/off; speed and volume; play/stop, fast forward and rewind; bookmarking and 'go to' functions. The numerical keys can be used to select page and section by entering the appropriate number, and also provide access to other features including bookshelf (to list all the books on included on a CD if there are more than one); forward/backward navigation through sections; where am I; information about the keys; sleep (timer off). The \* (cancel) and # (confirm) keys complete the layout.

Located on the left side are three jacks for earphones (included) an external speaker and to connect the AC adapter. There is also a data port, however this is unused. A small slide enables the keypad to be locked.

The WAVE comes with 2 rechargeable AA batteries. These are supplied fully charged. The player has an inbuilt recharger however it will only recharge Humanware supplied batteries. Other batteries including standard Alkaline or other brand rechargeable batteries can be used, but will not charge inside the device. The included batteries take approx 5 hours to charge, and provide 7 – 9 hours of DAISY format reading time. Battery life is reduced if playing mp3 or music CDs.

Bookmarks can be placed onto the book. These are digital markers that the user can insert (by pressing the bookmark key twice) and can return to at any time. Up to 998 bookmarks can be inserted. These are identified by their allocated number and can be selected directly if the number is known using the 'bookmark - go to' feature (press bookmark key once), or by navigating forward or backwards through the bookmarks that have been inserted (using the 4 or 6 navigation keys).

## Considerations

With the number of different functions and controls available on the player, it can take some time to remember them all. Some of the keys are quite intuitive, however others need to be learnt and remembered. Audio prompts are given when a key has been selected to assist the user and the Confirm and Cancel keys can be used to either select the chosen item or to cancel the selection and return to the

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previous function. When pressing the keys, there is sometimes a short delay before the selected feature is activated. Key selections are confirmed with audio feedback.

If the batteries become completely flat, they may not recharge in the device. They can be charged using an external recharger in this event to restore their power.

No strap is included either on the player or the case, but the case does have a belt loop.

The benefits of the WAVE or any DAISY player for students requiring audio format is enormous. These may be students with vision impairment, physical impairments for whom holding or manipulating a book is difficult or those with specific learning difficulties who find reading text difficult. Whole text books and novels can be stored on CDs in DAISY format, allowing students to find their way easily through the sections of the book, or to bookmark those sections they wish to return to for further study or review. This will increase the independence of those students, and give much greater and easier access to text. Study applications of bookmarks include: marking quotes to refer back to in novels or plays; marking sections to review; marking points of relevance for notetaking (similar to highlighting text), giving easy access to information during 'open book' exams for students with low vision or learning difficulties etc.

The Quick Start and User Guide supplied in DAISY format on the included CD is also located on the Humanware website in text at [http://www.humanware.ca/web/en/p\\_DP\\_VR\\_Wave.asp](http://www.humanware.ca/web/en/p_DP_VR_Wave.asp).

### ***DAISY Materials for use with the WAVE***

The Victor Reader players – WAVE, Classic Plus and Classic Plus with Recording will only play audio DAISY books. Schools may need to refer their students for membership with Libraries that hold DAISY materials in their collection, to access materials to use with the DAISY players. Vision Australia is one such organisation: <http://www.nils.org.au>, follow the links through Our Services to Information Library Services. It may be worthwhile for eligible students to register for membership so that access to materials is available during the loan period of the DAISY player.

There are some DAISY books available for download e.g. from [www.bookshare.org](http://www.bookshare.org), however these contain DAISY text only, no audio, so will not play on the Victor players. These materials require specialised DAISY reading software on a computer. You will find A DAISY reader included in TextHelp Read and Write Gold.

The WAVE and other Victor Reader players mentioned above will be available for trial through the Disability Services Support Unit Loans from 2007.

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## **Pegasus Mobile Note Taker**

*Andrea Sax*

*Teacher, Corinda Secondary Special Education Unit*

Before you decide that the only way to keep up with your notes and minute-taking (at all of our very important and numerous meetings) is to buy a laptop, take a moment to consider this little gadget. The Mobile Notetaker by Pegasus Technologies is extremely light and small measuring 10.7 x 6.5cm – about the same weight and size as a small mobile phone – and comes with its own specialised pen. The idea is that once you have clipped it onto the top edge of your A4 paper and turned it on, everything that is either written or drawn on that sheet of paper, with the supplied pen, will appear in a small LCD screen on the device. This will be saved there until it is downloaded to a computer with its supplied software, compatible with Windows 2000 and XP. Up to 50 pages can be stored. The Mobile Notetaker runs off 2 AAA batteries which come supplied. One ink refill is also included for the electronic pen.

The technology involves both ultrasound and infrared. Once the information is downloaded, exactly what you have written or drawn will appear on the left side of a split screen. On the right-hand side will be an immediate attempt by the program to interpret your handwriting as text using handwriting recognition. The drawing or diagrams can be selected on the left side and through a specific command, transferred as an image into the computer form. Once you have proof-read the right-hand page, the document can be sent to Microsoft Word or Notepad. Other programs, such as Outlook and Excel, can also receive the information. The writing capture process seems similar to that of the Mimio and E-Beam whiteboard capture devices, but works at a personal level on a page up to A4 in size.

The Mobile Notetaker has applications that may provide support to students with disabilities. A peer could write notes in their own books which are captured for later download for a student who requires support for notetaking.



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# Free Switch Software

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A number of web sites offer a range of switch software at little or no cost. Some are trial versions whilst others are demonstration programs that might last a limited number of 'turns' or minutes of play. Other titles are distributed as Freeware i.e. totally free to copy and use.

All of these programs provide alternate access to a computer via a single (or two) switch(s). The user's preferred switch is connected to the computer via a switch adapted mouse, a special switch interface or into an *IntelliKeys*<sup>TM</sup>. Most programs also provide other access methodologies by use of the keyboard (e.g. space bar, enter key or cursor arrows), trackball, head pointing system and/or touch screen. It depends on the design and function of the activity and what it has been designated to accomplish.

Switch software essentially is designed to provide activities that promote greater understanding of cause and effect, assist in developing switch timing skills and/or choice making. Fundamentals of vision, hearing and cognition need to be taken into account as well as subject matter and suitability for each client. Catering to individual or group needs is critical as elementary, simplistic, overly 'busy' or repetitive tasks can result in poor or limited performance by the user.

After performing some research for two special schools in Melbourne recently, namely *Mt Evelyn Special Development School* and *Burwood SDS*, I chanced upon a few new web sites that provide some simple yet engaging software that can be used with a switch. A couple of old favourites have also been included!

**Brillsoft:** [www.brillsoft.com](http://www.brillsoft.com)

A colleague at Glenallen School, J.T. Hew had listed this web site on his school's web site. It offered four titles but since revisiting it, it no longer provides the freeware programs that I had downloaded three weeks ago in mid November 2006. I have since rediscovered these switch programs on the next web site. The three programs are *Fab Four*, *Rockets* and *Jetstream Trader*.

**One Switch:** <http://www.oneswitch.org.uk/2/switch-downloads.htm>

There are over 80 switch programs listed on this site (including the Brillsoft titles). Other very useful information is available in pages on the site with some excellent background information and a wonderful resource section, titled *Ideas*.

The Switch Software Download page categories include *Adventure* (2); *Arcade Classics* (5); *Platformers* (14); *Switch Puzzle & Skill Games* (19); *Switch Race Games* (7); *Switch Shoot 'Em Ups* (17); *Sport* (5) and *Various* (12).

A small explanatory blurb accompanies each screen shot. The programs are compressed as ZIPped files. Users of MS Windows XP will have no problem unzipping (or decompressing them) whereas users of older operating systems might require a version of Winzip (<http://www.winzip.com/>) or a compatible freeware program i.e. *7-Zip* ([www.7-zip.org](http://www.7-zip.org)) or *Zip Reader 8* ([www.pkware.com/home\\_and\\_small\\_office/downloads](http://www.pkware.com/home_and_small_office/downloads)).

The programs are simple yet engaging fun switch based activities. As the categories indicate, they are styled upon some old classic arcade, shoot'em up and platforming games. They are ideal for older users who do not wish to play with software designed for younger students. They are age, gender and interest appropriate. Students and older users can practice and refine their reaction times, accuracy, tracking and scanning skills.

**Sarah Greenland** (<http://www.sarahgreenland.com/downloads.htm>)

Three programs are available for download. They are *K-1 Demo*, *Pre-Mouse* and *Touch Screen Mazes*. All three programs install into the *My Documents* folder so teachers can easily install it without permissions from technical support people. They are fun little programs that all provide interesting and motivating activities. The Touch Screen Mazes caters directly to touch window users, with Pre-Mouse proving access to one and two switches. Sarah has programmed some wonderful games and continues to provide stimulating activities.

**Simtech Publications** (<http://www.hsj.com/demos.html>)

There are about twenty (20) freely downloadable titles, most for MS Windows XP and others for older operating systems (Win 98 and Win 2000). Installation is very straightforward. The programs run for 3 minutes, and then stop. They are fully functional with all features and settings made available to the user. You need to restart the software each 3 minutes though. A range of switch skills is provided in full colour activities, with fun sound effects & music.

Some other resources and activities are included on the Spectronics web page, *Freebies and Shareware Sites* (<http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/library.asp?article=8206>). Also check out some fun programs for leisure and entertainment at <http://www.michi.nu/games/freeware.php>, and at [http://www.bbc.co.uk/ouch/closeup/switchgaming\\_guideto.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/ouch/closeup/switchgaming_guideto.shtml)

Software can be expensive, so freeware and demos play an important role in identifying the genres and types of programs that a client will enjoy and participate in most fully. Tell other colleagues so that they can install them at their school(s) and publish the links in school newsletters. Parents and users themselves can download the programs and use them over the long Christmas break.

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## Learning Development Centre – ICTs – Students With Disabilities

### ***Upcoming Events Term 1 2007***

Outlined below are the details of workshops and practicums being offered by the LDC-ICT-SWD for term 1, 2007.

Each activity requires the participant to complete the corresponding registration form for the activity. Once the registration form has been received by the LDC-ICT-SWD, the participant will be notified as to whether their application has been successful. It is suggested that ***if you have not received confirmation that your registration form has been received within 7 days of sending the registration form, contact the LDC-ICT-SWD to make sure your form has been received.***

The numbers of participants for each workshop is strictly limited to ensure all participants have adequate access to the resources. As a result, your registration may not be successful. Where this is the case, you are placed on a waiting list. In the event of a participant canceling, you will be offered a place within the workshop.

Registration forms for these activities are available from

**Ph:** 07 3240 9365

**Fax:** 07 3240 9393

**Email:** [LDCStudentsWithDisabilities@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:LDCStudentsWithDisabilities@qed.qld.gov.au)

**Web:** [www.learningplace.com.au/en/dssulc/ldcictswd](http://www.learningplace.com.au/en/dssulc/ldcictswd)

**Listserv:** <http://education.qld.gov.au/listserv/subscribe.html> and select LDC-ICT-SWD listserv from list.

**Location of Activities:** LDC-ICT-SWD, 141 Merton Rd Woolloongabba.

### ***Clicker 5 Playgroups***

***Tuesdays 6<sup>th</sup> February; 20<sup>th</sup> February; 6<sup>th</sup> March; 20<sup>th</sup> March; 3<sup>rd</sup> April***

***3:30pm – 6:00pm***

This term the LDC-ICT-SWD is running a series of “playgroups” once a fortnight to allow people time to explore and “play” with Clicker 5. The latest version of the popular framework software, Clicker 5 provides many new features to the Clicker library and an extremely realistic voice for text-to-speech. These playgroups are valuable to those who are familiar with Clicker 4 and want to have a look at the latest version before purchasing. The playgroups would also be suitable to those who are not familiar with Clicker and would like to find out what this application can do to support their students.

The sessions will allow participants valuable time and hands on experience in exploring Clicker 5 and to develop activities, resources and applications using the program. Personnel will be available for assistance with those tricky shortcuts and solutions to problems you may be having in developing activities for students. Please contact the LDC-ICT-SWD for further details.

**Level:** Introductory to Advanced covered. Individually catered to participants

**Location:** LDC-ICT-SWD, 141 Merton Rd Woolloongabba

**Time:** 3:30pm – 6:00pm on the days indicated

**Cost:** Nil

**Open To:** Teachers, Teacher-Aides, Support staff and Parents

**Registration:** No registration is necessary, however, as there are a limited number of computers and resources available, please contact the LDC to enroll in a session. You are able to attend all sessions if you wish but prior notification is necessary to ensure a computer is available. When spaces are limited, participation will be available only to those who have made a prior booking.

### ***Digital Portfolios Three-Day Practicum***

***Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February and Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> – Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March***

***8:45am – 3:00pm***

The use of digital portfolios to illustrate student achievements is becoming an integral part of school reporting and assessment. The Digital Portfolio for students with disabilities has even greater potential as an effective and comprehensive planning and information-providing tool. In using the Digital Portfolio, there are many issues a school and each individual teacher must reflect on in order to collect information that is appropriate, applicable and suitable.

This three-day practicum will explore the Digital Portfolio and how it applies to students with disabilities. The practicum will be split into one day of information sharing, with 6 weeks in between to collect suitable resources. The second and third days will be spent designing and developing a Digital Portfolio.

**Level:** Introductory

**Location:** LDC-ICT-SWD, 141 Merton Rd Woolloongabba

**Time:** 8:45pm – 3:00pm

**Cost:** \$198

**Open To:** Teachers, Teacher-Aides, Support staff and Parents

**Registration:** Registration form only (contact the LDC-ICT-SWD or visit the LDC-ICT-SWD web site)

### ***Inclusive Technologies to Support Students In Early Education Programs***

***Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February***

***8:45am – 3:00pm***

This workshop will allow participants to explore a number of ICTs that can provide inclusive opportunities for students in preschool and preparatory settings. A number of applications will be explored that will provide opportunities in learning for all students and enable teachers and support staff to ensure all early learning students are provided with learning opportunities.

The workshop will explore hardware and software including framework and curriculum applications as well as identifying strategies for the use of these ICTs within their learning environment.

**Level:** Introductory

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**Location:** LDC-ICT-SWD, 141 Merton Rd Woolloongabba

**Time:** 8:45pm – 3:00pm

**Cost:** \$70

**Open To:** Teachers, Teacher-Aides, Support staff and Parents who support students in either a secondary school setting or students that are of post-compulsory school age.

**Registration:** Registration form only (contact the LDC-ICT-SWD or visit the LDC-ICT-SWD web site)

### **What's New In Assistive Technologies**

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March**

**8:45am – 3:00pm**

It is often difficult to keep track with the latest in technologies and even more so when focussing on technologies for students with disabilities. This workshop will allow participants to explore a sample of recently released or upgraded technologies. Participants will also have the opportunity to use the new technologies to identify the suitability of the products for their students. Participants will be able to explore technologies that include the Nova 5000; Tracker Pro; Dragon Naturally Speaking 9; Co:Writer for Neo; Clevy keyboard; ZoomText keyboard; IntelliSwitch and Discover pro; Mobile Note Taker and more.

**NB** This workshop is at an introductory level

**Time:** 8:45am to 3:00pm

**Cost:** \$70, (No TRS available)

**Open To:** Teachers, Support Staff, Teacher Aides

**Registration:** Registration form only (contact the LDC-ICT-SWD or visit the LDC-ICT-SWD web site)

### **Digital Media To Support Students With Disabilities Three-Day Practicum**

**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> – Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March**

**8:45am – 3:00pm**

This practicum will allow participants to explore a number of ICT media options to support students with disabilities. The practicum will cover how to get the most out of using digital cameras and digital video cameras, and enable participants to manipulate media files for assistive software, supportive activities and digital portfolios. Participants will explore and use readily available applications that can manipulate media and will produce their own collection of resources that can be used for supporting their students.

**Level:** Introductory

**Location:** LDC-ICT-SWD, 141 Merton Rd Woolloongabba

**Time:** 8:45pm – 3:00pm

**Cost:** \$198

**Open To:** Teachers, Teacher-Aides, Support staff and parents.

**Registration:** Registration form only (contact the LDC-ICT-SWD or visit the LDC-ICT-SWD web site)

## *Happy Holidays*

*Don't forget to have a well earned break and to relax without technology for a while.*

*See you in 2007*

*The crew from OnLine.*



**ASSISTIVE  
TECHNOLOGY**

**DISABILITY  
SERVICES SUPPORT  
UNIT**

**141 Merton Road  
Woolloongabba 4102  
Brisbane  
Australia**

The OnLine Newsletter is published on a regular basis throughout the year. The newsletter is published in Acrobat format although other electronic formats are available on request.

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