

This is an introduction to literacy tools.

Reading Tools

- Text-to-speech software creates a spoken sound version of the text in a computer document.
- Optical character recognition (OCR) software converts an image of text, such as a scanned paper document or electronic fax file, into computer-editable text.
- Scanning & Reading software programs (when used with a scanner) enable the use of OCR and the conversion of text to speech. They often include a bundle of helpful features such as visual display options, speaking dictionaries, speaking word prediction, and tools to facilitate note taking and outlining.
- Text in an electronic format (eText) is text-based information that is available in a digitally encoded format that can be read visually and by electronic means. Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), MP3 Players, and eBooks are examples of devices used to read digitized text.
- The Reading pen is a small portable device that enables one to scan printed text and hear it spoken.

Writing Tools

- Text-to-speech word processors create a spoken sound version of the text that is created in a computer document.
- A word prediction program consists of a menu of words in a dialog box on the computer screen. The list of word “predictions” is refined as each subsequent letter is typed.
- Abbreviation expansion enables certain combinations of letters to expand when typed, converting into longer words.

Organizational tools

- Graphic organizing software uses formats such as diagrams, outlines, and mind maps to assist users in performing writing activities.
- Note taking and scheduling can be facilitated through the use of electronic devices such as PDAs and Palm Pilots.