

A Day in the Life of an Adult with Dyslexia: How Technology Helps Me Keep Pace with a Fast-Moving World

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As an adult with dyslexia, I am challenged every day to keep pace with a world of content and communication that continues to grow. Every working adult today is bombarded with email messages, text messages, and documents with an expectation that these are processed and responded to in a timely fashion. There is also a requirement for learning new things to remain proficient in your job. And social interaction requires an awareness of what is 'trending' in the world around us. When reading and writing takes as much effort and time as it does for me, there is no choice but to use the power of technology to help to meet the requirements of each day

There is lots of material that I need to "read" each day so I use a number of tools that can convert text to speech. Email messages and text messages on my phone happen frequently throughout the day. As an iPhone and Apple laptop user, the Apple digital assistant Siri is an important tool for me. I use Siri to read my email and instant messages and dictate my responses using Siri as well. Siri is supported on both the iPhone and my Apple laptop(www.apple.com/siri)

I, like most people, get information from the web on a daily basis. It can be anything from a restaurant review to a new article on dyslexia. For much of that, Siri converts text to speech for me. But I also use other tools for some of that web surfing. When I find lengthy articles that I want to read later, I store them using Instapaper. The Instapaper application (www.Instapaper.com) allows me to store the article and have it read back to me later. I also sometimes use the Google function for converting text to speech (Select and Speak)(<https://www.ispeech.org/apps/select-and-speak>).

Reading books present some additional attractive alternatives. In addition to using digital readers like Siri or the reader attached to Kindle, there are a large number of books on tape that have been recorded by a person actually reading

the book. My two favorites are Learning Ally (www.learningally.com) and Audible (www.audible.com).

Learning Ally has an annual subscription fee that allows access to their extensive library of recorded books. Their library includes many textbooks and I used them throughout my high school and college career. Audible is now owned by Amazon and has a monthly fee that provides one taped book and access to a number of news feeds and periodicals. One of my favorites is the daily New York Times summary that I often listen to on my way into work in the morning. It is a great way to stay current.

One of the biggest challenges has been reading printed material that I did not have in digital form. When I was in college, the college had a machine that could scan those pages and convert them into digital form that could then be read by a digital reader. Unfortunately, the machine cost \$5000 and was not portable. Today, that functionality is in your smartphone. The Speechify (www.getspeechify.com) app allows you to take a picture of printed text with your cellphone and have it read back to you. It is great for reading everything from documents you receive in the mail to descriptive plates on a museum display.

Speech to text is the primary way that I write. I use Siri for most of my writing requirements especially those that I initiate from my smartphone. For lengthier Word documents I sometimes use Dragon Speech. There are also a number of specialized speech recognition functions now being attached to your TV remote, appliances and other electronic devices.

As you can imagine, I am using headphones a good part of the day. That's a discussion for another day.

It is hard to imagine dealing with dyslexia without these tools. And there are new alternatives every day.