

## Accessible Library Workstations 2001

All library workstations should be accessible to everyone in the library's service community. At very least, they should be available to the widest number of people. That means that they should be in an accessible part of the building or the community. It means that workstations should be at physically accessible heights and accommodate a wide variety of abilities. The information that they access should also be available to everyone. Right now, many of our libraries need information about the issues involved and on how to go about fixing the problems.

Of course, budgets are limited. Very few places can even dream of having all of their workstations totally accessible. But it is possible to serve many more people more easily with a limited number of accessible workstation. Two or three would be a great start. Contrary to popular beliefs, it isn't even as expensive as you (or the person you report to) might fear.

Even one accessible workstation is a good start. You need to know that, at least as technology is right now, one station will never serve a wide range of the people with disabilities who live or work in your service area. Simply put, some accessibility features may serve one group very well, but the hardware or software may be incompatible with hardware or software that is essential to another group. But you must start somewhere. One is better than none, especially if it's the first step in a plan to have many more.

Below is an outline of a very basic accessible workstation. The list is not exhaustive, and does not include some items required by people who are blind. It's intended as a starting point. To apply it to your situation, work with local groups that serve people with a range of disabilities. Ideally, there's a disability advisory group that the library forms or "borrows" from the municipality or other entity. People from such advisory groups can also help you publicize your new workstations and services for people with disabilities when they're up and running. But first, listening is essential and so are gathering information and planning. Most of all, you just need to get started.

To find out about the items listed below you have a couple of options. You can contact the manufacturer directly. See the list "Accessible Technology for People with Disabilities." You can find a local vendor who specializes in accessibility. Your regional or subregional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped or Talking Book Library may be able to help you identify such vendors. So might one of the Tech Access sites in your state. Find Tech Access sites at <http://www.ataccess.org>.

**BASIC HARDWARE-SOFTWARE CONFIGURATION**  
**FOR AN ACCESSIBLE LIBRARY WORKSTATION** (Regular prices, averaged)

❑ Power Computer. As of Winter 2001: Pentium 800 megahertz processor, 256 megabytes of memory, 10 gigabyte hard drive, 10/100 megabit Intel Pro network card, 3-1/2 floppy drive, and a CD ROM drive, with Windows 2000	\$1,500.00
❑ 19" color monitor (minimum size)	\$450.00
❑ Keyboard with large print keys, reconfiguration options and ability to replace mouse/alternative keyboard (and illustrate Windows 2000 capabilities)	\$400.00
❑ Flatbed scanner	\$500.00
❑ "Reading Systems" Examples: e-Reader, Kurzweil 1000, Kurzweil 3000	\$2,000.00
❑ Text magnification/screen enlargement Example: ZoomText (and also illustrate Windows 2000 capabilities)	\$450.00
❑ Screen reader for people who are blind or visually impaired	\$800.00
❑ Web browsers Examples: Internet Explorer, Netscape Navigator, IBM Home Page Reader	\$150.00
<b>TOTAL for hardware and software</b>	<b>\$6,250.00</b>

**Also recommended:**

- ❑ Variable height table or workstation, preferably electronic and adjusted by the touch of a button
- ❑ Ergonomic chair with adjustability features and wheels that lock if needed
- ❑ On at least one workstation: Braille display (\$4700 and up) + JAWS 7 or WindowEyes

**Essential component for success:**

Staff well-versed in operation, basic troubleshooting, and minor reconfiguration.