

Ability Newsletter

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Expert Mouse Pro

We have been waiting a long time! But at last we now have a USB version of this popular Kensington trackball. The Pro retains the four programmable buttons of the traditional Expert Mouse trackball, and the excellent MouseWorks software. But in addition it has six small DirectLaunch buttons to take you directly to favourite applications and Web sites. It also has an integrated scroll wheel to allow you to move quickly through long documents and Web pages.

The Expert Mouse Pro has stainless steel bearings. It requires a computer with a USB port running Windows 95, 98 or 2000, or else Mac OS 8.1 or higher.

Many clients with disabilities will not be able to access the small buttons and scroll wheel, but the USB feature may be a benefit.



Product News

Lower Price Penny & Giles Joystick and Trackball



The excellent quality Penny & Giles trackballs and joysticks will soon be available in Australia at new low prices. While these prices are yet to be confirmed, we believe the basic models will sell for under \$400. This will make them extremely good value.

The Joystick in particular is a unique device, offering a method of access that is more intuitive and easier for many than a trackball.

HeadWay

For many people the most comfortable and efficient means of controlling the cursor is through head movements. Options such as the HeadMouse and HeadMaster have become very pricey. The HeadWay is a new option that sells for a very reasonable \$1499. A small transmitter is mounted on a headband or cap. The design is light and compact. Cursor speed can be varied via a special switch. A single adjuster screw allows the user to set a 'Dead Band' to reduce unwanted movement of the cursor due to tremor or involuntary head movement. No additional software is required with the unit.



Product News

Joggle Switch

This switch has a unique and very helpful feature – the actuation force can be varied from 200 grams to 1.5 K/gms. This is done by rotating the coloured top to one of fifteen pre-set positions provided.

The are available from Ability for \$139.



Mouse -TRAK Pro



This trackball has integrated hand support and a middle button that can be programmed easily as Click, Double-Click or Click & Drag. It has a built in scroll feature and extremely light ball movement force. Stainless steel shafts and bearings should ensure a trouble-free life.

The Mouse-TRAK Pro (PS/2) sells in Australia for around the \$330 mark.

Product News

Type & Talk 4.0 (By textHELP!)

This is a word processor designed for the education and special needs sectors. Based on the well-known *Read & Write*, the features of *Type & Talk* include speech, an advanced phonetic spell checker, word prediction, homonym support, thesaurus and word wizard (to help find words).

Lesson plans are included with the package. Users can choose between two toolbars (Advanced or Standard).

Type & Talk works with Mac (OS 7.6.1 or above) or Windows (95, 98, 2000 or NT4).

An obvious comparison can be made between *Type & Talk* and *Write:Out Loud*. Both are similarly priced, at just over \$200, and have comparable features. We will endeavour to bring readers a comparison in the next Newsletter.

textHELP! also makes a product called *WordSmith*. This adds a toolbar to Word 97/2000 and offers the same literacy support as other textHELP products within Word.

Ability brings you impartial advice. We give you wide options from different suppliers.

We are also a not-for-profit company.

Ability News

Brain Injury Research

We have just completed a draft Final Report on this pilot study. We have been examining how people with traumatic brain injury can best access their computers, what software is helpful for them and what benefits computer activity can provide for them. Six people from the Brain Injury Unit at the Royal Rehabilitation Centre, Sydney, have participated in the study. A case study methodology was utilised. The findings will be of considerable interest to those who work with and care for people with traumatic brain injury. The report will be released soon.

Remote Assessments

We are developing two alternative strategies for enabling our expertise to be provided to those in remote areas and even overseas! We are thrilled at the potential of what we are currently exploring. We will keep you informed.

AccessAbility Workshop

Graeme Smith will attend this workshop in Canberra on 14-15 May 2001, to give a presentation on our research into Online Assessments and Support for People in Remote Areas. Over 150 delegates and dignitaries will attend the workshop.

Ability News

Services for Schools

Ability's role in providing advice, products and services to schools in NSW has expanded significantly over the last 18 months. We are happy to come and talk with staff and discuss products and options. More specific assessment and training services can be arranged subsequently on a greatly subsidised basis.

Remember that when you deal with Ability you deal with a company that has access to the widest range of computer access products in Australia. We will find the best solutions, not just those of a particular brand or distributor. We will give you the pros and cons of alternative products, not the hard sell on a small range of products.

Contact Graeme or Michael at Ability if you are interested in having a visit to your school.

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