



Word Prediction Software

Word prediction can be useful for a variety of reasons. For people with a physical disability word prediction can increase the speed of writing text and cut down on the number of keystrokes/switch activations/energy required.

For people with literacy difficulties word prediction can improve their spelling accuracy and broaden their vocabulary. By relieving some of the pressure of attempting to spell every word the overall quality of language and narrative structure can improve.

Word prediction may be a standard feature on equipment, such as communication devices or portable notetakers; or part of larger software packages, such as on-screen keyboards and talking word processors. People with literacy difficulties frequently use word prediction as part of a software package that supports reading as well as spelling.

Word prediction does not suit all people. Some people may find the list of suggested words distracting. Settings such as where the prediction list appears on the screen, how many words are displayed at a time, and how many letters are typed before the prediction list appears may minimise distraction.

For people who struggle with accurate spelling, word prediction can reduce the demands on their spelling skills, allowing them to focus on the flow of ideas. However for word prediction to be useful the person needs to have some idea of sounding out the first letters of the word. They also need to be able to read the words in the prediction list. Word prediction software that is part of a talking word processing package usually has the capability of listening to the words in the prediction list before choosing the desired word.

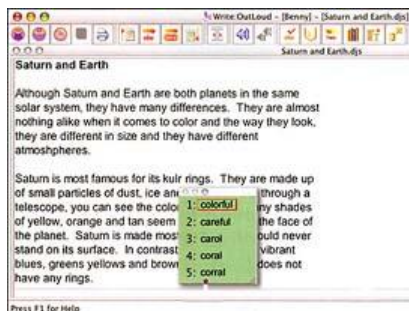
The dictionaries stored within the program determine much of the “power” of the word prediction. Look for features such as “homophone support”, “phonetic replacement”, and addition of custom dictionaries. Try typing some frequently misspelled words to see if the software is able to predict the correct spelling.

Many packages learn new words as they are typed. They base their prediction on the frequency that the words are used and the context of the sentence. Therefore they become more efficient the more the individual uses them.

Examples of Word Prediction software include...

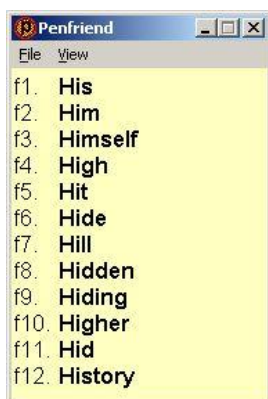
Co:Writer

Co:Writer has flexible spelling, taking into account phonetic substitutions, common letter confusions, letter reversals, additions and omissions.



Penfriend

Penfriend can read out loud the list of predicted words. It can be used with most Windows applications including word processors, email or internet applications.



WordQ 2

WordQ 2 provides word completion, abbreviation expansion and text to speech. Sections of highlighted text, menus and lists in any application can be read out. WordQ 2 gives examples of the word in a sentence. This helps to explain the meaning of the word and enables correct choice between similar words.

Soothsayer

SoothSayer allows the user to alter fonts, the colour, number of words presented and the position and orientation of the prediction window. Words in the prediction window can be spoken aloud.

More details

For individual advice contact ILC Tas ph: 1300 885 886.

More detailed information on word prediction software can be found at the Spectronics website.

Comparison chart <http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/article/22248>.

Fact sheet <http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/article/universal-access-using-word-prediction>

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