

The Chromebook Advantage for Adults with Disabilities Living Independently

presented by James McKittrick, M.P.A.

What is a Chromebook?

A Chromebook is a laptop computer with a unique operating system (OS). Instead of freestanding installed OS like the two most popular, Windows or Apple IOS, Chromebooks use a derivative of the Linux kernel (an Open Source OS) to power up a specialized version of the Chrome Web Browser. All computer functions are then web based rather than having unique programs such as Microsoft Office that end in .exe and run independently on the computer.

How Chromebooks Actually Work

Chromebooks accomplish their work with three different methods. They are: Chrome and Android Apps, Chrome Extensions, and conventional service oriented websites such as Efax (an online faxing services, Keepvid (an online Youtube down loader), or Dropbox(an online storage).

The Chromebook Major Advantages

Chromebooks are light on required resources. This makes them less expensive than comparable Windows computers and much less costly than Apple products. Chromebooks are virtually free of viruses.

Chromebooks update every five to six weeks very unobtrusively and the time to update is typically less than a minute.

Chrome apps and extensions are with rare exception free of charge.

Accessibility

Chromebooks have a variety of accessibility features for persons with visual disabilities these include a large mouse cursor pointer option, a high-contrast mode, which changes the text from black on white to white on black , a screen magnifier , and a feature called chromevox which is a text to speech application which is similar in many ways to JAWS.

For persons with physical disabilities, Chromebooks provide a Sticky Keys function which enables sequential use of specific keys for keyboard shortcuts. It also has tap drag, which allows clicking on a word or sentence and dragging it with your finger across the screen with a touchpad. There is also the option of a on screen keyboard and finally a very responsive speech to text application .

Chromebooks like other laptops have USB ports and Bluetooth connectivity. This makes possible alternative keyboards / mice / trackballs / etc. to be connected, provided that they do not require additional software drivers to operate.

Chromebook Shortcomings and Disadvantages

Printing is cumbersome

No Popular Adventure Game

Broadband Only

Less than Total Compatibility With Rest of Computing World

Google Quirkiness

Useful Websites

<https://support.google.com/chromebook/answer/4514391?hl=en> (general support)

<https://chromebook.guide/> (basic how to guide)

<https://chromeunboxed.com/> (blog with latest Chromebook news)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_FOZJjJqSXo
(video CHromebook How To)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpbIsN31hLM>
(video Chromevox how to)

<https://support.google.com/chrome/a/answer/6220366?hl=en> (ChromebokUpdatePolicy)