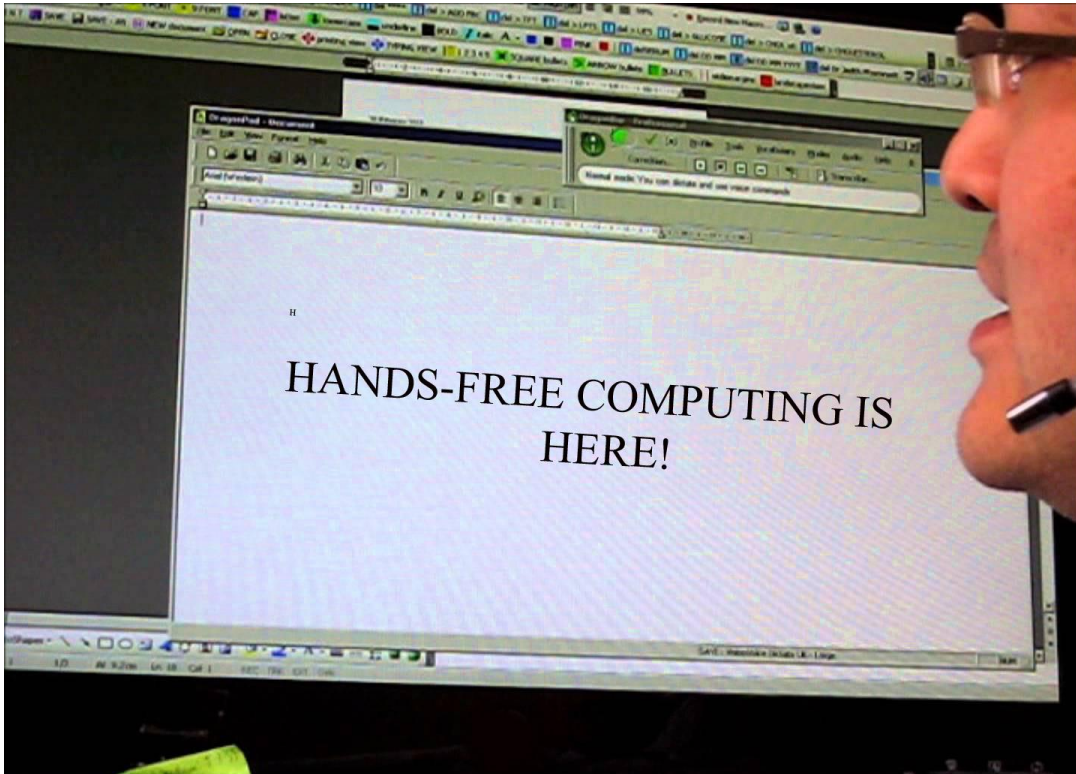


HELP FOR “BABY BOOMERS”!



As the “Baby Boom” generation ages, along with white hair, aches and pains may come some additional handicaps such as difficulty in seeing, hearing, and the ubiquitous arthritis. For many PC users hands and fingers don’t function as they used too and for others vision deteriorates (cataracts, macular degeneration, etc.). Fortunately the tech industry has developed and continues to improve ways to help such individuals. The 3 most useful devices/software that have been well received are: ***text magnifiers and readers, large keys keyboards, and voice-activated software.***

Text magnifiers and readers (for Windows or Mac) are software which enables text to be magnified up to 32 times the original (more than any other software to date), has various ways of displays, and also can read aloud what it sees (docs, emails, web pages, etc.). An additional feature is reading back characters as they are being typed.

Large keys keyboards have been around for a while and serve those with poor vision or faulty hand-and-eye coordination. The keys are usually 1-inch square which is 4 times the traditional size. All it takes is getting used to the location of keys as the layout is a bit different from the standard. Keyboard colors are available in white, black, yellow or multi-colored and in QWERTY and ABC formats.

Voice or speech recognition technology is not new but it has undergone huge improvements in recent years. For people who have finger/wrist/hand-arthritis problems or other handicaps that curtail typing and mouse-movement motions, this appears to be the best solution for them. The software translates the user's commands (speech) into text with speed and accuracy. A little setup is required at the beginning so that the program can be configured with the user's speech pattern and manner, dictionary, and so on, all of which improve over time and usage. It also offers simple navigational commands which can be customized. Using the computer hands-free can be liberating even for those without any physical difficulties so this program is for anyone. The cost ranges from €50 and up – some might think this a bit expensive as software pricing goes but well worth it in the end.

Although we would all love to be as agile as 20-year olds, time and aging does not always permit that. The good news is that technology is on our side as with more time R&D labs worldwide have been and are continuously striving to find new ways to help improve peoples' lives. So "aging" isn't as bad as it sounds after all... Help is already here!