PDAs:

Personal Digital Assistants are little portable computers not much bigger than a mobile phone. Most PDAs include a text editor, a calendar, e-mail, web browser and other software.

- They are useful if you have problems remembering things and organising yourself.
- They can incorporate MP3 players which can be used for listening to text, as well as music!
- They vary in price, size and clarity of screen, in memory and speed and in how easy they are to use.
- Although they can record speech it is a more expensive way of recording speech than a purpose built recorder.
- Content needs to be backed up regularly– they are easy to lose!

Thumb/pen drives:

If you need to move files between computers consider a thumb/pen drive. It is a little device that plugs into the USB port; no moving parts but it acts like another disc drive. It can be clipped onto a key ring and be moved from one machine to another.

- They range in price and memory size but have a much larger capacity than discs.

"Low-tech" devices

to help

dyslexic students

Apart from full computers there are a number of smaller and cheaper devices that can help dyslexic people. They are mostly electronic.

Franklin electronic dictionaries:

Just key in the word that you are trying to spell. An electronic dictionary can **often** offer the correct spelling but will not always recognise strange spellings.

Some people will need an electronic dictionary that will **read** the words on the screen– these are more **expensive** but can be used with headphones in class so as not to disturb. Some superstores have dictionaries on display which can be tried for keypads and spelling recognition before you buy.

Recorders:

Recorders are useful for taking notes, noting homework and other things to do or remember and recording answers, particularly if you have problems writing large amounts or quickly.

- A traditional tape recorder is cheap but can be frustrating finding your place on a tape.
- Mini disc recorders are more expensive but easier to find position on.
- Recorders which record onto RAM chips can be used for dictation away from a computer and then can be

Alphasmart:

This is a simple word processor with a full keyboard and a small screen.

- They are low cost compared to a laptop
- They are more robust
- They are less likely to be stolen
- They have a spellchecker and can have a word prediction program installed as an option.
- They don't have a means of doing computer speech which can be valuable for people with reading or spelling problems.

Alphasmart Dana has a larger screen but is still smaller than a laptop P.C. and monochrome. It is now available with the option of installing a program that will facilitate computer speech to read back your work.