

MACINSTOSH SNOW LEOPARD OFFERS GREAT BENEFITS FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED USERS

ATR's Michael Huckaby recently attended a 3-day workshop exploring the numerous advantages the Mac Snow Leopard operating system to blind or low vision computer users.

Here are just a few of those benefits-

Independent system start up out of the box

*The Voice Over reader utility is included in every Mac system and is available at initial start up, allowing for visually impaired persons to **proceed through set up independently**, as opposed to needing a third party screen reader in the Windows environment.*

Trackpad offers ease of use

"Typically, on a Windows machine, the easiest way to use the Mouse pad as a totally blind person is to use the mouse pad via the "numpad", which requires learning even more commands outside the normal operating system." The Apple version, a trackpad is a more simple and forgiving tool.

Mixed environment operations

"Mac affords you the opportunity to run not only the Mac operating system, but Windows as well. You are able to run each system separately, or simultaneously. This is important for people who are running one system at home or at school, and the other for work. It is also important, as there are inevitably applications that work better on one than on the other."

Reliability of applications

"Because everything that is written for the Mac is usually approved by the manufacturer, it's a reasonable bet that a given application is going to work well with the screen reader with little or no customization. Application packages such as "I-Works", which is roughly equivalent to Microsoft Office, are ready to use right out of the box, and are a fraction the cost of the Windows equivalent."

Support of Braille displays

*I was especially impressed with the Mac's support of "Braille" displays. During the course of the three day class, we had a wide variety of Braille displays being used,, including Syncbraille, Seka, Brailant and BrailleSense. They all plugged in, and started working instantly. We didn't need to install **special drivers**, nor did we have to tell the Mac where to find the devices.*

Variety of hardware options

On the laptop machines, there is a very wide range of possibilities, ranging from the 13 inch to the 17 inch. They are all constructed using a light weight aluminum case, and all have extremely good battery life ranging from about eight hours on the larger machines to about ten hours on the 13 inch. We also had one "I-Mac" machine and two "Mac Minis".

**For more information about Apple's Voice Over technology visit
www.apple.com/accessibility/voiceover/**

**WATCH OUR WEBSITE FOR FUTURE MACINTOSH TRAINING
OPPORTUNITES– www.adaptivetr.com**