

In My Humble Opinion
by
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While supervising the lab last week I had the opportunity to assist two of our members who have difficulty using the standard PC mouse while using the computer. I also learned that some of our learning center classes have users with mouse problems. At their urging I have gathered information on alternative mouse designs. I hope this information helps you, and/or that you can pass this information on to others.

MOUSE TECHNOLOGIES 2005

Aging can be pretty tough on the hands. From arthritis to simple loss of feeling in the finger tips... computer use can be frustrating. Luckily computer hardware companies have developed many new, innovative devices to aid those with physical limitations. There is no longer any need to give up your emailing and surfing activities just because you are frustrated with the standard mouse. There is not time or space to present all innovations in detail, so I will offer an intro here & then will zero in on new technologies in future articles. I hope you will send me your personal frustrations and successes to help guide me in providing the best and most needed information.

The standard for years has been the mechanical mouse (needs flat surface for ball to roll on, and is directly wired to the computer box). But now we have many choices (wireless/infrared/etc.). We are also offered various sizes, shapes and operating styles for our "mouse" including vertical, two-handed, and handless mice.

CHOOSING THE MOUSE

Here I will list Internet addresses (URL's) for various mouse innovations. In this article I wish to cover the simplest and most helpful solutions. The first is **size**. Many can be helped by purchasing a small mouse made for children. It is often more comfortable for small hands and some arthritic hands (www.logitech.com and search for 'mini mouse'). Large mice with roller balls help users with stiff and/or large hands. At the same site, look for the 'Trackman Series'. At www.sforh.com/pointing/mice.html, look at the 'whale mouse' and the 'zero tension mouse'.

INNOVATIONS

Next are design innovations. Even if you wear wrist splints, the 'AbleTrack' (www.mabatech.com/cmcrsino.htm) might be for you. Vertical mice (e.g. VerticalMouse II by Evoluent) are helping many people with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. There are even 'foot mice' and 'forehead attached laser mice' for partially paralyzed users. Check out www.abilityhub.com/mouse/foot.htm for these and other great innovations for challenged users. Last, but not least, travel to Frye Electronics or a similar, large, computer store and personally try some of these new mice. Most good stores will have a hands-on displays or salesmen will open boxes for you in order to look closely at these special accessories. And, of course, use www.google.com to surf for 'adaptive mouse for computers'! See you in the next issue!!