

# Hearing Impairment and Computing

## Visual Warnings

Sound is often used to alert the computer user of error, to signify task completion or that an input is required. For those who cannot hear the sounds, alternatives may be required.

Software is available in Windows which can change system sounds into visual signals on the screen. These are called SoundSentry and ShowSounds.

- SoundSentry provides visual warnings, such as a blinking title bar or a flashing border, whenever the computer generates a sound.
- ShowSounds instructs programs that usually provide information only by sound to also provide information visually, for example by showing text captions or informative icons.

For instructions on how to turn on these features please see our skillsheets Hearing – Text Warnings and Hearing – Visual Warnings.

## Using a Computer as a Textphone

A standard computer with a modem can be used to communicate with most textphones and textphone services (e.g. Minicom, Type Talk). When correctly set up the computer user can converse live with other text-phone users by using a terminal emulation program such as Hyperterminal that is supplied with Windows. The correct settings will depend on both the model of modem you are using and the textphone you are calling. You will need to follow the instructions supplied with your modem and software carefully.

RNID Typetalk can give you more information on how to set up your PC as a textphone.

## Induction Loops

Some hearing aid users might notice that using their aids switched to the T (Tele-coil) position near a computer causes interference to be heard. This is because computers are “electrically noisy”. Whilst a standard neck loop may be plugged into the speaker output of a PC’s sound card, this interference might become intrusive or render the loop practically useless. For advice on reducing the interference contact RNID Sound Advantage.

## Useful Organisations

### **The Royal National Institute for Deaf People**

Services for deaf and hard of hearing people

RNID, 19-23 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8SL

Tel: 0808 808 0123

Text: 0808 808 9000

Web: [www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

### **RNID Sound Advantage**

RNID shop that sells equipment, technology and publications for deaf and hard of hearing people.

Tel: 0870 7898855

Text: 01733 238020

### **RNID Typetalk**

Telephone relay service which enables deaf, deafblind, deafened, hard of hearing and speech-impaired people to communicate with hearing people anywhere in the world.

RNID Typetalk, PO Box 284, Liverpool L69 3UZ

Tel: 0800 7311 888

Text: 18001 0800 500888

Web: [www.typetalk.org](http://www.typetalk.org)

### **Deafax Trust**

Help deaf people acquire communication and literacy skills.

Deafax Trust, Technology Centre, University of Reading, Bulmershe Court, Reading, Berkshire RG6 1HY

Tel: 0870 770 2461

Text: 0870 770 2463

Web: [www.deafax.org](http://www.deafax.org)