

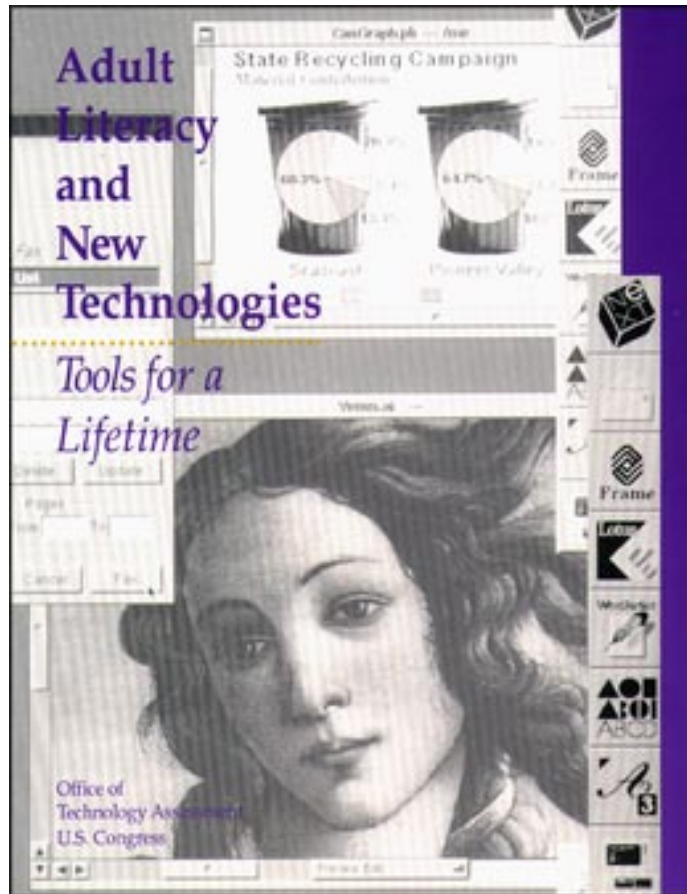
*Adult Literacy and New Technologies: Tools
for a Lifetime*

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Foreword

America's commitment to the importance of the individual has translated into a belief that education is essential for realizing the American dream. Historically, this Nation has moved to increase educational opportunity, because education was considered crucial to personal growth and achievement and because educated individuals were considered essential for an effective democracy.

Adult education needs are difficult to define and difficult to meet; what constitutes adequate literacy changes continually as the demands facing individuals grow more complex. Rapidly changing demographic patterns and rapidly changing technology mean that the United States today faces a massive problem in equipping citizens with the skills needed to participate fully in the workplace and to contribute as members of family and community. (OTA's examination of this problem, initiated at the request of the House Committee on Education and Labor and the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, suggests that technology offers particular capabilities for dealing with this issue. This report is an attempt to identify those capabilities, along with limitations, and outline how new information technologies can be marshaled to meet the goal of a fully literate citizenry.

Throughout this study, the Advisory Panel, workshop participants, and many others played key roles in defining major issues, providing information, and championing a broad range of perspectives. OTA thanks them for their substantial commitment of time and energy. Their participation does not necessarily represent an endorsement of the contents of the report, for which OTA bears sole responsibility.



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NOTE: OTA appreciates and is grateful for the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the advisory panel members. The **panel** does not, however, necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this report. OTA assumes **full** responsibility for the report and the accuracy of its contents.

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