

Introduction

Files of the Portable Document Format (PDF), developed by Adobe, can be easier to read if they have the correct tags for graphics and a structured layout as well as reading areas that flow in a way that makes sense when they are read with a screen reader or text to speech. Sadly there are times when PDFs are totally inaccessible so a work around is required.

Options (Free)

- **Download the latest version of Adobe Reader.** Having loaded a document, use the Adobe Reader Accessibility Quick Check (Document menu) to make sure it can be read aloud or changed in appearance.
- **Use the Accessibility Setup Assistant** (Document menu). This allows for some high contrast colour changes, preferences for reading order and zoom etc. Un-check the view in Browser box on the last section of the setup to make maximum use of these accessibility options.
- **More changes required** – Preferences (Edit menu) offers more options especially for colour, speed of reading and a choice of voice for Read Out Loud – see below. However, fonts still cannot be changed so if the file menu allows, save the document as text and view in your chosen word processor.
- **The Read Out Loud feature (View menu) of Adobe Reader will read all accessible text.** It does not highlight text read in the way Texthelp PDF Aloud helps, but the latest version allows for paragraph reading.
- **Try converting it before scanning if it is not accessible.** Google may offer an HTML version if you have used their search engine. Adobe offers a free e-mail and web address conversion service. http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/access_onlinetools.html

Options (Not free)

- **TextHelp Read and Write Gold** has Screenshot Reader for reading small sections of text displayed in picture format – You may need to magnify the text before capturing it.
- **Large areas of inaccessible text to speech** – scanning and using Optical Character Recognition may be the only option but the layout tends to change unless you are using a specialist program such as Kurzweil 3000. TextHelp Read and Write Gold and ClaroRead Plus also offer scanning - once saved as text or HTML, the document can be read with a screen reader or text to speech program. See Resources below.

Additional Resources

- TechDis: Personalising Adobe Reader for easier PDF reading
<http://www.techdis.ac.uk/resources/sites/accessibilityessentials4/modules/user%20personalisation/index.html>
- Adobe Accessibility Training Resources - reading and creating accessible PDF documents – a set of animated tutorials that are easy to follow.
<http://www.adobe.com/enterprise/accessibility/training.html>
- Add the 'Save as PDF' feature for Microsoft Word 2007
<http://tinyurl.com/v46jc>
- Texthelp Read and Write Gold with Screenshot Reader plus scanning with OCR for text to speech
http://www.texthelp.com/page.asp?pg_id=1218
- ClaroRead Plus 2008 with Accessible PDF Reader for conversion into web page layout plus scanning and OCR for text to speech.
http://www.clarosoftware.com/latest_news.php?id=36
- Kurzweil 3000 or 1000 for good pdf image conversion to text to speech.
http://www.sightandsound.co.uk/Products/SolutionsforPeoplewithReadingDifficulties/Text_to_Speech_Software/
- Papers – a Mac application for sorting and storing PDFs automatically saved on Mac systems. This was a free program, now it is £19.50 but students still have a 40% discount.
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