

Assistive Technology Software for Blind and Low Vision

This technology changes rapidly and the cost of the products is very dynamic and changing greatly. We encourage consumers to spend time in research to determine what will best meet their needs and the cost of the various products. The following list provides information on many of the assistive technology software programs available, but should not be construed as an inclusive list.

Screen Magnifiers

Windows Magnifier

Magnifier is a program built in to the Windows operating system that enlarges your screen, or portions of your screen, making words and images easier to see.

ZoomText Magnifier

ZoomText enlarges and enhances everything on your computer screen, making all of your applications easy to see and use. ZoomText automatically speaks all program controls, including menus, dialogs, list views and messages.

ZoomText reads documents, web pages and email within the application.

ZoomText has a full range of magnification levels from 1x up to 36x regular size print. The magnifier features include: font enhancements, enhanced screen colors, visible pointers and cursors, and focus enhancements.

ZoomText Magnifier/Reader is a fully integrated magnification and screen reading program that enlarges, enhances and reads aloud everything on the computer screen.

For an additional fee or purchased separately the **ZoomText Large Print Keyboards** are available with large lettering and color contrast. There are 2 keyboards available: black lettering on yellow keys or white lettering with black keys. There are eighteen buttons on the keyboard that allow a user to instantly access the features of ZoomText.

Manufacturer: Ai Squared <http://www.aisquared.com/zoomtext>

MAGic

MAGic is meant for users with low vision. MAGic can magnify text or images on a computer screen from 1-36x its normal size. Talking installation instructions allow for easy and independent installation. MAGic with speech option allows you to use synthesized speech to read text using the mouse or keyboard. MAGic highlights text as it reads and allows you to designate and save settings for applications and these settings are automatically applied when you switch to

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that application.

MAGic with Speech features built-in human-sounding voices that you control independently for speaking text, mouse echo, and typing echo. Speech On Demand™ lets you easily access this aid only when you need it.

For an additional fee or purchased separately the **MAGic Large Print Keyboard** contains extra specialty keys assigned to the most commonly used MAGic functions. The Launch MAGic key is always active and will launch MAGic if it is not already launched.. Manufacturer: Freedom Scientific
<http://www.freedomscientific.com/products/low-vision/MAGic-screen-magnification-software.asp>

WinZoom USB

WinZoom USB is a screen reader and magnifier that makes any computer that is Windows compatible accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired. Simply plug the USB drive into the USB port on the computer and WinZoom will launch immediately. Nothing installs on the computer which makes this a good option for portability or in cases where nothing can be installed on the local computer for security reasons. For more information on WinZoom USB visit:
<http://www.getwinzoom.com/>

Super Nova Magnifier

HD Magnifier with visual highlighting and crystal clear True Fonts for smooth text at any size. Supports multiple monitors. Suitable for people with low vision.

Dolphin Guide

Dolphin Guide is a software suite of more than twenty useful programs with built-in large print and speech access for people with low vision or who are blind. The user can customize Guide's voices, colors, magnification and menus to suit their specific needs. Little training is required; most people can teach themselves how to use it. Guide is a good selection for users who have little or no experience with computer technology, have little or no technical ability, lack the motivation or capability to acquire or retain detailed technical knowledge or have tried previous solutions but are unable to learn or use them effectively. Manufacturer: Dolphin www.yourdolphin.com/productdetail.asp?id=30&z=0

Screen Readers

Windows Narrator

Narrator, a basic screen reader built in to the Windows operating system that reads aloud the text that appears on screen, and describes events such as error messages, has been redesigned in Windows 8 to be substantially faster, and to support many new features.

JAWS

JAWS (Job Access with Speech) was developed for computer users whose vision loss prevents them from seeing screen content. JAWS reads aloud what is displayed on the computer screen. JAWS is compatible with Microsoft Office Suite, MSN Messenger, Corel, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Internet Explorer, Firefox, and many more applications that are used on a regular basis on the job and in school. JAWS has two multi-lingual speech synthesizers, Eloquence and RealSpeak Solo Direct with natural-sounding speech. Manufacturer: Freedom Scientific <http://www.freedomscientific.com/products/fs/JAWS-product-page.asp>

Windows Eyes

Windows Eyes is a leading software application for the blind and visually impaired, which converts components of the Windows operating system into synthesized speech allowing for access to Windows based computer systems. Applications that utilize standard Microsoft controls are spoken automatically with little to no configuration necessary. Other applications may require simple modifications to Window-Eyes whose options are easily accessible via a well organized, speech control panel. GW Micro and Microsoft Corp. have partnered to make Window-Eyes available to users of Microsoft Office 2010 or 2013 at no cost. Manufacturer: GW Micro <http://www.gwmicro.com/Window-Eyes>

Dolphin SuperNova

SuperNova Screen Reader is a screen reader that works by reading the screen interactively and communicating through a speech synthesizer or a refreshable Braille display. Dolphin <http://yourdolphin.com/>

NVDA

Non-Visual Desktop Access (NVDA) is a free and open source screen reader for the Microsoft operating system. Via synthetic speech and Braille, it enables people who are blind or vision impaired to access computers. Major features include support for over 20 languages and the ability to run entirely from a USB drive with no installation. NVDA is available at <http://www.nvda-project.org>.

Thunder

Thunder is free screen reader software for people with little or no sight. It works well with Windows 7, Vista or XP, and is available in 8 languages.

Manufacturer: Screenreader.net CIC www.screenreader.net

System Access (SAToGo)

System Access is an online screen reader developed by Serotek. To use System Access the user must be connected to the Internet and the computer must use the Windows operating system. After Registration the user need only to enter their user name and password from any computer and you will have access to the screen reader, and when you are done using the computer, simply log off your System Access to Go account. SAToGo will remember the user's preferences concerning language, speed, voice, etc. SAToGo will remain active as long as the user is connected to the Internet for both online and offline applications.

Manufacturer: Serotek <http://www.serotek.com/systemaccess>

Text to Speech Systems using Optical Character Recognition Scanning (OCR)

Open Book

Open Book converts printed documents or graphic-based text into an electronic text format on the user's computer, using quality speech and optical character recognition (OCR) technology. The user can choose between two leading text-to-speech software synthesizers: RealSpeak Solo (natural, human-sounding voices) or Eloquence (efficient synthesized speech often used for editing and document skimming). Open Book can be paired with the PEARL reading camera for portable reading situations. Manufacturer: Freedom Scientific <http://www.freedomscientific.com/products/fs/OpenBook-product-page.asp>

Kurzweil 1000

This software speaks text aloud in a variety of natural-sounding voices that can be modified to suit individual preferences. In addition, it provides users with document creation and editing as well as study skills capabilities for note taking, summarizing and outlining text. Kurzweil 1000 delivers quick access to information including online books, magazines and encyclopedias so users can pursue any reading interests. Users can also take their reading wherever they go by sending files to Braille note takes and embossers, as well as portable devices such as DAISY and MPD audio players. Manufacturer: Kurzweil

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Education <http://www.kurzweiledu.com/kurzweil-1000-v13-windows.html>

Speech to Text

Dragon Naturally Speaking

Dragon Naturally Speaking utilizes speech recognition to create documents, reports, or messages simply by speaking. Nuance Text-to-Speech technology, also reads on-screen text in human-sounding synthesized speech. The user can create email, schedule appointments, and search the Web or the desktop using simple voice commands. For voice dictation to work well for blind or low vision users, a “middle ware” program like J-Say makes JAWS work better with Dragon for users that can’t use a keyboard or JTools that makes Dragon work better with keyboard users and JAWS. Manufacturer: Nuance

<http://www.nuance.com/dragon/index.htm>

Speech to Text with Text to Speech

J-Say Pro

J-Say integrates Dragon NaturallySpeaking from Nuance and JAWS for Windows from Freedom Scientific. It also provides the user with an easy to understand interface enabling interaction with the computer using natural language and easy to remember and understand vocabulary. Applications to which J-Say provides access include Microsoft Word, Outlook, and Internet Explorer. Manufacturer: Next Generation Technologies

<http://www.hartgen.org/j-say>

Windows Voice to Text

Speech Recognition in Windows allows you to command your PC with your voice—including the capability to dictate into almost any application. You can dictate documents and email and surf the Web by saying what you see. Examples of use include dictating text to fill out online forms or to a word processing program to type a letter.