

Disability Unit

Introduction

The field of assistive technology is exciting. The ways and methods of accessing information are getting broader and broader, and technology is seemingly at the forefront of every single action that we perform in our daily lives.

Teaching and learning are benefitting from the rise in technology, and so are our students living with disabilities.

Studying online will impact your studies – particularly your ability to access your academic content. The Disability Unit is committed to providing you with the right technological support to ensure that you are still able to access your academic content. This is done in conjunction with all the support that the university is putting in place.

The Disability Unit (DU) recognises that not all our students have the financial means to purchase the assistive technologies they require to access their learning resources. In order to continue supporting our students with disabilities below is a list of freely (Open-sourced) downloadable applications, by category, that will aid in your access requirements.

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Freeware

Blind/Low Vision

1. Fire Vox

<http://firevox.clcworld.net/>

Fire Vox is an open-source, freely-available, talking browser extension for the Firefox web browser. It is a screen reader that is designed especially for Firefox. In addition to the basic features that are expected of screen readers, such as being able to identify headings, links, images, etc. and providing navigational assistance, Fire Vox provides support for MathML and CSS speech module properties. It works on Windows, Macintosh, and Linux systems.

2. iZoom Screen Magnifier

<https://trysight.com/product/izoom-usb/>

iZoom magnifies the screen from 1.5X to 16X the original size with six different zooming modes. This program also comes equipped with colour enhancement and image smoothing technology to improve blurred and difficult to read web pages. Free 30-day trial.

3. Microsoft Built-In Accessibility Ease of Access Centre

Windows 7, 8, 8.1, 10, Vista, and XP include built-in accessibility settings and programs that make it easier to see, hear, and use the computer. Accessibility features in Windows include: speech recognition and text-to-speech; magnifier; on-screen keyboard; keyboard shortcuts; sticky and filter keys; and visual notifications.

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4. NVDA (Non-Visual Desktop Access)

<https://www.nvaccess.org/download/>

NonVisual Desktop Access (NVDA) is a free and open-source screen reader for the Windows Operating System, enabling blind and visually impaired people to use their computers for no more cost than the computer and Operating System itself.

E-Books

1. Bookshare

<https://www.bookshare.org/cms/>

Bookshare.org is an online community that enables people with visual and other print disabilities to legally share scanned books. As a university student you are granted a free membership.

2. Project Gutenberg

<http://www.gutenberg.net>

Project Gutenberg offers free electronic books (eBooks or eTexts).

3. SensusAccess

www.sensusaccess.com

SensusAccess is a self-service, alternate media solution for educational institutions. It allows students, faculty, staff and alumni to automatically convert documents into a range of alternate media including audiobooks (MP3 and DAISY), e-books (EPUB, EPUB3 and Mobi) and digital Braille. The service can also be used to convert inaccessible documents such as image-only PDF files, JPG pictures and Microsoft PowerPoint presentations into more accessible and less tricky formats. We call that Inclusion Technology.

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Learning

1. AMIS

<http://www.daisy.org/projects/amis/>

AMIS is a software program that you can use to read DAISY books. It is self-voicing, meaning that no specialized screen-reading software is needed in order for it to be used. AMIS supports DAISY 2.02 and DAISY 3 books, although it does not support protected books such as those from RFB&D and NLS.

2. Cowriter 6/7

<http://donjohnston.com/cowriter/#.VcxD6LKqp>

Only Co: Writer Universal gives students access to the most powerful word prediction on their favourite devices (Google Chrome, iPad, and Mac/Windows desktop), over 4 million Topic Dictionaries, and incredible privacy-safe data collection.

3. RSA Animation

<https://www.thersa.org/discover/videos/rsa-animate/>

The RSA Animate series was conceived as an innovative, accessible and unique way of illustrating and sharing the world-changing ideas from the RSA's free public events programme. With millions of views and thousands of comments, fans and subscribers, RSA Animates have revolutionised the field of knowledge visualisation while spreading the most important ideas of our time.

4. XMind

<http://www.xmind.net>

XMind is a mind mapping/brainstorming tool. You can add pictures, attachments, and even export to PDF or Microsoft Office products (Word and PowerPoint).

Memory & Organization

1. Sunbird

<http://www.mozilla.org/projects/calendar/sunbird>

This program is an easy to use calendar to keep track of your schedule, by the creators of Firefox.

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Text-to-Speech:

1. BrowseAloud

<http://www.browsealoud.com>

This application highlights and reads text aloud on the web. Created by textHELP.

2. HelpRead

<http://www.helpread.net>

HelpRead automatically reads aloud text from the computer's clipboard.

3. NaturalReader

<http://www.naturalreaders.com>

NaturalReader will read aloud text from a variety of applications. For a nominal fee, users can upgrade to more sophisticated versions which offers text conversion to audio files and inclusion of natural sounding voices.

4. Power Talk

<http://fullmeasure.co.uk/powertalk>

Power Talk automatically speaks any slide show presentation in Microsoft PowerPoint. This program will also speak hidden "alternative text" in graphic images.

5. Word Talk

<http://www.wordtalk.org.uk>

WordTalk is a text-to-speech program with a talking dictionary and designed for use in Microsoft Word.

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In conclusion

This document is a resource that you can use to help you with access to you content and should you have any difficulty with either obtaining or using any of the above-mentioned technologies, kindly contact us at the Disability Unit, and we will be more than happy to assist accordingly.

We at the Disability Unit pride ourselves in our constant pursuit of access for all our student with disabilities. This is even more so now during these difficult conditions. It is our sincere hope that the above technologies can aid in you access to your learning during these trying times. And, that you will start implementing them in your learning to give yourselves more opportunities for success in your academics.

Contact us on:

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