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Accessible Texts: A Guide for Postsecondary Disability Service Providers

**HEATH Resource Center at the National Youth
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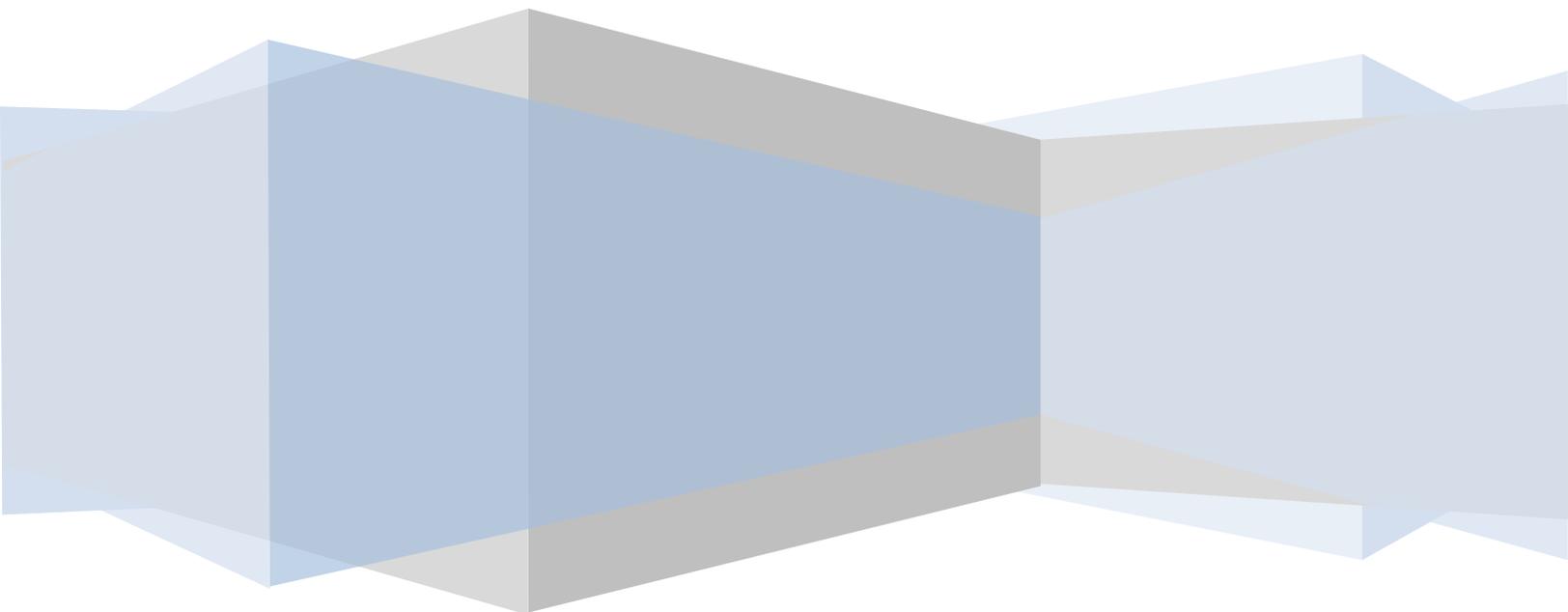


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Introduction

The purpose of this resource guide is to provide postsecondary disability support service providers with essential information and tools for supporting students who require printed texts in accessible formats. As the number of students with disabilities entering postsecondary education institutions steadily increases, it is *imperative* that disability support service providers have the knowledge to effectively support each student on their campus (NCES, 1999; NCES, 2006). One important area of support that students with disabilities require is how to gain access to and utilize accessible texts (Gilson et al., 2007). Accessible texts are *specialized* formats of curricular texts and include such formats as Braille, audio, large print, and electronic text (AIM Center, n.d.). In fact, once a student who requires a text in an accessible format enrolls at a university, it is the *university's* responsibility to meet the student's needs (AHEAD, 2006). This resource guide consists of a four sections that provide important information about accessible texts, including:

- Part I: The legal landscape of accessible texts
- Part II: An overview of common and available file formats for electronic texts
- Part III: Information about available assistive technologies for accessible texts
- Part IV: Outlets for obtaining electronic and accessible texts
- Resource Appendix: Professional resources, publications, and tools for disability support providers

This information was obtained through a collaborative effort with a variety of professionals in the postsecondary, legal, policy, and technological community. It is intended to serve as a support for all providers of disability support services so that each student receives the support that he or she needs to fully access the postsecondary academic program.

Part I: The Legal Framework of Accessible Texts

This section provides an overview of the federal legal landscape that impacts and guides the use of accessible texts in higher education. In essence, the right of students with disabilities to obtain and use accessible texts to access the curriculum is grounded in two pieces of civil rights law: the Americans with Disabilities Act and Amendments (ADAAA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (amended as Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998) (Brown & Brown, 2006). These two pieces of federal legislation provide guidance to postsecondary education campuses for providing accommodations, including accessible texts, to qualified students with disabilities (AHEAD, 2006). It is imperative that disability support service providers at postsecondary institutions *fully* understand these two pieces of legislation so that they can provide appropriate supports to students with disabilities that allow them to access university programs and activities.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was the first law that directly impacted students with disabilities enrolled in higher education institutions. Specifically, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Title IV of the WIA) requires that *public institutions*, meaning institutions that receive funding from the federal government, provide modifications, accommodations and auxiliary aids to students with a documented disability so that they are able to access the program content (Katsiyannis, Zahang, Landmark, & Reber, 2009; OCR FAQs, n.d.). All applicable disability support personnel should be familiar with how the law governs the provision of accommodations, such as accessible texts. It is advisable for all disability support service personnel to inquire whether his or her institution accepts public funding.

How Does Section 504 impact the work of higher education disability service providers?

Section 504 mandates that enrolled students who self-disclose their disability to the university and who meet the law's definition of disability are eligible to receive academic adjustments, such as reasonable modifications, auxiliary aids and services (OCR FAQs, n.d.).

The regulations of the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the United States Department of Education give additional guidance on "academic adjustments" in

postsecondary education (34 C.F.R. Part 104, 104.44). The regulations state that adjustments should:

- Ensure that a postsecondary institution's academic requirements do not discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability
- Ensure that auxiliary aids that meet the student's needs are available. Auxiliary aids directly involve accessible texts. For instance, the regulations specify that "readers for personal use or study" must be made available to qualified students who require them to access the curriculum. (Subpart E of 34 CFR 104).

Please note that accommodations are provided on a case by case basis (Katsiyannis et al., 2009). If a student meets a particular disability requirement, then the student and the disability support personnel must work together to create an accommodations letter that fits the student's needs. Within this letter, the use of accessible texts would be referenced as an appropriate accommodation. For a sample accommodations letter, please refer to the resources appendix.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (and Amendments) ADAAA

Following the enactment of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the ADA (1990), was the next piece of federal legislation that expanded the rights of students with disabilities in higher education institutions. Although the ADA does not specifically reference the discrimination of students with disabilities in institutions of higher education, institutions that receive federal funding fall under the Act's Title II provisions. Title II explicitly mandates that all state or local "public entities" may not discriminate on the basis of disability against individuals with disabilities (ADA, II-1.2000). Additionally, Title III of the Act expanded protection to students with disabilities enrolled in private institutions (Burke, Friedl, & Rigler, 2010). The Act was amended in 2008 (as ADAAA) to widen the population of students with disabilities that it serves.

How does ADAAA impact the work of higher education disability service providers?

ADAAA mandates that public entities must make appropriate academic adjustments and provide auxiliary aids to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to the academic curriculum (Katsiyannis et al., 2009; Leuchovius, 2010). Specifically, the law states that public entities "shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, a

service, program, or activity" (OCR, 1998). Similar to Section 504, ADAAA requires that postsecondary institutions ensure that students with disabilities have full access to academic programs and the curriculum (Burke, et al., 2010). Therefore, based on the needs of the individual student, accessible or alternative texts may be an appropriate accommodation because they allow the individual to access the course content and curriculum (AHEAD, 2006).

There are a few reasons for why postsecondary institutions may not be required to provide an auxiliary aid, accommodation, or modification. Reasons include, but are not limited to:

- If they create "undue" financial hardship for the university,
- Require a fundamental alteration to the program, violate accreditation requirements, or
- Require the waiver of essential program or licensing requirements within an academic course of study (Burke, et al., 2010; General Counsel, 2010; OCR, 1998).

For example, if a student cannot participate in an in-person lab that is required for a medical degree and the lab cannot be completed in any other manner, an appropriate auxiliary aid or accommodation may not be available. However, these instances are very rare and a university's disability support provider should have ample documentation specifying why a particular accommodation is not reasonable.

Privately funded universities are covered under Title III of ADA/ADAAA and may not discriminate against students with disabilities. However, these institutions are held to a much lower burden of proof and not expected to incur the same cost level as public entities (Leuchovius, 2010)

Section 504 and the ADAAA both utilize the ADAAA's definition of disability.

As interpreted by the regulations of the Act prepared by OCR, individuals with disabilities are individuals who:

- (a) Has a physical or mental impairment that limits major life activities: "any physiological disorder or any mental" or "psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities." Major life activities include, but are not limited to: caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.*

(b) *Has a record of such impairment:* "Has a history of" or has been classified as "having a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities"

(c) *Is regarded as having such an impairment:* A person who has a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit major life activities but that is treated by a recipient as constituting such a limitation; has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits major life activities only as a result of the attitudes of others toward such impairment; or has none of the impairments but is treated by a recipient as having such an impairment.

(d) Due to the passage of ADAAA, a disability service provider *can no longer* take into account mitigating measures, such as medications that treat the disability, when deciding whether an individual is a qualified person with a disability. (ADAAA Regulations, 2011; Burke, et al., 2010)

Please note that the information above applies to the federal law. Several states have passed specific pieces of legislation that directly impact how higher education accommodations and accessible texts are administered at the postsecondary level by making the requirements more strict. Please check with your state's public legal record or state legislative body as to whether your state has passed laws that impact your practices.

Section 508 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998

Disability support providers should also be knowledgeable about Section 508 of the WIA (1998). The WIA amended the Rehabilitation Act in 1998 and several updates were added to the law. One of the most important changes was the inclusion of Section 508. Section 508 requires *all Federal* government informational technology services to be accessible to people with disabilities (Brown & Brown, 2006; McKenzie, 2001). Information technology includes such services as websites, computer hardware and software, and multimedia products (McKenzie, 2001). As such, Section 508 is a mandate that applies to the Federal government, not the private sector or the education sector (Brown & Brown, 2006). However, many state governments and institutions of higher education have adopted Section 508 standards as a best practice (AccessIT, 2010a). Disability service providers should therefore inquire as to whether their university has adopted 508 standards and encourage university administrations to implement the standards.

For more information about 508 standards, please visit [the Section 508 Homepage](#).

Please visit <http://www.ittatc.org/laws/state.php> for state accessibility information.

Higher Education Opportunity Act (2008)

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008 provides guidance to postsecondary institutions for making textbooks available to students. Disability support providers should be aware of these guidelines as a best practice. Adhering to the guidelines could increase the opportunity of students with disabilities to receive textbooks and accessible files in a timely manner because following this guidance would ensure that course reading material would be readily available by the time a student registers. Section 133 of the Act outlines the specific guidelines for postsecondary institutions receiving federal funding:

"(1) disclose, on the institution's Internet course schedule and in a manner of the institution's choosing, the International Standard Book Number and retail price information of required and recommended college textbooks and supplemental materials for each course listed in the institution's course schedule used for pre-registration and registration purposes, except that—

(A) if the International Standard Book Number is not available for such college textbook or supplemental material, then the institution shall include in the Internet course schedule the author, title, publisher, and copyright date for such college textbook or supplemental material; and

(B) if the institution determines that the disclosure of the information described in this sub-section is not practicable for a college textbook or supplemental material, then the institution shall so indicate by placing the designation 'To Be Determined' in lieu of the information required under this sub-section; and

(2) if applicable, include on the institution's written course schedule a notice that textbook information is available on the institution's Internet course schedule, and the Internet address for such schedule."

The HEOA (2008) also mandated the formation of the Advisory Commission on Accessible Instructional Materials in Postsecondary Education. The Commission is charged with making recommendations to Congress for increasing the availability of accessible instructional materials for students with disabilities in postsecondary education.

Part II. An Overview of Available Formats

What's out there? What is the "correct" file format?

This section provides an overview of common formats available to meet the needs of students who require accessible texts and course materials. Please note that the "best" file format is what best meets the need of the student. A student might not be aware of all of the available file formats and could be comfortable using a format that does not best meet his or her needs. Therefore, it is important for disability service providers to be familiar with the available common file formats. With any postsecondary accommodation, the student's needs should come first and be respected during the development of the accommodations plan (Stodden, Conway, & Chang, 2003).

Common Formats Provided by Publishers or Authorized Entities

Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word (files that end in .DOC or .DOCX) is a universally popular word processing software. On postsecondary campuses and beyond, many course materials and other documents are distributed in the Microsoft Word format (AccessIT, 2011a). Although Microsoft Word is a "reasonably" accessible format, it must be noted that Microsoft Word documents are not *automatically* accessible (AccessIT, 2011a; WebAIM, 2011a). The disability support service provider *must* take measures to ensure that if he or she is providing a student with a file in Microsoft Word, that it contains accessible features. Such accessible features include:

- 1) Structured headings- *Adding explicit headings into the document that serve to structure the document*
- 2) Adding text to images- *A text description should be added to embedded charts and images*
- 3) Alter hyperlinks to a text description- *This will allow the reader to identify the content of the website*

- 4) Adhere to accessibility guidelines when constructing Word tables- *Some tables are not accessible to screen readers*
(WebAIM, 2011a)

For a step-by-step guide about how to structure Microsoft Word documents for accessibility, please visit the [WebAIM](#) website.

Other helpful tips

- Microsoft Word 2010 has an accessibility checker embedded in the program, which can serve as a valuable resource (Accessibility Checker, 2011). The disability support provider will still need to check the document for accessibility, but this can help give guidance.
- Microsoft Word files can be converted into HTML files using the Accessible Wizard for Microsoft Office 2007 7.0 found at www.virtual508.com
- Microsoft Word files can be converted into PDF files. Instructions for converting Word files into PDF files can be accessed at <http://webaim.org/techniques/acrobat/converting#word>

Portable Document Format (PDF)

PDF (.pdf) is a type of file format that requires the Adobe Acrobat tool to view, alter and create documents. Although the accessibility of PDF documents has increased as a result of Adobe product improvement and development, PDF accessibility is limited because *only* tagged PDFs are accessible (AccessIT, 2011b). However, there are several resources available that detail steps to increase PDF accessibility through tagging, which essentially means adding structure to the document, and following guidelines for checking PDF accessibility:

- 1) WebAIM -PDF Accessibility Guide:
<http://webaim.org/techniques/acrobat/acrobat#actionwizard>

This web resource provides a step-by step guide to adding new tags to a PDF document as well as changing and modifying already existing tags. Additionally, this resource provides information about navigating tables within PDF documents and

- 2) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services- PDF Accessibility Checklist:
<http://www.hhs.gov/web/policies/checklistpdf.html>

This web resource presents a detailed checklist for ensuring that PDF documents are accessible and meet Section 508 requirements. This checklist serves as an informative tool for service providers and faculty members.

- 3) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Making Accessible PDFs:

<http://www.hhs.gov/web/policies/pdfaccessibility/index.html>

Editing PDF Table Tags:

<http://www.hhs.gov/web/508/tabletags.html>

Adding and Moving PDF Bookmarks:

<http://www.hhs.gov/web/508/pdfbookmarks.html>

Editing PDF Image Tags:

<http://www.hhs.gov/web/508/editpdfimagetag.html>

These web resources provides information for making PDFs accessible, editing table tags, adding and moving PDF bookmarks, and editing PDF image tags. While the information is similar to the WebAIM resource, this source breaks up the tasks into more definitive, separate steps.

Please note that Adobe Acrobat Professional (<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobatpro.html>) is required to enhance the accessibility of an existing PDF file (Web AIM, 2011b).

Extensible Markup Language (XML)

XML is an extensible "mark-up" language that can be used across a variety of platforms and devices (AcessIT, 2010; Bradsher, n.d.). XML essentially "marks" sections of a document with a descriptive label, which are not limited in quantity (Pelz-Sharpe, 2010). XML is similar to [HTML](#), but viewed as more accessible for individuals with disabilities because:

- it allows *more* content, such as mathematics formulas, to be displayed and;
- allows for the content to be presented in a variety of ways depending on the user's device (AccessIT, 2010).

However, XML can be inaccessible if an author uses it to develop inaccessible web material (AccessIT, 2010b). Accessibility guidelines are available and can be accessed at <http://www.w3.org/TR/xag.html>,

DAISY

Developed by the [DAISY Consortium](#), the DAISY (ANSI/NISO Z39.86) file standard is one of the most flexible formats for individuals with disabilities. While .DOC and .PDF files have limited conversion ability, the DAISY standard includes Extensible Markup Language (XML) and the Synchronized Multimedia Integration Language (SMIL), which allows the content originator or an individual with DAISY authoring tools to modify the format to include text only, text and audio, or audio only (NISO, 2005). Additionally, the DAISY standard requires set elements to increase reader usability (DAISY Structure Guidelines, 2008). Such elements include:

- Major structural elements that create a structure for the digital file (index, chapters, appendix, etc).
- Block elements that create separate text features, including paragraphs.
- Inline elements that include sentences and inline tags that occur within the block elements.

(DAISY 3 Structure, 2008)

For a full description of DAISY 3 Structure Guidelines, please visit:

<http://www.daisy.org/z3986/structure/SG-DAISY3/index.html>

It should be noted that specific hardware and/or software tools are required for a student to access DAISY format files. Please visit [hardware playback tools](#) for an extensive list of hardware and [software playback tools](#) for an

extensive list of available DAISY software tools. Please note that many of the software tools are downloadable and free.

(Note: Please refer to Section IV for information for how to obtain DAISY files)

Braille

Originally developed by Louis Braille in the nineteenth century, Braille has been viewed as a longstanding and essential format for individuals who are visually impaired or blind (Duffy, 2009; NFB, 2011; Ryles, 1999). Braille is a tactile system of reading and writing that consists of arrangements of dots that comprise the letters of the alphabet, number, and punctuation marks (NFB, 2011). Although the use of Braille has decreased in recent years, each disability support service provider should ensure that he or she has working knowledge of how to meet the needs of students who prefer Braille formats of course materials and texts (NFB, 2011; Schroeder, 1990).

Resources for Securing Texts and Materials in Braille

- 1) One option is to convert course materials from text to Braille. For additional information, please review the American Federation for the Blind's guide to Braille Translators:

<http://www.afb.org/ProdBrowseCatResults.asp?CatID=46>

- 2) Larger texts can be ordered through accessible media specialists, such as TechAdapt:

<http://www.techadapt.com/services/productsAndServices.htm>

Note: PowerPoint a common format used by faculty members to present in-class lectures. PowerPoint presentations have the potential to be made accessible by using the structured layout designs available under the PowerPoint "layout" tab. However, to be fully accessible, all images related to the content of the word texts need to contain alternative text. Please visit WebAIM's PowerPoint accessibility resources for detailed directions:

<http://webaim.org/techniques/powerpoint/>.

Part III. Assistive Technology for Accessible Texts

Assistive technology is essential for providing students with disabilities the ability to utilize accessible texts and course materials (Shinohara & Tenenberg, 2009; Smith & Kelly, 2011). Assistive technology (AT) is defined by the Assistive Technology Act (1998) as "any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities" (29 U.S.C. Sec 2202(2)). There are a variety of types of AT, ranging from free products, to more sophisticated, higher priced items that enable students with disabilities to use accessible texts. AT has the ability to accommodate students according to each student's individual need, and also enhance students' independence (Smith & Kelly, 2011; Stodden, Roberts, Picklesimer, Jackson, & Chang, 2006). It is imperative that disability support providers conduct AT evaluations and are knowledgeable of a variety of types of AT to appropriately accommodate students (Stodden, et al., 2006).

Text-to-Speech Software

Text-to-speech software can be beneficial for allowing individuals with disabilities access electronic text because it essentially reads text that is on the screen out loud to the user (Rughooputh & Santally, 2009). Some programs also have the ability to convert text into digital audio formats, including MP3 (Access Project, 2011). There are a variety of different types of available text-to-speech software, many of which are affordable or even free. For instance, Microsoft Word provides a [free text-to-speech software device](#).

- For a comprehensive list of available free text-to-speech software, please visit the [Colorado State Access Project List of Free and Inexpensive Text to Speech Software](#).
- For a comprehensive list of available text-to-speech MP3 creation software, please visit the Access Project's [List of Text-to-Speech MP3 creation software](#).
- For a list of the top rated text-to-speech programs, please visit <http://www.brighthouse.com/computing/windows-platform/articles/56395.aspx> .

Kurzweil Educational Systems

<http://www.kurzweiledu.com/>

Kurzweil Educational Systems offers two types of assistive technology products for students who require accessible texts.

- 1) ***Kurzweil 1000 (version 12)*** is a software product designed to make printed or electronic text accessible for students who are blind or have low vision. Kurzweil 1000 speaks text out loud to students in a variety of computer generated, but natural sounding voices. Kurzweil is compatible with DAISY files, PDF files, and many of the accessible texts provided by Bookshare. The software also has many additional features, including:

- Writing and editing capabilities
- Save recognition, which allows users to save work
- PDF bookmarking capability on the document
- Dictionary tools

For full product and pricing information and capabilities, please visit

<http://www.kurzweiledu.com/kurz1000.html>.

- 2) ***Kurzweil 3000 (version 12)*** is designed for struggling readers who require accessible texts. Kurzweil 3000 is appropriate for students with a reading capability above the third grade level. The software provides a "multi-sensory" approach to electronic text files and Internet files by providing literacy and language support, and audio output. Specific feature include:

- Output to DAISY 2 audio and compatibility with Bookshare
- Document highlighting capabilities
- MP3 encoder for audio file creation
- Vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension supports
- Graphic organizer capabilities

For full product and pricing information and capabilities, please visit

<http://www.kurzweiledu.com/default.html>.

Braille Embossers

Braille embossers are an AT device that converts electronic text into Braille printed material. Braille embossers resemble standard printers and connect

directly to computers. Most devices can emboss 8-dot and 6-dot Braille and some devices have the ability to emboss graphics as well (AbilityNET, 2010). For additional information on the technique of Braille embossing, please visit <http://www.brailier.com/shop.htm> .

Braille Embosser Products

- 1) Enabling Technology Braille Embossing Techniques:
<http://www.brailier.com/ftp/ProductCatalog.pdf>
- 2) Freedom Scientific: <http://sales.freedomscientific.com/>
- 3) Nanopac, Inc:
<http://nanopac.info/Enabling%20Technologies%20Braille%20Printers.htm>
- 4) NFB's Guide to Braille Embossers:
<http://nfb.org/legacy/bm/bm01/bm0110/bm011007.htm>

Screen Readers

Screen readers are most commonly used by individuals who are blind or have low vision (AFB, n.d.). Screen readers are software devices that read the content and text that is on the computer screen to the user, enabling them to access the material on the computer. The user controls the software program by using a series of key commands, which are different for each screen reader program. Prices of screen readers can range from a few hundred dollars to well over one-thousand dollars, depending on the features of the program (AFB, n.d.). According to a survey conducted by WebAIM, JAWS is the most common screen reader software. However, the popularity of JAWS is decreasing due to the availability of more low-cost and free screen readers, which include NVDA and VoiceOver.

- The American Federation for the Blind has published an in-depth screen reader guide, which lists common screen reader programs. Please access <http://www.afb.org/prodbrowsecatresults.asp?catid=49> for the AFB's guide.
- To experience a screen reader simulation, please visit <http://webaim.org/simulations/screenreader>

Accessible E-Books Readers

Until recently, e-books, which are technological devices that read electronic books, were virtually inaccessible to students who are blind and with visual impairments because they were not in a fully audible format (Blanck, 2010). However, accessible e-books are becoming more readily available. In fact, in July, 2010, a joint letter from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and Office for Civil Rights (OCR), issued a "dear colleague" letter, which stated that inaccessible e-book readers could not be distributed by postsecondary institutions for mandated use by students because the practice violates the ADA and Section 504 (Dear Colleague, 2010). Recently, OCR has release guidelines that clarify issues surrounding the use and distribution of e-book readers and other technology in K-12 and postsecondary educational environments. Please [click here](#) to access the guidelines.

There are however, accessible e-book options. Benetech, the parent company of Bookshare recently announced the release of [Read2Go](#), an accessible e-book application for Apple iOS devices (I-pod, I-pad). Learning Ally has also released an [accessible e-book application for I-pod Touch and I-pad](#). There are also a variety of e-book readers that use the DAISY file format. Popular DAISY e-book readers include: EasyReader, ReadHere, and Stream.

For additional learning software tools, please visit the [Colorado State Access Project Learning Support Software List](#).

Part IV. Resources for Obtaining Electronic Texts

Disability support providers have several options for obtaining electronic files that can then be formatted for accessibility and accessed by the student through assistive technology. Please refer to Section II for a discussion of available alternative text formats and Section III for available assistive technology. Also please note that the disability support provider should consult with the student as to which file format he or she requires prior to requesting an electronic file. *For a sample student e-text request form, please refer to the resources appendix.*

Request Electronic File Directly from Publisher

One popular option for obtaining the electronic formats of books and course materials is by requesting the materials directly from the publisher. To request an item directly from the publisher, the disability support provider must contact the publisher and provide a representative with the required book information and verification that the student has purchased the book. Often, publishers have an electronic form for disability support providers to complete online. For a directory of higher education publishers, please refer to <http://www.publisherlookup.org/>. The disability support provider should contact the publisher directly to verify the amount of time that it will take for the higher education institution to receive the electronic file. The disability support provider should build in ample time to receive the file from the publisher and to verify the accessibility of the file.

Please note that student proof of purchase is required to receive an electronic file of the text.

Bookshare

<http://www.Bookshare.org>

Bookshare is a not-for-profit organization that receives funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to provide accessible texts to K-12 and higher education students who qualify as having a print disability and to qualified organizations (Bookshare, 2011; Newton &

Dell, 2009). In fact, Bookshare contains the world's largest library of digital books for individuals with print disabilities (Bookshare, 2011). Bookshare provides a searchable database of over 70,000 books in DAISY and BRF formats. All of the files provided by Bookshare are *student ready*, meaning they can be accessed immediately by the students. Free memberships and memberships for a small fee are available. To review Bookshare's membership types and qualification guidelines, please access this link: <http://www.bookshare.org/membershipOptions>

In 2010, Bookshare also announced the creation of its University Partner Program. This program allows textbooks that have been scanned and converted for use by individuals with a qualified print disability to be uploaded to a searchable database. For more information on the University Partner Program, please visit http://www.bookshare.org/assets/docs/brochures/Bookshare-University-Partner-Program_2810.pdf.

LearningAlly (Formerly Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic (RFB&D))

<http://www.learningally.org/>

LearningAlly is a not-for-profit organization that provides accessible texts to qualified K-12 and higher education students who are blind, have visual impairments, or have learning disabilities, and to qualified organizations (LearningAlly, 2011). For membership eligibility and rates, please visit <http://www.learningally.org/Membership/20/>. LearningAlly's online database allows users to conduct online searches of its over 65,000 available accessible texts. Additionally, LearningAlly's accessible texts include an audio component to promote accessibility for individuals with disabilities. LearningAlly uses volunteer readers to record audio textbooks, which makes its natural voice audio format rather appealing to users. Like Bookshare, LearningAlly provides *student ready* files that can be used immediately by students.

Accesstext Network (ATN)

<http://www.accesstext.org/>

Accesstext Network (ATN) is a clearinghouse that provides electronic files of texts to postsecondary students with disabilities and to postsecondary institutions. To receive an ATN file, disability service providers must verify that

the student has purchased a copy of the book (ATN, 2011). Detailed information about membership to ATN and file requests can be found at <http://www.accesstext.org/providers.php>.

Please note that many of ATN's files are not student ready and must be checked for accessibility prior to delivery to the student.

CourseSmart

<http://www.coursesmart.com/>

CourseSmart differs from the other resources discussed because it is not designed specifically for students with disabilities. Rather, it is online store for obtaining electronic books. Students can also purchase books in their campus bookstore and redeem the CourseSmart certificate online. Please visit <http://www.coursesmart.com/howitworks> for detailed information about how to obtain electronic textbooks using CourseSmart. *Coursesmart's files are not necessarily student-ready.*

Scanning

If a student has already purchased a hard copy of a textbook, the disability support provider can convert it to an electronic format by scanning the book. Please refer to http://www.bookshare.org/assets/docs/brochures/Bookshare-University-Partner-Program_2810.pdf for detailed scanning instructions and available scanning software. The Colorado State University's Access Project has also prepared a [detailed description of proper scanner procedure and available technology](#).

Resources Appendix

Professional Organizations and Listservs

- [Association on Higher Education and Disability \(AHEAD\)](#)
AHEAD is a professional organization with over 2,500 members of individuals who develop policy for and provide services to individuals with disabilities in postsecondary education. AHEAD provides a variety of resources for disability support providers and holds an annual conference. AHEAD provides a rather extensive list of resources for higher education disability support providers: <http://www.ahead.org/>
- [American College Personnel Association \(ASPA\)](#): ASPA is a student affairs higher education professional organization that promotes inclusive life-long learning. ASPA includes a variety of Committees. A committee that could be of interest and beneficial to disability support providers is the [Academic Support in Higher Education Committee](#).
- [Disabled Student Services in Higher Education \(DSSHE\)](#): DSSHE is a listserv for higher education disability student support providers. It enables support providers to post questions and engage in discussions about support higher education students with disabilities with colleagues at a variety of higher education institutions.
- [Access Technology Higher Education Network \(ATHEN\)](#): ATHEN is a professional organization that focuses on access technology in higher education. It offers message boards/ listservs, events focusing on accessible technology, and resources.

Accommodations/ Accessible Text Resources

- *Sample Accommodations Plan:*
<http://www.dredef.org/programs/clearinghouse/Sample-College-Accommodation-letter.pdf>. Please note that this is just an example and that the accommodations letter must meet the needs of the student and the higher education institution.
- *Sample Accessible Text Request Document:*
<http://www.uvm.edu/ebook/?Page=erequest/ebookRequest.html&SM=erequest/erequestSubmenu.html> (University of Vermont).
- *Description of Additional File Formats: Data Conversion Laboratories* provides a detailed description of a variety of file formats and how the formats interact. <http://www.dclab.com/idea.asp>.
- *WebAIM* provides web accessibility solutions for organizations for accommodation individuals with disabilities and comprehensive information about accessible products, software, and accessibility strategies: <http://webaim.org/>.

Publications

- [Chronicle of Higher Education](#): A news publication focusing on a variety of issues in higher education, including technology, policy and administrative practices. A valuable general resource for all higher education staff.
- [Campus Technology](#): A publication focused exclusively on technology in higher education. Provides information about issues such as software, operating systems, and eLearning.
- [The Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability](#): A peer-reviewed academic journal published by AHEAD, which focuses on issues relating to individuals with disabilities in higher education.

Training for Disability Support Providers

- [The Galvin Group Training Module](#): This module provides a comprehensive training for disability support providers. Although it focuses on California institutions of higher education, it provides a comprehensive overview of federal law and best practices.

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