



supporting blind and partially sighted people



Can everyone read your books?

Reach more readers through ebooks and other formats



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RNIB

Supporting blind and partially sighted people.

www.rnib.org.uk/publisheradvice

www.rnib.org.uk/ebooks

JISC TechDis

Supporting the education sector by providing expert advice and guidance on disability and technology.

www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/ebookplatforms

www.publisherlookup.org.uk

Right to Read Alliance

An alliance of 19 charities campaigning for people with print impairments to have access to the same book, at the same time and the same price as everyone else.

www.rnib.org.uk/righttoread

Welcome

If you work in the world of books – writing, publishing, selling or promoting them – this guide is for you. It:

- highlights some of the very practical steps you can take to make it possible for all of us to enjoy your books, particularly those who find it difficult or impossible to read standard print
- signposts you to expert guidance and best practice.

We are keen to hear your feedback, suggestions and success stories.



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A tantalising future

The digital revolution is opening a new chapter in the world of books. The speed of change over the last year has been stunning.

Popular books are increasingly appearing in ebook format and unabridged audio at the same time as the print editions. Ebooks give the reader the flexibility to adjust the format to their individual requirements, and ebook reading devices are including enhanced accessibility features.

All this is potentially good news for around one in eight of us who can't enjoy standard print, because we have sight problems, dyslexia, or a disability that makes it difficult for us to hold a book or turn a page. Many of us are already finding it easier to read the books that we want, in a format that we want, at the same time as everyone else.

But, for others it is as yet a tantalising future: there are still technical and procedural barriers across the supply chain. We are working in partnership with publishers, developers, device manufacturers, retailers, librarians and others to overcome these. If everyone plays a part, we can succeed.

This leaflet highlights the growing wealth of guidelines, advice and best practice available for the industry, and points you to online resources, including RNIB's online **accessible publishing** pages. We look forward to working with you to ensure these exciting developments open up the world of books and reach more readers.

Pete Osborne, Chair of the Right to Read Alliance
April 2011



Ways of reading

If we can't read standard print, we can read books in other formats such as large print, braille or narrated audiobooks.

And for those of us who can use computers, smartphones or ebook readers, the beauty of ebooks is their flexibility and the potential to adjust the size and type of font, use contrast, change background colour, use text-to-speech (synthetic voice) or even an electronic braille display. Many ebook reading devices can also be used for audiobook downloads, so it is possible to use one device for reading different formats.



Online resources

RNIB ebook guide: www.rnib.org.uk/ebooks

"I started reading again when I discovered ebooks!"



Publishers

As a publisher, you want to reach as many readers as possible. Digital formats can give people with print impairments unprecedented access to books. Here's a quick checklist:

Ebooks

- Enable text-to-speech on your ebooks: text-to-speech is a popular, often essential, way of reading for many people who can't use print (see the joint recommendation on text to speech on the Publishers Association website).
- Use ePub and check technical guidelines on what makes an accessible ebook, so that you can build accessibility into your digital workflows.
- Talk to your Digital Rights Management provider about making your ebooks interoperable and accessible to everyone.

A choice of formats

- Publish your ebooks and unabridged audiobooks at the same time as the standard print edition.
- Use print-on-demand to make your books available to buy in accessible formats such as large print.
- Use good font and spacing for print books, and check how easy it is to read the spine on the shelf.



Books for pupils and students

- Use guidance from JISC TechDis to meet students' needs for accessible digital content.
- Ensure that electronic school curriculum materials can be used by all children, including those who use assistive technology.

Online resources

RNIB

Accessible publishing pages: www.rnib.org.uk/publisheradvice
User information on ebooks: www.rnib.org.uk/ebooks

Publishers Association

www.publishers.org.uk/accessibility

JISC TechDis

Ebook platforms: www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/ebookplatforms
Publisher Lookup: www.publisherlookup.org.uk

Accessibility Action Group

Subscribe to the Publishers Accessibility Newsletter.
Email: i.forbes@pls.org.uk
www.pls.org.uk

"Ebooks are great and I wish they all had text-to-speech enabled. Not everyone likes it, but for me the synthetic speech is the equivalent of reading print. It's neutral so you build the characters yourself."

Booksellers

Whether selling online or in-store, make it easy for readers with print impairments to browse and buy your books.

Online shopping

- Make your website easy for customers to navigate whether searching, browsing or buying.
- Check that your website complies with industry standards like the World Wide Web Consortium's "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0".

Ebooks

- Include accessibility in your Frequently Asked Questions on ebooks.
- Make sure that customers who rely on keyboard navigation or screen reading software can buy and download ebooks from your site.
- Ask your ebook provider to use an interoperable digital rights management (DRM) system.



In-store shopping

- Display audiobooks and ebook readers prominently with clear signposting and good lighting.
- Train staff to answer questions from customers about accessibility features of ebook readers you stock.
- Train staff to give them confidence to meet the needs of readers with sight problems, dyslexia and other print disabilities.

Promotional material

- Follow clear print guidelines for your publications so that more people are able to read them.
- Provide your publications in accessible formats.

"I love unabridged audiobooks. Abridged books just aren't the same. I want to enjoy the whole book."

Online resources

Ebooks

RNIB ebook guide: www.rnib.org.uk/ebooks

JISC TechDis ebook platforms:

www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/ebookplatforms

Web accessibility

Industry standards: www.w3c.org/TR/WCAG

RNIB guidelines and services: www.rnib.org.uk/wac

Clear print guidelines

RNIB See it Right guidelines: www.rnib.org.uk/seeitright

UK Association for Accessible Formats: www.ukaaf.org

Librarians

With more libraries offering ebook and audiobook downloads, there's a lot you can do to make your digital services accessible and encourage take-up by people with print impairments, as well as promoting large print and hard copy audio.

Large print and audiobooks

- Display your large print and audio collections in prominent positions with clear signposting and good lighting.
- Carry a wide range of large print books and unabridged audiobooks, so that readers can enjoy every word.

Ebooks

- Join the MLA's community of practice and look at their frequently asked questions on ebooks.
- Check Reading Sight's ebook guidance for librarians.
- Make sure your ebooks and ebook platforms are accessible to people who use keyboard navigation or assistive technology.
- Promote the accessibility features of ebooks to your members to increase awareness.
- Participate in annual Make a Noise in Library activities (ebooks are the focus for June 2011).

Training and best practice

- Train staff to provide a good service to readers with sight loss and dyslexia.
- Use RNIB's "Six steps to making libraries more accessible".

- Use the Reading Sight website: designed for librarians, it is invaluable for best practice, guidance and training. Use its lively forum to learn from each other and share ideas.
- If you work with students, use JISC TechDis's guides on making library services accessible in further and higher education.
- Ensure that accessible formats are catalogued and that catalogues, reference materials, computers and other equipment are accessible to all users.
- Keep up to date with Share the Vision's fortnightly bulletins.

Book clubs and author events

- Make author events easy for everyone to attend. Choose book club books which are available in accessible formats, so everyone can participate.

Online resources

Reading Sight: www.readingsight.org.uk

- Search for "Accessible ebook services in public libraries"
- Search for "Six steps to library services for blind and partially sighted people"

JISC TechDis guides: www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/libraryvalue

Share the Vision: www.share-the-vision.org.uk

MLA (Museums Libraries and Archives) community of practice: www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/digital/e-books

User information on ebooks: www.rnib.org.uk/ebooks

Authors and authors' agents

Here are some practical steps which you can discuss with publishers to make it possible for more people to read your books.

Accessible versions of your books

- Ask for audio versions of your books to be unabridged so that listeners who can't read the original text can still enjoy every word.
- Check that text-to-speech is enabled on your ebooks.
- Ask for a clause like this to be put in your agreements with your publishers:

"The Publisher and the Author wish the work to reach as many readers as possible. The Publisher therefore agrees to take all reasonable steps to ensure simultaneous publication of the work in a range of formats accessible to blind, partially sighted or other print disabled people."



Events and activities

Many authors are very generous with their time in supporting the work of sight loss and dyslexia charities. This takes many forms: readings, interviews and recordings, to name but a few. This is much appreciated. Please continue to support us. Contact us to see how you can get involved.

"Reading is so much easier now, and the flexibility my device gives me is brilliant: I get the font and contrast that I need; I use the text-to-speech function quite often; and I can download and relax with audiobooks too."



Online resources

Society of Authors: www.societyofauthors.org/soa-news/text-speech-facility-e-book

Right to Read Alliance: www.rnib.org.uk/righttoread

RNIB ebook guide: www.rnib.org.uk/ebooks

Facts and figures

We estimate that 1 in 8 of the UK population find it difficult or impossible to read a standard print book.

Sight loss

- Almost two million people live with sight problems.
- 100 people a day start to lose their sight.
- One in five older people have sight loss which affects their day-to-day living.

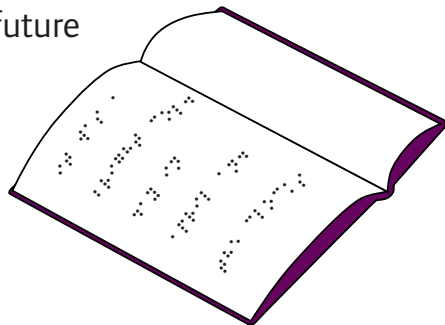
Dyslexia

- As many as one in 10 people are dyslexic to varying degrees.
- This includes 1.2 million school children who struggle to access the curriculum.

Books in accessible formats

With over 130,000 books published in the UK every year, historically only a small proportion have been made available in formats accessible to children and adults who cannot read standard print books. Most of this has been available through specialist provision. Now the landscape is changing. Of the 1,000 most popular books published in 2009 just over half were available in ebook format as well as print.

What a difference it will make if in future years the full 1,000 are available in accessible ebook and/or unabridged audio. In 2011 RNIB is researching the latest trends, and spreading the word to readers about what is already accessible.



Collaboration on accessibility

The Right to Read Alliance has a track record of partnership and collaboration with the book industry, central government and libraries.

Joint recommendation on text-to-speech: The Publishers Association, Publishers Licensing Society, Society of Authors, Association of Author's Agents worked with the Right to Read Alliance to understand the issues around text-to-speech and this led to a joint recommendation, issued in October 2010 that ebooks should have text-to-speech enabled, at least where there is no audio version available.

www.publishers.org.uk/accessibility

DCSF Textbook Pilot: Publishers worked alongside RNIB and dyslexia groups in this successful Government pilot project to transform access to textbooks for blind, partially sighted, dyslexic and all children who cannot read standard print.

Booker Prize: Publishers of all books longlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2010 provided RNIB with electronic files so that they could be made available in audio, giant print and braille, thanks to a clause in the Prize rules.

Accessibility in libraries: The Society of Chief Librarians endorsed a six point guide to ensuring accessibility of public library services for blind and partially sighted people, which was produced by RNIB. Visit www.readingsight.org.uk and search for Six steps to library services for blind and partially sighted people.

Reach more readers

Our **accessible publishing** pages offer publishers:

- technical guidance
- examples of best practice
- signposting to other resources
- the business case for publishing accessibly.

Digital publishing is opening a new chapter in the world of books for people who find it difficult or impossible to read a standard print book because of sight loss, dyslexia or other disability (about 1 in every 8 people). Make sure your books are accessible.

www.rnib.org.uk/publisheradvice

