

Access to Technology: Questions & Challenges

Organizations

AllTech

ALLTech is a national organization that provides training, consultations, and technical assistance in the areas of assistive technology, specialized software, Web accessibility, and universal design in education.

<http://www.alltech-tsi.org/>

Alliance for Technology Access (ATA)

ATA is a nationwide network that provides technical assistance, training and support to children and adults with disabilities.

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

Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)

CAST is an educational, not-for-profit organization that uses technology to expand opportunities for all people, including those with disabilities.

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

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/TeachersGuide/osers.html>

The ADA & IT Information Center for the Mid-Atlantic Region

One of ten regional centers established to provide training, information, and technical assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and accessible information technology in education to businesses, consumers, schools, and state and local governments.

<http://www.adainfo.org/accessible/it/resources.asp>

Maryland Technology Assistance Program

The mission of the Maryland Technology Assistance Program is to establish a statewide, consumer responsive system for the delivery of technology related assistance to individuals with disabilities, under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998.

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

Software

ZoomText

Screen magnification software for Windows PCs may make Web pages more accessible and friendly to low-vision users.

http://www.aisquared.com/Products/ZoomText8_mag/Z8Mag.htm

A trial version is available here:

http://www.aisquared.com/Products/ZoomText8_mag_reader/FreeTrial/Z8FreeTrial.htm

BigShot

Screen magnification software for Windows

<http://www.aisquared.com/Products/BigShot/BigShot.htm>

ReadPlease

Free text-to-speech software for Windows

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

outSPOKEN

Software for both Macintosh and Windows allows blind and visually impaired individuals to use the computer.

<http://www.alva-bv.nl/screenaccess/osw.asp>

<http://www.alva-bv.nl/screenaccess/osm.asp>

Home Page Reader

An accessible web browser made by IBM that offers spoken internet/web access for blind and visually impaired users, and is compatible with other screen readers.

http://www-3.ibm.com/able/solution_offerings/hpr.html

Mac OS X 10.4 is supposed to have a greatly enhanced spoken interface

<http://www.apple.com/accessibility/voiceover/>

Articles

Accessible Design for Users With Disabilities

Article by Web usability guru Jakob Nielsen
<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9610.html>

Effective Color Contrast:

Designing for People with Partial Sight and Color Deficiencies

http://www.lighthouse.org/color_contrast.htm

How People with Disabilities Use the Web

W3C Working Draft, 4 January 2001

<http://www.w3.org/WAI/EO/Drafts/PWD-Use-Web/Overview.html>

Alternative Web Browsing

"[A] collection of pointers to information, and where possible, to demonstration versions of alternative browsing methods."

<http://www.w3.org/WAI/References/Browsing>

User Style Sheets

<http://dbaron.org/css/user/>

Tips

How to Enlarge Text in a Web Browser

Internet Explorer:

Go to the menu at the top of the screen.

Click on view and scroll down to Text Zoom.

Choose the percentage you would like your browser to display.

Netscape:

Go to the menu at the top of the screen.

Click on view and scroll down to increase the font size.

Repeat step until desired font size is reached.

Tips

Browser Keyboard Shortcuts

(For Mac users: Try substituting the command or apple key for the CTRL key, and the OPTION key for the ALT key.)

Mozilla Firefox

See:

<http://www.mozilla.org/support/firefox/keyboard>

Microsoft Internet Explorer

Move to the next link: TAB

Move to previous link: SHIFT + TAB

Activate a selected link: ENTER

Find text on the current page: CTRL + F

Move to the next page (Forward): SHIFT + BACKSPACE or ALT + RIGHT ARROW

Move to the previous page (Back): BACKSPACE or ALT + LEFT ARROW

Move to the next frame: CTRL + TAB

Move to the previous frame: SHIFT + CTRL + TAB

Scroll towards the beginning of a document: UP ARROW or (in larger increments) PAGE UP

Scroll towards the end of a document: DOWN ARROW or (in larger increments) PAGE DOWN

Move to the beginning of the page: HOME

Move to the end of a page: END

Refresh the current page: F5 or CTRL + R

Stop downloading the current page: ESC

Go to a new location: CTRL + O

Open a new browser window: CTRL + N

Save the current page: CTRL + S

Print the current page or active frame: CTRL + P

Select all in the current page: CTRL + A

Copy the selection: CTRL + C

Close the current window: CTRL + W

Quit the current program: ALT + F4

*Go to the "Homepage": ALT + HOME

*View the web site in full screen: F11 (press F11 to toggle on and off)

**Only available in Internet Explorer 5.0 and higher*

Netscape Navigator

Move to the next link: TAB

Move to the previous link: SHIFT + TAB

Activate the selected link: ENTER

Find text on the current page: CTRL + F

Find again: CTRL + G or F3

Move to the next page (Forward): ALT + RIGHT ARROW

Move to the previous page (Back): ALT + LEFT ARROW

Scroll towards the beginning of a document: UP ARROW or (in larger increments) PAGE UP

Scroll towards the end of a document: DOWN ARROW or (in larger increments) PAGE DOWN

Move to the beginning of the page: CTRL + HOME

Move to the end of a page: CTRL + END

Refresh the current page: F5 or CTRL + R

Stop downloading the current page: ESC

Go to a new location: CTRL + O

Open a new browser window: CTRL + N

Save the current page: CTRL + S

Add the current page as a bookmark: CTRL + D

Edit bookmarks: CTRL + B

Print the current page or active frame: CTRL + P

Select all in the current page: CTRL + A

Copy the selection: CTRL + C

Increase font size: CTRL +]

Decrease font size: CTRL + [

Close the current window: CTRL + W

Quit the current program: CTRL + Q or ALT + F4

View the source of the current page: CTRL + U

View the Page Information: CTRL + I

View History: CTRL + H

View Security Information on the current page: CTRL + SHIFT + I

Tips

Font and Color Manipulation

How to change fonts, colors and sizes on various browsers (You can also do this with Macs of course, but these instructions are specific to Windows PCs).

Note that when using a screenreader, it is usually best to make the font as small as possible. This stops the text from wrapping which allows the screenreader to read it more easily.

Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.x

Note that in addition to the instructions below, in IE 5 you can also create your own style sheet and use that as your default stylesheet.

Setting the text and background colors:

1. Select Internet Options from the Tools menu.
2. Select the General tab.
3. Click the Colors button.
4. You can select the Use Windows Colors option to use the colors that you have defined for the screen windows in the Windows Control Panel. If you turn off the Use Windows Colors option, you can select your own colors for the text and the background.
5. Click OK to close the Colors dialog box.
6. Click the Accessibility button.
7. Select the relevant "ignore" options to force your preferences over the web page settings.
8. Click the OK button to close the Accessibility dialog box.
9. Click OK to close the Internet Options dialog box.

Setting the fonts:

1. Select Internet Options from the Tools menu.
2. Click the Fonts button.
3. Select the Web page font and the Plain text font as required.
4. Click the OK button to close the Fonts dialog box.
5. Click the Accessibility button.
6. Select the relevant "ignore" options to force your preferences over the web page settings.
7. Click the OK button to close the Accessibility dialog box.
8. Click the OK button to close the Internet Options dialog box.

Setting the font size:

Under the View menu there is the option "Text sizes". Select the size, from Largest to Smallest from here.

Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.x

Note that in addition to the instructions below, in IE 5 you can also create your own style sheet and use that as your default stylesheet.

Setting the text and background colors:

1. Select Internet Options from the View menu.
2. Select the General tab.
3. Click the Colors button.
4. You can select the Use Windows Colors option to use the colors that you have defined for the screen windows in the Windows Control Panel. If you turn off the Use Windows Colors option, you can select your own colors for the text and the background.
5. Click OK to close the Colors dialog box.
6. Click the Accessibility button.
7. Select the relevant "ignore" options to force your preferences over the web page settings.
8. Click the OK button to close the Accessibility dialog box.
9. Click OK to close the Internet Options dialog box.

Setting the fonts:

1. Select Internet Options from the View menu.
2. Click the Fonts button. The system displays the Fonts dialog box.
3. Select the family of the Proportional font and the Fixed Width font as required.
4. Select the Font size.
5. Click the Set as Default button.
6. Click the OK button to close the Fonts dialog box.
7. Click the Accessibility button.
8. Select the relevant "ignore" options to force your preferences over the web page settings.
9. Click the OK button to close the Accessibility dialog box.
10. Click the OK button to close the Internet Options dialog box.

Netscape Navigator V4.7

Setting the text and background colors:

1. Select Preferences from the Edit menu.
2. Select the Colors option in the Category field on the left-hand side.
3. Select the Use Windows Colors option to use the colors that you have defined for the screen windows in the Windows Control Panel. If you turn off the Use Windows Colors option, you can select your own colors for the text and the background.
4. To change the color of an item, click the colored buttons to display the Color dialog box.
5. Click the box "Always use my colors, overriding document". (Especially important if you have changed the color scheme significantly.)
6. Click OK to close the Preferences dialog box.

Setting the fonts:

1. Select Preferences from the Edit menu.
2. Select the Fonts option in the field on the left-hand side.

3. Select the family and size of the Variable Width Font and the Fixed Width Font as required.
4. You can also choose the following options:
 - Use my default fonts, overriding document-specified fonts. (This option uses only the fonts that you have selected).
 - Use document specified fonts, but disable Dynamic Fonts. (This option uses the fonts specified by the web page, but only if they exist on your system).
 - Use document-specified fonts, including Dynamic Fonts. (This option uses the fonts specified by the web page and will download them if they are not available on your system).
5. Click the OK button to close the dialog box.