

RESOURCES
REGARDING PERSONS WHO ARE BLIND
OR HAVE VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

Accessible Faith: a technical guide for accessibility in houses of worship (The Retirement Research Foundation), 8765 West Higgins Road, Suite 430, Chicago, Illinois 60631-4170, 713-714-8080, www.rrf.org (Chapter "Eliminating Visual Barriers" has good information on lighting).

See also **Discussion Forum's Blind and Visually-impaired** (should include all the Blind ones) TAGS for all related discussion topics:

<http://shambhalanetwork.org/forums/tag/blind/>

<http://shambhalanetwork.org/forums/tag/visually-impaired/>

<http://shambhalanetwork.org/forums/tag/blind-visually-impaired/>

From the Unitarian Universalist, web page "People" at [Some Disability Etiquette Tips for Greeting](http://uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/accessibility/disability101/26844.shtml) (<http://uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/accessibility/disability101/26844.shtml>)

American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) resources

[American Foundation for the Blind \(AFB\)](http://www.afb.org) (<http://www.afb.org>)

Has information on:

[Etiquette](http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=163) (<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=163>)

[Tact and Courtesy](http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=163&DocumentID=194)

(<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=163&DocumentID=194>)

[Communicating Comfortably](http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=163&DocumentID=194)

(<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=163&DocumentID=194>)

[Being a Sighted Guide](http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=163&DocumentID=2104)

(<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=163&DocumentID=2104>)

[Giving Directions](http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=163&DocumentID=2105)

(<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=163&DocumentID=2105>)

[Help for an Older Relative](http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=164)

(<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=164>)

[For Parents](http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=165) (<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=165>)

Check your local telephone directory, or call the American Foundation for the Blind for a referral, 1-800-232-5463

[For Parents](http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=165) (<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=36&TopicID=165>)

Other Blind or Visually Impaired Resources

[National Federation of the Blind](http://www.nfb.org) (<http://www.nfb.org>)

1800 Johnson Street, Baltimore, MD 21230

Phone: 410-659-9314 Fax: 410-685-5653

- "Aids and Appliances" link

1 410 659 9314

Books, canes, directional devices, housewares, leisure activities, magnifiers, measuring devices, medical devices, recording and playback devices, timekeeping, and writing supplies are available.

National Federation of the Blind Materials Center

(<http://secure.nfb.org/ecommerce/asp/default.asp>)

1800 Johnson Street, Baltimore, MD 21230-4998

“That All May Worship”. Welcoming A Person Who Is Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
pages 24-26. More information on this book under “General Resources”, page 1.

Blindness / Visual Impairments

(<http://uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/accessibility/disability101/visualimpairments/index.shtml>) Basic information about accommodating people with visual impairments from the Unitarian Universalist Association.

UK

National Federation of the Blind of the United Kingdom (<http://www.nfbuk.org>)

Royal London Society for the Blind (<http://www.rlsb.org.uk/>)

The Royal National College for the Blind (<http://www.rncb.ac.uk/>)

British Computer Association of the Blind Web Site (<http://www.bcab.org.uk/>)

Blind in Business (<http://www.blindinbusiness.co.uk/>)

Texts in Large Print

Large Font chants and Practice literature

Some large font chants and practice literature for Shambhala practitioners will start to be available in mid June 2009 from Shambhala Media, contact information coming soon, for now email maclaren@earthlink.net

Hints to Help Create Larger/Clearer Print Documents (from Disability 101: Resources)

http://archive.uua.org/programs/idbm/accessibilities/disabilityresources_largeprintdocs.html

American Printing House for the Blind, Inc..

1839 Frankfort Avenue, Louisville, KY 40206, USA.

Large APH Educational Research

Large Print: Guidelines for Optimal Readability and APHont™ a font for low vision

(<http://www.aph.org/edresearch/lpguide.htm>)

Recommend 18-24 pt fonts. Verdana and Arial being best.

National Association for the Visually Handicapped (<http://www.navh.org/>)

NAVH in New York City the staff can help you in Spanish.

22 West 21st Street 6th Floor

New York, NY 10010 navh@navh.org

Phone (212) 889-3141 or (212) 255-2804 FAX (212) 727-2931

Dr marchi 888 205 5951

CONTACT NAVH: Email navh@navh.org or services in the East Coast and the rest of the Planet.

Email staffca@navh.org if you live in the West Coast:

AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, UT, WA, WY.

NAVH San Francisco

507 Polk Street, Suite 420, San Francisco, CA 94102

staffca@navh.org (415)-775 NAVH (6284) Fax:-(415)-346-9593

National Association for the Visually Handicapped NAVH STANDARDS & CRITERIFOR LARGE PRINT PUBLICATIONS

If you are a publisher interested in large print, please contact us for more information about our large print standards at 212-889-3141. Quality large print involves more than just increasing font size. We can help you with things like proper contrast, spacing and font type. NAVH Recommend 18-24 pt fonts. Verdana and Arial being best.

[CNIB \(Canadian National Institute for the Blind\)](http://www.cnib.ca/en/contact/Default.aspx)

(<http://www.cnib.ca/en/contact/Default.aspx>)

1-800-563-2642

(902) 453-1480; 6136 Almon St, Halifax, NS, B3K1T8.

Halifax 800 565 5147

Verdana or Arial fonts recommended.

[Clear Print Design Standard](http://www.cnib.ca/en/services/accessibilities/resources/clearprint/Default.aspx)

(<http://www.cnib.ca/en/services/accessibilities/resources/clearprint/Default.aspx>)

Accessible Books and Periodicals for Readers with Print Disabilities

[Bookshare](http://bookshare.org) (<http://bookshare.org>) is free for all U.S. students with qualifying disabilities.

Student memberships are currently funded by an award from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). A searchable online library. Bookshare offers more than 50,000 digital books, textbooks, teacher-recommended reading, periodicals and assistive technology tools.

[Change Your Font or Text Size for Reading on the Web](http://uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/accessibility/disability101/visualimpairments/27152.shtml)

(<http://uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/accessibility/disability101/visualimpairments/27152.shtml>)

Video Captioning

Captioned (subtitled & closed audio description) Video Teachings

There are a number of documents related to this on the [Captioning and](#)

[Translating Teaching Videos](#) Files

(<http://shambhalanetwork.org/groups/captioning-and-translating-teaching-videos/documents/?category=7517>) on the Shambhala Network:

[CC Video Teachings](http://shambhalanetwork.org/groups/captioning-and-translating-teaching-videos/documents/?category=7517) (<http://shambhalanetwork.org/groups/captioning-and-translating-teaching-videos/documents/?category=7517>). There are several

documents whose names start with this phrase which cover different aspects of Closed Captioning.

Closed Captioning see Files in the Shambhala Networks [Captioning and Translating Teaching videos](http://shambhalanetwork.org/groups/captioning-and-translating-teaching-videos/) (<http://shambhalanetwork.org/groups/captioning-and-translating-teaching-videos/>).

[The Vidyadhara, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche -Official Channel](http://www.youtube.com/user/TrungpaRinpoche) at <http://www.youtube.com/user/TrungpaRinpoche>
[Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche -Official YouTube Channel](http://www.youtube.com/user/officialsakyong) at <http://www.youtube.com/user/officialsakyong>

Accessible email guidelines -byStefan Carmien.

See the latest version of that document at <http://shambhalanetwork.org/groups/accessibility-and-disability/documents/?category=8977>. See also discussion topic [Accessible Email Guidelines](#)

Web Site Accessibility

There are documents in Files at <http://shambhalanetwork.org/groups/accessibility-and-disability/documents/?category=8977>

See also the discussion topic [Web Site Accessibility](#).
[Change Your Font or Text Size for Reading on the Web](#)
(<http://uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/accessibility/disability101/visualimpairments/27152.shtml>)

Large Font Chants

See the discussion topic [Large font chants for practitioners with visual impairments are now available](#).

Appendix A: Meditation Instruction for the Deaf-Blind

From **Diversity and Accessibility: Best Practice**
(<http://shambhalanetwork.org/groups/accessibility-and-disability/documents/?category=7540>)

Appendix B: Text to Speech software

[SARA Scanning and Reading Appliance For Low Vision and Blind](http://www.freedomscientific.com/fs_products/scanners_SARA.asp)
(http://www.freedomscientific.com/fs_products/scanners_SARA.asp)

1 800 444 4443

“Freedom Scientific’s SARA™ (Scanning and Reading Appliance) is an affordable and easy-to-use solution for those with low vision or who are blind or deaf-blind. The SARA enables the reading of a wide variety of printed material including books, documents, mail, newspapers, magazines, and so much more. Using Optical

Character Recognition (OCR) technology, the SARA works like a computer scanner that recognizes text, translates it into speech, then reads the text aloud.” Stand alone product with scanner, so does not require a computer. However the price shown at their web site, September 2008, is \$2,795.00.

Kurzweil 1000 - Solutions for Blind Readers (\$995 retail, June 2009)

(<http://www.kurzweilededu.com/kurz1000.aspx>)

Designed to also be used by blind or visually impaired and has a lot more features than most OCR softwares. Can be used with a scanner or digital text documents like those from bookshare.org (accessible books and periodicals). “Kurzweil 1000™ is award-winning software that makes printed or electronic text readily available to people who are blind or visually impaired. It combines accessibility, communication and productivity tools to ease and enhance their reading, writing and learning experience.

The software speaks text aloud in a variety of natural-sounding voices that can be modified to suit individual preferences.”

Kurzweil 1000 - Features and Benefits

http://www.kurzweilededu.com/products_k1000_features.aspx

Choice of two OCR engines, ScanSoft® OCR and ABBYY™ FineReader, provide the most accurate available OCR, State-of-the-Art Speech Options, Appointment Calendar with Audible Reminders, etc.

OpenBook Scanning and Reading Software (\$995)

(<http://www.freedomscientific.com/products/fs/openbook-product-page.asp>)

“OpenBook™ allows you to convert printed documents or graphic based text into an electronic text format using accurate optical character recognition and quality speech.”

Natural Reader (<http://www.naturalreaders.com>)

This a free text-to-speech application

NaturalReader uses natural sounding voices and an easy to use interface to enable you to convert any written text into speech. Whether it's MS Word, a Webpage, PDF files, or emails, NaturalReader can handle the text with a few clicks of the mouse.

What's more, with NaturalReader you can convert text directly to an MP3 or a WAV file.

The Free version allows you to experience listening to your emails, web pages, reports or any text on your PC.

The paid versions support Natural Voices, while the Free version only contains and supports Microsoft Voices.

Free Natural Voice Text to Speech Reader

http://www.sofotex.com/Free-Natural-Voice-Text-to-Speech-Reader-download_L10611.html

Free Natural Voice Text to Speech Reader Publisher's Description:

This is a free and fully functional text-to-speech software. You can have your computer read any part of the news, weather forecasts, charting messages, and e-mail. The application can also read Word documents, rich text files, and PDF files. The speaking speed and voice quality can be changed at your wish. You can also save the

voice as a WAV file, so you can listen later or burn it onto a CD. You can also record your sound to compare Natural Voice and your voice.

New feature in this edition is: to read Internet news, you can just click an IE icon or menu, to hear other text, just click copy, computer will read selected text back to you; and one minor bug fixed. The main difference between the Standard version and the Enterprise version is that enterprise version supports and contains natural voice, but the standard version uses Microsoft Voices.

ReadPlease Products

ReadPlease offers a variety of text-to-speech products to a wide spectrum of users, ranging from business to personal use.

ReadPlease 2003 (Free Edition) offers full support for all Microsoft voices, reads text via Windows clipboard from any program, Adjustable voice speed (rate) and more...

EasyTutor Transforming the Written Word. (From Dolphin)

(<http://www.yourdolphin.com/productdetail.asp?id=13>)

“It's like having a personal reading and writing tutor, EasyTutor is always switched on in our house.” “EasyTutor is a truly revolutionary software solution for anyone with Dyslexia or who has difficulties reading, writing and spelling. By harnessing the power of the inbuilt speech output facility, computer users can write, read, view and check text alongside a human sounding voice.”

Nuance – RealSpeak (<http://www.nuance.com/realspeak/>)

RealSpeak™ is software that converts text into remarkably high quality speech. Whether you want to speech-enable an in-car navigation system, provide a screen reader for the blind or partially sighted, or enhance your call center service, RealSpeak is the natural solution. Friendly, expressive, highly intelligible quality that speaks for itself.

Speakonia 1.3.5 Price: Free Speakonia is actually a modest freeware utility that reads text out loud. Speakonia is a Text-To-Speech Program which is controlled through a graphical user interface (Similar to Notepad). Speakonia reads aloud any given text. http://download.cnet.com/Speakonia/3000-7239_4-10125328.html?tag=mncol;pop

Ultra Hal Text-to-Speech Reader 1.0.5 Price: Free

http://download.cnet.com/Ultra-Hal-Text-to-Speech-Reader/3000-7239_4-10071733.html?tag=mncol;pop

Text Speaker 3.14 : Free to try (200 words per document trial); \$29.95 to buy

http://download.cnet.com/Text-Speaker/3000-7239_4-10877963.html?tag=mncol;pop

Amazon's Kindle is a wireless, portable reading device with instant access to more than 200,000 books, blogs, newspapers and magazines. (April 09) Although not blindness or visually impairedness friendly yet and we don't know of if any dharma books that are available, but if not it is just a matter of time. It will be interesting to see how this evolves. There is a report on this at [Amazon Kindle for people with disabilities](#) at

http://www.it-director.com/blogs/Abrahams_Accessibility/2007/12/Amazon_Kindle_for_people_with_disabilities.html His summary is “Kindle seems to be a very interesting first generation product. There is no real indication that the needs of the disabled have been explicitly considered.”

However the Kindle 2 (\$259.00) and Kindle DX (\$489.00) both now have text-to-speech feature Kindle has six adjustable font sizes.

I don't know if this is still true but in Feb 2009 I see that “Amazon relented to pressure from the Author's Guild and has agreed to allow authors and publishers to disable the text-to-speech feature for their e-books available for the Kindle 2.”

Sony Reader Digital Book

For additional information about the Sony Reader, consumers can call (888) 315-SONY 669. None of the Sony Readers have text-to-speech functionality. Reader Pocket Edition (\$169.00) 5inch three adjustable font size, small medium large,. Sony Reader Daily Edition – 7" PRS-900 a 7" screen, (\$399) does half five font size options. Small medium large, extra large and extra extra large.

Barnes and Noble Nook Wireless eBook Reader (\$259.00 new) No text to speech. “Your nook makes reading comfortable by offering a choice of several fonts and five text sizes. Tap Font to change the text font and size.” Small medium large and extra large (18-22pt)

[An Evaluation of Kindle II and Sony Reader Digital Book Players](http://www.afb.org/afbpres/pub.asp?DocID=aw110104) at <http://www.afb.org/afbpres/pub.asp?DocID=aw110104> From AFB ACCESSWORLD ® Technology and People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired. Product Evaluation

[Blio eReader software](http://www.blioreader.com) As of March 2010 this was not yet available. The new free e-reader software from K-NFB Reading Technology is released. You can read more about Blio at www.blioreader.com. “software is the new touchstone for the presentation of electronic books & magazines.” [Kurzweil debuts Blio, a free eReader](#) read-aloud feature. The voice is synchronized with follow-along word highlighting, making it ideal for language learners, young children and the vision impaired.

(877) 547-1500. From the USA or Canada: 1-800-547-6747. From all other countries: 303-651-2829

Appendix C: Screen readers

[Screen reader description from Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screen_reader) A screen reader is a software application that attempts to identify and interpret what is being displayed on the screen (or, more accurately, sent to standard output, whether a video monitor is present or not). This interpretation is then re-presented to the user with text-to-speech, sound icons, or a Braille output device. Screen readers are a form of assistive technology (AT) potentially useful to people who are blind, visually impaired, illiterate or learning disabled, often in combination with other AT, such as screen magnifiers. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screen_reader

[Survey of Preferences of Screen Readers Users](http://webaim.org/projects/screenreadersurvey/) at

<http://webaim.org/projects/screenreadersurvey/>

“In December 2008 through January 2009, WebAIM conducted a survey of preferences of screen reader users. We received 1121 valid responses to the screen reader survey.”

“Of the 1121 respondents, 74% use JAWS, 23% use Window-Eyes, 8% use NVDA, and 6% use VoiceOver. While several other screen readers were reported, these were the most prominently reported. Individual versions of screen readers are not yet computed, but generally the majority of users are using the most up-to-date version of their screen reader.”

The two leading screen reading softwares are:

[JAWS from Freedom Scientific](http://www.freedomscientific.com/products/fs/jaws-product-page.asp), At

<http://www.freedomscientific.com/products/fs/jaws-product-page.asp> (\$895 for standard, \$1095 for professional, June 2009) JAWS screen reader software. “Developed for computer users whose vision loss prevents them from seeing screen content, JAWS reads aloud what's on the PC screen.” “With a refreshable braille display, JAWS also provides braille output in addition to, or instead of, speech. An array of versatile features and customizable options lets you tailor JAWS for your individual needs and preferences.” One report shows that 74% of people who use screen readers use this one.

http://www.freedomscientific.com/fs_products/software_jaws.asp

Window-Eyes Screen Reading Software by GW Micro. (\$895, June 2009) “Window-Eyes is nothing less than the most stable screen reader available on the market today. Featuring Windows 2000, Windows XP ..., Windows Server 2003, Windows Vista ... and Windows Server 2008 compatibility, Window-Eyes puts you in the hands of the most powerful screen reading software ever created. Window-Eyes gives total control over what you hear and how you hear it. Plus, with its enhanced Braille support...”

Others screen reading software includes:

Apple Inc. Mac OS X includes **VoiceOver**, a feature-rich screen reader.

System Access from Serotek (Standalone \$399.00 USD June 2009)

ZoomText Magnifier/Reader from Ai Squared (\$600-700, June 2009)

[NonVisual Desktop Access \(NVDA\)](http://www.nvda-project.org/wiki/Download) is a **free and open source screen reader** for the Microsoft Windows operating system. It supports over 20 languages and can run on any computer entirely from a USB drive with no installation. At <http://www.nvda-project.org/wiki/Download>.

[Hal from Dolphin – Screen reader with Speech and Braille support](http://www.yourdolphin.com/productdetail.asp?id=5) At

www.yourdolphin.com/productdetail.asp?id=5 “Developed for blind computer users, Hal is a software screen reader that works by reading the screen interactively and communicating through a speech synthesiser or a refreshable Braille display.”

In US Online Price: \$795.00 – \$890.00. In UK £595.00 (£699.12 inc. VAT) You can download a FREE demo of Dolphin software and try it for yourself.

Windows 7 and perhaps **Vista**, has an option “**Use the computer without a display**”, which seems to be a screen reader. It is described as “Windows has many features that enable you to use your computer without a display. For example, you can have screen text read aloud by using Narrator or you can have Windows describe screen activity to you. You can turn on or adjust settings for these features by clicking Use the computer without a display page in the Ease of Access Center.” Click the Start button, click Control Panel, clicking Ease of Access, and then click Ease of Access Center. There is information on this at [Use the computer without a display](http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/Use-the-computer-without-a-display-optimize-for-blindness) at <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/Use-the-computer-without-a-display-optimize-for-blindness> There are many good accessibility tools available through the [Ease of Access Center](http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/Windows7/Make-your-computer-easier-to-use) described at that link which is at <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/Windows7/Make-your-computer-easier-to-use>