

This Quick Guide list some programs and tools for converting text to audio files. Some tools are free; some cost a great deal of money, but essentially they all do the same thing, which is to take a text file and automatically convert it, using a computer voice, to a digital audio file.

Some things to consider when choosing a tool are:

- Cost
- Ease of use
- Voice quality - is the tool supplied with good quality voices, or can it use good voices if you have them on your computer? Are the finished audio files good quality (the more the tool compresses the file to reduce the file size, the lower the quality)?
- Efficiency - can you 'batch convert' a file or a set of files (e.g. TextAloud) rather than having to select a chunk of text manually on screen and save it as audio?
- Formats - in which audio formats can the tool save (MP3, WMA, WAV, etc)?
- Chaptering - can the tool automatically create a set of sequentially numbered and named audio files from a structured text file (e.g. EasyConverter)?
- Pronunciation editor - if a word is not spoken correctly can you edit it and save it in a dictionary so that it is pronounced properly from then on?



PC

Program	Comment	Cost	Audio Formats	Voices supplied	Operation	Editor?	Supplier
Browsealoud	Text reader for internet. Reads 'speech enabled' web sites and PDFs.	Free to end user	MP3	Good 'Streaming' voices over internet	Highlight text in web page, right click, save	Yes	Browsealoud
ClaroRead Plus	Text reader. Integrates with Word and IE. Scanning & OCR. Word prediction, talking calculator and spellchecker.	£159	WMA, WAV, OGG	RealSpeak Daniel, Emily & Jane	Highlight text, copy, save	Yes	iANSYST Claro Software
EasyConverter	For creating Alternative Format books. Scan, OCR, edit in Word and then make large print, Braille, MP3 and Daisy books. Opens PDF, DOC, TXT, RTF, HTML and scans paper documents.	£890 school price	MP3, Daisy	RealSpeak Daniel, Emily & Jane	Open in Word then click to convert. Can make separate audio files from structured Word doc	Yes	Dolphin
EasyProducer	For creating Alternative Format books. Converts Word docs to synthesised Daisy audio books. Like Converter but no scanning and audio output only.	£348	MP3, Daisy	RealSpeak Daniel	Open in Word then click to save. Can make separate audio files from structured Word doc		Dolphin
Dolphin Publisher	For creating Alternative Format books from Word docs. Makes recorded or synthetic Daisy books.	£695 school price	MP3, Daisy	None – Daniel at extra cost	Open in editor, click to save		Dolphin
Kurzweil 3000	Scanning and OCR – creates KES files. Reads KES, DOC, PDF, RTF, HTML files. Can save the text in MP3 and WAV files.	£725 colour scan, £500 mono scan	WAV, MP3	NeoSpeech VoiceText and ETI Eloquence	Open in Kurzweil, click to convert file	no	Sight and Sound iANSYST
NaturalReader	Text reader for Word, PDF, Internet Explorer. Good voices with paid versions.	Free, \$39.50 (1 voice), \$79.50 (Enterprise version)	MP3	AT&T voices with paid version	Open in Reader, select, click to convert		NaturalReader
Tell Me A Story	Simple and free Text to audio converter. http://customsolutionsofmaryland.50megs.com/	free	?	none	Paste or load text file, click to convert		Custom Solutions of Maryland
TextAloud mp3	Simple text reader. Cost effective way to get extra British and foreign voices for your computer, e.g. AT&T, RealSpeak, NeoSpeech, Acapela, Cepstral etc. Can save speech to MP3 files. Free demo.	£16.59 single, plus about £15-£25 for each extra voice	WAV MP3 WMA	None, but lots of good voices available at extra cost.	Open file, click to convert. Can batch process.		NextUp.com

Program	Comment	Cost	Audio Formats	Voices supplied	Operation	Editor?	Supplier
Text-to-Audio	Converts text to audio files. Can add bookmarks so that the audio files are segmented. Clunky interface.	£47	WAV, MP3, WMA, OGG, DSP	AT&T Mike & Crystal	Word, TXT, HTML, RTF files. Can make separate files lasting a set length, or by adding book marks	no	Premier Assitive Technology / Millfield Books
TextHelp Read and Write Gold 8.1	Text reader with scanning and OCR; also has word prediction, spellchecker, study tools, network versions; easy to use. Integrates into Word, Internet explorer, Acrobat.	Read and Write Gold: £320 single licence; £1095 primary; £1795 secondary	WAV, WMA, MP3	RealSpeak Daniel & Emily	Open in Word, select text, click to convert file.		TextHelp iANSYST
TextSound 2.0	Text to speech converter.	\$29.95	WAV, MP3	None. Extra voices available at cost.	Open text file, click to convert. Batch converter.		http://www.bytecol.com/textsnd.htm
Ultra Hal Text-to-Speech Reader 1.0	Reads documents (only .txt or .rtf files), dialog boxes, clipboard, email, websites, incoming messages. Saves WAV - needs converter to get MP3.	Free or \$25 with NeoSpeech voices	WAV, MP3	none	Open file, click to convert.		www.zabaware.com/reader/index.html
WordRead 2	Talking toolbar for MS Word. Reads and highlights.	£59 single; £245 5 user; £490 10 user.	WAV, WMA, OGG	Realspeak Daniel & Emily voices	Open file, click to convert		iANSYST
WordRead 2 Serif Edition	Same as above (we think), but cheap!	£9.95	WAV, WMA, OGG	RealSpeak Daniel	Open file, click to convert		Serif
WordTalk	Adds speech output and talking spellchecker to Word.	Free	WAV MP3	none	Open file in Word, select text, click to convert	no	www.wordtalk.org.uk

Mac

Program	Comment	Cost	Audio Formats	Voices supplied	Operation	Editor?	Supplier
ClaroRead for Mac	Reads text from Safari, Word etc. Has OCR and other tools to support reading.		AIFF	Acapela Lucy, Graham, Peter	Select text, click to convert		iANSYST Claro Software
GhostReader	Text reader with very good quality multilingual voices. Reads text, Word,	\$39.95	AIFF	Acapela Lucy, Graham,	?		http://www.convenienceware.com/t

	HTML, PDF and rtf files in window or have text-under-pointer read out.			Peter			extparrot.php
iSpeak It	Incredibly simple to use – loads Word, PDF, RTF, AppleWorks, text and HTML docs.	\$19.95	AIFF	None. Cepstral voices available for \$29.95 each.	Click on iTunes icon to convert the text into an MP3/AAC track.		http://www.zapptek.com/ispeak-it/
Read and Write Gold for Mac	Text reader for Macs. Reads PDFs, Safari, has OCR and study and writing tools.	£320	AIFF, MP3	?	Select text, click to convert	yes	iANSYST TextHelp
Tell Me A Story	Simple and free Text to audio converter.	free	?	none	Paste or load text file, click to convert		http://customsolutionsofmaryland.50megs.com/

Online conversion tools

Program	Comment	Cost	Audio Formats	Voices supplied	Operation	Editor?	Supplier
Spoken Text	Free Online Text to Audio Converter. http://www.spokentext.net/index.php	free	AIFF, MP3	Dave, Avery, Bob, Pierre (French), Mathias (German)	Upload PDF, TXT, DOC, PPT and then click to convert	yes	Spoken Text
RoboBraille	RoboBraille is an email based translation service capable of translating electronic documents to and from contracted Braille and into synthetic speech. http://www1.robobraille.org/websites/acj/robobraille.nsf?OpenDatabase	free	MP3	Good female British voice	Send email with TXT, DOC or HTML attachment to e.g. britspeech@robobraille.org . Return email has audio file as attachment.		RoboBraille britspeech@robobraille.org