



Thommen's Timely Technology Tips "It Can Talk!?" Let Acrobat Say It

Adobe Acrobat Reader can be configured to read aloud any text that is displayed within the program. This might be valuable to persons with vision problems, ESL students and/or anyone who would prefer to have a document read to them.

A Preliminary Explanation: The Difference between Text and Graphics

When creating Acrobat (.PDF) files, many devices will scan the document and place a picture (graphic image) of the text in the finished file. A second operation, which converts the graphic image to text (Optical Character Recognition, OCR), should be performed before the file is saved. If the second step is omitted, the resulting .PDF file will be excessively large and the text unreadable by the Acrobat software.

Implementing Acrobat's Read Aloud Feature

Acrobat can read any text in an Acrobat (.PDF) document using a synthesized voice. It will not read text that is inserted as a graphic (e.g., a picture).

1. Method #1 - When the Acrobat reader is open, press the **Ctrl + Shift + Y** key combination and the reader program will start. This method will work whether or not Acrobat is opened inside or outside of the browser.
Method #2 – Click on the **View > Read Out Loud > Activate Read Out Loud** menu item. This will only work if Acrobat is opened external to the browser. (See the next paragraph for a method that forces Acrobat to display all its menus.)
2. Click on any paragraph in the document and Acrobat will draw a box around the paragraph and read all of the text in the box.
3. Additionally, the **Read Out Loud** menu includes the options to: **Read This Page Only** or **Read To End of Document**.

How to Make Acrobat's Menus Display When Using a Browser

When viewing a document using Acrobat (i.e., viewing a .PDF file), normally the Acrobat application opens inside the browser and most of Acrobat's functions (menus) are hidden from view.

To eliminate this problem:

1. Open Acrobat outside of the browser by clicking on a link to the program itself, or by opening a .PDF file somewhere on your computer.
2. Go to the **Edit > Preferences... > Internet** page in the program.
3. Uncheck the **Display PDF in browser** box item on the **Internet** settings page.
4. From this point on, the Acrobat reader will open outside of the browser and all menus/buttons will be displayed.

This timely tip can also be found at:

ANGEL: Faculty Community Group > Content > Thommen's Timely Technology Tips
http://www.lcc.edu/cte/resources/thommen_tips/

