Update on how to access digital copies of textbooks January 2021
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Digital copies of books are very useful for students with dyslexia as it enables them to see and hear the text. The educational publishers make digital copies of textbooks available. It may be the PDF file of the book with images and graphics stripped out or the eBook version.

There is a problem with the integration of iPad assistive technology software with some eBook versions of textbooks. This may mean the book cannot be read aloud on the device.   However the educational publishers are working to overcome this incompatibility. This article describes the situation as of January 2021.

Bookshare Ireland is the largest accessible library in the country available for all people with visual impairment or print disabilities. **The service is available to students with dyslexia.**   Launched in November 2019, it is a partnership between the National Council of the Blind and the Department of Education and Skills. It is a free service for those who qualify with over half a million books, which are available in a range of formats including audio, digital Braille, Word, and PDF. For the student with dyslexia, the EasyReaderApp facilitates dyslexia friendly fonts, increased size of font, highlighting text etc. it is also possible to access audio recordings of books**. It is planned that books from the Educational Publishers will be available on Bookshare.**

If the student would benefit from having the book read aloud, an alternative solution is the use of a scanning pen/reading pen. There are two types of reading pen, the C Pen and the Exam Reader. The C Pen Reader reads text aloud or through headphones. It can also scan and store text and has a dictionary feature.   The Exam Reader is a reading pen with only the scan and read facility. The Exam Reader has been accepted by the SEC as a reasonable accommodation in State exams in 2018. Both are available from Ed Tech in Ireland (www.edtech.ie/details.asp?id=16331&ptid=20151). Schools can request a 30 day free trial of the pens from Scanningpens www.scanningpens.co.uk.

The Irish Educational Publishers Association (IEPA) have a Special Needs Access Request Form (SNAR) for students who require access to digital versions of textbooks. This form must be submitted to IEPA members via the following email addresses:

- Edco – support@edcolearning.ie
- Educate.ie – support@educate.ie
- Fallons – support@cjfallon.ie
- Folens – support@folens.ie
- Forum – info@forum-publications.com
- Foras na Gaeilge – angum@forasnagaeilge.ie
- Gill Education – snr@gill.ie
- Mentor – admin@mentorbooks.ie
- Prim-Ed – sara@prim-ed.com
- Veritas – growinlove@veritas.ie

This form lists the book titles and the format requested, for example, eBook or PDF. It needs to be signed by the school principal and parent/guardian. Some publishers also send an educational agreement to be signed.

CJ Fallon
- If contacted by teacher or parent, CJ Fallon will create and assign an eBook account free of charge for textbooks used in the classroom. If they feel it is being abused, they can revoke the access. The books are same as the printed version.
- The full range of books is accessible, so it is possible to buy revision eBooks.
- They are working on integration with the iPad assistive technology. Access presently is as follows:

On iPad, go to Setting >General>Accessibility>Speech> Turn on Speak Selection. Next open a title in your CJFallonReader app, go to a page you want to read, next click the settings icon on the top right of screen and click on 'Text Only', select the text you want read aloud and from the menu provided click speak.

EDCO

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Gill

Gill ask that a "**Gill Education Agreement and SNAR Form**" be filled up and signed. They will then make the PDF versions or eBook versions of their textbooks available.

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Mentor
There is an application form (SNAR) to be completed, which can be returned to Mentor Books.ie (Educate.ie via email). There is no additional charge for this service.

At present the eBooks cannot be read aloud on iPad/Tablet unless the student has installed such software themselves. To access reading aloud, Mentor will provide a pdf and, if the student has software on their laptop, it can be read back.