

Blackboard and ReadSpeaker Partner to Enhance Accessibility of Digital Course Content

ReadSpeaker's leading text-to-speech technology integrated into Blackboard Ally, helping instructors worldwide create more accessible content for learners

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 23, 2018 – [Blackboard](#) and [ReadSpeaker](#) are furthering their partnership to help instructors worldwide improve the accessibility of course content for their students. Currently, ReadSpeaker is Blackboard's exclusive [text-to-speech](#) provider that is fully integrated within Blackboard's learning management systems, supporting Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Now, as part of this extended collaboration, ReadSpeaker's text-to-speech technology will also be integrated within Blackboard Ally as an offline audio alternative for course content. This allows students to automatically access an MP3 version of content added by the instructor into the LMS.

Currently being implemented by hundreds of institutions, Blackboard Ally integrates with an institution's existing LMS and identifies common accessibility issues within course materials. The solution generates a range of more accessible alternatives of the instructor's original content including audio, Semantic HTML, ePub, and electronic Braille. Blackboard Ally also provides feedback to the instructor to help them make their original more accessible, and helps institutions gain detailed insight and understanding into the accessibility of their content through a comprehensive institutional report. Blackboard Ally now supports integration with four major learning environments including Blackboard Learn, Moodle, Moodlerooms and Instructure Canvas.

“ReadSpeaker enjoys a long-lasting partnership with Blackboard with our fully fledged integration into Blackboard Learn, used by Blackboard clients around the globe. The addition of part of our text-to-speech service to Blackboard Ally allows for better comprehension of text content for students,” said Joop Heijenrath, Chief Commercial Officer at ReadSpeaker.

“Blackboard is committed to helping institutions around the world generate more accessible and usable course content that can benefit all students,” said Phill Miller, Vice President of Teaching and Learning at Blackboard. “Our partnership with ReadSpeaker is an important part of this mission. We look forward to continuing to work with their team to bring the leading text-to-speech technology to even more courses around the world.”

To learn more about Blackboard Ally, visit <https://www.blackboard.com/accessibility/blackboard-ally>.

About Blackboard Inc.

Our mission is to partner with the global education community to enable learner and institutional success, leveraging innovative technologies and services. With an unmatched understanding of the world of the learner, the most comprehensive student-success solutions, and the greatest capacity for innovation, Blackboard is education's partner in change.

About ReadSpeaker

A leader in text-to-speech (TTS) technology, ReadSpeaker® provides learners with the ability to listen to many types of educational content. ReadSpeaker's flagship webReader and TextAid solutions help all learners improve reading comprehension in all elements of LMSs and other types of education platforms. The synchronized highlighting features provide bimodal learning for deeper understanding. By providing different ways of accessing the learning content, ReadSpeaker fits the Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

educational framework. ReadSpeaker provides a complete online and offline TTS offering with over 50 languages and 200 voices. To learn more about ReadSpeaker, visit <https://www.readspeaker.com>.

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