**Text-to-speech: ICT as an inclusion tool**

Text-to-speech (TTS) is an assistive technology that reads digital text aloud. It’s sometimes called “read aloud” technology.

Print materials in the classroom, like books and handouts, can create obstacles for kids with reading issues. That’s because some kids struggle with decoding and understanding printed words on the page.

With a click of a button or the touch of a finger, TTS can take words on a computer or other digital device and convert them into audio. TTS is very helpful for kids who struggle with reading. But it can also help kids with writing and editing, and even focusing.

A reading disorder is characterized by trouble with reading despite normal intelligence. Different people are affected to varying degrees. Problems may include difficulties in spelling words, reading quickly, writing words, "sounding out" words in the head, pronouncing words when reading aloud and understanding what one reads. Often these difficulties are first noticed at school.

As a school, we think it’s important to support these students. We want to support them with some exceptions, but also on a technical level.

We’ve tested several TTS options:  
 - Kurzweil  
 - Sprint  
 - iPad  
 - …

Taking several parameters (vision, community, learning curve, environment, team, measurability, financial durability, …) into account, and know all our students will be bringing an iPad as a digital learning device to our school, we’ve ruled the iPad option as the most durable and payable option for our school.

This was before the Belgian government made funds available to make reading software freely available for those who need it. However, since both options will be available, we’ll support them both in our school.

On the last page of this document you can also find a step-by-step guide on how to go from paper to speech.

A video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/H7G9T7UWZNI>

**Text-to-speech: Step-by-step**

1. Scan the document using ScanSnap (manager)  
   The paper needs to be put in the scanner, tekst down and upside-down
2. Make sure the following options are set:  
    - scan to pdf  
    - searchable pdf  
    - all page  
    - language: English needs to be set if your specific character set is not available
3. Choose simplex or duplex scan
4. Wait until the scanning and the conversion are finished
5. Close the program
6. Open Google drive
7. Upload the document to your drive
8. On your iPad, go to settings > General > Accessibility > Speech
9. Enable Speak selection
10. Enable Speak Screen
11. Enable Highlight content
12. If you want, you can select the voice for the languages you want to use
13. Op the Google Drive App
14. Select your document
15. Select open in iBooks
16. Open the document in iBooks
17. Select the text you want to hear
18. When selected, push Speak
19. The iPad recognizes the language and will read the text
20. You can also swipe with 2 fingers from the top of the screen, to activate the screen reader
21. This works with all selectable texts, e.g.: websites, books, documents, emails, …