Windows Narrator

Windows Narrator is a screen reading program that is built into each version of Windows. Since Windows XP, the software has become more useful and with more features. This being said, it is not meant to be a primary screen reader. Uses might include:

* Trying out a sighted friend's computer.
* Looking at a computer in a showroom at a retail store that you are thinking about purchasing.
* Reading screens when your primary screen reader encounters difficulty.
* Providing technical support to someone who might not have a screen reader installed.
* Unboxing a new computer and getting it to the point of installing your favorite screen reader. (hint): this requires that you are fluent in Windows keyboard shortcuts

Although we will not cover in-depth instructions for using Narrator, here are a few items to get you started.

Keystrokes:

Windows+CTRL+ENTER - turn Narrator off or on

Capslock+W - read the entire window in focus

Capslock+Up or Capslock+down arrow - change the level of navigation

Capslock+Left or Capslock+Right arrow - navigate by the items set in previous command

Capslock+R - read from current location.

Note that the key for starting narrator changed in the Windows 10 version 1703 update. If Narrator doesn’t turn on when you issue this command, try Windows+Enter. This also means you should upgrade your version of Windows to take advantage of all features.

More Info about Narrator:

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/22798>

Give it aTry!

Exit JAWS with Capslock+F4 and Enter.

Now, start Narrator; all computers in the lab have Ctrl+Windows+Enter available.

Explore around the desktop and start menu.

Try the Narrator keys we mentioned earlier.

You can turn Narrator off when you’re done with Ctrl+Windows+Enter

Something else to try!

Talk to your instructor about the pros and cons of narrator. If they and you agree, try Narrator for a few class periods to see how it works. Ask your instructor for guidance on switching your primary screen reader off for this testing period. When you’re done, write a brief summary, minimum three paragraphs, about what you’ve encountered. Include the following questions in your summary:

Does narrator work as well as the screen reader you were using before?

Where could you see yourself relying on Narrator?

Where did it work well and where didn’t it?

Any other observations or findings that seemed intriguing.