# Film transcript - Listening to text documents

**As part of the Responsible Support and Sustainable Development project, the Jagiellonian University in Krakow would like to invite you to a film from the series ‘Find out about learning support programmes and applications’.**

[Rhythmic, dynamic melody in the background during the film]

[Joanna Dzięglewska] Good morning, my name is Joanna Dzięglewska and I am an Assistive Technology Specialist at the Jagiellonian University Disability Support Service. Today, I will show you a short film on how to listen to text documents and create audio files out of them.

To get the computer speak using a human voice, you need to install a voice synthesiser. In Windows 10, there are default, free voice synthesisers. I will now show you where they are installed and where to add more voices. Go to ‘Settings’, in settings select ‘Time and Language’, then select ‘Speech’ - the last item from the side menu - and voice packages can be found at the very bottom the page that opens up. Here, the options installed are ‘English (United States)’, ‘English (United Kingdom)’, Chinese, Polish and Russian.

You may have only 1 synthesiser, for example English or Polish. You need a synthesiser for the language in which the text documents will be listened to. Adding synthesisers in other languages is very simple. Select ‘Manage Voices’ just above the voice packages installed and enter the language you are interested in; I will choose French. I have chosen ‘French (France)’ and clicked ‘Add’. The installation of the French language package will take several seconds. When it is over, I can already listen to documents in French. After a few dozen seconds, French is installed and now I can also listen to documents in this language.

After installing the necessary voice packages, you can now listen to your text document in Microsoft 365 Word. This is available to all students and employees of the Jagiellonian University for free. To listen to a document, you need to open it in Word and check whether the document language setting is correct. As you can see here, the language is Polish and no errors are underlined.

Then, in the ‘Reviews’ menu, I can go to the ‘Read aloud’ function in the ‘Speech’ area, also accessible using the keyboard shortcut ‘Alt+Ctrl+Space’, and I can launch ‘Read aloud’. In the top right corner of the screen, an additional menu appears. You can choose the speed and voice in the settings in this menu.

For Polish there are 2 voice synthesisers available - ‘Microsoft Adam’ and ‘Microsoft Paulina’. You can also choose the speed of reading. When the right voice, its parameters and speed have been set, you can launch the synthesiser to read the text by clicking the ‘Play’ button.

[Male voice synthesiser] Lithuania, my country, thou art like health; how much thou shoulds be prized only he can learn who has lost thee.

[Joanna Dzięglewska] Not only on Windows can you listen to text documents. It is also possible on the macOS operating system. You need to use the ‘Spoken content’ function. To access it, go to ‘Settings’, then to ‘Accessibility’ and find ‘Spoken content’ in the side menu.

Here, you may define the synthetic voice that will be used to listen to documents for the entire operating system and all programmes used. At this moment, I have selected the voice ‘Zosia’ for Polish.

In ‘Spoken content’ select ‘Speak selected’ and go to ‘Options’. In options there is the keyboard shortcut ‘Option+Esc’ set by default and words will be highlighted automatically. In the next items I can see that the word colour will be ‘default’, the sentence colour will be ‘default’ and the sentence style will be ‘underline’. However, in the ‘Show container’ item, ‘Automatically’ is selected by default. I'm now going to set it to ‘Always’. The little menu that has appeared makes it possible to adjust the listening to the text document. I will check ‘OK’ and go to the text document. I will select a section of the document and use the keyboard shortcut ‘Option+Escape’.

[Female voice synthesiser] Lithuania, my country, thou art like health; how much thou shoulds be prized only he can learn who has lost thee. To-day the beauty of all its splendour I see and describe, for I yearn for thee.

[Joanna Dzięglewska] Please note that the voices available on macOS are professional, commercial voices which have a very good sound.

MacOS from the system position offers us not only a possibility to listen to text documents but also to convert a text document into an audio file. To do this, you have to go to ‘Settings’, to ‘Keyboard’, select ‘Shortcuts’ in the top menu of ‘Keyboard’, and then select ‘Services’ in the side menu. By default, the item ‘Add as spoken track to music’ is not checked, but it is this item that you have to check and select an appropriate keyboard shortcut to turn a text document into an audio file. My keyboard shortcut will be ‘Control’ and the letter ‘R’.

I will go to the text document, select a passage and press the keyboard shortcut ‘Ctrl+R’. In the newly opened ‘Text to audio file’ window, I will select the system voice. By default it is ‘Alex’, but I will choose ‘Zosia’. In the next item ‘Save as’ I need to enter the name of the file - let it be ‘Pan Tadeusz’ - and then set where it should be saved, by default it is saved in ‘Music’. I will select ‘Next’ and the recording will be ready in a moment.

After a separate sound can be heard, the recording with the set synthesiser is now available and we can listen to it.

[Female voice synthesiser] Lithuania, my country, thou art like health.

[Joanna Dzięglewska] At this point, Windows users may feel aggrieved that they are unable to turn a text file into a sound file. Systemically, this is not possible, but it may be done using the free program Balabolka.

Balabolka offers its users a possibility to track the text they are reading and also to turn it into an audio file. You need to go to the ‘Voices’ menu and select ‘Voice’. Check whether you have set the right voice for the text document. I have a document in Polish and I will use the free Microsoft system voice - ‘Paulina’.

After selecting the voice I will check if the speed of the voice is appropriate. I can do this by running the function of reading for a moment. To do this, I select ‘Speech’ and ‘Read’ or use the keyboard shortcut F5.

[Female voice synthesiser] On window rain shimers, rain shimers down-falling

[Joanna Dzięglewska] The speed in my opinion is sufficient. We will move on to the beginning of the document.

Now I would like to draw your attention to the fact that it may be set how the text that is being read out will be highlighted. We will go to 'View', 'Font and colours', and please note – the settings are as follows: the text that will be read out is black; the text that has been read out is blue; and the text that is being read out is white against a green background. You can change all of these text properties right in this window, ‘Font and Colors’.

Let’s go back to our document. Once I have set the right colours, background and font size, I can recreate the document. In the text document presented there is a fragment of a poem in Polish, a link to an audio file and a fragment of the text in English. This fragment has been covered by tags. The opening tag tells us what language the synthesiser will use, and the closing tag tells our programme that at this point we are switching to the default voice synthesiser.

I will now show you how to add a sound file to a text document. You need to select ‘Text’, ‘Insert audio clip’. Then in the next window, select the soundtrack and click ‘Open’. The soundtrack has appeared in my document. Now I will play you a fragment of the text document together with the soundtrack. In the soundtrack, there will be a recording of rain.

[Female voice synthesiser] On window rain shimers, rain shimers down-falling

[Sound of rain]

[Joanna Dzięglewska] Now as the Polish synthesiser is still set up, let’s move on to the next fragment, where at first we will hear a text in Polish, and then a text in another language using the proper synthesiser defined in the opening tag.

[Female voice synthesiser] Ala has a cat. To be, or not to be, that is the question. Whether ‘tis.

[Joanna Dzięglewska] How to define tags is shown in the menu ‘Text’, ‘Foreign words’

and here the tags for the language are defined. The language number is in the ‘Language’ drop-down menu, in the ‘XML tags’ area.

Once you have properly prepared and formatted a text document, you can now save it as an audio file. To do this, go to the ‘File’ menu, ‘Save to audio file’ and then select the audio file type. By default this will be ‘wave’, but you can choose from many other formats, including ‘MPEG-4’. After a while an audio file will be created.

Balabolka also enables its users to save an audio file not as a single file, but split into several parts. This is possible in the ‘File’ menu - you go to ‘Split and convert to audio files’ and here you can choose how the file will be divided, named and where the ordinal number of the file will be placed. Once you have set everything up according to your plan, select ‘Split and convert to audio file’. I am not going to do it now.

If you found this film interesting and want to learn more about technologies supporting students, please visit the Dorada website at [www.dorada.uj.edu.pl](http://www.dorada.uj.edu.pl) and the website of the Jagiellonian University Disability Support Service at [www.don.uj.edu.pl](http://www.don.uj.edu.pl).

[Louder, rhythmic music]

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