# Salisbury University instructions for acquiring a screen reader

The following instructions are for members of the SU community who wish to utilize a computer screen reader. There are many options both free and paid when considering a screen reader. The following screen readers are recommendations by the SU web office and Information technology based on their free availability, support, and adaptability. **NOTE:** You will need to contact the IT helpdesk to arrange installation of a screen reader.

## **NVDA (For Windows)**

NVDA (NonVisual Desktop Access) is the most widely used free “screen reader” on the market. NVDA offers support for a variety of applications such as web browsers, email clients, internet chat programs and Microsoft office suites.

Learning to use NVDA is a process and sighted users may have trouble adapting at first. The following tips and resources are provided to help user get comfortable using NVDA.

[NVDA user Manuel can be accessed at the following this link](https://www.nvaccess.org/files/nvda/documentation/userGuide.html)

### **TIPS**

1. NVDA is a background program, once started the program will run continuously while you navigate programs on your computer.
2. NVDA is activated using keyboard shortcuts that tell the program to behave in certain ways depending where you are in an application.
3. **Warning:** Using your mouse in tandem with NVDA will cause the screen reader to behave erratically. It expects the user to use mainly keyboard input as blind and vision impaired users do not typically use a mouse.
4. The initial voice Synthesizer (Voice used by program) used by NVDA is pretty robotic and can easily become annoying. You can change it by clicking the NVDA icon in the lower right or your Windows task bar. Which will show the NVDA menu. From here selecting Preferences > Synthesizer will allow you to change the Synthesizer.
5. The following link [provides direct access to the NVDA user manual where a list of keyboard commands are provided](https://www.nvaccess.org/files/nvda/documentation/userGuide.html#AboutNVDAKeyboardCommands)
6. By default the NVDA action keys are the regular and numpad “Insert” buttons.

## **Windows Narrator (built in screen reader)**

Windows Narrator is the native screen reader offered in windows. While NVDA is by far more popular and robust in its uses. Windows Narrator provides a great tool for understanding how someone with a visual impairment uses a computer. It can also be used to get a general idea of how accessible/inaccessible your website is. Windows Narrator is generally easier to use then NVDA and as such can be perfect for someone who wants to experience their computer through a screen reader.

For [instructions on activating and using Windows Narrator in windows 7 and 8.1 follow this link](../../../../Program%20Files%20(x86)/NVDA/documentation/en/userGuide.html#KeyboardLayoutshttps://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14234/windows-hear-text-read-aloud-with-narrator)

For [instructions on activating and using Windows Narrator in windows 10 follow this link](../../../../Program%20Files%20(x86)/NVDA/documentation/en/userGuide.html#KeyboardLayoutshttps://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/17173/windows-10-hear-text-read-aloud)

### **Tips**

1. Windows narrator works best as a desktop/ Microsoft office suite screen reader. While Narrator does its best to convey information found in web browsers. It does a noticeable downgraded job then NVDA when processing web browsers.
2. The default speed for Narrator can be slow which can be confusing to some users as they are unsure is Narrator stopped or is simply giving time before announcing the next item. You can increase or decrease the speed inside of the voice settings options.
3. Unlike NVDA, Windows Narrator is completely dependent on the keyboard. NVDA will allow focus to be moved with the mouse and will follow this focus to the best of its ability. Windows Narrator however will only follow then focus of the tab key.