


Chapter 2

JAWS (Job Access With Speech): A Third Eye for Visually Impaired Students

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ABSTRACT

JAWS screen reader is an integrated application for visually impaired computer users. The application has various features that allow users to read text that is displayed on display of the computer. Current review of JAWS computer application as a screen reader will depict the basic important features and its importance to visually impaired students in their academic advances through use of it.

INTRODUCTION

JAWS, Job Access with Speech, is a popular screen reader, developed for computer users who are visually impaired and their vision loss prevents them from seeing display content and using the mouse for navigation. JAWS provides speech and braille output for the most popular computer applications on your PC. The Chapter will focus on the features, and attributes of software and elaborate on how JAWS software is helpful for visually impaired students for using computers for their academic and personal development.

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TECHNICAL TERMS

Vision Impairment

Visual impairment is a term experts use to describe any kind of vision loss, whether it's someone who cannot see at all or someone who has partial vision loss. Some people are completely blind, but many others have what's called legal blindness. (Nemours KidsHealth, n.d.)

The International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision (2018) classifies vision impairment into two groups, distance and near presenting vision impairment. (WHO, 2018)

1. **Distance vision impairment:**
 - a. Mild – presenting visual acuity worse than 6/12
 - b. Moderate – presenting visual acuity worse than 6/18
 - c. Severe – presenting visual acuity worse than 6/60
 - d. Blindness – presenting visual acuity worse than 3/60
2. **Near vision impairment:**
 - a. Presenting near visual acuity worse than N6 or M.08 with existing correction.

A person's experience of vision impairment varies depending upon many different factors. This includes, for example, the availability of prevention and treatment interventions, access to vision rehabilitation (including assistive products such as glasses or white canes), and whether the person experiences problems with inaccessible buildings, transport, and information. (WHO-Fact Sheet, n.d.)

Screen Reader

A screen reader is a software program that enables a blind or visually impaired user to read the text that is displayed on the computer screen with a speech synthesizer or braille display.

Assistive Tools/ Devices and Technology

Assistive devices and technologies are those whose primary purpose is to maintain or improve an individual's functioning and independence to facilitate participation and enhance overall well-being. (Unicef-WHO, n.d.)

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