DARLENE MCLENNAN: Welcome everybody. For those who don't know me, I'm Darlene McLennan and I'm the Manager of the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training, or ADCET for short. This webinar is being live captioned, and to activate those captions you can click on the CC button in the toolbar, and also you can have your captions in the browser. Our wonderful Jane will put the 1Capp into the chat now so you can access that through your browser as well. And Donna is our fabulous captioner.

Okay. I'm on Lutruwita, which is Tasmanian Aboriginal land, and in the spirit of reconciliation I want to respectfully acknowledge the Lutruwita nations and also recognise the Australian history and culture of the land, and I want to pay my respects to Palawa and Pala Kawi people on the land who I am on today, their elders past and present, and to the many Aboriginal people that have not made elder status.

I also want to acknowledge all the countries participating in this meeting and also acknowledge their elders and ancestors and their legacy to us, and any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in this webinar. I invite you, I think most of you know the deal, if you'd like to add the countries you are on today, please feel free to add that into the chat.

Today the title is What are web apps and how can a text to speech web app support learning and boost confidence? Really excited to welcome Mary Wilcox from Aventido from the UK. You say potato, I say potato, whichever. For this presentation, Mary will discuss how text can be read aloud using a range of text to speech technology, downloadable software, physical pens, phone apps, browser extensions and web apps.

Mary will also take a look at the benefits of using text to speech web app to support learning and boost confidence. I saw that Ahead in the UK were doing a presentation on this a little while ago and it kind of inspired us to reach out to Mary to also get a presentation happening for an Australian audience. It's fabulous.

As I said at the start, this webinar is being captioned by Donna from Bradley Reporting. It will be recorded and the recording will be on ADCET in the coming days. If you're having any technical difficulties, please email us at admin@adcet.edu.au. Mary will present to us for around 40 to 50 minutes and at the end we'll have some questions. I can ask her some questions. I encourage you all to add your questions to the Q&A box not the chat box; the Q&A box and please choose all panellists and attendees so everybody sees your questions and your chat.

Also encourage you to chat in the chat because that's one of the great things about this new medium not new anymore but it's great to see the conversation across the network also happening in the chat, so really encourage you to do some chat.

I feel like we're a bit out of practice. We had a bit of a break from our webinars because we did a Universal Design for Learning event in June, so we've just kind of been doing the wash up from that. We're now going to be back into probably fortnightly or weekly webinars. I think we have another one this Thursday. So at the end of this, please stay tuned and we'll tell you some of the webinars that we've got coming up and we'll probably put links into the chat as well.

Okay. That's it from me. You didn't pay all your money to listen to me. It's over to Mary now. Thanks, Mary. Thank you.

MARY WILCOX: Thank you, Darlene. Good afternoon, everybody. We're going to talk about text to speech today and focusing especially on web app text to speech. It's getting more and more common to have assistive technology available in a browser and there's lots of advantages to that, which I will talk about in a while, but let's take a look at what the options are for text to speech. Of course, text to speech helps anybody who has a difficulty with reading and understanding text. And that's a big percentage of the population. At least at least 10% of people have dyslexia and then there are other reasons why someone might find it difficult to read.

What you can see on the screen are some different options. You can have the text read aloud on a device. We'll first talk about a physical pen reader. This wouldn't be for text on a screen so much, more the page of a book. I've got a pen here, a reader pen. This is the Scanmarker pen. There are other ones available. More and more people are making more and more reader pens. There's the C pen from Scanning Pens, there's Orcam. That's slightly different. You press a button and it actually takes a picture of a whole page or whole area of text. This one, you use the end to press down on to some text, maybe a page of a book I have a book here and it will read it aloud. There's a screen, a very clear screen, it's a touch screen, and I could swipe along for other tools as well, your translate, you can look at words, you can even record audio. In translate you can speak in one language and it can translate into another. Very clever.

I'm just going to tap "read", and I can slide the text I know you can't see this, but I'm just doing this very quick I've just put the pen across the page a line of text and it will read it to me. Hopefully you could hear that. That's a reader pen. It's particularly great for reading physical books, physical pieces of paper. And the good thing about this, I think, it's very discreet. You don't need a computer. So if you are learning around other people and they don't have a computer, it's really discreet. You can connect some earphones and then listen to the text and it looks like you're holding a pen. This is a reader pen. Lots of different options. These can be used in exams as well because it can be just a stand alone pen.

There are other options with Scanmarker that connect to your computer and things, but you can use them just as a stand alone helper to have text read. That's what the reader pen is.

The second on the screen is computer software. That is software that you download on to a computer. So you have to download it so that it's on to a specific device.

Often with computer software, you can have two activations, you can put them on two computers, but you are restricted to using the technology on those computers rather than on any device. So you can I've got one here. So if I bring this along here, this is ClaroRead. This is an example of computer software that you download on to the computer. It used to be that once you've got that software you don't have to pay to upgrade it, it's a perpetual licence, you've got it forever with those tools. They are changing things at the moment to make it actually expire, or some of the tools expire so you can't use it, all the tools, unless you pay an annual fee, but it used to be that you could.

This is a floating toolbar that you use on a computer, Windows computer or a Mac, to have text read aloud. Under the tools that you can see, prediction, spellchecking, there's a screen ruler, page mask. Claro has a lot of tools. You're probably familiar with Read and Write. That has even more tools to help with not just reading, but writing as well, and help with grammar and things. This is a floating toolbar but a type of downloadable software. It does require a bit of memory, and you can't use it very effectively if it's a very old machine that is not particularly high spec or not particularly quick. It's more likely to crash, if that's the case, but you can use this sort of text to speech to have text aloud. You can select the text, so maybe on a Word document or anything on your screen, on your computer, really. You can have a Word document, PowerPoint presentation like this, or PDF. You can also, with some software, hover over text that's on the screen and it will read that aloud too. That's computer software.

I'll close that and we'll move on to the next, which is apps for your phone. There are a few free apps. IOS have some text to speech built in anyway. Android you can switch on the screen reader and have the text that you can see on the screen read aloud. That's really great for people who are visually impaired. There are some options with apps on your phone, but also apps for a tablet as well. You can't download computer software on to a phone so you need some different technology to access on the phone. So it can be an app that you go to the Playstore or you go to the App Store, the Apple store to download. Some of those apps can actually be used on a Chromebook. It didn't used to be the case, but now you can go to Google Play and download some apps and they work really well on a Chromebook because Chromebooks you can't download its computer software so that's not an option, so you need a different option for Chromebooks.

The next type of text to speech is the browser extension. This is often combined with other types of text to speech. Often if you have some computer software like the Claro I was showing you before, you'll have also the Edge extension and the Chrome extension. The reason you would have both is because the browser extension reads website content, whereas the computer software reads documents that are on your computer. That's the difference. You can't use a browser extension on a phone. You can't do that, or on a tablet, so an iPad.

You can't download a browser extension, that's just because of the technology, the way it works. It's not possible to do that. I will show you a way you can have websites read on a phone or tablet a little bit later on.

I have a few extensions on my phone. I'm just going to come out of that. I'll just show you where they are so you fully understand what I mean. Where there's the jigsaw at the top right, if I click on that this is showing me the extensions I've got on my computer. You can get browser extensions for all sorts of reasons. So I've got Dragon, that's speech to text. So I could be on a website and speak and it could type. I've got ProStudy. That's all to do with collecting information for research and projects. And ScreenShader and many of these are free bionic reading, that's very useful, changes the way all the letters work, and research has shown you read more quickly often if you use bionic reading. These are free extensions.

I've got some others for mindmapping and this is information that I use at work. There are different extensions and there are quite a few options that are free to have text read aloud. I will be showing the extension that TextAid has in a while. That's a web extension to have websites read aloud. Let's move back to that page we were looking at there. Just need to start that slide show.

So we've talked about four different types of text to speech so far, the reader pens, really handy for reading physical text, and computer software that you download on to a Windows computer or a Mac computer, you've got iOS and Android apps for your phone and tablet, and a browser extension.

There's also integrated text to speech. So on the ADCET website there's I'll just bring it up. Let's just go on here. There is some text to speech available for everybody who visits the ADCET website. I'm just opening it on my own screen. Won't be a moment. So if I go over here, make that full screen, right, here's ADCET. They've got a listen button here. This is actually made by ReadSpeaker which is the same company who makes TextAid which I'm going to talk about in a moment. This means that anyone visiting the ADCET website can have the text read aloud. You just select it and then a little icon appears and you can click play and it will read the text aloud. There are a few options as well to change the highlighting and reading speed and things like that. That's embedded into ADCET's website, so making it accessible for everybody visiting.

There's also integrated text to speech, so especially at universities and at schools you can have some text to speech available. Once you're logged into your learning management system, so if you're using Blackboard or Canvas or Moodle, something like that, you can get technology that's embedded so anyone logged in can access some text to speech and additional tools in that way as well.

Then the final type of text to speech available is what we're focusing on today and that is a web app.

What is a web app? I've just got to check there are no questions. Oh, there are questions. Right. So I can provide after the webinar I'll provide you with details where you can buy reader pens, or this reader pen, the Scanmarker, and some extra details about that. And how do you get the extensions? To get a web extension you go to the Google Play store, you just search and then you can you just search for text to speech and then it will give you some options of what's available. Some are free, some you need a licence for. So that's how you get them.

Yes, Antony, at the end, afterwards, I will send some links to everything I've shown and where you can get all of that. Yes, that will be useful for you, won't it. Okay. Right. Moving on and then I will check the questions again as we go along.

What is a web app? A web app, it's technology and all assistive technology and tools, they're available by logging into an account that you have, and you log into it in a web browser. It doesn't matter which web browser you like to use, whether it's Edge or Firefox or Chrome. You go to the website and log in, and often you're logged in automatically. Once you've logged in, the computer will remember your details and tell you, you can access it very easily in that way. Let's move on.

What are the benefits of having some technology in the browser as a web app? Why is that sometimes better for the user rather than using all the different technologies I've just been showing you? Well, it can be used in exactly the same way on any device. So you can use a web app on a Windows computer just the same as if it was a Mac computer or a Chromebook, or even on your phone or on an iPad. It's because you're using the internet and an account you've got on the internet, it's all the same. All the buttons are the same, in the same place, and you're using it in just the same way.

Whereas with the software, like I was mentioning earlier, often the software will come with a Chrome extension and also it will come with some apps that you use on your phone. But they don't talk to each other. So you can't take a photograph of a log of text from a book and then immediately use that text on your computer. It will be there on your phone using the phone app. It's easy to transfer and use different devices all at once with a web app.

It automatically updates as well because you're online, so any updates you don't have to remember to update with them. Multiple device use, I was just mentioning that. You take a photo on your phone with a web app and immediately you can use that text on your computer if you want to or you can use it still on your phone. There are benefits to using it. You don't have to download it on to a specific machine. It's really, really useful if you're at school, you could use it at school in the classroom and then later on you can use all that technology in your account at home. You don't have to install anything in your home, you just log in to your account, or you might want to use it on your phone or at a friend's computer. The same with university. You could just choose a computer at university and log in. You don't have to find one that's got the software downloaded. For that reason also it's very easy to share the technology with everybody. You don't have to spend time downloading it. They're the advantages of using a web app to help have things read aloud to you.

Right. Let's take a look, shall we, at TextAid and the tools that are available. I'll be talking about different ways it can help and then also demonstrating what that looks like so you fully understand how it works.

First of all, the main thing that TextAid does, or text to speech does, it, of course, reads text aloud to you. Often with all this different technology it also highlights the text as it's being read. The reason all this technology does the highlighting as well as just reading it out is research has shown that this way of having things read aloud, called bimodal reading, helps with processing and understanding what's being read. They've done lots of studies and found that comprehension is improved if text is highlighted as it's read.

TextAid uses ReadSpeaker's voices. ReadSpeaker make computer voices and they actually take I was asking them it takes two weeks to make a voice. They employ a human a voice actor who has to say thousands and thousands of words, not just once, but with different emotions attached to it so that it sounds very natural, and then they use AI to make every word possible, nice natural sounding voices. So we'll have a listen to the reading and then we'll also take a look at something called text mode, making documents easy to read.

I'll just come out of this and take a look at a live demonstration of TextAid. I'll just move that one to the other page and go to TextAid.

This is what my account looks like. I've got my name at the top right so I know that this is my account, and I've opened it in a Chrome browser. But as I was mentioning earlier, it doesn't matter what browser you use. I just went to the ReadSpeaker website or actually I went to my shortcut. I created a shortcut on my toolbar here. I've also got a shortcut at the bottom of my screen and on the desktop so it's easy access. That's one thing with web apps, it's really important to have a shortcut to get to the technology, but with software it automatically puts a shortcut on to your desktop. That's not the case with a web app so it's a good idea to have a short cut so it's easy to get on.

There are four documents actually open in my TextAid account. You can have multiple documents open. That's what the tabs are along the top. The buttons that you use are down the left-hand side, and the last four buttons, that's the settings. So it's very easy to use. The tools aren't really hidden in menus so much. What you see, you can probably work out what that does as well. Let's take a listen to it reading, doing the main thing it does.

This is just some text I've pasted in. I will show you how you get documents read aloud in a moment. I will select the text with my mouse and a box pops up to give me options to listen, so I can just click listen and...

(In botany a tree is a perennial plant with an elongated stem or trunk usually supporting branches and leaves. In some usages the definition of a tree may be narrower, including...)

MARY: So it read there with the highlighting just the bit that I selected. You can change what is going to be read. What I mean by that is I've selected with my mouse. You can change that so wherever I click it will read from there if I want to. Or you can choose for it to read from that paragraph that you click on, so that area. You've got some options of how you want to make it read. If I click "listen now", it would read from the top of the document all the way to the bottom and I can pause it if I need to.

Now, the settings for highlighting and the reading speed and the voice, so we were using the Jack voice there. You can change the voice by just clicking on the drop down. I have lots and lots of voices. You don't usually in a TextAid account have so many voices. People don't need that much. There's too much choice there. Usually you might have between five and 10 voices. You can restrict that as well if it was used in school, so children will just spend a lot of the lesson messing around with the voices changing. We don't want too many options there. You can change the voice if you want to, if you don't like that. It's so important to use a voice that you enjoy listening to else you're not going to use it. You need to like listening to that voice. Often it's like your voice. Sometimes you like something very different to your voice, so the choices are here and then we've got some speeds, and they're highlighted and things down the bottom. So if I click on reading you will see what we can do.

You can choose the default voice and then the voice for what you're reading at the moment. They can be different if you want. You can speed the voice up. Some people, especially with ADHD, I find, they like to have things read very, very quickly. I can't do that. It's too I feel very stressed and on edge if it's reading very quickly but it works very well for some people. It gets through a lot of text in a small amount of time.

If you're reading or listening to some text in a language that's not your native language, you might need to slow it down or add a little pause between the words just to hear the words more clearly. So you can choose that in the reading settings.

The highlighting settings, you click on highlighting to choose those. You've got a range of colours for the words and the sentences. It shows what it will look like at the bottom. If colour contrast doesn't work very well for you, you don't like the differences, you can switch the highlighting off if you don't want it, or underlined sentences and words if that works better for you. You can choose. You don't have to do this every time. It will remember what your preferences are, so that's the highlighting settings.

Let's talk about now reading other things, because I just pasted this text in. That's not what you want to do every single time you want some text read. You don't want to have to highlight it and paste it in, do you.

If it was a document, a PDF document, or a Word document, PowerPoint presentation, something like that, you need to upload it into your account, and the good thing about that is it's there in your account for use in the future as well and on other computers. I'm going to click on the library on the left-hand side. Okay. This is my library. I've got things organised into folders. If you were using this in a school and you had a site licence, teachers and staff can share documents with students. It's very useful for homework, or for exams, or just normal class work. It can be shared very easily. That's what the tabs are along the top with "shared with me", "shared with others". You can also access your Google Drive and One Drive there as well.

And a Bookshare, I'm not sure if you've heard of Bookshare before. That is, you could have an account as long as you can prove that you have a disability that affects reading, so vision impairment or dyslexia, you can have free access to millions of books in an electronic version. What I mean by that is you can find a book and it is in either an ePub or PDF format so you can select the text with your mouse and have it read aloud. It's really, really useful. There are millions of books in Bookshare, and it's an American company, Bookshare, but you can access it in other countries, and this is just a shortcut to Bookshare. You can search for a book and then it will show you. So if I just click on one that I've looked for before, it shows you what's available. This is just a training version, they give you just one book, Call of The Wild, and that's it, but if it was a real account, it would list all the different choices you have for the title you've searched for, and it will show you whether it's PDF or an ePub reader version. Then you can open it into TextAid and have it read aloud and extract bits of that text as well. Very useful, is Bookshare.

If I wanted to upload a document into my library, I just click on upload document, and then I could drop the document into the box, or select it from the internet, or I could just click select document. Let's do that to show you so you can really see how to do that. I'm just going to go into downloads and we've got a homework sheet here, so if I click upload, I'll change the voice. Let's go we'll go for Olivia, New Zealand voice for this one. Upload. You can change it once it's uploaded, but that's what it will be set as whenever you open it. There's Olivia. It's a nice voice. I can see it's there. It's a Word document. If I click on it, it's going to open. Here is the worksheet. I can have it read aloud. Let's listen to Olivia reading.

(1. Write a definition and give an example of each of the following terms: /1 (a) digestion...)

MARY: There we are, it's reading to me with the highlighting. This is a document that I uploaded.

So let's move on to talking about text mode. We've had some things read aloud. Very, very useful. The highlighting, especially, really does help you follow the text. I'm going to look at this document, which is an academic paper. Often academic papers are not very friendly for dyslexic people with a white background, columns, text is squashed together quite a lot. It is really very hard to follow that text. It makes you very tired as well looking at it like that.

Craig has asked does it read from a variety of documents? Yes, it does, Craig. It will read anything. If it was a Word document, PDF, PowerPoint presentations, any documents like that, you would upload it from your library. A little bit different if it was a JPEG. If it was an image, that's different. I'll show you that in a moment. We'll take a look at what you do if it's a physical piece of paper or an image with some text in, because you can have it read.

This academic paper, you can select and have the text read to you, but wouldn't it be great if you could change the way the text looked so it's easier while you're having it read to you. That's what the button at the top is, text mode. If I click on text mode, all these words are the same as in layout mode, but they've just changed the way it looks. And for me, this is much easier to follow like that. You can choose the way any document looks. You don't have to have this pink background or blue writing.

If I click on text at the bottom, this is where you can choose what your documents look like. So maybe you are a dark mode type of person and you like a black background maybe with yellow writing. You can change it. It shows you in the background and in the box what it will look like. You can change the size of the font, the text and the font style. So you can choose what works for you. The spacing can be altered too. So find what looks good and then all documents can look like that. I'm not personally a dark mode person. That's a bad contrast, isn't it? Let's change it. Blue so I'll go for blue writing with pale yellow background and fairly big spacing. There, you can really customise the way documents look, so much easier to read. Let's select a little bit now to have read. We have the American voice, Sophie now. Let's listen to this.

(Types of technology reveal a rich area of future)

MARY: There it's reading, but in that text mode. I do like that feature. It does make clearer you're more likely, I think, to have a go at having it read aloud and processing that information. It's not so overwhelming for me when it's in text mode compared to layout mode. I don't know, do you think that's a good feature too?

So we've been looking at reading.

Let's take a look at what Craig was asking. He was saying, well, how about with images? Can you have those read? You can. You have to go to a different button, though, for an image. So this image to text on the left-hand side. With Word documents, PDF documents, that sort of thing, as you upload it, it OCRs. So it finds all the text and makes that accessible. It does have to use slightly different technology if it was an image. That's the reason why you have do it slightly differently with an image.

If I have my phone, that's because of course, as I've mentioned, and hopefully you're aware now, TextAid will be available on my phone, so I'm going to just share my phone screen with you. This is just for the image to text bit of TextAid, actually having things read which is an image. Before I maximise this screen so you can see it better, you'll see I'm in TextAid on my phone, TextAid on my computer. These tools are the same. The only reason you can't see the name labels is I've pressed the button here to hide something. If I tap on it, look, they're the same. So everything is the same, it's just on a smaller screen, but that means I've got it with me all the time. There's a helping hand with reading wherever I am, because most people have their phones with them, don't they?

I'm going to click on "image to text" now, and you will see these options are the same. Let's enlarge it so you can see it better. So I click "choose file". I could be doing this on my computer if the image file is on my computer. Maybe it's a scanned worksheet or something like that. You can just click on it and select it on your computer, but I'm on my phone and it gives me the option of camera. So if I go on camera, I have now got a page of some text. Of course it depends on how good you are at taking photographs. It's better if you scan it. If you have a scanner it will be a bit more accurate. It's taken a photograph. This is not going to work very well. It's too early in the morning for me. I've taken a bad photo. Let's just try one more time. We'll just do a little bit of text. So you take a picture yeah, this is better. I've got it angled better. Like I say, it's better if you scan this text. Okay. Oh, it's turned around. Right. One more time. I'll just do this bit. You will see what I mean. I'm not a good photographer this morning this afternoon.

I've chosen the file, I've taken a photograph. I've got a reader voice which I can choose and change. Let's go for Mia. Then root folder means, do you want it loose in your library or into a particular folder? You can choose that. You can also choose whether you want to edit the text you take a photograph of. I'm not going to this time but you can. Now it's OCRing, it's making that text accessible so I can select the text and have it read aloud. It just takes a moment. Okay. This is like a watched kettle. I was saying to Darlene earlier, when you want something to go quickly it seems an age, doesn't it?

DARLENE: Yes, or it could be, you know, watching the paint dry.

MARY: Yes, watching paint dry.

DARLENE: No, it's a challenge probably early in the morning, taking photos and focusing.

MARY: Yeah. It is taking a moment. We'll move on and we'll come back to that, because it will appear in my library even on my computer in a moment because it's a web app that will be so I'll just minimise that for now because then you'll see. It doesn't usually take so long. Right.

Just going to bring back the presentation we were looking at, just to go through. We talked about the voices being natural sounding, we've got text mode, documents are automatically OCR, they're made accessible. Let's talk about translation, shall we? You may have noticed when I selected some text there was an option of translation. So there are two ways that you can have text translated in TextAid. You can select some text and then click translate. So if I click there, maybe we'll want let's change it to Japanese. So it instantly translates to Japanese and you can click play and it will read in Japanese to you with highlighting.

(Demonstration in Japanese)

MARY: So they're reading in Japanese. That's so wonderful if English is not your first language. It's no longer a barrier to your learning. Of course, you do need to learn the language you're learning in, but sometimes you just need it quickly translated so you understand it more quickly and better. And also it can be used for maybe just one word. Perhaps you're not sure what that is but you will know it if it's translated. You can translate a whole a sentence, a paragraph, just a word if you need that, or if we go back to the text that we were looking at that I pasted in, you can click translate and it will translate the whole page into another language. Let's change it to French. So translate to French. As quick as that, instantly translates and then I can have that read aloud in French. So it's changed the voice too.

(Demonstration in French)

MARY: If I want to change it back, I click revert translation at the top and it changes it back to the original language. That's translation. Really, really useful if English isn't your first language, it's your second language. Very convenient for the Olympics, it is.

Oh, you like the Japanese voice, Lee Anne? That's great. In fact, one of the founders of ReadSpeaker is Japanese, although that doesn't mean there's not a founder from each language, but maybe that's why it sounds particularly great. I don't know.

You can also, talking of languages, you don't have to have all the buttons in English if you prefer it in a different language. There's a selection of different languages, you can have all the buttons in, so Italian or Dutch. The head office for ReadSpeaker is in Netherlands, Uranian, there's all sorts of languages to change all the buttons into that. So it's great for some people. Translation, really great that is.

Let's take a look at other things. Right. Web pages, or reading on a tablet or phone. I talked about this right at the beginning, the option of using a browser extension. So let's take a look at the browser extension in TextAid and how that can be used to have things read. Good. Right. We're going to go to a website now. I've got this website all about well, it was all about kangaroos at the top, kangaroos at the beach. This is a website. It's just a website that maybe you feel overwhelmed, I can't be reading this, it's going to take me ages. I just want to know what it says. I need someone to read it out to me. Use the extension.

Now, with this one, someone asked how do you get these and I said you go to the Google Play store or the Apple store to download it. Yes, you do, and you can download this from there, but with TextAid you do this once I'm just going to jump back to the TextAid tab you click on web reading and it's very easy to set it up. It tells you. So you tell it are you on your computer or your phone and choose which browser you like to use and then it will add this little button top right that you can use on websites. If you can't see it, click on the jigsaw and then you can pin it. So you click to make it go blue. So if I wanted lightkey available, if I click on it, it shows a little icon at the top. That's just a little handy hint about extensions.

Let's go back to the website now. I've already downloaded this is a Chrome extension. I don't even have to open it. If I select the text and right click, I can have the section read

(Oceania is a region made up of thousands of islands throughout the central and south Pacific)

MARY: There it is, reading with highlighting, very useful. There are a few other tools are some settings to change the highlighting, and the speed of the reading and the voice.

The next button is some assistance if you are someone who likes to use Google Docs or Word online, you can use this. As you're writing it can read back your text, instant proofreading, which is really great, and the button underneath, the play button, is used if the text is a hyperlink or a picture on a screen, you can draw a box around it and it will read that to you. That is the extension for reading websites.

TextAid also has some help with reading websites on your phone or tablet and this has got some additional tools in as well that I really like. If I go share my screen of my phone again, I will see oh, it's still wanting we need to refresh it because it's still on that different screen. I think it must have crashed. I'm doing too many things. Yes, connection lost. We'll try again. I'll just close it. Won't take a moment. I'm going to show you reading a website on your phone. I mentioned earlier you can't normally do this because you can't use extensions, Chrome extensions, Edge extensions on a phone. There is a way around it. Oh, it's not connecting. It's all going so well but it's not wanting to connect.

I will show you on the computer otherwise, but you just imagine that this is on your phone. I shared it earlier no, it doesn't want to. I will show you on here, but imagine this is your tablet, maybe an iPhone, or this is your phone. If I was on this website, I would click on the address bar and start typing TextAid. Once it's set up it's very easy and you just look for where it says the web reader, Java script, and it will open up a toolbar. It looks a little bit different, but it still reads the text to you. Here is the toolbar. It looks a little bit like the button that's on the ADCET website. That's because it's using that same technology.

I can have the text read, but when you're on a phone it's a small screen, it's really hard to select with your finger. There are some buttons. You can click and listen and enlarge text. Click and listen means if I click on one section it will read that entire paragraph, and obviously enlarges the text

(In terms of total land area, most of Oceania, including Australia, is under the Pacific, a vast body of water that is larger than all earth's...)

MARY: There we are, it's reading that and enlarging it. So handy on a small screen. There's also a page mask on here, as well as some other tools to help with reading websites. You can even put some of this text into your TextAid account if you want to.

Now, I realise I'm really running out of time so I will move on now just to show you a few extra features before we run out of time. Right. There is some help with writing. You can type on a new document. I just clicked new text, did some typing. There's a spellchecker. It will show you which words aren't correct. You just click on them and then you can listen to the words to find the one you need and then you can correct them.

As you type it will immediately read out your sentences. This is word prediction, helping you find the words that you need. If I just do that, it will read the sentence out to me. Then I can check I often, between my head and my fingers, sometimes type the wrong word, but you can find that out if you immediately can listen back. You can look up the meaning of a word. So if you're not sure what it is, you can look up it in the dictionary and listen to the definition as well. So there's some help with reading.

And then there's a reading page mask and a reading ruler to help you follow one line at a time. This can all be customised to make it the colour and how opaque it is and the size of it as well. So you've got reading ruler to help you follow as well.

Then there are two tools to help they don't read, but they do other things. Let's look at that academic paper again. There is, first of all, annotations. In fact, I'm going to go to a form here because this is what it's very useful for. Annotations allows you to type directly on to any document, whether it's an image, web document, PowerPoint presentation, PDF, anything like that. It's particularly good for filling in forms, which is really, really worrying for people who are dyslexic. They're worried, "This piece of paper, I've got to try and read it, then I've got to try and handwrite it", handwriting is very poor often, "then spell everything right."

Use the image to text, take a photograph of it, and then use this annotations button. You can type on here, you can change the size of everything, you can move it around, put it wherever you want, you can listen to it read back. And it saves automatically, no need to remember to save. So it's great for form filling, for filling in worksheets, you know, if it's a school student. Also making notes on academic papers. That's why I opened the academic paper.

You can be listening to this and actively listening by adding some notes and some shapes and all sorts of things to help you understand and really process that information.

Also there's a highlighter tool. I'm just going to change the page. At the top left is where you navigate pages of your document. So you can move one page at a time or you can click on the button to see the pages and quickly jump to the one that you want to look at. So if I click on the page, it brings it up. I've already highlighted a few things using the highlighter tool. This is very good for summarising. Maybe you need to extract the important bits for revision. You can do. So you just click on the colours and highlight, like I have been doing, and then I'm going to download. I'm sorry, I'm rushing through this. I didn't realise how much time I'd used.

Now, it's just taken everything I highlighted and put it into one document. If this was for revision, I might want to just take away a bit of information, like the pages it was taken from, the title, and then use this download as MP3, download it as an audio file. Then you can be doing something else, going for a walk, cooking, doing something else, as you're listening and learning the content. So download an audio file is very useful, especially if you do that on your phone and then the file is on your phone, you can listen while you're doing something else. So that's that. Sorry about the quick ending bit. I just really didn't realise the time.

DARLENE: Thanks, Mary. It's Darlene speaking. I was going to come in a bit earlier, but then I realised most of the questions you've kind of answered as we're going. I also wanted to say aragoto and merci, seeing as we've done the French and the Japanese. I too enjoyed the Japanese voice.

I think most people were looking for links and how to get the resources. We will have all that as links on the website too. So we'll be sending out an email to everybody with a survey, if people could please complete that, and we'll also have the relevant links to access everything for it. Unless anybody else has any major questions. There was one around where to buy the pens, how to get the extensions, which you showed, and the links to the software and resources.

We can put all of those into the information we provide to the people. So we've got some great engagement, so it's been lovely to hear from people. As we said, we've got a lot of webinars coming up. The next one is on Thursday at 3 pm Tasmanian time. That's very exciting. It's going to be around generative AI and how it can support our diverse learners. It will be an engaging and informative webinar similar to this one. Thank you, Mary, for getting up early and for joining us in Australia.

MARY: No problem.

DARLENE: It's absolutely great to hear more about what is happening in this space. So thank you and have a great rest of your day, and thank you, everybody, for joining us.

MARY: Great. Thank you, everybody.

DARLENE: Okay. Bye bye.