ReadSpeaker

pioneering voice technology

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ReadSpeaker® Offline Chrome Extension

ReadSpeaker Offline Chrome Extension is a tool that speech enables the text content of any page shown in the Chrome browser, also when the device used is offline or on a local area network that is not connected to the Internet.

ReadSpeaker Offline Chrome Extension, further referred to as Offline Chrome Extension or simply the tool, works on Chrome for desktop and Chrome OS. At the time of writing, Chrome for mobile devices is not supported and therefore the tool cannot be installed on mobile devices, such as Android or iOS/iPadOS.

When the device running Offline Chrome Extension is connected to the Internet, the extension will also function on web pages of websites, Google Docs, Microsoft Word Online pages, and PDF documents in the user's Chrome browser, so that the user can listen to the text. It also provides writing assistance tools for Google Docs and Microsoft Word Online pages.

Unlike ReadSpeaker's online browser extensions, such as ReadSpeaker TextAid for Chrome, Offline Chrome Extension comes pre-installed with a limited number of voices. There are different versions available on the Chrome Web Store, each with a different set of voices available in the tool.

The typical use case of Offline Chrome Extension is when you need text-to-speech functionality on a computer that is not connected to the Internet, for instance in an exam situation.

Product Description

Offline Chrome Extension shows a ReadSpeaker icon on the Chrome toolbar.

Clicking this icon when on a web page that is supported by this tool, displays a toolbox, including a player and several feature buttons. The tool works on all pages open in the Chrome browser and, when using an online device, on (most) web pages of websites, PDF documents, Google Docs pages, Microsoft Word Online pages, and emails in Gmail and Outlook online.

On all supported pages, when the user first selects text and then clicks on the Listen button, the selected text is read out loud while it is highlighted in one color and the word currently being read is highlighted in another color.

On Google Docs and Microsoft Word Online pages, depending on the settings, when the user clicks the Listen button without first selecting text, the reading will start at the beginning of the document or at the current cursor position. Again, the text that will be read is highlighted in one color and the word currently being read is highlighted in another color.

Using the buttons on the player, the user can stop the audio version of the content, pause and restart it, and close the player (which stops the reading).

Users who have difficulty spelling correctly can benefit from the writing assistance feature, which will sound or spell out letters they type in a Google Doc, Word Online document, or email in Gmail or Outlook online and read out each word when completed.

The buttons in the toolbox enable the following features:

- Move - Drag the toolbox to another position on the screen.
- Settings - Allows the user to
    - choose the user interface language
    - choose a reading mode (only for Google Docs and Word Online): start reading at cursor position or read the whole document,
    - turn highlighting off or on,
    - choose whether to highlight only words, only the text that will be read, or both,
    - and choose the colors used for highlighting words, for the text that will be read, and for the text being highlighted,
    - enter an activation code which determines the validity of the license.
- Writing Assistance (only for Google Docs, Word Online, and emails in Gmail and Outlook online) - Allows the user to
    - turn writing assistance on or off
    - choose between letters being sounded out or spelled out.
- Voice Settings - Allows users to adjust the reading speed.
- Reading Language - Shows a list of available languages to choose from for reading the content.

The audio is generated using ReadSpeaker text-to-speech technology.

Offline Chrome Extension uses built-in text-to-speech synthesis which requires a valid license in order to generate audio. Users will obtain an activation code from ReadSpeaker Support. The tool itself is downloaded from the Chrome Web Store.

Features

ReadSpeaker Icon in Chrome Toolbar

Offline Chrome Extension can be activated on supported pages by clicking the ReadSpeaker icon in the Chrome toolbar. This will activate the tool and show the toolbox on the page open on the active tab of the browser. The tool can be deactivated by clicking the Close button in the toolbox on any page.

When the tool is active, the toolbox will automatically be shown when any supported page is opened. When it is not active, the toolbox will not be shown when a supported page is opened, and the user will have to click the ReadSpeaker icon in the Chrome toolbar to activate the tool again.

Text to Speech

Offline Chrome Extension can read text out loud using state-of-the-art text to speech (TTS). In order to keep the tool portable, there may be cases where the available voices need to be slightly limited in audio quality to save disk space.

Synchronized Highlighting

Words are simultaneously highlighted as they are read while the whole text that will be read is highlighted in a different color.

The user can choose to have only words highlighted, only the text to be read, or both, or turn highlighting off.

Colors for Highlighting

A default combination of colors is provided for highlighting words (light blue) and the text (light green), and the highlighted text itself (black).
The user can personalize these colors. Eight colors are available as background

color for highlighting the text and/or words. Underlining can be chosen as an alternative. 6 colors are available for the highlighted text itself.

Reading Speed

The default reading speed (or speaking rate) is "normal". The user can personalize the reading speed from very slow to very fast on a sliding scale.

Reading Selected Text

If text is selected on the browser page, the selected text will be read out loud when the Listen button is clicked.

Reading the Whole Document

This feature is only available in Google Docs and on Word Online pages. If the text reading mode is set to "Read the whole document", the whole text on the page will be read out loud provided it is no larger than 12,000 characters. If the document is longer than this, only the first section of the document will be read.

Reading Text from Cursor Position

This feature is only available in Google Docs and on Word Online pages. If the text reading mode is set to "Start reading at cursor position", clicking the Listen button will result in a section of the text with a maximum of 12,000 characters being read out from the cursor position onwards.

Reading Multiple Languages

The user can select a reading language from a list of languages in a drop-down list to determine in which language the text must be read. Which languages are available depends on which version of Offline Chrome Extension was downloaded from the Chrome Web Store.

Note: if the user selects text and asks for it to be read in a language that does not match the text, the reading will not sound correct.

User Friendly User Interface

The user interface (UI) is available in several languages, including English (American), French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

Technical Specifications

Supported Devices

Offline Chrome Extension should work with:

- all commonly used online PCs (including laptops and Chromebooks).
- all major operating systems:

    - Windows, macOS,
    - Chrome OS,
    - and more provided adding extensions for the Chrome browser is supported.

Offline Chrome Extension is browser-specific for Chrome.

Simple to add extension to browser

Users do not need to download and install separate software for Offline Chrome Extension to work on their PCs. It is simply a matter of following the steps for adding an extension to Chrome, for which the device on which the tool is installed must be connected to the Internet. This saves the tool on the device and adds a ReadSpeaker icon to the Chrome toolbar, which allows users to activate the tool on supported pages. The text-to-speech is generated by the locally installed text-to-speech engine included in the tool.

Note that Offline Chrome Extension can be added to the Chrome browser by anyone, but the text-to-speech feature of the tool will only work for licensed users for which they need to enter an activation code.

Reads static and dynamic text content

Offline Chrome Extension can read any clear text content as long as it is presented using standard HTML technology regardless of how it is generated on the customer's web server.

Reading limit

Offline Chrome Extension has a default reading limit of 12,000 characters including spaces for each time the Listen button is clicked.

User settings

The settings the user selects through the features in the toolbox are saved by the browser, so that the tool will have the same settings for that user when the service is used again on the same device.

Requirements and Limitations

Users Must Be Logged in to the Browser

Offline Chrome Extension will only work for users while logged in to Google Chrome with an email address belonging to a domain for which the offline extension has been licensed by ReadSpeaker.

Activation

After downloading Offline Chrome Extension from the Chrome Web Store, an activation code must be entered into the dialog window that is displayed when the tool is launched the first time. Activation codes are provided by ReadSpeaker and will expire after a certain period, after which a new activation code must be requested to activate the tool.

The device that the tool is installed on needs an active Internet connection during activation. The same is true when reactivating a license after it has expired.

Time to first audio

Since audio is generated on the device where the offline extension is installed, it will start almost instantaneously after clicking the Listen button.

Supported web pages

Offline Chrome Extension will function correctly only on web pages where the content is presented using standard HTML technology. Reading PDF documents in the browser is supported with the exception of PDFs open in Google Drive or PDFs opened from the local hard drive.

The tool doesn't appear on web pages that have been explicitly listed within the tool as not supported, including Word Online document preview pages, Google Drive pages, Google Sheets, and Google Slides as well as special browser tabs, e.g. empty tab, pages starting with "chrome://" such as chrome://settings, chrome://extensions.

JavaScript support

If the user's browser does not support JavaScript, the offline browser extension will not work.

Offline browser extension and mobile devices

ReadSpeaker Offline Chrome Extension does not support mobile devices (smartphones and tablets) as these do not support installing extensions.

Intended Use

Customers may only use the ReadSpeaker Offline Chrome Extension, which is a licensed service for text to speech, in accordance with this product specification.

It may be used only by licensed users to listen to the content of supported pages, and only when the service is activated with the Listen button of the toolbox generated and displayed by the offline browser extension.

Any other use of the offline browser extension is not considered intended use.

Disclaimer

Features listed in this document are guaranteed only if the offline browser extension has been implemented according to the instructions provided by ReadSpeaker. Specifications and features as described in this product specification can be changed by the manufacturer without prior notice.