

ReadSpeaker® webReader for Blackboard

This is an addendum to the product specification for ReadSpeaker® webReader™ (“webReader”) which includes all information relevant to the implementation thereof in a Blackboard Learn 9.1 environment.

ReadSpeaker webReader for Blackboard (“webReader for Bb”) speech-enables the HTML content in the customer’s Blackboard Learn 9.1 environment to enable logged-in users to listen to the text. Any user can hear their HTML course content spoken aloud or download it as an MP3 using only their internet browser. Users can also highlight and play back a subset of the content. webReader for Bb has many extra features, including synchronized highlighting of the text while it is read and reading and translation tools.

All paragraphs in the product specification for ReadSpeaker webReader apply to ReadSpeaker webReader for Bb, unless a paragraph with the same title is included in this addendum, in which case the paragraph in this addendum applies. In the product specification for ReadSpeaker webReader “website” can be read as “LMS”, “customer” as “customer or LMS administrator”, and “web page” as “content page within the LMS”. Generally, “user” will be a student in the LMS.

Product Description

The LMS administrator can activate webReader for Bb for all courses by default (usually the case) or on a per course basis.

webReader for Bb functions as described in the section “Product Description” of the product specification for ReadSpeaker webReader. In Blackboard, the Listen button will not show when the user goes to a page unless it is activated by clicking on the play button shown at the bottom left of the screen.



When the user clicks the play button, the Listen button will appear. When the user closes the player by clicking the Close player button the Listen button and player will disappear and the play button will be shown at the bottom left of the screen again. The appearance of the Listen button and the player is slightly different, as they will always be floating and therefore always show the drag-icon, so the user can drag them to a different location on the screen:



The customer can purchase licenses for one or multiple languages (and for one or multiple voices per language). ReadSpeaker sets the default language and voice for all courses and the default voice per language. The LMS administrator can overwrite the language for individual courses on a per course basis in the LMS.

Adding the webReader for Bb functionality is simple: ReadSpeaker distributes a Blackboard Building Block using the same packaging as all other Building Blocks. The Blackboard System Administrator just needs to upload the .war file provided by ReadSpeaker, make it available and configure a few settings. For customers who have Blackboard Learn as a hosted SAAS it is even simpler. The Blackboard Building Block has been pre-installed in Blackboard Learn and the Blackboard System Administrator needs only to configure a few settings.

Features

Most webReader features work in webReader for Bb exactly as described in the product specification for ReadSpeaker webReader. However, in webReader for Bb, features cannot be enabled/disabled by the LMS administrator. They can be enabled/disabled by the ReadSpeaker support team for the specific LMS account upon request.

webReader in background unless activated by user

Unlike in webReader on websites, in webReader for Bb, the Listen button will only show on pages in the Blackboard LMS if the user activates webReader for Bb by clicking on the play button shown at the bottom left of the screen. webReader for Bb will be in the background like that (play button only) each time a page is opened. When the user activates webReader for Bb the Listen button will appear where it was last positioned. The user can also deactivate webReader for Bb by

clicking the Close player button on the player. This will hide the Listen button and player and show the play button again.

Floating Listen button, player and toolbar

Each time a new page in the LMS is opened, the play button will appear at the bottom left of the screen. If the user clicks it, the floating Listen button (with the drag icon and with the expandable player and toolbar) will show where the user last positioned it. If the user never moved it on that page, it will show in the top left corner of the page or another default position determined by the customer. A different default position would be logical for right-to-left languages such as Hebrew for instance. The user can always move it to where it is most convenient in relation to the content shown on the page using the drag-icon shown above the Listen button or player.

The Listen button will remain visible in the same position on the screen when the user scrolls on the page.

Customer-defined reading area

This is not a feature of webReader for Bb.

Multiple languages - different languages for different pages

This paragraph in the product specification for ReadSpeaker webReader does not apply to ReadSpeaker webReader for Bb. The following paragraph replaces it.

Multiple languages - different languages for different courses

Available if the customer has purchased a license for more than one language. ReadSpeaker sets the default language and voice for all courses and the default

voice per language. If multiple voices have been licensed for any language this will be for the “Reading multiple languages - manual language switch” feature (see the product specification for webReader) in order for the user to be able to choose a reading voice in his own dialect (e.g. English US versus English Australian) or to be able to choose between a female and a male voice. Different courses can be read in different languages by setting the language for the course in the LMS. Within one course, only one language can be used.

webReader for Bb uses the language determined by the Blackboard language setting.

Reading multiple languages - automatic language switch

This feature is not available in webReader for Bb, i.e. webReader for Bb cannot switch from one language to another automatically within one course page.

Technical Specifications

Simple implementation

Adding the webReader functionality to the Blackboard environment is simple: ReadSpeaker distributes a Blackboard Building Block using the same packaging as all other Building Blocks. The Blackboard System Administrator just needs to upload the .war file provided by ReadSpeaker, make it available and configure a few settings. Or, in the case of BlackBoard Learn as a hosted SAAS, only the last of these three steps: configure a few settings. The settings allow determining whether webReader for Bb will appear in all courses or only in selected courses. If webReader for Bb has not been activated for all courses by default, instructors have to request the LMS administrator to activate webReader for Bb for each course they own that they wish to speech enable.

Graphical design

This technical specification does not apply for webReader for Bb.

Configuration settings

ReadSpeaker can modify a number of settings for the customer that turn off or change some of the features. Some examples of these modifiable settings can be found in the product specification for ReadSpeaker webReader. In addition the default position for the play button which activates the Listen button can be set.

JavaScript support

webReader for Bb will only work if the browser used supports JavaScript and has JavaScript enabled for the ReadSpeaker scripts.

Product Components

SAAS application

The core of webReader for Bb is the ReadSpeaker webReader SAAS (Software As A Service) application, hosted by ReadSpeaker. After successful implementation and configuration of the Blackboard Building Block by the System Administrator, this SAAS is accessible to all users in the courses for which webReader for Bb has been activated.

Javascript and HTML code

The product consists of a Blackboard Building Block which is delivered as a .war file, and a URL to be entered in the settings for that Building Block, which refers to the SAAS hosted by ReadSpeaker and contains the customer ID. The Building Block will automatically insert the HTML code and JavaScripts necessary to make webReader for Bb work.

Implementation instructions

Clear implementation instructions and other documentation such as FAQ are included and available to the customer through the ReadSpeaker customer portal.

Customer portal

The Customer receives a username and password to login to the ReadSpeaker user portal. Here, the customer can access account information, statistical information about the use of webReader for Bb, implementation instructions, information on FAQs and how to contact support in case of questions or problems.

Options

Multiple voices per language

This is not an option for webReader for Bb in the same way that it is for webReader for websites. If the customer purchases multiple voices for a language, only one of these voices can be used as default reading voice for Blackboard pages in that language. ReadSpeaker sets the default voice per language. Other voices for that language can only be used for the Reading Language feature, i.e. the user can manually select that voice.

Custom Listen button, player and toolbar

This is not an option for webReader for Bb.

docReader add-on

Customers who purchase webReader for Bb can also integrate ReadSpeaker docReader into their Blackboard LMS, so that online documents in the LMS can

also be speech-enabled. Please refer to the product specification for ReadSpeaker docReader for further details.

Disclaimer

In addition to the content of the disclaimer in the product specification for ReadSpeaker webReader, ReadSpeaker cannot guarantee that webReader for Bb will continue to work as specified in this document if Blackboard implements changes to the Blackboard LMS.