

Accessibility.

Ease of Access Centre

The new Ease of Access Centre in Windows provides a convenient, centralized place to locate accessibility settings and programs to make your computer easier to use. The Ease of Access Centre includes quick access to common tools, a questionnaire to get recommendations for accessibility settings and tools, and the ability to explore all accessibility settings in seven categories. The Ease of Access Centre can be found in the Control Panel in Windows or by selecting Windows logo key+U. The Ease of Access icon is also available when you are logging into Windows. The Ease of Access Centre replaces the Accessibility Wizard and Utilities Manager in previous versions of Windows.

Gain quick access to common tools

Start Narrator, Magnifier, On-Screen Keyboard, and High Contrast quickly from Quick access to common tools in the Ease of Access Centre. When you start these tools from the Quick Access section, the tools will turn off after you log off or shut down. If you want these tools to start automatically every time you log on, turn them on under the Explore all settings categories.

Get recommendations for settings

The Ease of Access Centre includes a new, optional questionnaire (that replaces the Accessibility Wizard found in previous versions of Windows). Based on your answers, a custom list of recommended accessibility settings is provided so you can choose which options you want to try. You can take this questionnaire and adjust your settings as often as you like. This new questionnaire takes the guesswork out of selecting settings.

The questionnaire includes questions about performing routine tasks, such as whether you have trouble seeing faces or text on TV, hearing normal conversations, or using a pen or pencil. Based on your answers, Windows provides a personalized recommendation of the accessibility settings and programs that are likely to improve your ability to see, hear, and use your computer.

The questionnaire asks questions that relate to:

Eyesight

Dexterity

Hearing

Speech

Reasoning tasks

You can find the questionnaire in the Ease of Access Centre (in the Control Panel) by selecting "Get recommendations for settings."

Explore all settings by category

Instead of looking for accessibility settings in various places on your computer, Windows brings all those settings together and organizes them into categories that you can explore in the Ease of Access Centre.

You can explore seven different categories of accessibility settings and programs: Only 5 in XP. Narrator, magnifier and onscreen keyboard accessed through Utility manager Win logo+U.

Use the computer without a display.

Make the computer easier to see.

Use the computer without a mouse or keyboard.

Make the mouse easier to use.

Make the keyboard easier to use.

Use text or visual alternatives for sounds.

Make it easier to focus on tasks.

Make things on the screen larger with Magnifier

Magnifier is a magnification program in Windows that enables you to enlarge a portion of your computer screen in a separate window to make it easier to see. The magnification quality has improved from previous versions. Now you can choose magnification levels up to 16 times the original size, and you can choose to track the mouse, the keyboard, or text editing.

In Magnifier, you can choose to:

Invert the colours for better screen legibility.

Move the Magnifier window anywhere on your screen.

Choose a docking position which places the magnifier window at the left, top, right, or bottom of your screen.

Adjust the tracking focus so that it follows the movement of the mouse cursor, keyboard focus, or text editing.

In windows XP can be accessed by clicking the windows Icon on the keyboard +U.

Hear text read aloud with Narrator

Narrator is the text-to-speech program in Windows that reads what is displayed on your screen, including the contents of the active window, menu options, or the text you have typed. Narrator reads menus without leaving the active window and includes a pleasant, natural-sounding voice.

Narrator has a number of options that allow you to customize the way screen elements are read. You can:

Read Narrator menus without leaving the active window.

Move around the desktop with the number keys using virtual focus, which allows you to move through the objects on the desktop and read aloud any content they contain.

Move around the desktop with the arrow keys using virtual menus.

Use bookmarks to find commonly used programs.

You can choose the type of text Narrator reads aloud, such as keystrokes, system messages, and scroll notifications, and you can choose voice settings. Plus, Narrator is compatible with any SAPI-compliant voice for users who can use a different voice.

In windows XP can be accessed by clicking the windows Icon on the keyboard +U. To have narrator repeat the text press CTRL + SHIFT + SPACEBAR

Type with On-Screen Keyboard

On-Screen Keyboard in Windows displays a visual keyboard with all of the standard keys on the screen.

Instead of relying on the physical keyboard to type, you can select keys using the mouse or another pointing device, a small group of keys, or just one key. Several keyboard layouts are available in On-Screen Keyboard, and views are available to promote faster typing or to give access to the maximum number of keys. You can choose the typing mode that works best for you—clicking mode, hovering mode, or scanning mode. To make the On-Screen Keyboard keys easier to see, you can change the font, font style, and font size from the Settings menu.

In windows XP can be accessed by clicking the windows Icon on the keyboard +U.

Interact with your PC by voice using Speech Recognition

Speech Recognition in Windows empowers you to interact with your computer by voice, significantly reducing the use of a mouse and keyboard, while maintaining or increasing your overall productivity.

Speech Recognition is particularly useful for people who have difficulty with dexterity or have limited use of their hands and arms, because it reduces or eliminates their need for a mouse and a keyboard while enabling them to maintain or increase their productivity.

With Speech Recognition, you can dictate documents and e-mail, fill out forms on the web, and command applications and the operating system by saying what you see. Right from the beginning, you are guided through an easy setup process and an interactive training application that will familiarize you with the voice commands. Whether it is starting an application, selecting a word, or correcting a sentence, you are always in control and guided toward a list of smart choices.

Speech Recognition is fully integrated into Windows and is built on top of the latest Microsoft speech technologies. It features state-of-the-art voice recognition accuracy that is designed to improve as people use it, adapting to their speaking style and vocabulary.

You can find Speech Recognition in the Control Panel of Windows. Also available on XP if installed along with the operating program.