Making documents accessible and study tools

Office 365 comes with a vast arrange of Accessibility features including a built in accessibility checker. You will see this under the "Review" tab, please note in Outlook you will only see this when writing or replying to messages.

For screen reader software staff\students should use the desktop version rather than the web version.

Dictate:

allows you to dictate your documents rather than type. Useful for students who have a physical difficulty using a keyboard or conditions such as dyslexia.

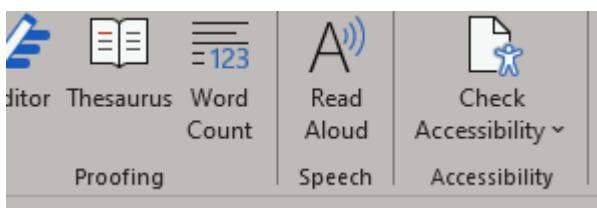It can be found on the main toolbar under the "home" tab
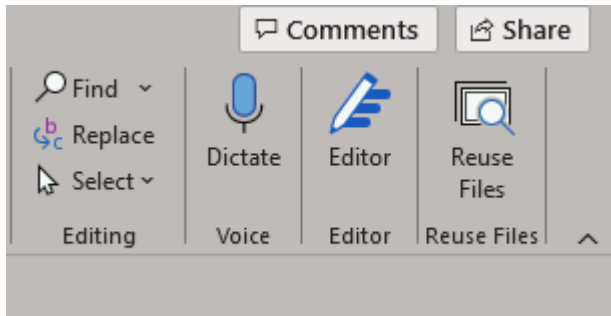
Dragon Dictate is also available on campus computers, though with limited licences and only for specific disability needs, unfortunately there isn't a Mac version.

Read Aloud:

will read back contents of the document as audio can be recommended to students.

It can be found on the main toolbar under the "review" tab

ClaroRead is also available to all students which is a dedicated text to speech application.

Text to speech can assist students in a myriad of ways from typing and reading disabilities such as dyslexia to eye strain.

It can be used to both read documents received and to listen back to documents created to identify any grammar or spelling issues.

It also gives the option to save files as .mp3 enabling students to listen to work whilst mobile.

Alt-text:

This feature will automatically add alt text to images which provides a description of the image for screen readers.

This is particularly important for visually impaired readers using JAWS software as it will not read images within files. If the content is not accessible for example as a .pdf then an alternative format must be provided whereby Alt-Txt can be added.

It is worth while checking what default text has been added and edit if appropriate.

To check right click on the image and select "edit alt text"

In the example below "logo" has been automatically added. To edit just click in the description box and type your preferred description, so in this example you may want to expand the description a bit and say "hearing system logo".
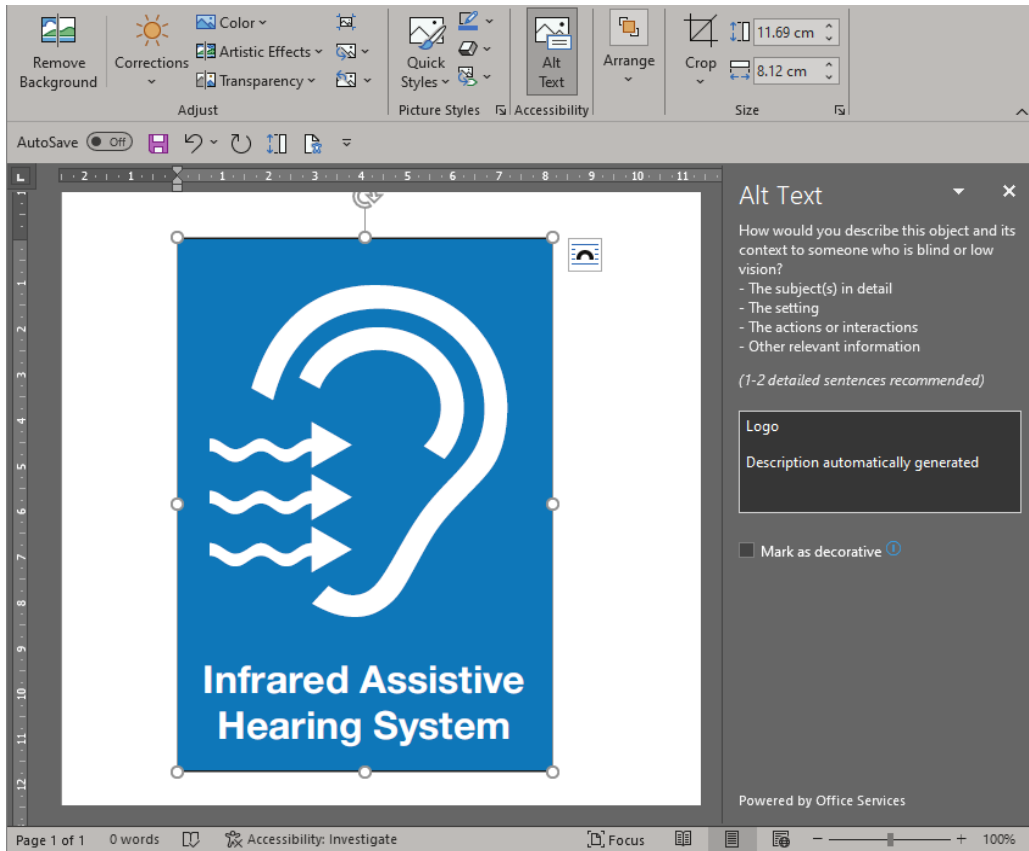
Transcribe: (This feature is only available on the web version of Office at present (o4/2022).

This feature will provide a written transcript of audio files uploaded

Can be found as a drop down under the Dictate button
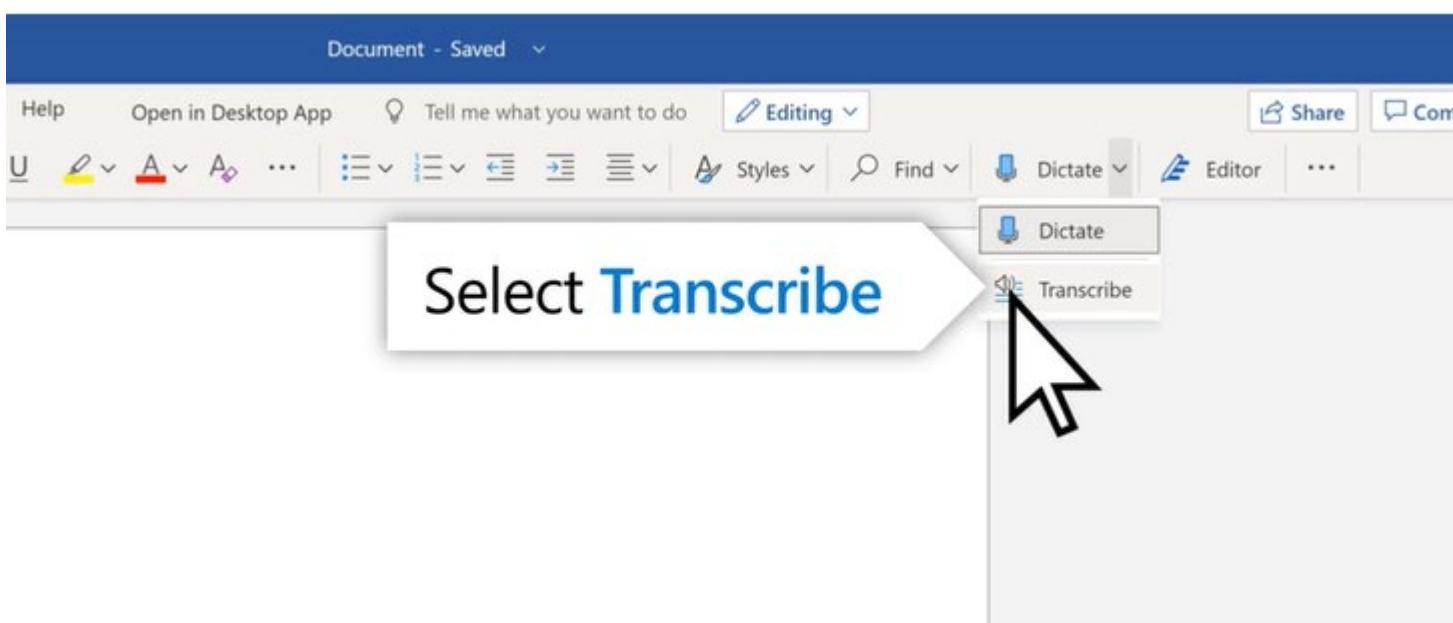
As with all audio to text the transcript should be checked for accuracy.

Document format:

Ensure **all documents can be edited**. This allows students to change font type, size, colour and line spacing.

Keep in mind that different fonts work better than others at preventing certain kinds of errors so the best font will depend on the preference of the individual who will be using it.

As the British Dyslexia Association explains: "Some dyslexic people have expressed strong feelings about typefaces, but there is no agreement apart from saying it should be sans serif; Arial and Comic Sans are examples.

Hyper Links:

These can be extremely long in some cases and screen reader software such as JAWS and ClaroRead
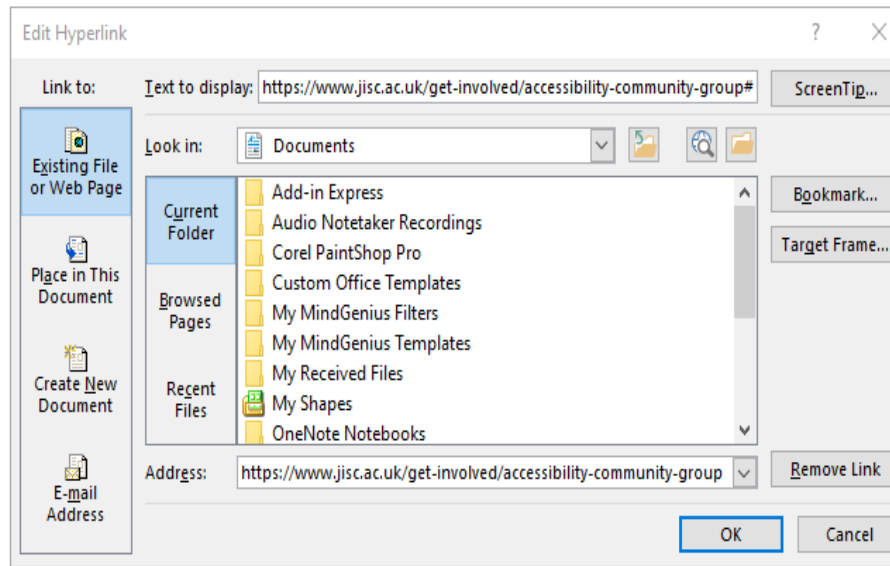
will read out every letter and symbol in the link which is unhelpful, distracting and time consuming, this can be prevented by simply editing the link and renaming it to a shortened more relevant context
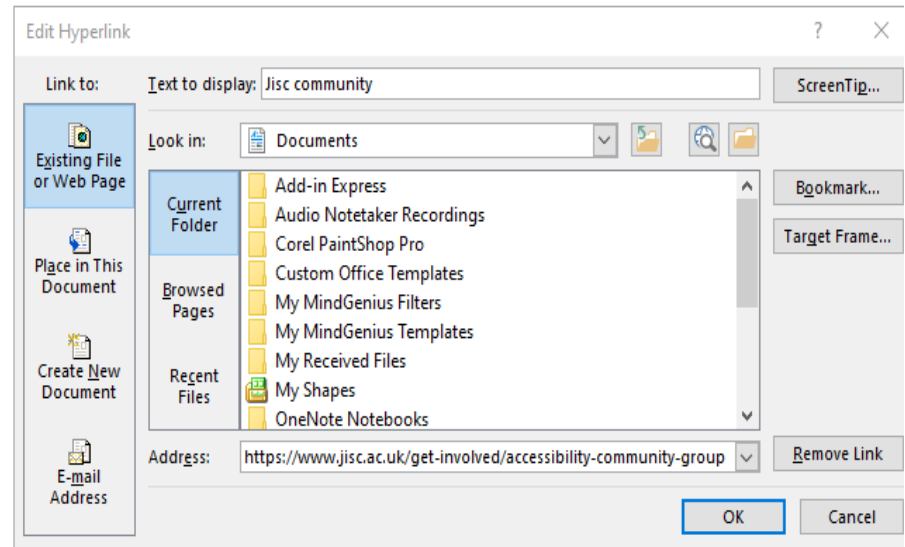
right click the hyperlink

from the drop down menu select "edit hyperlink"

in "Text to display" type a short description of the link which will then be shown on the document.

https://www.jisc.ac.uk/get-involved/accessibility-community-group#

https://www.jisc.ac.uk/get-involved/accessibility-community-group#

Accessibility/Study tools:

There are a range of software applications that are available for students to use on campus computers that can be installed via the "install university apps" under the "Accessibility" category.

Information on these applications can be found at https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/it/accessibility/

(Full URL provided so it can be shared with other users).

These applications contain a lot of useful features and would be worth highlighting to students, please mention my email: atsupport@liverpool.ac.uk and anyone who requires further advice, a demonstration or training can contact me direct.

Additional information:

We use an external company that can take electronic documents and have them transcribed into braille print-outs.

Canvas has an extremely good accessibility checker built in which can notify and recommend changes to ensure content meets accessibility standards.

For any further queries regarding software applications or hardware please contact me direct.

Steven Summers

Assistive Technology Specialist.

summers@liverpool.ac.uk