# ReadSpeaker ◀))
*pioneering voice technology*

**University of Applied Sciences**
## Windesheim

# CONTRIBUTING TO AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY WITH TEXT TO SPEECH

''ADDING TTS TO THE LMS IS A NO-BRAINER. IF I WERE TO ADVISE OTHER UNIVERSITIES - I'D SAY ADD IT CAMPUS-WIDE AND GIVE ALL YOUR STUDENTS THE OPTION TO USE THE READSPEAKER LISTEN BUTTON. IT'S A POWERFUL TOOL FOR EVERYONE''

**GEERT VAN DER WIJK, PRODUCT OWNER-EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS, WINDESHEIM**

## About Windesheim University

Windesheim University in Zwolle is one of the top-3 universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands, known for its personal approach, small classes, and quality education. Windesheim's goal is that no student fails unnecessarily; as such, they work to create a personalized learning pathway for each individual student.

**hogeschool**
**Windesheim**
*Dichter bij jou*

Windesheim University focuses heavily on inclusivity, equality, and a mission to create an educational environment where each individual has equal opportunities to make an active contribution. Recognizing that each student is a unique person with strengths and limitations, adding text to speech (TTS) to their learning environment just made sense. With TTS, students who struggle with reading can listen to the text instead, removing learning barriers and making education more accessible.

## Finding a Solution That Works

Having recently moved to the BrightSpace learning platform, finding a TTS solution that could be easily integrated was important. ReadSpeaker's standard integration into BrightSpace made their choice easy, eliminating the need to dedicate time and resources to implement a solution. **Windesheim University found that other TTS tools require the user to download the audio files, often causing difficulties for students when trying to locate the downloaded file.** With ReadSpeaker TTS, no download is required - users simply click a button to have the content read out directly, making it easy for all students to use.

"STUDENTS WHO ARE TIRED, BUSY, OR PREFER TO LEARN BY LISTENING INSTEAD OF READING, NOW HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO USE THE TOOL WHEN IT SUITS THEIR NEEDS."

– **GEERT VAN DER WIJK**

## Results

The Windesheim University administration responsible for those students with learning disabilities, especially those with dyslexia or other reading difficulties, were happy with the extra support ReadSpeaker tools could bring to these students.

In addition, adding TTS to Windesheim's e-assessment platform ANS, which was previously found not accessible enough for students with disabilities when taking a test, made it easier to use. So Windesheim University is now able to better support these students.

Although used mainly for students with reading difficulties, Windesheim states that they do not see ReadSpeaker TTS as a tool only for disabled or struggling students, but as a tool that helps everyone.

**GEERT VAN DER WIJK**
PRODUCT OWNER ,
EDU SYSTEMS

**HENK JAN KAMPHUIS**
ICTO

# Interview with Windesheim University

## Challenge

Further build upon Windesheim's mission to make education inclusive and enable a personal learning pathway for each student.

## Results

Students, especially those with dyslexia and other reading difficulties, now have extra support to assist them in their education, while allowing other students who prefer listening over reading to study their preferred way.

Windesheim's e-assessment platform ANS, which was previously found not accessible enough for students with disabilities taking a test, became easier for them to use after ReadSpeaker TTS was integrated.

**Q. What were the challenges you faced that made you consider getting a text-to-speech tool?**

**Geert:** One of our main goals at Windesheim is to offer inclusive education. We are currently at the last phase of implementing BrightSpace, and adding both BrightSpace and ReadSpeaker TTS has allowed us to improve our digital accessibility. The process of getting internal approval to acquire ReadSpeaker tools, as well as testing and integrating, was easy. We're very happy with the tool; it's been a great deal for us.

**Q. Once you started the process of finding a TTS tool, what made you decide to go with ReadSpeaker?**
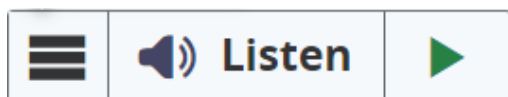
**Geert:** Having the opportunity to use a standard integration that's available directly in BrightSpace made our choice for ReadSpeaker a lot easier. We didn't have to worry about a complicated or time-consuming integration; it works immediately.

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The process of getting internal approval to acquire ReadSpeaker tools, testing, and integrating, was easy. We're very happy with the tool; it's been a great deal for us.

**Q: How did adding ReadSpeaker text to speech to your organization help? What were the results?**

**Geert:** We have several deans at our school who assist students with learning disabilities, especially dyslexia and other reading disabilities, during their studies. We received positive feedback from them about the extra support ReadSpeaker tools can bring to these students. The tool is especially helpful to get students through large pieces of text. Our primary user group is students with dyslexia, but the tool is also used by other students who prefer to study by listening instead of reading.



We also found that our digital testing system was previously quite challenging for students with disabilities to use when taking tests. With the addition of ReadSpeaker to our e-assessment platform ANS, we can now serve these students better across platforms, making it easier for them to complete tests and exams. We are looking forward to implementing ReadSpeaker docReader soon to also support students who need assistance with the reading of documents during tests. While it may not be a large target group, it is a group that requires this extra support and will significantly benefit from it.

**Q: Is there anything you would recommend other organizations when it comes to TTS?**

**Henk Jan:** I think TTS helps everyone. Not just people with

disabilities. I don't have any reading problems myself, but I do like using some of the tools.
 After a long day reading gets more demanding, and it can be nice to have a tool that reads the text aloud for you. So it's not only for students who have trouble reading; it's also for all students who prefer to listen to text instead of reading. And it can be used by anyone using a digital service which has TTS or visiting a website with a Listen button.

**Geert:** Adding TTS to the LMS is a no-brainer. If I were to advise other universities - I'd say add it campus-wide and give all your students the option to use the ReadSpeaker Listen button. It's a powerful tool for everyone.

**Q: Is there anything else you would like to add?**

**Geert:** Because we use BrightSpace to provide our education, we depend on suppliers with a standard platform integration. Otherwise, we would need to do a lot of work to integrate a tool.

We have additional accessibility tools alongside ReadSpeaker. However, they make you download the audio file to listen. This often makes it difficult for our students, especially those who use tablets, as it is common for the file to download into an unknown folder that the student cannot find. With ReadSpeaker TTS, there's no hassle. You click a button to listen to the content without needing to download anything. It is a simple tool and is also used by the Dutch government, making it an already known tool for many Dutch people.