

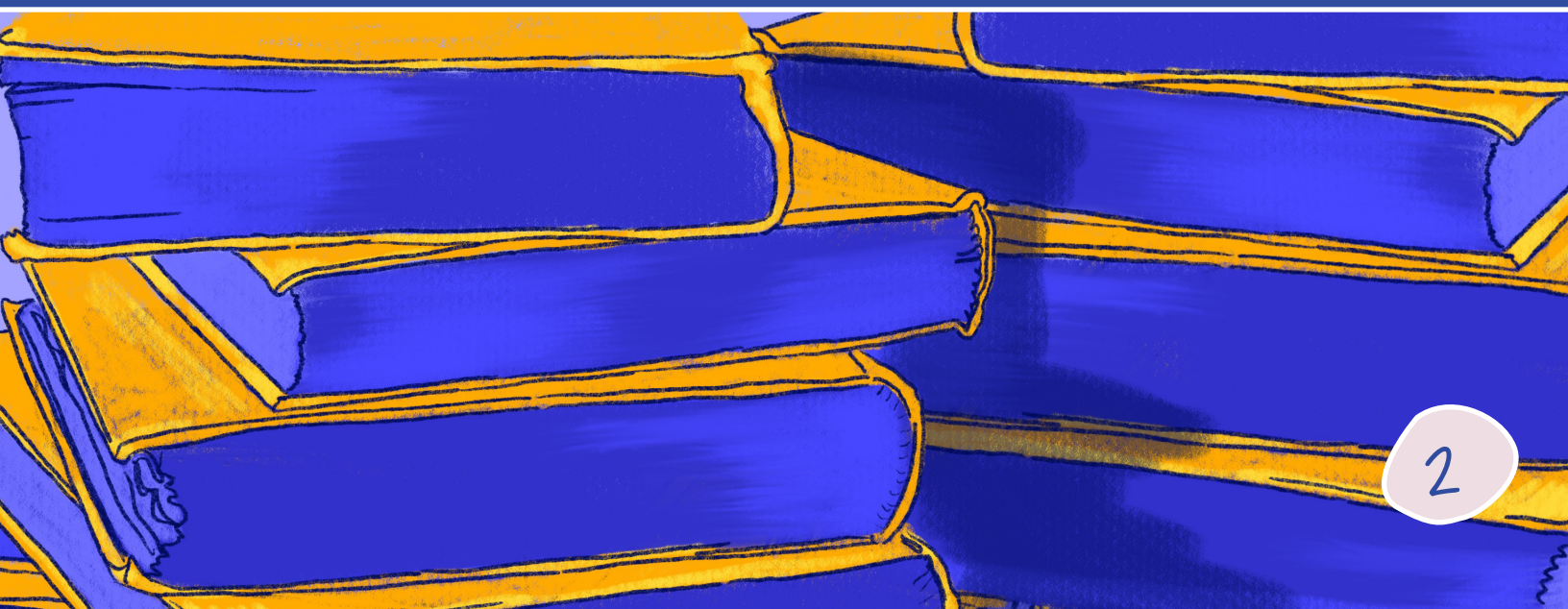


**MAKING
ACCESSIBLE
BOOKS**

Glossary of
Accessible
BOOK TERMS

The terms in this glossary relate to language about accessibility and accessible books and have been compiled from the many existing resources, guides, and glossaries found at the end of this document.

It is important to remember that terminology and word usage changes as do attitudes and approaches, and this glossary should always be considered a developing work in progress.





A11y

Most often seen on Twitter as #a11y, the abbreviation stands for accessibility, with the “11” in the middle representing the 11 missing letters of the word.

Ableism

As with sexism, racism, and ageism, ableism defines people possessing a particular characteristic as “less than.” Discrimination and social prejudice against disabled people are rooted in the belief that typical abilities are superior, and that people with disabilities need to be “fixed.”

Accessible Canada Act (Bill C-81)

A bill passed by the Government of Canada, which aims to create a barrier-free Canada by 2040 through the identification, removal and prevention of barriers including employment, the built environment, information and communication technologies, design, delivery and procurement of programs and services, and transportation.

Accessible Content

Can be read by all users and incorporates accessible formatting standards into its design.



Accessible Publishing

Works designed to be accessible and compatible with assistive technologies.

Accessibility Metadata

Metadata that is used specifically to describe the accessibility of content. This specifically refers to the schema.org-developed set of HTML-expressed microdata used to describe the accessible qualities of content.

Ally

Anyone from a dominant or majority group that is working towards ending oppression by listening to, learning from and supporting and advocating for those in marginalized and oppressed groups.

Alt Text (Alternative text)

A description of the content of an image usually accessed through text-to-speech applications or other assistive technologies.

American Sign Language (ASL)

A visual language where people communicate through a series of hand signs, gestures, facial expressions, and body movements, primarily used by people who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing. American Sign Language (ASL) and langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) are commonly used in Canada.



AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act)

A law in Ontario that creates an enforcement framework and sets standards requiring accessibility for citizens with disabilities, coming into full effect in 2025.

Accessible Rich Internet Applications (ARIA):

A set of attributes you can add to HTML elements that define ways to make web content and applications accessible to users with disabilities who use assistive technologies.

Assistive Technology

An encompassing term for software and technological devices that have been developed with features that enable disabled people to access digital content including alternative input devices (head or foot mouse, puff-and-sip switches, speech recognition), screen magnifiers, screen-reading software, and speech recognition software.

Audiobook

A voice recording of the text of a book.



Audism

A form of ableism, audism is the judgement or oppression of people who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing. Audism has two aspects: the assumption or belief that d/Deaf and hard of hearing people should become as much like hearing people as possible, and the disempowerment of d/Deaf and hard of hearing people by hearing people who assume, without consultation, control over key aspects of their life, language, and education.

Augmentative/Alternative Communication

A variety of devices, systems, strategies, and tools that people use to communicate without speech. These can include drawing, gesturing, signing, picture books, and technological solutions such as speech-generating devices and interactive touch screens.

Born Accessible

Content that is accessible upon publication and requires no further modification. The goal of most accessibility initiatives is to be able to create workflows that produce 'born accessible' e-books and digital products.



Braille

A system using six to eight raised dots in various patterns to represent letters and numbers that can be read by the fingertips. Dynamic or refreshable braille involves the use of a mechanical display where dots (pins) can be raised and lowered dynamically to allow any braille characters to be displayed.

CSS (Cascading Style Sheets)

Define how HTML elements are displayed, for example, is text bolded, is an image centred on a page, etc. Since styles are often not preserved during the conversion process, you can use CSS styles to style your EPUB, preserving or enhancing the way it looks on the printed page.

Colour Contrast Ratios

The measure of difference between how bright and dark colours appear on screens.

Context Break

Breaks in the continuity of the narrative representing a shift in thought, time, location, or similar in a work of fiction or non-fiction. These changes are typically represented by a large blank space between paragraphs.



Crip

An activist/artist reclamation of the previously oppressive and derogatory term “cripple.” The word “crip” is meant to expose how disability and difference can disrupt the everyday in creative and productive ways.

Crip Time

The recognition that disabled, mad, d/Deaf, and neurodiverse people can orient to time differently in relation to disabled bodies, lives, and experiences.

Cultural Equity

The belief that all cultures have equal value. Teaching about the value of disability perspectives and cultures is important to creating a born-accessible mindset.

DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System)

The DAISY Consortium represents libraries for people with print disabilities and has developed a specialist standard format for use in the creation of accessible versions for people with print disabilities.

Deaf/deaf

The ‘uppercase D’ Deaf is used to describe people who identify as culturally Deaf and are actively engaged with the Deaf community. The ‘lowercase d’ deaf refers to the physical condition of having hearing loss.



Deafblind

A combination of sight and hearing loss that varies from person to person.

Digital Publishing

The publishing of works designed to be read using technology, such as a computer, mobile devices, tablets, e-readers and more.

Digital Rights Management (DRM)

Systems used by many technology companies to limit the reading of a digital book file to a single user. DRM can create significant barriers, particularly if it prevents the content being read by voice to speech technologies.

Disability

Defining disability is complex and developing. A disability may be the result of combinations of impairments and environmental barriers, such as attitudinal barriers, inaccessible information, an inaccessible built environment, or other barriers that affect people's full participation in society. A disability can be obvious or invisible.

E-book

A non-editable book that is converted to a digital format to be read on digital devices such as tablets, e-readers, computer screens or mobile devices.



E-book reader

A specialised handheld device that displays the text of an e-book.

EPUB

An e-book file format that uses the “.epub” file suffix. An EPUB file is a compressed file that contains all the text, images, CSS, HTML, XML, navigation information and more that make up an e-book. EPUB 3 is the most recent version of the EPUB file format and the main commercial publishing format.

EPUB for Education

A set of specifications that optimize the EPUB 3 standard for educational content.

Fixed Layout

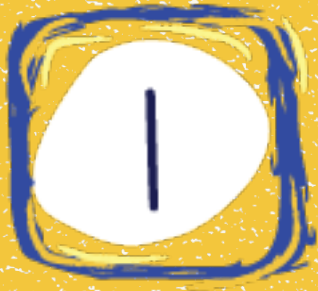
Usually contains images exactly positioned relative to text. Fixed layouts can cause major accessibility issues for readers of alternate formats.

HTML 5

Used to label pieces of content, which the computer reads and uses to render the content of the page.

Identity-First Language

As opposed to person-first language, some people prefer to be referred to as a “disabled person”.



Inclusive Publishing

Works that take the needs of every reader into consideration.

Inline Styles

Styling in the HTML markup that is not separated out in the corresponding Cascading Style Sheets (CSS).

Image Description

A detailed text explanation of an image.

Inclusive Design

Anything that is usable, reachable, or available for all, as well as models of creating that prioritize usability for all. Susan Goltsman says, “Inclusive design doesn’t mean you’re designing one thing for all people. You’re designing a diversity of ways to participate so that everyone has a sense of belonging”.

Invisible Disability

Chronic illnesses and conditions that may not be obvious to others because they do not always include visible features commonly associated with disability, such as wheelchairs, canes, prosthetics, or service animals. Invisible disabilities vary and can be episodic.



Legally blind

When a person has visual acuity of 20/200 or less.

Literacy

The ability, confidence, and willingness to engage with language to acquire, construct, and communicate meaning in all aspects of daily living.

Mental Load

In the context of disability, the term refers to the extra tasks, time, and additional overall effort required for people who identify as disabled to participate in society. Navigating inaccessible and/or poorly designed books is an example of something that adds to the mental load of people with disabilities.

Navigational Information

The elements of markup designed to assist in movement around the content of a digital file.

Neurodiversity

As opposed to “neurotypical,” a term that can refer to differences in brain function and behaviour, most often with reference to the autism spectrum (though it is not universally embraced by the autism community).

Non-disabled

A person who does not identify as having a disability. This term is preferable to the term able-bodied.



ONIX

A product metadata standard widely used in commercial book publishing and retailing. ONIX Code List 196 allows publishers and others to describe all aspects of print, braille, e-books, and audiobooks.

Page List

A simple ordered list of links to the page break locations, particularly important for academic and educational publications.

Page Title

These are meaningful titles that are added to a document, which will be read by assistive technology.

PDF

The main file type provided when accessible files are requested. While PDFs can be made accessible through some manual work, they are often not an ideal format.

Person First Language

As opposed to identity-first language, this is the preference of some people to be referred to as a person first (a person with a disability or a person who self-identifies with a disability).



Plain Language

Simple and direct written communication that is intended to be as understandable as possible. Plain language includes using common word choices and avoids idioms, jargon, slang, and complicated sentence structures. Other terms include Clear Language, Plain English, easy English, everyday English.

Print Disability

A learning, physical, or visual disability that prevents a person from reading conventional print. Varying widely in nature, print disabilities include, but are not limited to, visual, physical, cognitive, and learning disabilities.

Reflowable

In a reflowable EPUB, the content is fluid and can be adjusted to fit the size of the screen.

Refreshable Braille Display

A hardware device that can be connected to a computer or mobile device and converts text into braille in real time. It contains sets of pins that are raised and lowered to form the braille encoding, which allows users to read by touch.

Screen Magnifier

Used to increase the ease of reading text on a screen through methods such as magnification, increased contrast, and cursor customization.



Screen Reader

Software that reads aloud the text that is displayed on a computer, tablet or mobile screen.

Self-identification

The voluntary process of identifying oneself with a minority group. It is a key practice in the context of employment equity policies or funding access.

Tactile Graphics

Graphics including images, maps, charts, layouts, schematic diagrams, and images of geometric figures that deliver information through touch.

Text-to-Speech (TTS)

A type of assistive technology that reads digital text aloud.

Universal Accessibility

A characteristic of a product, process, service, environment, or piece of information that enables everyone to carry out activities and achieve similar results.

Universal Design

The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by everyone.



Visual Content

Any content that is graphic in nature, including photographs, drawings, maps, graphs, charts, and more.

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)

The primary web standards organization. The W3C manages the WCAG 2.0 and EPUB guidelines.

RESOURCES

Accessible 360 provides a glossary of terms for web accessibility.

Accessible Books Consortium guidelines provide a glossary of terms for book publishers.

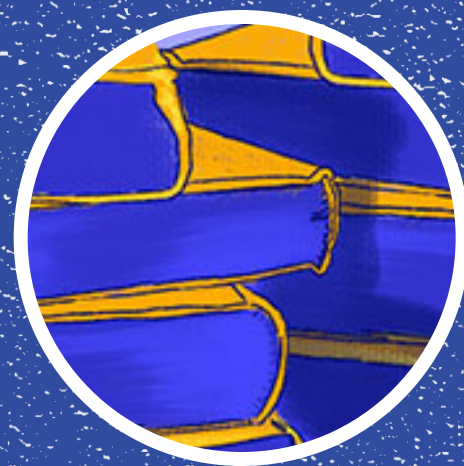
Accessible Canada Act benefits all Canadians, especially persons with disabilities, through the proactive identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to accessibility in seven priority areas.

AccessiblePublishing.ca glossary includes terms pertaining to accessible book publishing.

Access Living is a leading disability-led organization that challenges stereotypes, protect civil rights, and champions social reforms.

Ai-Media is a leader in captioning, transcription, translation, and audio description services that provides captioning for education, broadcast, and government.

Benetech is a technology non-profit and the creator of the DIAGRAM Center, which develops open-source accessibility solutions to assist publishers. Benetech also manages



Bookshare, an online library that provides accessible textbooks to students with disabilities.

Book Industry Study Group (BISG) creates and manages standards for the publishing industry in the US. In 2016, the BISG published the **Quick Start Guide to Accessible Publishing**, available for free online.

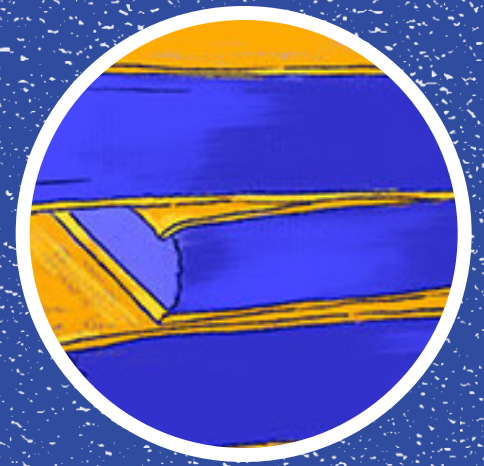
BookNet Canada is a non-profit organization that develops technology, standards, and education to serve the Canadian book industry, supporting publishing companies, booksellers, wholesalers, distributors, sales agents, industry associations, literary agents, media, and libraries.

Crippling the Arts access guide includes a glossary of terms, words, and ideas about access, disability, and inclusion.

eBound Canada and the Association for Canadian Publishers collaborated on an **Accessible Publishing Research Project**, which includes a glossary of terms.

Glossary: Deaf and Disability Arts Practices in Canada facilitates the understanding of key concepts that pertain to disability, inclusion, equity, and diversity.

Canadian Association for the Deaf (CAD) protects and promotes the rights, needs, and concerns of Deaf people in Canada.



Canadian Press Stylebook is a reference book for accurate and consistent writing and editing that contains an up-to-date glossary of terms.

Disability Arts is an organization led by disabled people that advances disability arts and culture.

Inclusive Language in Media guide from Humber College details language and terminology that establishes developing practices and inclusive thinking in media.

National Center on Disability and Journalism style guide provides a robust glossary of recommended terms when writing and reporting on accessibility and disability.

Re-vision: The Centre for Art and Social Justice investigates the power of the arts and story to open conversations about systemic injustices in health care, education, and the arts sectors.

W3C Glossary and Dictionary of terms and definitions used in the development of Web and EPUB standards.

