Practical Tips for Improving a Blind Person's Productivity on Computers

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Windows Computers

Place a shortcut to the favorites on your desktop.

Go to C:\Users\userID\Favorites, click the right mouse button, and select send to, and select desktop. You can then access your favorites with Windows Explorer.

If you have a Braille display, Control+alt+tab allows you to feel and hear the window you are on. Good for selecting another Window in high noise environments.

If you are using JAWS, JAWS key + f10 shows all your sessions in alphabetic order. To go to a session, arrow down to your choice, and hit enter.

To save attachments in an Outlook message: arrow up to the top line in the body of the text message, shift + tab to the attachment box, hit control + a to select all the attachments, hit control + c to copy all the attachments into the clipboard, in Windows Explorer, move to wherever you want the files to be stored, and hit control + v.

If you have a file, and you want to Copy its path into the clipboard, select the file in Windows Explorer, hit shift + applications, and hit the “copy as path” option.

For adobe, when controls disappear, you can still use the keystrokes like control+shift+s for save as, and control+p for print.

To reliably start the Surface Pro Two with Windows 8.1: push the power button for half a second, count to fifteen seconds, hit windows + enter to bring up narrator, hit tab to get to the password field, fill in the password and hit enter. I have JAWS set to load automatically after the login process. JAWS does not come up for me reliably in the login dialog. Windows + enter starts and stops Narrator. Narrator is much improved in Windows 8. Start the surface Pro Two with narrator.

To put the Surface Pro Two to sleep, exit JAWS, start Narrator (windows + enter), go to the desktop (windows + m), alt + f4, and pick the sleep option. Use Narrator for the wake-up process.

Map a SharePoint Website to a Disk Drive

To establish a link to a SharePoint site through Windows Explorer, go to the SharePoint website, hit alt+d for the address field, starting from the end of the address, delete all of the address until you get to the website just above the SharePoint site in question, hit enter which opens the website containing a link to your SharePoint page, tab down until you are on your SharePoint link, click the right mouse button (which is the context menu), hit the copy shortcut option, hit Windows + e to go to Windows Explorer, hit shift + tab to bring you to the left side of the screen (in tree view) and land on computer (which is my PC in Windows 8), click the right mouse button, arrow down to Map Network drive, hit enter, paste the SharePoint shortcut name into the folder field, hit shift + tab and select a drive, tab to "reconnect at startup and check it, tab to finish.

Now when you want to read or add documents to your SharePoint site, hit Windows + e for Windows Explorer, hit shift + tab to go to the tree view, arrow down to the appropriate disk drive, and your SharePoint documentation will appear in a Windows Explorer dialog. You can open, copy, and delete files just like any Windows Explorer dialog.

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iOS Machines

Read Anna Dresner’s book, “Getting Started with the iPhone and iOS 7, An Introduction for Blind Users” from the National Braille Press (npb.org) as an introduction to the iPhone.

For the focus 14: chord k turns keyboard help on, chord b turns help off. This 14 cell Braille display works well with the iPhone.

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Linux Machines