The FIRST Project

The Open Book tool is being produced by the FIRST (Flexible Interactive Reading Support Tool) Project.

The FIRST Project is a collaborative research project bringing together experts in language technology, software development and autism.

The project partners:

- University of Wolverhampton, UK
- Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust, UK
- Universidad de Alicante, Spain
- Autism-Europe aisbl, Belgium
- Universidad de Jaen, Spain
- Parallel World Sdruzhenie, Bulgaria
- Deletrea SL, Spain
- iWeb Technologies LTD, UK
- Kodar OOD, Bulgaria

By creating a tool to adapt text into a format that is easier for people with autism to read and understand, the project aims to help them gain better access to educational, vocational, cultural and social opportunities and thereby increase their social inclusion.

FIRSTPROJECT

OPENBOOK
EASIER TO READ. EASIER TO UNDERSTAND.

The Open Book tool
and more information are available:

www.openbooktool.net

contact@first-asd.eu

By the end of 2014, Open Book will be available in English, Spanish and Bulgarian.

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autismeurope.AE

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An online tool for people with autism to simplify text.

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Reading difficulties for people with autism

As a result of their condition, people with autism can experience difficulties in:

- Comprehending speech and writing;
- Interpreting figurative / non-literal language;
- Understanding complex instructions;
- Deriving the meaning or gist of written documents.

These difficulties can present a significant barrier to their participation and inclusion in all aspects of society, including education, employment, health care and social activities.

Making reading easier

Open Book aims to reduce these barriers by empowering people with autism to read a broad range of documents with confidence and autonomy.

The tool is designed for people with autism who experience difficulties in understanding written texts, but do not have an intellectual disability.

As autism encompasses a spectrum of symptoms that vary in severity among individuals, the software is personalisable, enabling users to adapt documents to match their own reading and comprehension abilities.

How Open Book works

Open Book utilises language technology to adapt the language used in written documents by reducing complexity, removing ambiguity and improving readability.

This process includes:

Replacement of...

- long complex sentences with several short, simple sentences;
- informal expressions with regular language.

Provision of definitions for words and expressions that are...

- long/technical;
- ambiguous;
- non-literal (eg. metaphors);
- related to emotions.

Addition of...

- images;
- concise summaries;
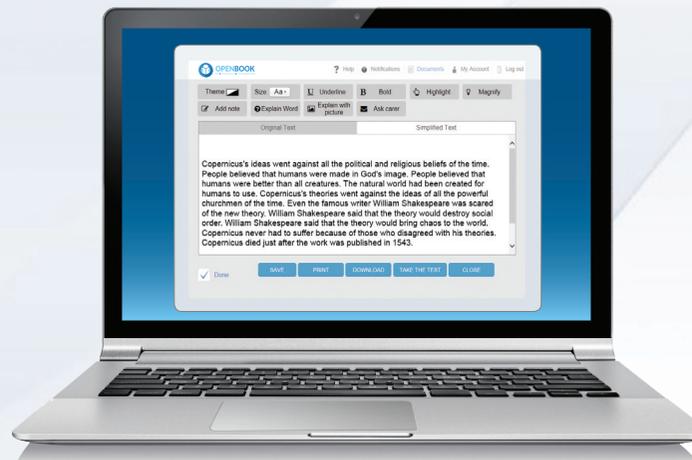- document navigation tools for long documents.

Developed with people who have autism

Open Book is not just being developed *for* people who have autism, it is being developed *with* people who have autism. The team developing the tool is working with a large group of people who have autism across three countries to ensure that the tool will meet their diverse requirements and to evaluate the tool's effectiveness in improving reading comprehension.

Increasing social inclusion

By assisting people with autism to access written information, Open Book aims to increase their access to educational, vocational, cultural and social opportunities in Europe, and thereby increase their social inclusion and quality of life.

Open Book can also be helpful for people with low literacy or learning difficulties, as well as people who are learning a foreign language.

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