Alternate Media

Alternate media is defined as instructional materials, textbooks, college publications, and/or library materials in formats accessible and usable by individuals with print disabilities. Examples of accessible formats are: Book on CD, MP3 audio, large print, Braille, tactile graphics, captioning, and e-text. Alternate Media Services will only be provided to students who have a verified disability and whose disability related functional limitations prevent them from reading regular printed materials. Alternate Media is provided by Lauri Nicolosi.

Types of Alternate Media:

- **E-text (PDF, Word, Text)**
- **Audio (mp3, Daisy, Learning Ally audio books)**
- **Braille**
- **Large Print**
- **Tactile Graphics**

E-Text

Most alternate media formats begin with e-text. E-text is printed material converted into a digital or “electronic” document. Sometimes e-text may be obtained from publishers in the form of a WORD or PDF file, but when not available, books can be scanned with a high speed scanner to prepare them for alternate media processing. The resulting “image” file is processed by Optical Character Recognition software which looks for shapes and patterns in the scanned electronic image that resemble letters and makes a fairly accurate guess as to what the text should be. Once text is recognized it can be saved to a variety of text based formats such as .txt, .doc, or .rtf. These text based documents can then be accessed by the end user in a myriad of ways. Most commonly they are magnified on a computer screen or read out loud by text-to-speech programs such as Natural Reader, ReadPlease, Acrobat Reader, or Text Aloud. Images from printed material may also be included in the digital document with alternate text descriptions to provide accessibility.

Braille

The Braille system is a method that is widely used by blind people to read and write. Each Braille character or cell is made up of six dot positions, arranged in a rectangle containing two columns of three dots each. The dots may be raised at any of the six positions thus creating varying patterns of dots to represent characters. The dots are perceived tactilely by moving the fingers across the Braille page.

Tactile Graphics

Using specialized embossing machines, software, and paper, printed material is represented graphically as raised lines which are discernable by touch.

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