How To use Windows Ease of Use Center

Introduction
Both Apple and Microsoft have provided more and more accessibility apps for their operating systems recently. Microsoft have collected their accessibility software in one place and called it the Ease of Use Center. This document describes the major applications within the Ease of Use Center and how to start them as well as what they do. It is then down to the reader to experiment with the applications and get them working exactly the way that the user wants.

The applications that will be considered in this document are:

- Magnifier
- High Contrast
- Narrator
- On-screen keyboard
- Windows Speech Recognition
- Others attributes (sticky keys, et al)

With each new version of Windows, the software in the Ease of Use Center will get better and better and will rival commercial products. Some of the software already does, others it is only a matter of time.

Accessibility options for all Microsoft products can be viewed at the following webpage:

Microsoft Office Accessibility

Starting the Ease of Use Center
The Windows Ease of Use Center can be started in a number of ways:

1. The Windows button at the bottom left of the screen can be pressed and then the ‘All Programs’, followed by ‘Accessories’ then ‘Ease of Use Center’ and, finally, pressing the ‘Ease of Use Center’.
2. The Windows button at the bottom left of the screen can be pressed and then ‘Ease of use center’ typed into the search box. Click on the ‘Ease of Use Center’ icon found.
3. The Windows button at the bottom left of the screen can be pressed and the control panel icon chosen. The ‘Ease of Use Center’ is then one of the options available inside the control panel.
4. The windows keyboard button can be pressed along with the ‘u’ at the same time.

Once started, the following screen is displayed:
From the main screen, the applications listed below can be found, configured and activated.

Magnifier
The magnifier can be started in a number of ways:

1. The Windows button at the bottom left of the screen can be pressed and then the ‘All Programs’, followed by ‘Accessories’ then ‘Ease of Use Center’ and, finally, pressing the ‘Start Magnifier’.
2. The Windows button at the bottom left of the screen can be pressed and then ‘Magnifier’ typed into the search box. Click on the ‘Magnifier’ icon found.
3. The Windows button at the bottom left of the screen can be pressed and the control panel icon chosen. The ‘Ease of Use Center’ is then one of the options available inside the control panel. From there, the ‘Start Magnifier’ option can be pressed.
4. The windows keyboard button can be pressed along with the ‘u’ at the same time. This opens the ‘Ease of Use Center’, then the ‘Start Magnifier’ option can be pressed.

Once started, the magnifier is displayed:
You will also see on the screen the control panel for the magnifier which is represented by a magnifying glass:

Once this icon is pressed, the full control panel is displayed (as shown below) and this can be used to alter the configuration of the magnifying glass. Attributes that can be changed are size, dimensions, magnification, contrast of text within magnifying glass, whether it is anchored, full screen or follows the mouse.

The user needs to alter the configuration until it is just right for them. The program should remember the configuration for the next time that the student uses the magnifier.

High Contrast
The high contrast setting can be started in a number of ways:

1. The Windows button at the bottom left of the screen can be pressed and then ‘high contrast’ typed into the search box. Click on the ‘Turn High Contrast on or off’ icon found.
2. The Windows button at the bottom left of the screen can be pressed and the control panel icon chosen. The ‘Ease of Use Center’ is then one of the options available inside the control panel. From there, the ‘Set up High Contrast’ option can be pressed.
3. The windows keyboard button can be pressed along with the ‘u’ at the same time. This opens the ‘Ease of Use Center’, then the ‘Set up High Contrast’ option can be pressed.

If options 2 or 3 are executed, then the following window is displayed:

![Image of Ease of Use Center]

Just press on ‘Choose a High Contrast Theme’ and the following Window is shown. This same window is shown if option 1 is executed from the above list.

![Image of High Contrast Theme]

Finally, just choose a theme that is right for you and press ‘OK’.
Narrator

The Windows Narrator can be started in a number of ways:

1. The Windows button at the bottom left of the screen can be pressed and then the ‘All Programs’, followed by ‘Accessories’ then ‘Ease of Use Center’ and, finally, pressing the ‘Start Narrator’.
2. The Windows button at the bottom left of the screen can be pressed and then ‘Narrator’ typed into the search box. Click on the ‘Narrator’ icon found.
3. The Windows button at the bottom left of the screen can be pressed and the control panel icon chosen. The ‘Ease of Use Center’ is then one of the options available inside the control panel. From there, the ‘Start Narrator’ option can be pressed.
4. The windows keyboard button can be pressed along with the ‘u’ at the same time. This opens the ‘Ease of Use Center’, then the ‘Start Narrator’ option can be pressed.

Once started, the narrator screen is displayed which gives a number of options for when the narrator should talk and also how fast and loudly it should talk too. The screen is shown below:

Once started, wherever the mouse pointer is resting, the Windows Narrator will explain what it is. It is also useful to read out the text of documents too.

Note that the voice has to be set up on the PC and it usually is in Windows. Just go to the Windows button at the bottom left of the screen and in the search window type ‘text to speech’ then click on ‘Change text to speech settings’. The following window will be displayed:
You can choose ‘Preview Voice’ to hear what the chosen voice will sound like. If you cannot hear the voice then check the loudspeaker icon to ensure that the volume is high enough and is not on mute.

**On-Screen Keyboard**

The On-Screen Keyboard can be started in a number of ways:

1. The Windows button at the bottom left of the screen can be pressed and then the ‘All Programs’, followed by ‘Accessories’ then ‘Ease of Use Center’ and, finally, pressing the ‘Start On-Screen Keyboard’.
2. The Windows button at the bottom left of the screen can be pressed and then ‘On-Screen Keyboard’ typed into the search box. Click on the ‘On-Screen Keyboard’ icon found.
3. The Windows button at the bottom left of the screen can be pressed and the control panel icon chosen. The ‘Ease of Use Center’ is then one of the options available inside the control panel. From there, the ‘Start On-Screen Keyboard’ option can be pressed.
4. The Windows keyboard button can be pressed along with the ‘u’ at the same time. This opens the ‘Ease of Use Center’, then the ‘Start On-Screen Keyboard’ option can be pressed.

Once started, the virtual keyboard is displayed on the screen. Using the mouse to click on the keyboard and holding the button down, the keyboard can be moved around the screen and put wherever convenient. On standard PCs, the mouse can be used to press the keys to enter commands or text. On touchscreens, obviously, a finger can be used to press the keys on the screen. The keyboard can be stopped by clicking the usual close button on the keyboard application.

**Speech Recognition**

The Windows Speech Recognition can be started either directly or through the speech recognition application window. The Windows button at the bottom left of the screen can be pressed and then ‘speech recognition’ typed into the search box. If you click on the ‘Speech Recognition’ icon that is found then the speech recognition application is started with all the tutorials and configuration required, as shown below. Before you use the speech recognition application, you will need to train the computer by pressing the ‘Train your computer to better understand you’ link:

If you press ‘Windows Speech Recognition’, then the speech recognition application is started as shown below:

As with the Narrator, the speech recognition needs to be set up but, in addition, needs to be trained to easily recognise the user’s voice. As with the Narrator, this is done by typing ‘text to speech’ into the search window and then choosing the ‘Speech Recognition’ tab, as shown below:
Other Attributes
The following attributes can be turned on or off in the Ease of Use Center configuration screen.

**Sticky Keys**
When switched on, this means that a combination of keys can be pressed individually. For example, to press the CTRL, ALT and DEL keys together requires both hands and three fingers. Using Sticky keys means that the each key can be pressed individually with one finger and after the third is pressed, the function is executed.

**Toggle Keys**
When switched on, a tone is sounded when either CAPS LOCK, NUM LOCK or SCROLL LOCK keys are pressed.
Filter Keys

This is where the user can configure the sensitivity of keys so that, for example, if they are repeatedly pressed, the computer only takes the first press as the desired one and ignores the rest. Under the heading of Filter Keys, you can either configure 'Bounce keys' (if your fingers accidently bounce on the keys) or 'Repeat keys' (where the computer will ignore brief touches of the key for a configurable period of time).