



World-Class OCR Enables Students with Learning Exceptionalities to Read & Study Independently

In addition to his usual duties as a teacher, John Bouchard tackles the challenges faced by children whose learning exceptionalities mean they greatly benefit from text-to-speech technology. But converting texts into the required digital formats demands precision OCR – and ABBYY FineReader delivers with speed and accuracy that converts scanned documents swiftly, easily and reliably.

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John Bouchard, Classroom Teacher, Ontario, Canada



Barriers to more inclusive classrooms

John Bouchard faced a situation familiar to every classroom teacher: the need to make text intensive course information available to students at every level of reading ability. As he says, “Whether a student has a learning exceptionality or is behind in their reading skills, the need to comprehend course material is vital if they’re to keep up in class. Otherwise they’ll fall behind – greatly amplifying the tendency to behave disruptively.”

And not only is such behavior a drain on teachers’ time and energy. The effort and hours it takes to create engaging assignments and study material takes a toll, too. “Combining and recombining existing text and graphics into new lessons, homework and study guides would take dozens of hours every month. Retyping material, cutting and pasting everything together and photocopying the new resources was incredibly time consuming,” recalls Bouchard.

About John Bouchard

John Bouchard has taught mathematics, language and science to middle school students in Ontario, Canada, for 15 years. A member of the Ontario College of Teachers, John not only takes an innovative approach to the teaching of his subject matter: he has also created tools that enable every student to benefit from books, lessons and classroom resources regardless of lagging reading skills or differences in learning ability.

Advanced OCR: Key to eliminating obstacles to learning and discovery

To unlock printed content for his students, Bouchard began researching text-to-speech software and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) solutions for converting paper documents into the necessary digital files. "Accurate and reliable OCR is a key requirement for text-to-speech," says Bouchard. "ABBYY FineReader excelled in both areas."

Lifting the limits on learning with ABBYY FineReader

The ability to unlock text from paper using FineReader and enable students to listen to it via text-to-speech was swiftly achieved. And the results were immediate and positive for students needing reading support – as well as for the classroom environment as a whole. "All students, regardless of reading ability, are now able to fully participate in lessons," Bouchard explains. "Not only has our classroom become truly inclusive, but disruptive behaviors have been drastically reduced – because all students can now access and understand text. And given the choice and necessary support, most students will choose to succeed!"

Faster and more productive resource creation

Having achieved his initial goal, Bouchard began exploring how to create and modify resources using FineReader. And, as he puts it, "I'm using it in ways that I never believed possible. "FineReader has saved me countless hours! I don't have to retype text anymore – just scan, convert, edit. That's it."

Bouchard goes on to detail some of the ways FineReader has improved his work life: "FineReader makes it almost effortless to create three versions of the same test. And modifying graphic organizers takes only minutes. To create lessons, I simply scan text, remove any part of it and have students research and rewrite it. Plus, the ability to combine text and graphics from different resources into a single document is incredibly useful."

The results

Bouchard describes FineReader as "essential classroom software" that has helped him claim back time from slow and tedious manual processes – while benefiting his students and classroom environment. "I now use those extra hours to devote to my students, creating new and better content and helping individuals with special needs. I can't believe," he continues, "that I used to photocopy bits and pieces from sources, cut out parts, glue them on to a page and then photocopy that page to make a new resource. I can do virtually all of this now using ABBYY FineReader 12 Professional."

And as Bouchard concludes FineReader offers even more advantages: "I haven't even begun to describe the benefits of using FineReader for classroom administration tasks. Suffice it to say that it's allowed me to digitize and streamline any number of classroom organization and reporting functions (including marking and report card writing). I use any number of software applications, but without hesitation I can say I rely on ABBYY FineReader extensively. It gets better and better with each release and classroom teachers will find even more ways to use it to the benefit of their students."

The Challenge:

Enable students with learning exceptionalities and reading challenges to study more productively by making learning resources and lessons available to them via text-to-speech.

The Solution:

ABBYY FineReader precisely and automatically converts paper documents into digital files for text-to-speech. Additionally, it eliminates retyping and slow manual processes when re-using content to create new learning materials.

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*John Bouchard
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Visit www.ABBYY.com/FineReader for more details on ABBYY FineReader.
Or call ABBYY at 866.463.7689 for immediate assistance and to discuss your specific needs.

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