

Technology Feature Brief

Adjustable Text Size

Making text sizes larger or smaller as needed can benefit readers of different ages and those with visual impairments. Having the ability to change the text size easily means that readers can use larger print if it is late in the day and their eyes are tired and return to a smaller print the next morning. It also means that readers with visual impairments and dyslexia can easily find settings that support their needs.

In this example from [Clusive](#), tools to adjust text size and more are embedded in the learning environment.



The screenshot shows a mobile application interface. On the left, there is a back arrow and the text "< back". Below that is the article title "Should secret wiretapping be legal?" and a paragraph of text. A small image of a woman holding a phone is visible. On the right, there is a settings panel titled "Adjust text settings" with a close button (X). The settings panel includes options for Text size (four buttons labeled "Aa", "Aa", "Aa", "Aa" with increasing font sizes), Line spacing (three buttons with increasing line spacing), Letter spacing (three buttons labeled "abc", "a b c", "a b c" with increasing spacing), and Font (a list of fonts: Open Sans (selected), Calibri, Comic Sans, Georgia, and Open Dyslexic).

Research

- **Studies report that larger font increases comprehension, objective and subjective readability, and reading rate for adolescents and adults with dyslexia.**
 - [Rello, Pileot, Marcos, & Carlini, 2013](#)
 - [Rello, Kanvinde, & Baeza-Yates, 2012](#)
 - [Chen, Keong, Teh, & Chuah, 2015](#)
- **Studies report different optimal font sizes for adolescents and adults with dyslexia.** One study of 28 individuals with dyslexia found that readability was greatest for 18-point

fonts, declining at larger font sizes. Another study of 22 individuals with dyslexia reported that participants preferred a font size of 26 or 22 points, the largest options offered.

- [Rello, Kanvinde, & Baeza-Yates, 2012](#)
- [Rello, Pileot, Marcos, & Carlini, 2013](#)
- **The beneficial effects of a larger font may also apply to individuals who do not have dyslexia.** A study of 29 sixth-graders found that increasing print size improved reading rate up to a point in individuals with and without dyslexia. Individuals with dyslexia benefited more from larger print than did individuals without dyslexia. In addition, a study of 104 individuals ages 14 to 54 (disability status not specified) found that readability and comprehension increased with font size.
 - [Martelli, Di Filippo, Spinelli, & Zoccolotti, 2009](#)
 - [Rello, Pielot, & Marcos, 2016](#)
- **Larger font may also be beneficial for individuals with Down syndrome.** A study of 6 individuals with Down syndrome ranging from age 16 to 23 found that participants preferred larger, bold, or italic serif fonts.
[Kirijian, Myers, A.K.A. New Media Inc, & Charland, 2007](#)

Related Guidelines

Adjustable text size features are related to existing accessibility guidelines and best practices, including the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guidelines. Connections include:

- [UDL Guidelines Checkpoint 1.1](#): Offer ways of customizing the display of information
- [WCAG Success Criterion 1.4.8](#) (Visual Presentation) requires that there be a way for users to magnify fonts up to 200% of their default size.

Adjustable Text Size Examples

- On desktop web browsers and other applications, font size can often be increased by using control++ or ⌘++ In some cases, this will increase the size of images as well.
- [Microsoft Immersive Reader](#) allows users to change the font size for any document within various Microsoft applications.
- Explore what [GPII Developer Space](#) has compiled for more examples of and research about adjustable text size.



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