K-12 BLUEPRINT

Crucial Education Moments	Commissioned by Microsoft
January 2022	Prepared by Clarity Innovations, Inc.

Immersive Reading: Supporting Student Focus Through Read-Alouds

How Microsoft education solutions compare to Google in offering customized support for readers.

Objective

The goal of this paper is to evaluate the ease and access of using digital tools to customize a read aloud experience both online and in a document using two of the most popular operating systems in K-12 education – Microsoft Windows* 11 and Google Chrome* OS (e.g., the Chromebook* solution). For comparison, we used an online article in a browser tab and the identical article saved as both a Microsoft Word* document and a Google Doc*.

Key Findings

1. Immersive Reader* is a built-in tool in the Microsoft Edge* browser and in Microsoft Word that can be used without additional downloads or third-party extensions.
2. The Chrome web browser-based and Google Doc-based experiences require installing a third-party extension that can take more time, more IT involvement, and pose data security risks.
3. The Google solutions take two to three times as many clicks as the Microsoft offerings.
4. Students can use Microsoft's Immersive Reader both in a browser tab and a document to change the:
   a. Read aloud language;
   b. Tone of the voice; and,
   c. Speed at which a text is read.
5. Word allows the full Immersive Reader experience to be used when offline while the Chrome web browser-based and Google Doc-based experiences are not available offline.

Conclusion

With only three clicks, students can begin a browser-based or document-based read aloud experience using Microsoft's Immersive Reader. This solution empowers students to change the language text is read aloud in, the tone of the voice, as well as the speed at which a text is read. In addition, Microsoft Word allows the Immersive Reader experience to be done completely offline.

The Chrome web browser-based and Google Doc-based equivalent experiences require installing a third-party extension that can take more time, more IT involvement, and pose data security risks, and the experiences are not available offline. **With two and three times the number of clicks to begin the read aloud experience, Google solutions fall short in ease of use and access for students. Given its built-in simplicity across solutions, Microsoft's Immersive Reader is a better choice to support learners in customizing the read aloud support they need anytime, anywhere.**

Download a copy of the full report including a step-by-step description and analysis of Windows 11 and Chromebook tools from the K-12 Blueprint.

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