

Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services

National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) and the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC)

1. What is the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS)?

NIMAS is a technical standard used by publishers to produce source files that can be used to develop specialized formats for students with print disabilities. The source files are prepared using Extensible Markup Language (XML) to mark up the structure of the original content. A NIMAS file set contains these XML source files and all of the images files as text. They can be used to create specialized formats, such as, braille, large print, audio, or digital.

[20 U.S.C.§1474(e)(3)(B); 34 CFR §300.172(e)(iii); 34 CFR §300 Appendix C]

2. What is the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC)?

NIMAC is the national repository of NIMAS files. NIMAC was established at the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) and began operations in December, 2006. NIMAC receives NIMAS files from publishers, catalogs/stores the files, and makes the files available for download to Authorized Users (AU). States designate who will be the AU's for their state. Each state may identify up to five AU. AU can convert the NIMAS files to student-ready versions or they can designate the files to an Accessible Media Producer (AMP) to convert them to student-ready files.

[20 U.S.C.§1474(e); 34 CFR §300.172(e)(ii); 34 CFR §300.210; Education Article §8-408(d), Annotated Code of Maryland; COMAR 13A.06.05.01; COMAR 13A.05.02.13M]

3. What are specialized formats?

Braille, large print, audio, or digital are specialized formats. Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY) is the national standard format for digital/audio books. Many AMPs are now producing NIMAS files in DAISY format. DAISY books can be audio only, text only, or both audio and text. A DAISY file can be played back in a supported hardware device or software. See Attachment 4 for list of DAISY Playback

Tools. An electronic braille notetaker can also use a digital braille file called a BRF (Braille Refreshable Format) to display the book on its refreshable braille display.

[20 USC §1474(e)(3)(D); 34 CFR §300.172(e)(iv)]

4. Which students are eligible to receive specialized formats produced by NIMAS files?

Students with the following disabling conditions, and receive special education in accordance with IDEA, who are unable to read standard print as a result of the disability:

- Blind – a visual acuity that is 20/200 or less in the better eye after correction or fields less than 20 degrees.
- Visually Impaired – a visual impairment, with correction and regardless of optical measurement, that prevents the student from reading standard print.
- Physically disabled - a physical limitation that prevents the student from reading standard print.
- Print disabled – having a reading disability resulting from an organic brain dysfunction and of sufficient severity that prevents the student from reading printed materials.

[20 USC§ §1412(a)(23) and 1474(e); 2 USC §135(a); 34CFR §300.173(e)(i)]

5. What about students who need specialized formats, but do not meet eligibility under the NIMAS guidelines?

Local school systems and public agencies are still responsible for providing accessible formats to students who are not eligible. Students receiving accommodations under Section 504 or students who do not have documentation from a certifying authority may need accessible materials, but they do not qualify for NIMAS-produced materials. Local school systems and public agencies must purchase or produce accessible formats, without using NIMAS files or infringing on copyright.

[COMAR 13A.06.05.01D(2)]

6. Who certifies the student’s eligibility?

In cases of blindness, visual impairment, and physical disability, the “competent authority” who can certify eligibility is:

- Doctors of medicine;
- Doctors of osteopathy;
- Ophthalmologists;
- Optometrists;
- Registered nurses;
- Therapists; or
- Professional staff of hospitals, institutions, and public or welfare agencies (e.g., social workers, counselors, teachers).

These professionals need to certify the disability and that the individual is unable to read standard print.

In the case of a reading disability from organic dysfunction, the “competent authority” who can certify eligibility is:

- Doctors of medicine; or
- Doctors of osteopathy.

These professionals need to certify that the student has a reading disability of sufficient severity that prevents him or her from reading standard print in a normal manner and that the disability is organically or physically based.

[2 USC §135(a)]

7. What materials are publishers required to produce in NIMAS format and submit to the NIMAC?

Publishers will be required to create NIMAS files and submit to the NIMAC, *upon request, print instructional materials* that are *sold after July 19, 2006*. Publishers are not required to automatically create NIMAS files and submit to the NIMAC for everything they publish. It is the responsibility of local school systems and public agencies to inform publishers of their need for NIMAS format to meet the needs of their identified eligible students.

Print instructional materials mean printed textbooks and related printed core materials that are written and published primarily for use in elementary and secondary schools and required for use by students in the classroom. This includes textbooks and additional resource materials that are “bundled” with the series. Publishers are expected to create NIMAS files for print instructional materials sold after July 19, 2006, regardless of the copyright year of materials.

[20 U.S.C. §1474(e); 34 CFR §300.172(e)(ii); 34 CFR §300.210; Education Article §8-408(d), Annotated Code of Maryland; COMAR 13A.06.05.01; COMAR 13A.05.02.13M]

8. What about novels and trade books?

Publishers may submit NIMAS files to the NIMAC for novels and trade books. Publishers are required to do so for those books that are bundled with textbooks, purchased after July 19, 2006, and are *written primarily for use in school*. Most classic novels and trade books were not written primarily for use in school.

9. Can NIMAS files be given to students, teachers or schools?

No. NIMAS files are not student-ready. NIMAS files can only be downloaded by AUs who are designated by the state and sign the NIMAC’s Limitation of Use Agreement (LUA).

10. What is the Maryland process for obtaining accessible instructional materials?

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has agreed to collaborate with the NIMAC and has signed and submitted the NIMAC Coordination Agreement. We have identified three AUs for the State to assist local school systems and public agencies with the provision of specialized formats for NIMAS eligible students with disabilities. The three AUs are:

- Maryland Instructional Resource Center for Students with Visual Impairments (IRC);
- Bookshare; and
- Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D).

The IRC provides braille and large print for students who are blind or visually impaired. Bookshare and RFB&D provide audio and digital formats for all students with print disabilities.

[20 U.S.C. §1474(e); 34 CFR §300.172(e)(ii); 34 CFR §300.210; Education Article §8-408(d), Annotated Code of Maryland; COMAR 13A.06.05.01; COMAR 13A.05.02.04E]

11. What can local school systems and public agencies do to deliver instructional materials in specialized formats?

Local school systems and public agencies should consider the following when purchasing print instructional materials:

- Include in procurement contracts or agreements to purchase print instructional materials the provision that requires the publisher to provide the NIMAS files to the NIMAC. See sample language below:

The publisher agrees to prepare and submit, on or before _____, a NIMAS file set to the NIMAC that complies with the terms and procedures set forth by the NIMAC. The files will be used for the production of specialized formats as permitted under the law for students with print disabilities. The publisher will also submit to us a Certification from the NIMAC to demonstrate the submission of the file.

- Consider purchasing textbooks from publishers for *all* students that have available a version that is accessible (i.e. an accessible PDF or online version)
- Determine which students, as specified in question number 4 above, require instructional materials in specialized formats and specify the required format.

- Register students with the appropriate AUs:

Blind/Visually Impaired

- IRC for braille and large print (Attachment 1)
- Bookshare for audio or digital (Attachment 2)
- RFB for audio or digital (Attachment 3)

Physically Disabled and Print Disabled

- Bookshare for audio or digital (Attachment 2)
- RFB for audio or digital (Attachment 3)

- Ensure students have any necessary hardware or software to access the specialized format and the skills to use it (Attachment 4).
- Gather pertinent information about the texts the student needs in a specialized format. This includes the title, author, publisher, copyright date, and Library of Congress ISBN 10 or 13-digit number
- Search national databases/sources to determine if the texts needed are currently available in the needed format (Attachment 5)
- If the text is not available and the student is NIMAS eligible, search the NIMAC database to see if the NIMAS files are there. If the files are in the NIMAC, contact the AU, with whom you registered the student(s), to request the conversion. If the files are not in the NIMAC, contact your sales representative as per your purchasing agreement

[20 U.S.C. §1474(e); 34 CFR §300.172(e)(ii); 34 CFR §300.210; Education Article §8-408(d)(2)-(3), Annotated Code of Maryland; COMAR 13A.06.05.01; COMAR 13A.05.02.13M]

For more information, call 410-767-0242

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Attachment 1

Instructional Resource Center for Students with Visual Impairments (IRC)



c/o The Maryland School for the Blind
Bledsoe Building ▪ 3501 Taylor Avenue ▪ Baltimore, Maryland 21236-4499
(410) 319-5715 Fax (410) 319-5706 1-800-400-4915 (MD Only)

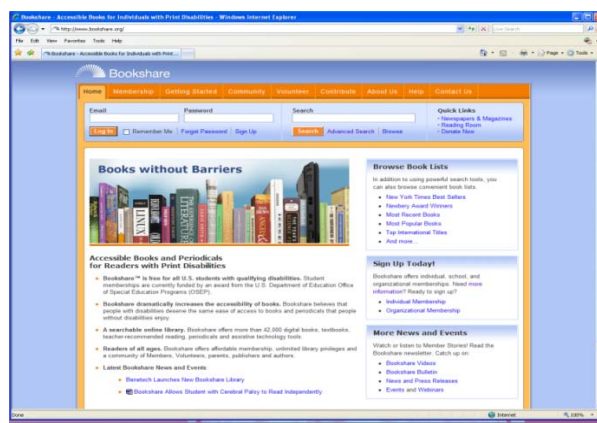
The Instructional Resource Center (IRC) is a partnership between MSDE, the Maryland School for the Blind (MSB) and the twenty-four Local School Systems (LSSs). It serves as a centralized depository, searching, ordering, and shipping facility for large print and braille textbooks and instructional materials for K-12 students with visual impairments in Maryland public schools.

The IRC works directly with Vision Programs in the LSSs to facilitate the ordering process. When a LSS needs instructional materials in large print or braille for a student with a visual impairment, the LSS completes an *IRC Search Form* for the student with the necessary information. The IRC will first check their own inventory for the book to loan to the LSS. If it is not available, then the IRC will search for purchase availability and cost. The IRC informs the LSS contact person of availability of loan or the purchase price prior to ordering. If a book is not available in large print, the IRC requests that the LSS provide a print copy of the book to the IRC, who then sends it to an appropriate vendor for production. If a book is not available in braille, the IRC will request a print copy of the book from the LSS for braille production. The IRC will download and utilize the NIMAS file for the production of braille or assign the NIMAS file to an eligible AMP for large print or braille production. The IRC will be distributing an *IRC NIMAS Student Registration Form* to Vision Programs to be completed as needed. This form will be required for qualifying students to document the disability by a competent authority in order to access NIMAS files.

The *IRC Search Form* and the *IRC NIMAS Student Registration Form* are available from the IRC. For questions, information, or forms contact the IRC at 410-444-5000 x344.

Attachment 2

Bookshare — <http://www.bookshare.org>



Membership

Bookshare provides accessible reading materials for people with print disabilities. Individuals can register for membership or schools can register to provide access to their students. A Bookshare membership offers unlimited access to accessible books, textbooks, newspapers and magazines. Through an award from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Bookshare offers free memberships to U.S. schools and qualifying students.

Tools

Bookshare provides two free DAISY readers for members:

- Victor Reader Soft Bookshare Edition by Humanware. This new and improved version is much easier to use and has more functionality than the previous version. It is designed for people who are blind or have low vision. Use this software if you are a screen reader user and want a fuller-featured DAISY reader.
- READ:OutLoud Bookshare Edition by Don Johnston. This DAISY reader is designed specifically for people with learning disabilities. It is not recommended for use with screen readers. This software features high-quality text-to-speech for multi-modal reading, spotlighting, note-taking and other study skill features, an online dictionary, and more.

Accessing Books

1. Search Bookshare's collection at: <http://www.bookshare.org/search>
2. If the needed book is not in the collection, confirm that the NIMAS file is in the NIMAC by searching at: <http://nimac.us>
3. Send an email to nimacrequest@bookshare.org requesting the book. Provide the title, author, publisher, and ISBN number.
4. Bookshare will download the book, convert it into accessible digital formats (DAISY and BRF) within a week. Bookshare will then let the requestor know the book is in Bookshare.
5. The requestor logs into their Bookshare account and downloads the book for eligible NIMAS students with disabilities.

Attachment 3

Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic — <http://www.rfbd.org>



Membership

Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D) provides accessible audiobooks for people with print disabilities. Individuals can register for membership or schools can register for an institutional membership to provide access to their students. Individual memberships cost \$100 initially and \$35 annually, thereafter. Institutional membership costs are in the table below:

Learning Through Listening Institutional Memberships:

LTL Level	# Audio Books	Typical # Students Served	Annual Fee
Level 1	25	4-12	\$350
Level 2	50	13-25	\$500
Level 3	100	26-40	\$950

Tools

RFB&D now offers AudioAccessSM, which enables downloading of audio textbooks from the Internet for playback on either a Windows computer or a Windows-compatible portable media player. RFB&D's AudioPlus® digitally recorded textbooks are stored on CDs, which hold more than 40 hours each of recorded materials. In order to play RFB&D digitally recorded textbooks, you will need to use specially adapted CD players or software. RFB&D offers a complete line of players, software and accessories. Hardware and software can be found at: <https://cushub.rfbd.org/BrowseProducts.asp>

Accessing Books

RFB&D's online catalog can be accessed at: <https://cushub.rfbd.org/SearchCatalog.asp>
To request books not in the catalog, contact: Member Services at 800-221-4792 or Custom Recording Service at 609-520-8096.

Attachment 4

DAISY PLAYBACK TOOLS

Below is a list of hardware/software that can be used to play instructional materials in a DAISY format.

- AMIS (Adaptive Multimedia Information System)
- Book Courier
- Book Wizard Reader
- ClassMate
- EasyReader
- eClipseReader
- EzDAISY, Digital Talk
- gh PLAYER® 2.2 Premium Edition
- gh Player® 2.2 Standard Edition
- INCI Reader
- KBLL Reader
- Kurzweil Products
- Milestone 311 DAISY Player
- Plectalk Basic (Model: TK-200)
- Plectalk Model PTN1
- Plectalk Portable Recorder (Model: PTR2)
- Plectalk Pro (Model: TK-300)
- Scholar, Digital Talking Book Player
- TAB Player for Thai and English
- TPB Reader
- Victor Reader Classic
- Victor Reader Classic +
- Victor Reader Classic + with Recording
- Victor Reader ClassicX
- Victor Reader ClassicX +
- Victor Reader Soft
- Victor Reader Stream
- Victor Reader Vibe
- Victor Reader Wave

Attachment 5

National Databases/Sources for Accessible Instructional Materials

American Printing House for the Blind (APH) has a searchable website called “Louis”. Most Accessible Media Producers include their accessible formats in this database with contact information for loaning/purchasing the book from APH or other national accessible media producers. Includes textbooks, supplementary materials, novels and periodicals in braille, large print, audio, and digital formats.

<http://louis.aph.org>

Bookshare produces accessible textbooks, novels, leisure reading materials and periodicals in DAISY and BRF formats. BRF files are digital braille files that, with braille translation software and a braille embosser you can emboss hardcopy braille or you can open the file with a compatible braille device with a refreshable braille display. Bookshare requires membership/registration and certification of student eligibility in order to download books. Membership is currently free for schools. There is no cost to download books once registered.

<http://www.bookshare.org/web/Welcome.html>

Maryland Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (MLBPH) provides novels, leisure reading materials and periodicals in braille, large print, and audio formats. MLBPH requires registration and certification of student eligibility. Membership is free and books are available for loan.

<http://www.lbph.lib.md.us>

National Materials Access Center (NIMAC) is the national repository of National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard(NIMAS) files. Anyone can search their database of files.

<http://nimac.privatereserve.com/Inventory-Search.asp>

Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D) produce texts and novels in audio formats. RFB&D requires registration, membership fees, and certification of eligibility. Audio books are available for loan on CD and downloadable versions.

<http://www.rfbd.org>

Teaching Learners with Special Needs, Alternative Format Books Blog:

<http://teachinglearnerswithmultipleneeds.blogspot.com/2006/11/alternate-format-books-and-stories.html>