

ALS: Otter.ai as an Accommodation

Version 6

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ACCESSIBLE LEARNING SERVICES

Use of Otter.ai as a Note-Taking Tool

Since the 2022-2023 academic year, Otter.ai continues to be a valuable note-taking support available to students registered with Accessible Learning Services who have documented disability-related impacts on note-taking. Eligible students will have this accommodation indicated on their Letter of Accommodation, stating:

Digital Notetaking: Otter.ai

Otter.ai is an application that provides students with real-time captions and notes for in-person and virtual lectures, labs, and course meetings through technology. It allows students to integrate electronic PowerPoint slides into a note-taking application while transcribing auditory information presented in lectures. It empowers students with the ability to highlight, comment, and insert images within class notes, enabling them to seamlessly create notes with the transcripts.

FAQ for Otter AI

1. How does Otter AI work?

- Otter is cloud-based and 100% AI-powered with no human transcribers involved. It's speech-to-text engine supports English and requires minimal training and customization.
- Otter AI uses a speaker identification algorithm that distinguishes and learns to create a voiceprint for each speaker. The result is a legible, speaker-labeled transcript with synchronized audio and text.

2. Why are we moving to Otter AI?

- Traditional note taking related accommodations (i.e., Peer Note taking) were not effectively meeting student needs because it is dependent on other student volunteers, has no mechanism to assess quality control/accuracy of notes and has limit opportunity for knowledge consolidation for the student.
- Otter AI is widely compatible — laptops, tablets, smart phones, and other mobile devices, allows students to consolidate slides with transcribed verbal lecture content, provides accurate and immediate notes and meaningful study guides, and requires minimal training for students to use independently.

3. Will Peer Note takers still be used to support students in my class?

- We continue a slow phase out of Peer Note taking as an accommodation for note taking support, but some current students have experienced success with it, so for those few students Peer Note taking will continue to be available for the duration of their studies.

Privacy and Security:

Otter.ai is committed to maintaining user privacy and data security. A Privacy Impact Assessment has been completed by the Seneca Privacy Office, and procedures have been developed to protect information when students use Otter.ai. These procedures align with Seneca's existing Recording Lectures and Educational Activities Policy. When this accommodation is added to an accommodation plan and appears on the Letter of Accommodation, students are trained on the ethical use of Otter.ai concerning professors and classmates, and the local procedure is reviewed with them.

Faculty Implementation:

When "Digital Note-taking Support: Otter.ai" appears on a Letter of Accommodation, instructors are required to notify their class and obtain consent for recordings. For most recordings, implicit consent is sufficient and can be obtained by notifying students at the beginning of a term that lectures will be recorded for accommodation purposes, without identifying the student.

Additional Resources:

- Otter.ai Features Overview: For a comprehensive list of features, visit Otter.ai's features page.
- Privacy Policy: For detailed information on data handling and privacy practices, refer to Otter.ai's Privacy Policy.

For further information about Otter.ai, please visit their website: [here](#).

tags : notetaking