

## Using YouTube the Easy Way



YouTube, is most definitely one of the most popular web sites when it comes to entertainment and online learning. It is used by tens of millions of people worldwide and offers videos and audio files on a huge variety of topics. However, one problem with YouTube, is that each video/audio file is often preceded by an advertisement, which can be extremely frustrating. The vast majority of these adverts cannot be skipped, so you have to sit through many minutes of information that you are not interested in, before the video/audio starts. Sure, there are controls available for fast-forwarding the video/audio, but these can be difficult to use for people who use Assistive Technology, such as a Screen Reader.

For a better experience, it might be worth trying a much more accessible version of YouTube, designed by Henshaws. This is a Charity, based in the North West of England, who support people living with sight loss and a range of other disabilities. Their main aim is to help reduce social isolation and increase independence through empowering disabled people to go beyond expectations and achieve their ambitions. To demonstrate this, they have spent a considerable amount of time developing an accessible version of YouTube.

The Accessible YouTube site offers a very simple interface. It contains a single Search box at the top of the page, into which you type key words to do with the video/audio you are looking for. Once the search has been carried out, a list of video/audio files that match your search criteria are listed just beneath the Search box.

You can navigate the list of video/audio files using the Arrow keys on your keyboard, pressing ENTER when you find the one you want, or if you have sufficient vision, you can simply click on the one you want to play. Upon doing this, the video/audio will play in a separate window, most of the time free from adverts! This window contains a set of controls at the top for playing and pausing the current video/audio file, playing the next video/audio file, Repeating the current video/audio file and an option to go back to the Search Results page.

To access the controls, simply press TAB to move to each one in turn and then press ENTER to activate the selected option. Alternatively, if you have sufficient vision, simply click on the option you want.

The Accessible YouTube site is an excellent alternative to the actual YouTube site, as it is very neat and tidy and there are only a few controls available, compared to the dozens on the main site. Additionally, it is extremely easy to use in conjunction with a screen reading program such as JAWS, NVDA and SuperNova.

The Accessible YouTube site is limited in its functionality, for example, you cannot upload a video, nor can you create playlists etc. However, for the person who simply wants to find and then play a video/audio file, it is perfect!

So, without any further ado, please find the link to the Accessible YouTube site below:

<https://accesstechnology.co.uk/youtube/>

Go ahead and give it a try. I am sure you will be impressed at its simplicity!

If anyone needs any help on how to use the Accessible YouTube site in conjunction with a screen reader, please contact Yasmin at Surrey Coalition using the following email address: [yasmin.broome@surreycoalition.org.uk](mailto:yasmin.broome@surreycoalition.org.uk).