Blackboard Ally How-to: Use Optical Character Recognition

This document shows how to use BB Ally to create an ‘OCRed’ document from a ‘scanned PDF’.

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) is the electronic conversion of an image of text into machine-encoded text, meaning that it can be recognised by a screen reader. Sometimes, a PDF is scanned without OCR – this usually happens with older documents that were manually scanned or were downloaded before OCR was as common as now.

If this happens, BB Ally will score the document as 0% accessible.

There are three solutions:

1. Find a new version of the document – for example from a journal website
2. Add a library link to an electronic version of the document
3. Use BB Ally to create an ‘OCRed PDF’ using the Alternative Document function (see below)

# Identify if Document Needs OCR

1. With Editing turned on, click on ‘**Dial**’ icon beside the document to open BB Ally
2. View explanation and instructions. ‘**This PDF is scanned**’ means that the PDF does not have OCR. Click on ‘**What this means**’ for more explanation, and ‘**How to fix this**’ for instructions.



# Obtaining an OCR Copy from BB Ally

1. Click on ‘**Alternative formats**’ icon beside the document
2. Select ‘**OCRed PDF**’
3. **Download**



1. Click on ‘**Dial**’ icon to open BB Ally
2. **Upload** replacement file
	* NB: this will not necessarily fix all the issues, but it will improve the accessibility of the document



# Further Resources

* Blackboard
	+ [Blackboard Ally Quick Start](https://help.blackboard.com/Ally/Ally_for_LMS/Instructor/Quick_Start)
	+ [Scanned PDFs](https://help.blackboard.com/Ally/Ally_for_LMS/Instructor/Improve_Accessibility/Scanned_PDFs)
* TEL@CoSS: [Blackboard Ally](https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/staffinfo/technologyenhancedlearningcoss/moodle/moodleresources/#blackboardally)
* University of Glasgow:
	+ [Accessible Moodle Courses](https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/digitalaccessibility/moodle/)
	+ [Accessibility- What is it and How can I Create Accessible Content?](https://sway.office.com/a685kyNBRAAe5cU1)

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