

# File Formats for Note Takers

The following table lists seven of the most popular note taking or Braille conversion devices. Several of these have built-in Braille displays. These include the Braille Lite (which includes the millennium series), BrailleNote, Braille Sense, and Pac Mate. The Braille 'n Speak only has a Braille entry keyboard and voice output. The Book Port is used primarily as a listening device since its small size and design make extensive Braille input somewhat uncomfortable.

The table lists the types of document formats these devices can accommodate. I have restricted this table to word processing rather than audio formats.

In the table below are listed the different formats and the devices that use these formats. In this case Brl is unformatted Braille. This is similar to a text file in print. Brf is formatted Braille, which uses mark-up to denote paragraph styles, bold, and capitalization among others. Doc is a Word document format used by Microsoft Word. The newer note taking devices use this format. RTF (Rich Text format) is used across different operating systems and different versions of operating systems. Again it is used in the newer note takers. Word-Perfect 5.1 documents can be read by the BrailleNote for example but cannot be used by earlier devices. Text (.txt) is the simplest and smallest of word processing formats and can be used by all the devices listed below. Some of the note takers, like BrailleNote, use proprietary word processing software called keyword. A BrailleNote device can only read files created in this format. Pac Mate uses both Pocket Word and their proprietary FSEdit software to create word processing documents.

Device	Brl	Brf	.doc	.rtf	Word Perfect 5.1	.Txt	Proprietary
Braille 'n Speak	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Braille Lite	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Braille Lite millennium	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
BrailleNote	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Key Word
Braille Sense	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Proprietary
Pac Mate	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	FSEdit
Book Port	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No

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## File-Extensions Commonly Found in Louis

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### **ACN = PokaDot ASCII-Braille File**

Should be used with an embossing utility.

### **BFM = Megadots ASCII-Braille File**

Should be used with an embossing utility, but can also be used with ED-IT PC/Braille 2000, MegaDots, or Pokadot.

### **BRF = Duxbury ASCII-Braille File**

Should be used with an embossing utility.

### **DXB = Duxbury Braille File**

Can be used with ED-IT PC/Braille 2000 (standard styles only), or Duxbury.

### **MEG = MegaDots Braille File**

Can be embossed.

### **RTF = Microsoft Rich Text Print File**

Needs to be transcribed.

### **TXT = Generic ASCII text File**

Needs to be transcribed.

## **Electronic Files Ending in PF**

Need to be transcribed.

## **Electronic Files Ending in BF, TF, and AF**

Braille ready files.

Electronic files can only be used for Braille or for listening purposes. We cannot use them for large print (LP) or to put on a computer screen to read form.

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## **About Louis**

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The *Louis* Database of Accessible Materials for People who are Blind or Visually Impaired contains location information for over 170,000 titles in Braille, large print, sound recording, and computer file from over 170 agencies throughout the United States and Canada. *Louis* also includes downloadable computer text files from the [APH File Repository](#) and APH products.

If you are visually impaired, you can use *Louis* to locate your accessible books and materials.

If you are an accessible media producer, you can search *Louis* to ensure that you are not duplicating work that has already been done by other transcribers. And you can download text files for Braille transcription. To access the [Louis database](#) go to <http://louis.aph.org/catalog/CategoryInfo.aspx?cid=152>.

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