

Table Navigation with JAWS and NVDA

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Introduction

Table navigation is an important skill for those using a screen reader. Tables in a document or on a webpage can be confusing if the user does not have a clear picture of where he might be. Users often simply use the up or down arrows to move line by line to access the table, which is inefficient and does not provide a clear picture of the table. This document provides some suggestions on how to solve the problem using JAWS or Non-Visual Desktop Access (NVDA).

Finding Tables

The first step is to determine the number of tables present. JAWS can provide a list of tables using the keys Insert + Ctrl + T. The user is then presented with a list of tables present in the webpage or document. The list can be navigated by using the up or down arrows. When the desired table is announced, it can be selected by pressing Enter.

Tables can be accessed by NVDA or JAWS using key navigation. On a webpage, simply press the letter T to move to the next table or Shift + T to move to the previous table. In a document, this method can be used as well by following these steps:

JAWS

- Press Insert + Z. This moves JAWS into Quick Key mode.
- Press T to move to the next table.
- Press Shift + T to move to the previous table.
- You can also use Insert + Ctrl + T to view a list of tables.
- Press Insert + Z to exit the Quick Key mode.

NVDA

- Press Insert + Spacebar to move to Browse mode.
- Press T to move to the next table.
- Press Shift + T to move to the previous table.
- Press Insert + Spacebar to exit Browse mode.

Moving by Cell

Although JAWS has several methods for reading or moving through a table, beginners might find the following key commands easier to use at first. NVDA uses the same key strokes. If column and row headers have been properly marked up, they will be announced.

Key Commands

- Move to the next row: Ctrl + Alt + Down Arrow
- Move to previous row: Ctrl + Alt + Up Arrow
- Move to the next column: Ctrl + Alt + Right Arrow
- Move to the previous column: Ctrl + Alt + Left Arrow

Getting Help

In newer versions of JAWS, users can find key commands by using the JAWS Commands feature:

1. Press Insert + Spacebar.
2. Press the J letter key. A search window will appear.
3. To find other table key commands, type the word "table."
4. Tab through the commands to explore them.

Use the following steps to access NVDA's help feature:

1. Make sure NVDA is running.
2. Press Insert + N to bring up the NVDA user interface.
3. Move through the menu to the Help item.
4. Click the Right Arrow to open the submenu. There will be a user guide, as well as a Command item that provides a list of commands.