# New free font available to help those with dyslexia

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(Medical Xpress)—A new font tailored for people afflicted with dyslexia is now available for use on mobile devices, thanks to a design by Abelardo Gonzalez, a mobile app designer from New Hampshire. Gonzalez, in collaboration with educators, has selected a font that many people with dyslexia find easier to read. Even better, the new font is free and has already been made available for some word processors and

ebook readers. The font, called OpenDyslexic, has also been added to the font choices used by Instapaper—a program that allows users to copy a web page and save it to their hard drive.

Dyslexia, also called specific reading disability, affects approximately 10 percent of the population. Dyslexia is characterized by difficulty reading in people with normal vision and intelligence (www.mayoclinic.com). What is even more challenging is the fact that dyslexia doesn't manifest itself in the same way in all those who have it, making it even more difficult to develop effective strategies and therapies. One recent approach has involved using a bottom-heavy font, using lines that are thicker toward the bottom than at the top. For reasons that are not understood, reading text with such a font results, for some, in less page-flipping and more successful reading.

Once it was suggested that using bottom-heavy fonts might help with dyslexia, font developers rushed to create their own versions, hoping to capitalize on licensing fees. Gonzalez decided a better approach would be to design a font from scratch, and then make it free to anyone that wants to use it. And, that's exactly what he's done. Gonzalez' hope is that OpenDyslexic differs enough from other fonts on the market to prevent litigation efforts from removing it from the public domain.

Gonzalez' app, called openWeb, is available for iPhone and iPad: it modifies text in the Safari browser by presenting web pages in the OpenDyslexic font. Others have downloaded the font and made it available for free to Android users. Gonzalez has also been working with educators, some of whom run programs specifically geared toward helping children with dyslexia. Based upon anecdotal reports from these educators, the new font facilitates reading for those with dyslexia. Sony, Amazon and Google have also contacted Gonzalez expressing their interest in the font.

**More information:** dyslexicfonts.com/
blog.instapaper.com/post/31834532875

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