



Marrakesh Treaty Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some of the most common questions that people have about the Marrakesh Treaty. You can use this information to start conversations on why ratifying this treaty is so important for people who have vision and print disabilities.

1. What is the Marrakesh Treaty?

A treaty is an international agreement with the force of law for countries that ratify (adopt) it. The Marrakesh Treaty is an international copyright law. It allows people who are blind, have low vision, or have print disabilities to access books and other material in accessible formats (Braille, audio, digital, large print, DAISY, etc.). Thanks to the Marrakesh Treaty, people who need to use accessible formats will not have to obtain permission from copyright holders, which means accessing the written word will be much easier.

2. Why is the Marrakesh Treaty needed?

The Marrakesh Treaty meets an enormous global need among people with vision and print disabilities by providing access to books and other published material in accessible formats. Right now, copyright laws make it very difficult for people to have books in formats other than print. The result is that people with vision and print disabilities don't have access to the powerful world of knowledge that others do. The Marrakesh Treaty provides access to the written word, while also protecting the copyright holders from potential abuse.

3. How would the Marrakesh Treaty enable people with vision and print disabilities to access published works in accessible formats?

The treaty gives permission to "Authorized entities" to create accessible versions of published materials and share those with "beneficiaries" at no cost. An "Authorized entity" is a government-recognized entity that provides education, instructional training, adaptive reading or information access to beneficiary persons on a non-profit basis. The treaty defines "beneficiary persons" as people who are blind, with visual impairment, or otherwise unable to hold or manipulate a book. The treaty also allows authorized entities to exchange accessible works across national borders with each other, which reduces duplication and cost. Authorized entities can give accessible works to individuals directly, too.

4. How does the Marrakesh Treaty protect copyright holders?

The treaty strictly preserves copyrights and protects against potential abuse. Practical means to certify user eligibility and other technical safeguards are provided through authorized entities such as government agencies and certified schools for the blind in each country.

5. Why is it important for my country to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty?

The Marrakesh Treaty was adopted on June 27, 2013. Over 80 countries have signed it, which means that they support it. However, 20 countries need to ratify it for the treaty to “come into force,” which means that it has legal force and effect. A list of countries that have ratified the treaty can be found here:

http://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/ShowResults.jsp?lang=en&treaty_id=843