Android Talkback Keyboard Commands

Android's Talkback accessibility service includes basic keyboard navigation, which is available in most apps. Talkback must be enabled for most of these keyboard commands to work, which can be done under Settings, Accessibility, Talkback (Settings, Accessibility, Vision, Talkback on Samsung devices). The following assumes that the latest version of Talkback is installed on the device, which is v13.1 as of the time of this document. We will cover the keyboard commands introduced in Talkback version 13.1, which is the minimum recommended version for accessibility test environments. The most up-to-date version of these commands can always be found at: [*https://support.google.com/accessibility/android/answer/6110948?hl=en*](https://support.google.com/accessibility/android/answer/6110948?hl=en)

**Basic Navigation**

Most commands are performed with a combination of the Alt key plus another key or set of keys. To move to the next element on a page, press Alt+Right Arrow. This is analogous to doing a swipe right gesture on the touchscreen. Conversely, Alt+Left Arrow moves back to the previous element. To move to the first item on the page, use Alt+Control+Left Arrow, and to move to the last item on the page, use Alt+Control+Right Arrow. Use Alt+Enter to activate the selected element, and Alt+Shift+Enter to long press (touch and hold) the element.

Note: You may notice that pressing just the arrow keys also sometimes moves around the screen. This is a legacy feature, which benefits users of Android 2.3 and earlier when touchscreen accessibility was not available. Since it is now assumed that users will be on a device with Android 4.1 or greater, using just the arrow keys is considered an unpredictable method of navigation and should not be used for most testing.

**Changing Navigation Elements**

Talkback lets you change the level of granularity used for navigation, making it possible to navigate by small units like characters or large chunks such as paragraphs. To cycle between these settings, press Alt+Plus or Alt+Minus. Typically, apps should be tested with the default setting, which should stop once for each swipeable element.

When using an app with web content or browsing a web page using Chrome, additional elements such as Controls, Lists, and Headings are added to this list. Controls refer to form controls such as edit boxes or radio buttons. Lists and Headings refer to items with the list or heading HTML tags. Using headings and form controls that conform to web standards and are properly labeled will allow Talkback users to navigate using these granularity levels, allowing for a more efficient web experience.

**Chrome-Specific Commands**

The following commands can be used with the Chrome browser to navigate web content:

* Next button: Alt+B
* Previous button: Alt+Shift+B
* Next control: Alt+C
* Previous control: Alt+Shift+C
* Next ARIA landmark: Alt+D
* Previous ARIA landmark: Alt+Shift+D
* Next edit field: Alt+E
* Previous edit field: Alt+Shift+E
* Next heading: Alt+H
* Previous heading: Alt+Shift+H

**Additional Commands**

Some additional Talkback keyboard commands that aid in navigation include:

* Alt+Control+Backspace: Go back to the previous page. This command is identical to pressing the Back button on a phone or tablet.
* Alt+Control+H: Go to the home screen
* Alt+Control+R: Open recent apps
* Alt+Control+N: Open notification shade
* Alt+Control+Slash: Search for text on screen
* Alt+Shift+Z: Pause or resume Talkback

**Inputting Text**

As long as a keyboard is connected, it will generally be available for text input. When a user enters an editable field, they can begin typing immediately as long as the field is or emulates a standard control. Regular arrow keys can be used to review previously entered text. To adjust the value of a combo box, navigate to the element and then press Alt+Enter to select it.

**Using Chrome Without a Screen Reader**

Some users, especially those with mobility impairments, may choose to use a keyboard without Talkback enabled. Keyboard testing should be performed to ensure that all web page elements can be accessed. While on a web page, use tab and Shift+Tab to move forward and backward through the page. Each actionable element should be included in the tab order in logical order. Enter can be used to activate the currently focused item in this mode.

**Reassigning Shortcut Keys**

The keyboard shortcuts above can be reassigned. The most practical reason for doing this is to get around bugs in some Bluetooth keyboards that don't allow for all multiple-key commands. To do this, go to Accessibility, Talkback, Talkback Settings, Manage Keyboard Shortcuts.

This policy will be reviewed, on an [annual] basis, by the United Web Accessibility Coordinator and key stakeholders to ensure that it is up to date and in line with the original purpose.