# May 2025 BT Speak Update Release Notes

Blazie Technologies is pleased to offer an exciting feature-packed update for the month of May. New features include a universal clipboard that functions across traditional and desktop modes with automatic forward and back translation between text and Braille, enhanced editor commands, improved welcome screen and help file navigation, and a custom NFB Newsline application. Keep reading to learn all about all the new features the May 2025 BT Speak update has to offer.

## Quick Instructions for Updating Your BT Speak

1. Ensure that your BT Speak is connected to a Wi-Fi network and that your battery level is at 40% or higher.
2. Type O-Chord for the Options menu.
3. Type O for Operating System.
4. Type S for System Administration.
5. Type U to Check for Updates.
6. Your BT Speak should tell you that a new update is available and will ask if you’d like to install it. Press the letter Y to begin the installation.
7. The BT Speak will download and install the update. Once BT Speak restarts, you will be able to start enjoying the new update.

## Universal Clipboard

BT Speak now includes a significantly improved clipboard, allowing you to cut, copy, and paste text across all environments- whether you’re in the editor, most Traditional Mode applications and even Desktop Mode. For example, you can copy text from the editor and paste it into LibreOffice Writer or Thunderbird, and vice versa, from an email in Thunderbird into a file in the editor.  
When working with Braille files inside the editor, BT Speak automatically back-translates copied content into text and translates pasted text into Braille. For example, if you copy contracted Braille from a file in the editor and paste it into a Thunderbird email, the pasted content will be automatically translated to text. Likewise, copying text from an application and pasting it into a Contracted Braille file in the editor will automatically translate the text according to your active Braille table. Please note that if you copy text to the clipboard from a Braille file and then change your Braille table, any paste operations will be based on the original copied Braille and will not reflect the newly changed table.  
These new capabilities make the clipboard even more versatile.

### Standard Clipboard Commands Are Now Available in the Editor

We’ve added support for more widely recognized keyboard shortcuts to make editing easier and more intuitive. To enter Control letters, enter the letter along with dots 7 and 8. For example, enter Ctrl+C with dots 1, 4, 7, and 8.

* Select All Text: Ctrl+A
* Copy Text to the Clipboard: Ctrl+C
* Cut Text to the Clipboard: Ctrl+X
* Delete line or selection: Ctrl+D
* Paste Text From the Clipboard: Ctrl+V
* Redo Last Action: Ctrl+Y
* Undo Last Action: Ctrl+ZThese commands will be familiar to those who are accustomed to performing such tasks in other operating systems such as Windows or Mac.

### Standard Clipboard Commands in Application Prompts

All clipboard commands, except Redo and Undo, can be used in text input prompts found within applications. As input prompts are limited to one line of text, only the first line of the clipboard contents will be pasted to input fields.  
For example, if you have text on the clipboard and move to an input prompt in the calculator or YouTube search, you can use Control+ V (V with dots 7-8) to paste the first line of the clipboard into the field. Like the editor, your input mode setting for Computer or Literary Braille is honored.  
You can also use Control+C to copy the text from the input prompt or Control+X to cut the text from the prompt, placing that text on the clipboard.  
You can also type Control+D or Control+K to delete any text typed in to the prompt without cutting the text to the clipboard.  
Please note: Input prompts in AI Chat, Blackjack, and Hangman are currently not compatible with the clipboard. Most application prompts only accept a single line of text.

### More Details on New Editor Commands

We have rearranged some of the editor commands previously bound to Control characters to different keys, to accommodate the new universal cut, copy, paste, and undo operations.  
Notably, Control+X previously saved and closed the current file. This function has been moved to Meta X. It is still available from the editor menu.  
In addition to the new Control Key mappings, we have retained all existing chord commands for cut, copy, paste, etc. such as C-8-Chord (copy to clipboard) and Dots 3-4-6-Chord (paste). However, we recommend using the new Control key versions.  
The full list of Changed Editor Commands includes the following:

* Control A: Select all. The mark is placed at the top of the file and the cursor placed at the end of the file.
* Control C: Copy line or selection to clipboard
* Control D: Delete (zap) line or selection without cutting to the clipboard - low-D-7-8-Chord. If you have marked a selection, you can delete it with this command.
* Control K: cut line or cut selection to clipboard. Retained for compatibility. This is the Same as Control X in the main editor.
* Control U: Paste in Nano retained for Nano compatibility (same as Control V)
* Control V: Paste text from the clipboard
* Control X: Cut line or selection to clipboard
* Control Y: redo last undone operation
* Control Z: Undo last operation
* Dots 4-5-6-7-Chord: Cut from cursor to end of file
* Meta J: activate the link closest to the cursor on the current line
* Meta M: enable/disable Markdown rendering in editor and file-viewer
* Meta X: Close file and save changes (was previously bound to Control X)
* Meta Z: Cancel (same as Z-Chord)

### Other Editor Changes

* In the Delete menu (d-chord), we added D for delete line or selection. This is the same as Control+D.
* In the paste menu (p-chord), we added the ability to insert an ASCII character by entering its number in text files. Press the letter I from the Paste menu, which is the shortcut key for ASCII Code. Enter the ASCII number using literary or computer Braille and press enter. This command is currently only available from the Paste Menu and it allows entry of various characters, including backslash, currency, accented characters, and Roman letter variants into your text file. This feature is not available in Braille files, as ASCII special characters are not applicable. If you believe there is a use case for this feature in Braille files, please let us know.

## Introducing Smart Reader - More Flexibility When Viewing Help Files, Articles and Other Information

BT Speak’s new Smart Reader is now used for viewing read-only content (such as BT Speak help topics, articles from Wikipedia, books from the Bible app, publications from NFB Newsline, and more). Smart Reader is based on BT Speak’s editor, making nearly all of the standard editor features available when reading. This includes clipboard support, precise navigation, and text searching capability. For example, when you’re reading one of our help files, you can now use standard editor commands to search for text, mark and copy selected blocks of text. Want to email a part of a Wikipedia article to your friend? Search for a particular text string in the Bible? Now you can.  
If the file contains headings, this means that you can now press dots 2-3-6-chord or dots 3-5-6-chord to move to the previous or next heading, respectively. You can also use N-Chord to bring up the Navigation Menu and press H for next heading. If the help file contains links, you can press enter (dot 8) on the link to activate it (see Improved Markdown Support).

## Improved Markdown Support

The editor now recognizes markdown links in text files, which can open web links, files, audio, and other resources. Headings, bulleted and numbered lists are also supported. Files with a .md extension automatically enable Markdown rendering, but you can turn this feature on or off on any file using Meta M. To enter Meta M, type M along with dot 8.  
To open a link while in Smart Reader or the Welcome Screen, press Enter (dot 8) with your cursor on the line containing the link.  
If you are in a file that can be edited, you can use Meta J to jump to the link on the current line, the same as enter in a protected file.

## Updated Applications Menu

The Applications menu has been slightly updated. The Specialized category has been removed and its applications have been moved into the following newly added categories:

* Library: L
* Education: EThe Library category now includes the Bible app and the NFB Newsline app (released in this update), with more services planned in a future update. The Education category includes BT Learn and Morse Code.

## BT Speak Now Includes NFB Newsline®

We are thrilled to be able to offer the NFB Newsline® application for customers who have an NFB Newsline account. NFB Newsline is a free service which provides access to over 500 newspapers and magazines to residents of the United States of America.  
Note: Blazie Technologies does not provide NFB Newsline accounts to our customers.  
To determine whether you are eligible to subscribe to NFB Newsline, you must complete an application. There are several ways to do this, including requesting one by reaching out to  
[your local NLS affiliate library.](https://www.loc.gov/nls/find-your-library/)  
You can also request an application by calling the National Federation of the Blind at 866-504-7300. You can also fill out an online application by going to  
<https://www.nfbnewsline.net/Nl2/NL2NewUserReqInput.jsp>  
Once you have an NFB Newsline identification number and passcode, you will be able to access the service through our NFB Newsline application.

### Introduction to the NFB Newsline Application

You will find NFB Newsline by going to Options, Applications, Library.  
Once you open NFB Newsline, you will find the following options, along with their shortcut keys:

* Favorites: F
* Breaking News: B
* Publications by State: P
* National Newspapers: N
* International Newspapers: I
* Magazines: M
* Spanish Publications: e
* All Publications: A
* Search Publications: S
* Read Downloaded Publications: R
* Download Favorites: D
* Sign Out of Newsline: OWhen you access one of these options for the first time, you will be asked to enter your NFB Newsline identification number and passcode.

### A Note About Reading Publications

NFB Newsline app publications now load in our new Smart Reader. This means you can tap into editor features such as the find command to quickly locate text, copy article text to the clipboard, and precisely navigate article text, while reading publications.

### Favorites: F

This category allows you to read or download publications which you previously added to the favorites list tied to your Newsline account. Selecting a publication displays a menu of choices (see Publication Choices Menu).

### Breaking News: B

Publications in this category get updated throughout the day, and include ABC News,  
Android Central, etc. Selecting a publication displays a menu of choices (see Publication Choices Menu).

### Publications by State: P

This category provides publications grouped by each US State and Puerto Rico.  
Selecting a publication displays a menu of choices (see Publication Choices Menu).

### National Newspapers: N

This category provides a list of national publications from the United States, such as the New York Times, USA Today, and more. Selecting a publication displays a menu of choices (see Publication Choices Menu).

### International Newspapers: I

This category includes international publications, such as the Jerusalem Post, the London Telegraph, etc. Selecting a publication displays a menu of choices (see Publication Choices Menu).

### Magazines: M

Selecting Magazines will initially provide a list of categories, such as All Magazines, Blindness Specific, News and Commentary, etc. Selecting a category presents a list of magazines for that category. Selecting a magazine displays a menu of choices (see Publication Choices Menu).

### Spanish Publications: E

This provides a list of publications in the Spanish language. Please note that to read the publications in this category with the proper pronunciation, you will need to manually choose a Spanish voice from one of the text to speech engines. Once you select a publication in this category, you will be presented with the Publication Choices Menu (see below).

### All Publications: A

This category provides a list of all of the available newspapers, magazines and other news services offered by NFB Newsline. Once you select a publication in this category, you will be presented with the Publication Choices Menu (see below).

### Search for a Publication: S

This option allows you to find a publication by entering part of its name. When you select this option, BT Speak says “publication?” Enter part of the publication’s name that you want to read, followed by enter. For example, if you’re looking for the Philadelphia Inquirer, you could type “Philadelphia” or “Phila” without the quotes, followed by enter.  
You will be presented with a list of search results. Once you find the publication that you wanted, press enter and you will be presented with the familiar options for Read, Download, adding or removing from favorites and View Information.

### Publication Choices Menu

Selecting a publication from the menu choices described above will present the following options:

* Read: This option opens the publication for reading within the application instead of saving a copy to your BT Speak. Upon selecting this option, you will be presented with a list of publication subsections (egs. Business, Sports, etc.). The first option of this list ‘Full Publication Text’ will open the full text article for reading instead of a particular article. Selecting a subsection (egs. Business) will load a list of that section’s articles. Choose an article to open it in the Smart Reader.
* Download: This option will download the publication to your BT Speak and save it to the Library/Newsline folder of your Home directory. Newsline downloads the entire Daisy 2.0 article directory, but once downloaded, you may read the article offline within Smart Reader by choosing the Read Downloaded Publications option from the NFB Newsline app’s main menu.
* Add to Favorites (or Remove From Favorites): Select this option to add the publication to your favorites. It will be linked to your NFB Newsline account and available across all your devices.
* View Information: This option will open issue details and dates for the selected publication in Smart Reader.

### Read Downloaded Publications: R

This option provides a list of publications you have downloaded to your BT Speak.  
Pressing enter on any of these publications provides the following options:

* Read
* Delete From Your Library: If you choose to delete a publication from your library, you will receive confirmation that the publication has been removed.You can also remove any downloaded publications via the file browser by navigating to home/pi/Library/Newsline.  
  Once you’re in this directory, you can then remove the directory or folder containing the publication you no longer need.

### Download Favorites: D

This option downloads the current issues of each publication in your favorites for offline reading. You can read these downloaded publications by going to Read Downloaded Publications from the main NFB Newsline menu.

### Sign Out of Newsline: O

This option signs you out of the Newsline service.  
If you select this option, you will be asked to enter your identification number and passcode the next time you attempt to access any of the services from the NFB Newsline application.

## Changes and Additions to Help Files and the Welcome Screen

* The Welcome screen and all help files now open with Markdown rendering enabled. Headings and links, as well as bulleted and numbered lists, are recognized in this mode. One of the benefits of this change is that we now have links in the help files which take you to other relevant content. To activate a link in one of these files, press enter (Dot 8) when on the line which contains the link. If you have activated a link that takes you to a different file, pressing Z-chord returns you to the file you were previously reading.
* The Welcome Screen also contains links to recommended help topics as well as to the audio getting started tutorial.You can open the new Welcome screen by typing E-chord to open the Editor menu, followed by the letter w.
* The Getting Started guide has been updated and Markdown headings have been added.
* The BT Speak User’s Guide has been substantially updated and contains Markdown headings. You can find the Getting Started and the User’s Guide under Help > Guides and Tutorials.
* Some help files now have support for external links. As an example, OpenAI-key help contains external links for setting up and funding a key.Pressing enter on an External link asks if you want to open the link in your default Desktop browser. Typing letter y for Yes switches to Desktop Mode and opens the link in your default web browser. Typing letter n for No cancels the request and returns you to the document.
* The hotkey to toggle Markdown rendering on or off is meta M. This is the letter M with dot 8.Note that while markdown is enabled, moving by line or using Dots 1-2-4-5-6-Chord to read continuously causes BT Speak to voice text with formatting applied, but navigating by character or word always shows the raw file content.
* We have revised all of the help files, including providing markdown headings for navigation and links to other relevant documents.
* There are new help files, including one describing clipboard usage and another for help with checking for software updates. All help files can be accessed by typing O-chord, followed by the letter H.
* In Guides and Tutorials, the Audio Demos and Walk-throughs section includes a new tutorial covering the clipboard functions.
* The OpenAI-key help file has been updated to include Markdown links to set up and fund your key. These links open in your default desktop Web browser.
* The computer-Braille help file has a new section “Accented and Other Characters” covering various special characters that can be inserted in the BT Speak editor. These include British Pound and Yen, and various accented letters. This is not a complete list.

## PDF to Text Support in Traditional Mode

BT Speak is now able to open files with the PDF extension in the traditional mode editor. The PDF is automatically converted to text, allowing you to edit the file as needed.  
You can also directly translate a PDF into another format, such as Braille. This can be achieved with the translate option (accessed with T from within the file browser while you are pointing to a PDF).  
In our experience, most PDF files are properly converted to text. However, the results you obtain from BT Speak depend on how the source file was prepared (see Technical Details below).

### Technical Details

As with other rich formats like HTML, Word, RTF, etc., opening a PDF file creates a text version of the file behind the scenes and opens this copy in the editor. If no text is found in the PDF file, BT speak falls back to performing optical character recognition on the file using the Tesseract engine. If you are working with files that are just scanned images, OCR may take a while to complete and the final results may not be as good as what you would find with commercial engines embedded in programs like FineReader, OmniPage, Kurzweil 1000, OpenBook or JAWS.

## YouTube Stream Now Paginates Search Results

The YouTube Stream app now displays video lists in pages grouped into 20 items per page. This will make it easier to browse the video catalogue.  
To move to the next page of results, press dots 5-6 chord. BT Speak will announce “next page”. Press Enter to load the next page of results. To go back to the previous page, press dots 2-3 chord. BT Speak will announce “previous page.” Press Enter to load the previous page of search results.  
This new feature applies when browsing search results or channel playlists.

## Smart Input: Type Keys and Commands in Desktop Mode Using Natural Language

Smart Input lets you type more easily in Desktop Mode by simplifying how you send keyboard shortcuts, run commands, launch applications, or type text, even if you don’t remember the exact keystroke. Furthermore, it honours your input Braille grade, or you can change your input grade enabling you to enter literary grade 2 Braille etc. Activate Smart Input by pressing low-J chord, then enter the name of the key, command, or action you want.For instance, you can type:

“copy”: to perform Ctrl+C  
“firefox”: to launch the Firefox web browser  
“select all then delete”: to highlight all text and remove it  
“refresh”: to refresh a webpage

In short, Smart Input translates your words into keystrokes. It can be helpful when you can’t remember how to type a specific command, such as when you want to close a program or when you want to type keys using modifiers like alt, control, etc. With Smart Input, you just enter the name of the keys you want to type using intuitive, natural language and the keystrokes are typed. This is a powerful way to interact with graphical programs directly in desktop mode without needing to remember complex chord commands.  
Please note that this feature is only available in desktop mode.  
The Smart Input feature is activated by typing low-j chord (dots 3-5-6-chord).

### How Smart Input Works

When you type dots 3-5-6-chord to activate Smart Input, BT Speak says “Enter command:”. Simply type what you want to do and press Enter. BT Speak will try to understand your command in this order:

1. Key combinations: Keyboard shortcuts like Alt+F4 to close windows
2. Common directives: Simple commands like “copy”, “paste”, or “select all”
3. Application launching: Starting programs by name, like “Firefox”
4. Text typing: Typing whatever you entered directly into the current window

### Keyboard Shortcuts Made Easy

You can enter keyboard shortcuts in several ways:

* Simple format: Type keys with spaces between them, like “alt f4” or “ctrl c”
* With hyphens: Connect keys with hyphens, like “alt-f4” or “ctrl-alt-t”
* With plus signs: Use plus signs, like “alt+f4” or “ctrl+alt+t”

### Modifier Keys You Can Use

Smart Input understands these special keys that modify other keys:

* “ctrl” or “control”: The Control key
* “alt”: The Alt key
* “shift”: The Shift key
* “super”: The Windows key or Super keyThe quotes in the previous examples are used to denote what can be typed. Entering quotes is not advised when using the Smart Input feature to enter specific commands.

### Entering Special Keys and Function Keys

Beyond regular letters and numbers, you can use these special keys:  
The quotes in the following examples are used to denote what can be typed. Entering quotes is not advised when using the Smart Input feature to send keystrokes.

* “escape” or “esc”: The Escape key
* “space”: The Space key
* “enter” or “return”: The Enter key
* “tab”: The Tab key
* “delete” or “del”: The Delete key
* “backspace”: The Backspace key
* “home”: The Home key
* “end”: The End key
* “pageup”: The Page Up key
* “pagedown”: The Page Down key
* “up”, “down”, “left”, “right”: The arrow keys
* “f1” through “f12”: The function keys at the top of many keyboards

### Common Commands Made Simple

Instead of remembering complicated key combinations, you can use these easy-to-remember commands:

* “copy” – Copies selected text (Ctrl+C) |
* “Paste” – Pastes from clipboard (Ctrl+V) |
* “Cut” – Cuts selected text (Ctrl+X) |
* “selectall” or “select all” – Selects everything (Ctrl+A) |
* “undo” – Undoes last action (Ctrl+Z) |
* “redo” – Redoes last undone action (Ctrl+Shift+Z) |
* “save” – Saves current file (Ctrl+S) |
* “saveas” or “save as” – Opens save as dialog (Ctrl+Shift+S) |
* “find” – Opens find dialog (Ctrl+F) |
* “Replace” – Opens replace dialog (Ctrl+H) |
* “New” – Creates new document (Ctrl+N) |
* “open” – Opens file dialog (Ctrl+O) |
* “Print” – Opens print dialog (Ctrl+P) |
* “Close” – Closes current tab/document (Ctrl+W) |
* “quit” or “exit” – Quits the program (Ctrl+Q) |
* “bold” – Makes text bold (Ctrl+B) |
* “italic” – Makes text italic (Ctrl+I) |
* “underline” – Underlines text (Ctrl+U) |
* “refresh” or “reload” – Refreshes page (F5) |

#### Using “and” or “plus” to Press Keys Together

When you want to press multiple keys at once (like Ctrl+Alt+T), use “and” or “plus” between them:

* “ctrl and alt and t” - Opens terminal in many Linux systems
* “ctrl plus shift plus n” - Creates a new private window in many browsers

#### Using “then” to Do One Thing After Another

When you want to perform actions in sequence, use “then”:

* “select all then copy” - First selects everything, then copies it
* “select all then delete” - Selects everything and then deletes it

#### Using “>” (Greater Than) for More Complex Sequences

For more complex sequences, use the “>” symbol (Dots 3-4-5 in U.S. English Computer Braille):

* “copy > alt tab > paste” - Copies text, switches to another window, then pastes
* “ctrl a > ctrl c” - Selects all, then copies it

### Starting Programs

To launch a program, simply type its name. If the program is installed and in your system’s PATH, it will start:  
Examples:

* “firefox” - Starts the Firefox web browser
* “gedit” - Opens the Gedit text editor
* “caja” - Opens the Caja file manager

### Typing Text

If what you type doesn’t match any command or keyboard shortcut, Smart Input will type it exactly as entered into the current window.  
For example, typing “Hello, world!” would simply type that text where your cursor is.

### Working with Orca commands

You can trigger Orca screen reader commands by typing “orca” followed by the key:  
Examples:

* “orca h” - Opens Orca’s help documentation
* “orca space” - Opens Orca preferences

### Helpful Tips

* Not case-sensitive: You can type commands in any case (upper or lower)
* Extra spaces okay: Don’t worry about extra spaces - “ctrl c” works the same as “ctrl c”
* Error messages: If something goes wrong, you’ll see a helpful message
* Powerful combinations: Create powerful workflows with commands like “ctrl a > ctrl c > alt tab > ctrl v” to select all, copy, switch windows, and paste

### Examples You Can Try

* “alt f4” - Closes the current window
* “ctrl s” - Saves the current document
* “alt tab” - Switches to the next window
* “Firefox” - Starts the Firefox browser
* “Hello, how are you?” - Types this text

## Miscellaneous Improvements

* The Where Am I WH-Chord command now reports if you are in an editor prompt such as Find, Jump to line etc. It first reports your current line and column position in the file.
* AI Chat now saves a copy of your last session. You can paste this into a document in the editor from the Paste menu. It will automatically be pasted in text or Braille. Each question to Chat GPT is marked as a heading 2, for easier navigation.
* The AI Chat History file has also been adjusted to incorporate Markdown headings for all sessions going forward. The AI Chat help file links to the audio demo and also has a link to open your history file in the file-viewer for easier access.
* We have fixed the long-standing misleading messages from Delete word left, Delete word right and Delete (zap) line or selection. Now they say how many characters they are deleting, instead of cutting, as these commands do not update the clipboard contents.
* White space in a document is more accurately spoken when moving by character instead of just “space”. Tab is spoken as “tab” and all other Unicode space characters are spoken as “Unicode space”.
* We fixed a bug where help topics were not set correctly when moving in and out of apps
* In the April 2025 release, we included a change to automatically update Firefox. However, because you can now do this yourself, this has been removed. To update Firefox and other installed software manually, navigate to Options, Operating System, System Administration, Check for Package Updates.
* In the desktop, the Window Switcher has been re-written to provide a more reliable experience, with enhanced keyboard navigation with arrow keys and tab cycling
* German and Spanish locales have been updated.
* Markdown links are now supported with these protocols: http, https, help, file, view, viewm (to force markdown on), audio, tutorial (for audio tutorials) and shell. This enables you to interact with documents in different ways such as loading files, viewing help, playing audio and loading web links.
* When using the translate and convert command (T from the file browser), it is now possible to convert a file to a PDF.
* We fixed a bug in the Phonebook application where locally stored contacts failed to synchronize with Google Contacts.

### Known Limitations and Pending Fixes

* If you are using US English Braille, Markdown headings will not be preserved when you perform copy paste operations. We are planning a work-around fix to preserve # characters when using US English Braille.
* Some help files now contain links to play audio tutorial files. If you use H-Chord (context help) and start playing a tutorial, the audio will only keep playing while the help viewer is running. If you exit the help file, the audio file will stop playing.

## Concluding Remarks

As always, we welcome your feedback about this new update and about the BT Speak. Please feel free to email us by sending feedback to  
info@blazie.net  
or you can call us at (772) 214-1616.  
The Blazie Technologies Team