



The Kurzweil Reading Edge

Launched in 1992, the Reading Edge was an early piece of assistive technology equipment in SPL's Library Equal Access Program (LEAP) lab. The stand-alone Reading Edge, weighing 25 pounds and considered "almost portable" at the time, cost a relatively affordable \$6,000 and allowed patrons to scan printed materials and have them read back to them.

Visual Description

The tabletop scanner made of black plastic and metal has an irregular wedge shape about the size of an overstuffed 15x20 inch briefcase or laptop bag. The thin, flat clamshell lid opens and closes at the 7-inch highest point of the machine's sloped, angular body to reveal the glass scanner bed. The lid hinges along the shorter rear side of the machine, about four inches high.

Left to right, the front label says "The Reading Edge: A Kurzweil Reader" and bright yellow braille fades into a compact grid of many yellow dots beside the label that reads "Xerox Imaging Systems: A Xerox Company."

Below the front-facing labels, a speaker grill lines the bottom of the scanner beside a removable panel on the bottom right, about the size of a 5-by-4-inch postcard. This small keyboard has white and yellow keys with various labeled operational commands such as "Start/Stop scanning," "spell," and a series of Last and Next word/row/line/column/sentence/paragraph/page and document.

Knobs that adjust the volume and speaking speed are tucked around the right corner from the keypad.