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While it may be true that there are copyright issues at stake with digital text-to-speech rights, it is also a civil rights issue. It would be deplorable to cut off access to a book based on a person's race, gender, sexual identity, religion, culture, or some other personal identifier. And yet this is exactly what will happen if text-to-speech rights are construed only as a copyright issue, because people with disabilities who depend on text-to-speech technologies will immediately be closed off. It may be the author's prerogative to publish or not, but I don't think it can be justifiable to give the author the prerogative to discriminate on the basis of disability status. There are other ways to solve the copyright issue. Certainly the text-to-speech voices of speech synthesizers are not real competition for reading by real human beings. Perhaps the technology will improve over time and make the voices more realistic, but it will never provide a high quality dramatic reading. Even if it could by some stretch of the imagination reach that point, closing off the rights of people with disabilities is a fundamentally bad approach. People with disabilities already have a hard enough time navigating around in a world that often only grudgingly provides inadequate after-the-fact accommodations. E-readers are a fantastic *solution* to many of the issues faced by people with disabilities. Why take this away and give this action legal sanction? To put it in simple words, that's just wrong. We are not all "created equal" in a literal sense, but we should all be equal before the law.

- Paul Bohman