



E-BUZZ ON “ACCESS TO INDEPENDENCE”

Information around the world for persons with vision loss

October 2017 (17th edition)

Greetings from the Institute for Vision Rehabilitation!

It's our pleasure to bring forth yet another edition of E-Buzz to you!

This edition brings you updates and happenings ranging from assistive technology to accessibility, from training to leisure and recreation, from government initiative to rehabilitation from the world around us.

Hope you find this useful. Please do share it with your contacts who you think would benefit from it.

- **Google sets up new accessibility and disability answer desk**

Apple and Microsoft already have dedicated staff who are made available to help customers with accessibility related questions. Now, Google will do

the same in a limited capacity. The disability support team is available Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 5PM PST to answer any questions one may have about accessibility features within Google products, but via email alone. The team can be reached at disability-support-external@google.com. The team will respond to your questions within 72 hours.

Source: <https://coolblindtech.com/google-launches-disability-answer-desk/>

- **From sports to music, this Kerala organization is helping persons with vision loss fulfill their dreams**

The Society for the Rehabilitation of the Visually Challenged (SRVC) is the brainchild of like-minded people who came together to make a difference in the lives of persons with vision loss. Led by Professor V.J. Pappu, the organization has been providing training in areas that one would generally not associate with a person with vision loss. “We have undertaken projects where training has been provided in areas like orchestration, data entry, telemarketing, medical transcription, call centre jobs, physiotherapy, counseling, foreign language assistance, tea tasting and wine tasting,” said Mr. Sunil Mathew, an IT professional who serves as the Secretary of SRVC. Through the organization, a Vodafone telesales centre has been set up in the city last year which is completely run by persons with vision loss. One of the major accomplishments of SRVC however is ‘Heart2heart’ – an exclusive orchestra comprising a talented group of musicians from across the state. The organization has also opened up sporting avenues for persons with vision loss. Starting with cricket and other sports like athletics and powerlifting, SRVC teamed up with the Indian Blind Sports Association (IBSA) and Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) in 2013 to

promote football for persons with vision loss across the country and eventually set up a national team.

Source: <https://www.thebetterindia.com/114520/from-sports-to-music-kerala-organisation-helping-blind-chase-their-dreams/>

- **UAE students develop ‘smart eye’ for persons with vision loss**

What started as an idea to help a schoolmate with vision loss developed into a smart technology that will allow persons with vision loss to read. Students at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) in Al Ain have developed a pocket-sized smart reading device called Braille Eye. Designed to be no bigger than a standard mobile phone, the device’s camera uses Optical Character Recognition (OCR), which converts documents captured by a digital camera into editable and searchable data, then into Braille. Faraj Alfaraj, one of the students from UAEU explained, “Braille Eye simply requires the user to direct the device towards any form of written material and the technology will guide them to the point where this information comes within the range of its camera. The Braille equivalent of the text will then be displayed.” “The device can be used in super markets, to read bills or in restaurants, to read menus etc”, he added.

Source: <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/news/general/students-develop-smart-eye-for-visually-impaired>

- **Government launches Divyang Sarathi, a mobile app for persons with disabilities**

Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot, Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment has launched the Beta version of Divyang Sarathi, a mobile application for easy dissemination of information to persons with disabilities on a wide

range of issues. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Gehlot said that this mobile application is bound to empower the 'Divyangjans' by providing easier and convenient access of information to them as they can now understand all details pertaining to the schemes, scholarships, statutes, employment opportunities, institutional support systems and other relevant and crucial information at the click of a button. The application has been so developed that once downloaded, it can be accessed by any Android smartphone user who may or may not have access to the internet. The mobile app will be available for download on Google Playstore.

Source: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=171125>

- **'Blind with Camera'... a workshop on photography for persons with vision loss!**

So many in our country would be shocked at the mention of photography by persons with vision loss. They cannot seem to wrap their head around the concept. Why and how would a person with vision loss take a photograph? Photography by a person with vision loss extends the idea of seeing by reinventing newer ways of arriving at images. The senses of touch, taste, smell and sound guide the process along with devices that help access purely visual information. Thus, learning to respond to sensory cues as well as to use available technology enables a person with vision loss to take a photograph. Partho Bhowmick who is a photographer and teacher, inspired by Evgen Bavcar, a Hungarian photographer with vision loss, started 'Blind with Camera' in the year 2006. 'Blind with Camera' is a workshop where persons with vision loss can learn about photography and the visual arts. Over the years, hundreds have flocked to Partho wanting to unleash their imagination through photography.

Source: <https://www.thebetterindia.com/111605/art-seeing-beyond-seeing/>

- **Audazzle.... Computer games for persons with vision loss!**

After his daughter Daisy became blind from eye cancer, Selwyn Lloyd wanted to develop something that would enable her and other children with vision loss to interact and have fun with their sighted peers. With his wife Marie and two business school classmates, he founded Audazzle in April 2014, a company that creates inclusive computer games for persons with vision loss using 3D sound. This enables persons with vision loss to have fun playing with their sighted friends and families. This is done by engineering sound effects inside moving objects in virtual reality games

Source: <http://disabilityhorizons.com/2016/01/audazzle-computer-games-for-blind-and-visually-impaired-people/>

- **Central Bank of India branch in Hyderabad organizes training for employees with vision loss**

The Central Bank of India's branch in Hyderabad organized a first-of-its kind training program for employees with vision loss from Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank, Central Bank of India and Dena Bank in collaboration with the State Bank of India Foundation. These employees were trained in the latest computer and various other assistive tools that are useful for them. The first such type of capacity building initiative was launched at Mumbai at the SPBT college.

Source: <https://newzhook.com/story/13261>

- **Be My Eyes now on Android platform!**

Be My Eyes, an app that lets sighted people remotely help persons with vision loss with visual tasks is now available on Android, after two years on iOS. It's an app that connects persons with vision loss with sighted helpers from around the world via live video connection. A person with vision loss can request for assistance in this app. The challenge that he/she needs help with, can be anything from knowing the expiry date on the milk to navigating new surroundings. The volunteer receives a notification for help and a live video connection is established. From the live video, the volunteer can help the person with vision loss by answering their questions.

Source: <http://bemyeyes.com/>

Disclaimer: The information shared in this newsletter is a collection of updates and happenings from various sources.

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