



E-BUZZ ON “ACCESS TO INDEPENDENCE”

Information around the world for persons with vision loss

January 2018 (20th 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 government initiative to leisure and recreation, from advocacy to medical advancement from the world around us.

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

- **New video explains Web Accessibility**

A new video introducing the Web Accessibility and W3C Standards was released by the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) to provide organizations with guidance to develop their websites following best practices that enable all users to access their services. These guidelines were created to provide developers and content managers with tools and instructions to create websites that can be accessed by all users. The video explains what is accessibility, what users can benefit from it and introduces some examples to illustrate how to apply the guidelines. It also provides information about tools that can be used to enhance accessibility of contents, browsers and media players.

Source: <http://digitalinclusionnewslog.itu.int/2017/12/28/new-video-explains-web-accessibility-and-w3c-standards/>

- **Twitter lets you describe your pics for persons with vision loss**

Now Twitter has an option that lets you add a description to pictures. When you upload an image to Twitter via iOS or Android, you have the option called 'compose image descriptions' in the accessibility menu by which you can add a short description to the pictures. When you do so, users who have VoiceOver or TalkBack turned on, can hear the description read out along with the tweet. The option links to a Twitter support article which details how the image descriptions help and how they can best be implemented. Images aren't as big a part of Twitter as they are of Instagram, for example, but they do play a large part of some posts and can provide crucial context that users with vision loss might miss.

Source: https://thenextweb.com/twitter/2018/01/04/twitter-lets-describe-pics-visually-impaired/?amp=1&_twitter_impression=true

- **Bionic eye helps Russian woman see her husband for the first time in 13 years!**

A woman with total vision loss living in Chelyabinsk was able to see her husband for the first time in 13 years. Visually impaired in childhood, Antonina Zakharchenko completely lost her sight in 2004 at the age of 37. Now, almost 14 years later, a chip implanted in her eyes gives the 50-year-old woman the chance to have her vision partially restored. The high-tech bionic eye consists of an electronic implant, glasses equipped with a camera and a separate part where the image received from the camera is processed. The camera catches the image and sends it to a chip implanted in the patient's eye which is then converted into an image receivable by the brain.

Source: <https://www.rbth.com/science-and-tech/327151-bionic-eye-helps-russian-woman-see>

- **Louis Braille Park launched in Hyderabad for persons with disabilities**

The Louis Braille Park which was launched for persons with disabilities (PWDs) by Municipal Administration Minister K T Rama Rao on 5th January, 2018 is more than just a play area for children or for adults to spend their leisure time, vouch special educators. The first of its kind park set up at Nalgonda cross roads in Malakpet has a number of facilities besides a free space for children with disabilities.

The barrier-free park has been developed in an area of more than an acre with a vocational rehabilitation centre, a consultation chamber, area for exercise therapy, an amphi-theatre for recreational programs and also an audiology and speech department. The park will also help in early detection of any kind of disability as it is open for people and the tests will be done free of cost

Source: <http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/hyderabad/2018/jan/07/hyderabad-louis-braille-park-has-lots-in-store-for-persons-with-disabilities-1746665.html>

- **SC passes orders to make government buildings accessible for persons with disabilities**

The Supreme Court has ordered that accessibility to buildings of the central and state governments should be made easier for persons with disabilities. A bench of Justice A K Sikri and Justice Ashok Bhushan issued 11 directions requiring both the Centre and state governments to provide accessibility features like ramps, accessible toilets, lifts with Braille symbols and auditory signals for persons with disabilities in such buildings, including educational institutions, railway stations, airports and public transport. The Supreme Court directed the government to lay out a plan and provide dates by which its directions will be carried out and asked for the submission within 3 months.

Source: <http://zeenews.india.com/india/make-government-buildings-easier-to-access-for-differently-abled-sc-2066686.html>

- **Between the pages of a book is a wonderful place to be!**

Be it Harry Potter or the Ramayana, this Jaipur library brings literature alive in Braille. Since 1998, the Braille library of Jaipur has been making sure that the joy of reading is not lost to those who have vision loss. From popular children's magazines like Champak and Chandamama to the Harry Potter series, the library ensures that persons with vision loss can read by touch. The library has over 3,000 titles in Hindi, English and Sanskrit, and 1,500 cassettes. They are sent here by the All India Confederation for the Blind and the topics are wide-ranging covering poetry, sports, health and geography.

Source: <https://newzhook.com/story/15564>

- **App that enables persons with vision loss to freely move around airports to be launched across United States**

Using Bluetooth technology, the free "Indoor Explorer" function of the existing Nearby Explorer app transforms a smartphone into an audio guide that can tell users exactly where they are in the airport and guide them turn by turn, step by step – to gates, ticket counters, baggage claims or the nearest Starbucks. Besides operating with the ease of a smartphone, the app provides much more interactive data about the environment inside the airport building. The new feature for Nearby Explorer, which was developed by the American Printing House for the Blind, is being used at the Louisville International Airport in Kentucky. The developers of this app hope to see it replicated elsewhere so that travellers with vision loss can navigate an airport with a more detailed idea of what's around them and

without having to rely on airport personnel, inadequate signage or the kindness of strangers.

Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/tripping/wp/2017/12/21/blind-travelers-can-get-around-an-airport-more-easily-with-new-app/?utm_term=.277e606f73f6

- **This Bengaluru doctor gives prescriptions in Braille**

Since 2015, Dr. Shalini Shetty from Bengaluru has been able to give prescriptions in Braille to her patients with vision loss. She was based in United Kingdom earlier for about 10 years. When she fell sick during her stay, she was prescribed with some medicines and that's when she noticed that the medicine packet that she was given had information in Braille. Once back in India, Dr. Shetty approached some pharma companies about Braille packaging, but found the response poor. She found someone who could translate in Braille and was able to help her. She soon decided to make it a key part of her practice. A person well-versed in Braille helps her with the Braille prescriptions that are given on a sheet of paper along with the written version.

Source: <https://newzhook.com/story/15421>

- **Trestle Labs develops a text to voice converting device**

A text to voice converter device called 'Graphite' has been developed by Trestle Labs under its digital impact. 'Graphite' scans the document placed on its screen, converts it into digital content and then reads out loud for the user. Similar devices are available in

international markets too. However, 'Graphite' is specially designed for Indian languages. Its Hindi and Marathi pronunciations are more accurate than other such devices in the market.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/nashik/vernacular-reader-for-visually-imapired->

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

For any comments, suggestions and queries, please contact:

HelpLine Services

Ph: 040 30612841/30612842

Email: rehabhelpline@lvpei.org