

The Bulletin

Number 12, Friday 29th July 2016

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Check [The Bulletin archive](#) for back issues!

SVRC PD and Workshops

Upcoming SVRC workshops and PD days include:

Online Webinar 9:30-10:30 JAWS Basics (online training), Glen Morrow	4 August
Low Vision Day	Tuesday 9 August
Skill Power – Focus on brailleing students 9:30-11:00 Including braille reading students in classroom and instrumental music sessions , Lea Nagel 11:30-1:00 PowerPoint with JAWS or NVDA , Lea Nagel	Wednesday 17 August
Skill Power – Focus on low vision	Tuesday 30 August

Please request a topic – choose your own adventure! – contact us via email or phone; and please register online for workshops and PD.

SVRC Professional Development 2016

Glen Morrow and Emily White had a great Apple in Education for VI where participants had the opportunity to enjoy Macbook and iPad accessibility and skills that they learned on the day! We are grateful to Emily for coming out to Donvale from her other life as a doctoral student at Melbourne University to fill in for Lyn who is currently on leave.

Winners of the Ballyland Magic App!

For the past month or so, the SVRC in conjunction with Sonokids, have run a competition to receive a free copy of Ballyland Magic App.

Ballyland is a terrific, educational and fun iPad game specifically designed for children with vision impairments to learn and practice touch gestures for VoiceOver, Apple's built-in screen reader.

[More information about Ballyland](#) is available via the website.

Free copies will be sent to our winners, **Kelle** and **Katrina**.

Congratulations to both recipients and we hope you and your families enjoy your adventures in Ballyland.



20th Nation to Ratify Marrakesh Treaty

Thanks Marion for this information!

In late June 2016, Canada became the 20th nation to ratify the [Marrakesh Treaty](#), which will significantly increase the number of braille and audio books available to people who are visually impaired or otherwise unable to read print materials.

Australia signed the Treaty on 24 June 2014.

The United States has not yet ratified the Marrakesh Treaty. The Obama administration [sent the Marrakesh Treaty to the Senate](#) in February 2016 and urged that body to ratify it.

The Marrakesh Treaty is an international agreement that will help an estimated 285 million people worldwide have greater access to books published in accessible formats such as large print, braille or audio.

According to the [World Blind Union](#), about 1 million books are published around the world each year, but less than 7 percent are made available in formats accessible to people who can't read traditional print.

The goal of the Treaty is to help to end the book famine faced by people who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled. Currently only some 1-7per cent of the world's published books ever make it into accessible formats. This is partly due to access barriers in copyright law-something the treaty helps to remove. It does that in two main ways.

Firstly, by requiring countries which ratify the Treaty to have an **exception to domestic copyright law** for visually impaired and print disabled people. This means that countries which ratify the treaty must ensure their laws allow blind people and their organisations to make accessible format books without the need to ask permission first from the holder of copyright (e.g. author or publisher).

Secondly, by allowing for **import and export** of accessible versions of books and other copyrighted works, again without copyright holder permission. This will help to avoid the duplication of transcription efforts in different countries, and also allow those with larger collections of accessible books to share these collections with visually impaired people in countries with fewer resources.

Free Download of Public Domain Etext

There's a great website of etext for books that are out of copyright and in the public domain. It's called [Project Gutenberg](#) and there are literally thousands and thousands of books (upwards of 50,000) that are freely available. You can read online or download your titles. For example, you can find such titles as:

- Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll
- Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain
- Dracula by Bram Stoker
- Peter Pan by JM Barrie
- Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen
- Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens
- The Jungle Book by Rudyard Kipling
- War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy

Take a look and begin a personal electronic library!

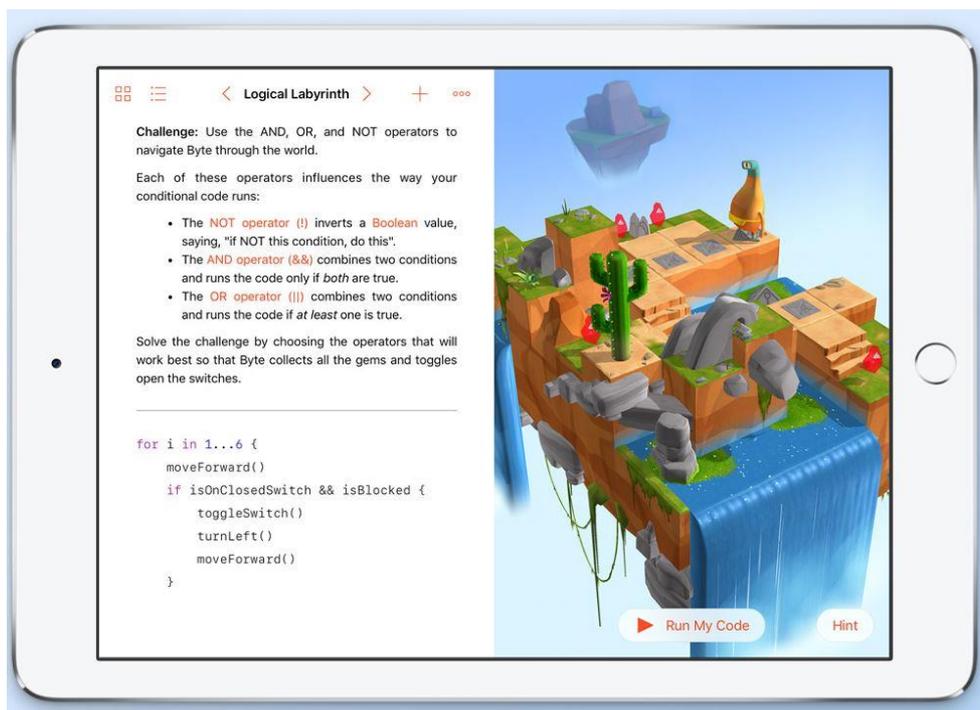
Learn Programming on your iPad!

Swift Playgrounds is a revolutionary new app for iPad that makes learning Swift interactive and fun. Solve puzzles to master the basics using Swift – a powerful programming language created by Apple and used by the pros to build many of today’s most popular apps. Then take on a series of challenges and step up to more advanced creations.

Swift Playgrounds requires no coding knowledge, so it’s perfect for students just starting out. It also provides a unique way for seasoned developers to quickly bring ideas to life. And because it’s built to take full advantage of iPad, it’s a first-of-its-kind learning experience.

And apparently it is fully accessible via VoiceOver right out of the box!!!

Available for free in Spring!



“We’re the Super-heroes”

From Lea Nagel who writes:

This video is most excellent and I’d highly recommend showing it to lots of our students!! It is a rousing invitation to any person with disabilities to join in with life and with the Paralympics.

Created as English TV Channel 4’s ad for the Rio Paralympics: “We’re the Superhumans” features the UK paralympic athletes, as well as disabled non-athletes, while the band plays “Yes I Can” by Sammy Davis Jnr and showcases disabled musicians from around the world.

Audio described, [“We’re the Super-heroes”](#) is definitely worth a look!

Pokemon Go Accessibility

With thanks to Deb Davidson!

How many of our readers are caught up with the latest Pokemon Craze? Year 8 student, Thien, was keen to find out what all the excitement and buzz was about, but found that the app is not accessible. Disappointed but not defeated, Thien wrote to the developers to let them know that the app is not accessible for blind users. He is keenly awaiting a reply and the update!

We’ll let you know the outcome!

Woolies Celebrates the Australian Paralympic Team

With less than 50 days to go, Woolworths and the Royal Australian Mint have launched a limited edition Australian Paralympic \$2 coin. It's multi-coloured and includes an image of an athlete in a wheelchair.

The coins will be available at Woolies' checkouts from 22 July 2016.

And On the Subject of Money – the New \$5 note

Source: Reserve Bank website

The new \$5 note, featuring a tactile design feature, will be available from 1 September 2016.

Each banknote in the new series will depict a different species of Australian wattle and a native bird within a number of the elements. On the \$5 banknote, these are the Prickly Moses wattle (*Acacia verticillata* subsp. *ovoidea*) and the Eastern Spinebill (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*). The images and colours of the Eastern Spinebill in the clear window are security features and are not photo-realistic depictions of how the bird appears in the wild.

The portrait of the Queen on the new banknote has been redrawn from the original source photograph, which was commissioned by the Bank in 1984 and approved for use on the banknote by the Queen. Technological advances mean more detail can be achieved in the design and the portrait on the new banknote more closely resembles the original photograph.



The building in the top-to-bottom window is the Federation Pavilion, which was opened in Centennial Park on 1 January 1901 and was the site of the official ceremony that marked the proclamation of the Commonwealth of Australia.

There is a new 'tactile' feature to help the vision-impaired community distinguish between different denominations of banknotes. The tactile feature will be in addition to the existing features present on our current banknote series – bright colours, large contrasting numerals and size differentials.

Index Embossers: Emboss from Your Mobile Phone!

The new V5 Index embossers allow braille straight from your mobile phone! It is apparently no longer necessary to connect the embosser to a computer or to use a braille editor!! The V5 includes wireless connectivity through Wi-Fi!!! Who knew?

What Did Helen Keller Use to Read and Write?

Source: [Fascinating facts about the history of writing systems for people who are blind.](#)

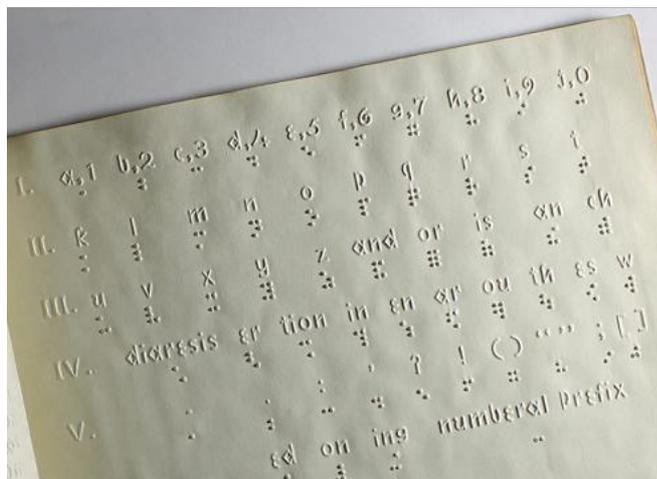
Helen Keller came to Perkins when many competing systems for reading and writing for people with blindness were being used, invented and reinvented. These systems included raised-dot alphabets like English Braille, American Braille and New York Point; embossed Roman alphabets, namely Samuel Gridley Howe's Boston Line Type; and a system that utilized abstracted Roman letter forms called Moon Type.

Although Louis Braille published his tactile writing system in 1829, it wasn't until 1918 that braille was adopted as the official system in the United States. As a 1904 graduate of Radcliffe College, Keller became the first person who was deafblind to earn a Bachelor's degree, and she had to read fluently in all of these systems for her studies. In a letter to William Wade written in 1901, Keller remarks: "There is nothing more absurd, I think, than to have five or six different prints for the blind."

Even though Howe's Boston Line Type remained the official printing system at Perkins until 1908, braille was so popular for personal use that the school offered braille slates for sale as early as 1869. Slates were metal or wooden grids that fitted over paper and allowed users to form braille dots with a stylus.

By the 1930s, Perkins had designed and manufactured several models of mechanical braille writers. Like other braille writers of the time, the early Perkins models required frequent repair in addition to being noisy and expensive to produce.

When Gabriel Farrell became director of Perkins in 1931, he resolved to develop a superior braille writer that would solve the earlier design problems. Unveiled to the public in 1951, the new Perkins



Brailier™ was tough and hard to break, with a touch so light it could be used by young children and those who lacked finger strength.

Thanks to the work of director Farrell and designer David Abraham, braille was not only the standard reading and writing system for people with blindness, it was now also easy and fast to produce.

The booklet (shown in the photo left) from 1915 shows Boston Line Type, a tactile version of the standard alphabet, and Standard Dot, a compromise between the various raised-dot systems in use at the time.

From a Recent Work Experience Student

Mohammed, who is well-known to the staff here at SVRC, has recently undertaken work experience at the SVRC. He writes:

Work experience at SVRC was interesting. It was interesting to look behind the scenes and to see what goes on. Helping people felt good. The production area was the best. I asked questions to the production staff and got some interesting answers. Shredding paper isn't as bad as you'd think. It's chilled and gives you room to think. I asked the production staff about their roles. I asked Marian and Deb lots of questions about what they do. I recommend work experience at SVRC for the following reasons: it's good to see what it's like outside of Supports Skills. The staff occasionally drop little bits of helpful advice. It's a great environment to work for a vision impaired person.

Dialogue in the Dark

Source: Guide Dogs Victoria website

Dialogue in the Dark is an experience in total darkness through which, led by blind guides, one learns to interact and communicate by relying on other senses. And it's coming to Melbourne in March 2017.

A reversal of roles is created: sighted people are removed from their familiar ways, losing the sense they rely on the most – their sight; people with vision impairments are guides, providing security and orientation while transmitting a world without pictures. Within this new paradigm, guides open the visitor's eyes to show them that the world of the blind is in no way poorer – only different.

Within a period of 60 minutes, the experience allows the participant to discover:

- How to find orientation and move in the dark
- How to identify the world through the remaining senses
- How to communicate and collaborate without sight

Guide Dogs Victoria will be holding an information session on employment opportunities in Dialogue in the Dark around late August 2016, and commencing recruitment for Guides after that.

Holiday News

Source: Progress Leader

Guide Dogs Victoria's recent camp focused on getting youngsters active! Primary students with vision impairments came from around the state to take part in the Mobility Olympics. The group visited a host of venues including a gym, the Victorian Institute of Sport and Rowing Victoria to learn about how their bodies could move.



The photo (right) shows Mayen, Luke, Amanda and Jessica, three of whom are well-known to us from Support Skills.

Sporting News

Christine Casey – one of our very own Support Skills Teachers – has been selected for the Australian Blind Cricket team to compete in the world cup in India next year. She is the only woman in the team. Yay Christine!!!!

New Staff for SVRC

We have two wonderful new staff members who have started at the SVRC this term.

Deb Davidson was recently appointed as an Education Officer at SVRC. Deb commenced in her new role at the beginning of term 3 and has been enjoying working as part of the team supporting students attending EVAC. Deb has taken up the role in a part time capacity and continues to work part time as a Visiting Teacher in SWV Region.

Emma Hall has been employed as an Administrative Officer here but has already made herself very useful with etext and braille production, creating braille books, illustrating using PictureBraille and doing 101 useful tasks to assist the team.

Welcome to the SVRC to Deb and Emma!

Finally

Editor Deb Lewis would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin!