

# The Bulletin

## Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 10

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2012

This issue was edited by Lyn Robinson, Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

### Professional Development Activities for Term 3, 2012

<b>Skill Power Workshop</b> 1.15-3.30 <b>Duxbury for Braille Production</b> Lea Nagel, SVRC	Tuesday 26 June
<b>Skill Power Workshops</b> 9.30-11.00 <b>Computers without the Mouse</b> (key commands) Lea Nagel, SVRC 11.30-1.00 <b>Maths Solutions</b> Charlie Roberts, SVRC/SMR 1.30-3.30 <b>Braille Music</b> for VTs and Music Teachers Lea Nagel, SVRC	Wednesday 1 August
<b>Masterclass – Assessment and Instruction: Two Sides of the Same Coin for Successful Literacy Outcomes</b> – Frances Mary d'Andrea	Mon & Tues 13-14 August
<b>Skill Power Workshops</b> 1.30-3.30 <b>iPad User's Group</b> Lyn Robinson, SVRC	Wednesday 15 August
<b>Literacy with Frances Mary d'Andrea 4.00 – 6.00</b>	Wednesday 15 August
<b>Skill Power Workshops for Visiting Teachers, Teachers, Aides, Students etc</b> 9.30-11.00 <b>Interpreting Vision Reports</b> Marion Blazé, SVRC 11.30-1.00 <b>Albinism – Description and educational implications</b> Marion Blazé, SVRC 1.30-3.30 <b>Teaching JAWS for Internet and Email</b> Lea Nagel, SVRC	Wednesday 29 August
<b>Dot Power</b> Day of literacy-based activities for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	Tuesday 11 September
<b>Space Camp – Huntsville, Alabama</b>	29 September to 4 October

The program for 2012 is available at: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Acalendar2012.doc>

### National Partnership - Vision Assistive Technology

From Marion Blazé

This spectacular funding is already having an impact for our students. The “Working Party” of Visiting Teacher representatives from each Region met for the first time on June 14 and has begun mapping out how we will endeavour to make the most of this funding for our students.

### Inside This Issue

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We are also looking at how we can ensure this funding has a positive impact beyond the fixed time-frame of the project. I hope there have been lots of discussions at Regional level about what our students need and how teachers should be trained in its most effective use.

You are welcome to contact SVRC for information but also your regional representatives with questions and ideas. They are:

- EMR - Rory Fraser
- SMR Sue Matthews
- WMR - Heidi Littleford
- Hume - Marg Moloney
- Grampians - Joanna Sims
- Loddon - Gill Nicholls
- BSW - Prue Gunner

SVRC has already taken delivery of 10 brand new BrailleNote computers with dictionary and thesaurus software, and as soon as they are checked and labelled, these will be distributed to 10 lucky students to begin developing their literacy through this fabulous tool. What a great way to celebrate the International Year of Reading!!

## Term 2 Dot Power Day

Report by Marion Blazé and Lyn Robinson



Thirteen kinder to Year 3 students attended the Term 2 Dot Power Day at the SVRC on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> June. The theme for the day was “echolocation” and the students enjoyed learning about animals like bats and dolphins who use echolocation to navigate their way through their environments. The students conducted experiments in different rooms and “sound tunnels” to determine if their hand claps or tongue clicks sounded different. The students sang, read lots of braille and played braille reading games.

In the afternoon, the older children wrote about their experiences.

Here’s what Ella had to say:

“Today I went on a sound route and learnt about echolocation and how bats cannot see.

We also played some ‘Thingy’ and had lots of fun. I hope I have a good night’s sleep tonight because I am quite tired at the moment.”

Here’s what Charlotte thought:

“Today I played with Zeynep. We had the same clothes on today. We met Jeff and he told me that he had met my Uncle Scott.”

(Both stories written on the Perkins Brailier.)

Many thanks to team who made the day possible especially Leanne Nagel and Sam Oxley.

Pictured Above: Phoebe, left and Ella, right, in the sound tunnel.

## Books for everyone

From i-access Online Support Team at Vision Australia

After twelve months of development, four months of user testing and feedback, and a lot of tweaking, we are delighted to launch the new online catalogue.

### Features

- More to choose. 23,000+ audio and braille books, 200+ newspapers, magazines, braille music and podcasts.
- Searchable. Find what you want quickly
- PC and Mac friendly. Peter says 'it is clear that your programmers have given some thought to the way the Mac functions. I have added to my Mac daisy reader, and I'm cooking with gas.'
- Anyone can browse.
- Choose which format to search
- Select the books you want. Ashley says 'so far I am finding this site the ants pants!'
- Borrow up to 5 books a day. Bill says 'This new site is much easier to use and MUCH easier to search than the old one'

### Can I keep the books?

Unfortunately not. We'll send you a reminder when the two month loan period is up to select the 'return' option in My Library. This will prompt you 'to delete any local copies of the content if you have not already.' Feel free to keep the magazines, podcasts or newspapers though.

### How do I sign up?

You can log in with your Visway member number and password. If you don't know your login details, please call the library on: 1800 005 965 or email: [i-access.online@visionaustralia.org](mailto:i-access.online@visionaustralia.org)

### What do I need?

An Internet Connection and a Windows or Mac computer. You will also need to get the latest version of the i-access ® Online Downloader, which is now available for both Mac and PC. There is a link to the downloader in the welcome message when you enter the website and on the Help pages.

[http://i-accessonline.visionaustralia.org/Pages/IOL\\_Download.aspx](http://i-accessonline.visionaustralia.org/Pages/IOL_Download.aspx)

### Need a hand?

If you require further information or assistance, please call the i-access ® Online support desk on 1800 00 59 65 or email [i-access.online@visionaustralia.org](mailto:i-access.online@visionaustralia.org).

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/VALibrary>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/#!/VALibrary>

Web: [i-accessonline.visionaustralia.org](http://i-accessonline.visionaustralia.org)

## Wheelchair Orientation & Mobility

From Geoff Bowen

The Perkins School for the Blind website has a video which shows orientation and mobility for students with a vision impairment who get around in a motorised wheel chair.

[http://support.perkins.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Webcasts\\_Wheelchair\\_OM](http://support.perkins.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Webcasts_Wheelchair_OM)

## Tactile Overlay

By Trent Nouveau, TG Daily, June 5, 2012

Tactus Technology is showcasing its next-gen mobile tactile tech at SID Display Week 2012 in Boston.

Essentially, Tactus has created a Tactile Layer component that generates a haptic user interface (UI) with real physical buttons, guidelines, and shapes which rise out of the surface from any touchscreen.

A Tactus spokesperson told *TG Daily* that its layer panel is the "world's first" deformable tactile surface capable of creating dynamic physical buttons that users can actually see and feel in advance of entering data into the device. So how does it work?



Well, Tactus uses microfluidic technology to create physical buttons that rise from the touchscreen to give users the experience or feeling of operating a physical keyboard. When no longer needed, the buttons recede back into the touchscreen, leaving no trace of their presence.

The Tactile Layer panel is a completely flat, transparent, dynamic surface that adds no extra thickness to the standard touchscreen display since it replaces a layer of the already existing display stack. When triggered, the thin layer deforms and buttons or shapes of a specific height, size and firmness appear on the surface of the screen. Users can feel, press down and interact with these physical buttons just like they would use keys on a keyboard. Tactus Technology expects its Tactile Layer to help power a new generation of smartphone, tablets, ebook readers, gaming devices and automotive displays.

Source: <http://www.tgdaily.com/mobility-features/63829-mobile-tactile-tech-gets-physical>

## Vision Australia's Dickinson Literary Awards

Vision Australia's Dickinson Literary Awards are open to the many talented writers from the blindness and low vision community. One of this year's winning entries comes from former VT student Kate Barry and we congratulate her. To read the winning entries visit <http://www.visionaustralia.org.au/info.aspx?page=1964> where you'll find links to the following sections:

- Adult autobiography
- Adult fiction
- Adult non-fiction
- Young adult non-fiction

And have a think about entering yourself. There are also sections for younger writers, but this year no winners!!!

- Youth fiction
- Youth non-fiction

Entries for Vision Australia's 2013 Dickinson Literary Awards will open in early October.

## Optometrists and ophthalmologists working together

Centre for Eye Research Australia, News 04 June, 2012

A trial of shared care between optometrists and ophthalmologists for patients with chronic eye diseases has been successful, according to research published in the June 4 issue of the *Medical Journal of Australia*.

Traditionally eye disease patients are mainly managed by an ophthalmologist, but waiting times are long. Optometrists, on the other hand, are more numerous and have greater geographical coverage across rural and urban locations.

In the trial, 98 patients from The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital with stable age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma saw optometrists who monitored the progression of their eye diseases, with referral to ophthalmologists as needed.

The researchers, led by Professor Jill Keeffe (PhD) from the Centre for Eye Research Australia (CERA) and the University of Melbourne, conducted semi-structured interviews with participating optometrists, ophthalmologists and patients. They found that optometrists not only met expectations, but exceeded them, appropriately detecting and referring patients with additional previously undetected conditions.

“Shared care between local optometrists and hospital-based ophthalmologists not only provides a solution to reducing hospital waiting times but also offers an opportunity for these two key groups of eye care professionals to collaborate in providing localised care for the benefit of patients,” the authors wrote.

They also noted that shared care yielded substantial savings in travel time for participants. They found a significant association between travel time and participation by patients. They noted, however, that trust and relationship building between optometrists and ophthalmologists needed to be further developed.

The *Medical Journal of Australia* is a publication of the Australian Medical Association.  
Source: <http://www.cera.org.au/news/18/121/2012-06-04/optometrists-and-ophthalmologists-working-together/>

## Battleship – Accessible Game

BG Battleship is a blind accessible version of the popular pencil and paper game, Battleship.

Battleship is played between two players, each trying to be the first to completely sink the enemy's fleet of ships. At the start of the game, each player places their ships on their Ocean Grid. They then take it in turns to fire a shot at their enemy's Ocean Grid. They mark the result of that shot on their own Target Grid. This is either recorded as a miss (by placing an X in the appropriate square of the grid) or as a hit (by placing the initial letter of the type of ship hit). The game continues in this fashion until one of the two players has completely sunk all the other player's ships. That player is declared the winner.

This is the 20th game in Spoonbill Software's Blind Gamers series of games specifically written for blind and vision-impaired players. You can browse descriptions of all 20 games in the Blind Gamers series at: <http://www.spoonbillsoftware.com.au/blindgamers.htm>

## VidKids

Source: Blind Citizens Australia Parent News, June 2012

As outlined in the February edition of Parent News, the Federal Government has committed funding to the delivery of the Remote Hearing and Vision Services for Children initiative. On 17 May, the VidKids project was launched. This project is a nationwide program of vision and hearing services for children which will be delivered through videoconferencing on iPads and laptop computers. The VidKids Consortium is made up of Vision Australia and 5 independent paediatric hearing services, known collectively as First Voice: <http://firstvoice.org.au/>.

This project builds on established international practices such as teleschool and telemedicine projects. The NBN will now allow the streaming of therapy, counselling, diagnostic services and education support into the homes of children living in regional and remote areas of Australia.

## Napoleon: Revolution to Empire Exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria

Napoleon: Revolution to Empire is a panoramic exhibition examining French art, culture and life from the 1770s to the 1820s. Its story runs from the first French voyages of discovery to Australia during the reign of Louis XV to the end of Napoleon's transforming leadership as first Emperor of France.

**What:** Napoleon: Revolution to Empire Access Tours: Visual Describing

**When:** Friday 29 June, Monday 23 July, Tuesday 21 August and Wednesday 26 September commencing at 3.00 pm.

**Exhibition entry fees:** Adult \$26.00, concession \$22.50.

**Where:** National Gallery of Victoria: Meet Exhibition entrance, Ground Level, NGV International

For further information please phone 8662 1555 10.00 am-5.00 pm.

For a great overview of this exhibition go to: <http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/napoleon>

## Mind's Eye – Blog for young people who are blind or vision impaired

Source: Blind Citizens Australia Parent News, June 2012

The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) has launched a blog aimed at young people who are blind or vision impaired. Focusing on technology and inclusion, Mind's Eye is written by young blind or vision impaired volunteers. The blog includes a simple layout, skip to content links and colour contrast. Readers are encouraged to share their personal experiences by joining the site and commenting within the blog.

One young blogger talks about how he uses his iPhone. Other blogs include using a white cane for the first time, visiting museums and exhibitions and using a guide dog. The site also offers information about starting work and enjoying free time.

Link to the Blog:

<http://www.rnib.org.uk/livingwithsightloss/copingwithsightloss/youngpeople/mindseye/mindseyeblog/default.aspx>

## Paths to Literacy Initiative

Source: ICEVI E-News April 2012

The Perkins School for the Blind and the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) have come up with a new website, Paths to Literacy for students who are blind or visually impaired: <http://www.pathstoliteracy.org>. The purpose of the website is to assist educators and families in the quest to provide literacy experience for children who are blind or visually impaired. The information on this site ranges from a basic overview of literacy to various stages of development and special challenges as well as an exploration of different media (print, Braille, auditory strategies). The viewers are encouraged to add their ideas and questions so that this will be an interactive hub of resources.

## Goalball in the West

The Australian Paralympic Committee (APC), in collaboration with the Access All Abilities Program, will be conducting an 'Introduction to Goalball' workshop in the Western Region.

**When:** Monday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2012 from 1:30pm – 3pm

**Where:** Werribee Sports and Fitness Centre (35 Ballan Road, Werribee 3030)

The aim of this workshop is to generate greater awareness of the sport, and better educate people as to how the sport is played and the potential opportunities / pathways that exist in the sport. In the weeks following this workshop, a 'come and try' goalball session will also be offered.

For further information or a brochure, please contact:

Paul van Oosten, Coordinator, Pathway Development

Australian Paralympic Committee

Tel: (03) 8633 9003

Email: [paul.vanoosten@paralympic.org.au](mailto:paul.vanoosten@paralympic.org.au)

## Launch of Audio Description in Cinemas

From: Thai Nguyen, Victorian Advocacy and Policy Officer

Audio description is the auditory narration of visual representations such as television programs, films and live performances. During gaps in dialogue, it describes visual elements such as scenes, settings, actions and costumes.

Join BCA for a showing of 'ICE AGE 4' which will be audio described. Audio description will be streamed out into the open for all to enjoy! No headphone use required. Canapés and refreshments will also be served before and after screening.

**When:** Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2012

**Time:** 4pm – 7pm

**Where:** Village Cinema Jam Factory, 500 Chapel Street South Yarra

**Cost:** \$8 concession price or \$12 full price

For more information please contact Thai Nguyen by calling the Blind Citizens Australia National Office on (03) 9654 1400.

To book tickets, either drop into the BCA office, Ross House, Level 3, 247-251 Flinders Lane Melbourne, or make your booking over the phone (03) 9654 1400, or email [bca@bca.org.au](mailto:bca@bca.org.au).

## Blind cooking: 10 tips from chefs

From: BBC News Magazine, June 19 2012

A blind contestant has reached the final stages of a US version of the television cooking competition, MasterChef, highlighting the difficulties faced by blind chefs. Emma Tracey, a producer on the BBC Ouch! disability blog and talk show, who has been blind since birth, says cooking provides many challenges.



Christine Ha, who is 33 and gradually lost her vision over a decade, made it to the final 18 of the MasterChef competition after impressing the judges, who include Gordon Ramsay.

Christine says she has to depend a lot more on the other senses to cook - taste, smell and how ingredients feel at different stages of cooking.

Christine says the biggest challenge is working in a new kitchen.

"I have an assistant who acts as my feet and eyes. I can ask her to go and get me equipment, etc, but I can't cook while she is gone. I have had to learn to work closely and communicate with her. The flow of how we communicate has been really important so that I can work as quickly as everyone else. "The advantage for me, if there is any, is that I am not able to see what others are doing and just have to be concerned with my own kitchen station."

To read the rest of the article and find out about the 10 top tips from chefs go to the BBC News Magazine website at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-18491533>

## For Sale BrailleNote Apex

Sadam Ahmed has a BrailleNote Apex for Sale

- Model BT with an 18 cell refreshable braille display and 8 dot Perkins style keyboard
- 3 USB 2.0 ports
- 1 SD card slot supports up to 32GB cards.
- 1 VCA port
- 100 10 based Ethernet port
- Bluetooth 2.0 + EDR technology
- Removable lithium polymer battery up to 10 hours use.
- Stereo speakers
- Weight 700G
- Asking price: \$2,300

Contact Mr Sadam Ahmed

Email: [Sadamahmed1992@gmail.com](mailto:Sadamahmed1992@gmail.com)

Mobile: 0435 892944

## Braille: Relevance of Literacy, And Double Standards

Posted by Buddy Brannan on June 20th, 2012

Hi,

First, do I love my Perkins braille? Of course I do.

I don't really want to talk about that, though. Rather, I want to address the question you ask: is braille still relevant in a technological world? Of course you got the answer, and, in my view, the correct one, but what disturbs me is that the question was even asked in the first place. It is, I think, the wrong question. In short, what happens if you replace the word "Braille" with the word "Print"? Does the question change? Does the relevance of the medium change? Does the answer change? What about the perceptions of the question—do those change?

A couple weeks ago, I was a fill-in host on the Serotalk podcast, where we discussed an article about the decline in spelling skills among today's youth. However, I didn't take away what was probably the intended message of the article. I took away a double standard. Now that it's sighted children who use print and are losing the ability to spell, form proper sentences, and so on, we have a tragedy, and our electronics-centric lifestyle is to blame. Think of texting as the most often blamed culprit. Yet, where was this outcry for our blind kids 20 years ago, when, as now, we are told that talking computers and recorded textbooks are good enough? Double standard much? Why is it, do you suppose, that learning to read print and having access to print is essential to teach sighted children the fundamentals of grammar, spelling, and punctuation, but such skills are adequately taught to our blind kids with talking computers and recorded textbooks? Or, is it that our blind kids and their skills and abilities in these areas just aren't important enough to give the same amount of attention or priority? Why is, pulling a number out of the air here, a 10% illiteracy rate among the sighted a national tragedy, yet a 10% literacy rate among the blind acceptable?

If you get that I'm angry, you're right. I am absolutely livid. This is only one example of this double standard where blind and sighted people are concerned. The thing is, it's a huge example, and it doesn't even seem as though we ourselves always recognize it for what it is, because we ask things like, "Is braille still relevant". So long as literacy is relevant to gainful employment, career advancement, educational opportunities, and all the other things life has to offer, the answer should be obvious.

So, as I said, you're asking the wrong question. There are probably a lot of "right" questions, but the one that comes to my mind, putting aside the "Why is this double standard acceptable" question, is, "How do we get braille into the hands of more kids and get more of our kids learning it, and more of our teachers teaching it"? Let's start there; there's much, much more that we should be asking as follow-ups to that.

Parenthetically, I note that the word "braille" was flagged by my spell checker. Moreover, it was autocorrected to "broiler". That speaks volumes.

Source: The BudCast: It's crowded inside my head

<http://buddy.brannan.name/blog/?p=121>

## RoundTable News

From Leona Holloway

I am happy to be able to advise that all of the papers, reports and other associated documents from the International Council on English Braille Assembly are now available for download in print or braille formats at <http://iceb2012.net/cms/index.php?page=papersreports>.

Kind regards,

Leona

## Introducing NimPro 1.1

From DuxNews List

Duxbury Systems is introducing a new product, NimPro, to read NIMAS files. This product automates many of the common transcriber steps which may be very time consuming. These files can then be exported to DBT (version 11.1 or higher) or to MegaDots (version 2.4 or 2.5). NimPro is currently available for \$295 for licensed DBT 11.1 and MegaDots 2.4/2.5 users only.

For more information, please check:

<http://www.duxburysystems.com/nimpro.asp>

## Student News

The National Braille Music Camp in New South Wales: Good luck to Christine, Music Teacher, and the students accompanying her to the camp. Myriam Ash the Visiting Teacher from WMR is also attending. We look forward to hearing the CD which is produced after each concert. Students attending are: Sam V. Mohamed, James B, Michaela and Emma-Mae, Alexandra, Brendan and Veronica.

## Staff News

School holidays are approaching and some lucky people are heading overseas.

**Rachel Morgan**, Children's Mobility Instructor, is off to the London Olympics. She has tickets for the Women's Basketball, including the finals, so here's hoping the Australian women's team makes it through.

**Jo Nagel**, Support Skills Administration, is off to New Zealand on a skiing holiday. Take lots of warm clothes and a GPS Jo. Have fun!

**Note from Garry:** Is that the Alps I can hear? Speeding bikes and champagne corks popping! Must be France I can hear on that approaching horizon. Lyn will be leaving soon for France where she is hoping to catch some of the 99<sup>th</sup> Tour de France in the Pyrénées. She says she might have to turn into a mountain goat to manage the roads but it will be worth it! If you want to follow the Tour, SBS will be broadcasting live each day!

## Finally

And finally thanks to everyone for their contributions to this Bulletin, especially Marion Blazé, Geoff Bowen, Deb Lewis, Leanne Nagel, Cam Phillips and Garry Stinchcombe.

If you have something you would like included in "The Bulletin" please email Lyn Robinson [lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au](mailto:lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au)

To Read the Bulletin Online: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Abulletin.shtml>