

Modern-Eyes

Working together
WITH visually impaired **FOR** visually impaired people

THE MAGAZINE

Issue 75

November/December 2009

**Sharing news, views, comments, information
and technology**

Website: www.modern-eyes.co.uk

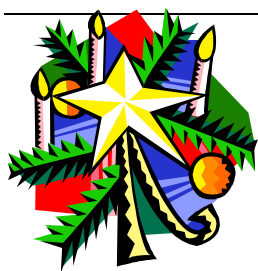
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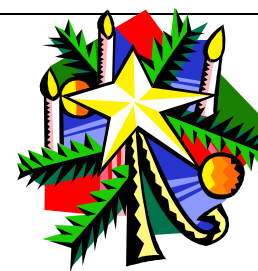
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DISCLAIMER

All information in this magazine is provided in good faith and is, to the best of our knowledge, accurate at the time of printing.

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Modern-Eyes: THE MAGAZINE is available in:

- Large print
- BRAILLE
- Audio CD
- DAISY CD
- Data CD – Word, text and pdf files
- By email
- On the website as a Word file, zipped Word file, webpage or pdf file

Modern-Eyes: THE MAGAZINE is provided free of charge. However, we rely on donations to produce the magazine so any contributions are very welcome.

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Modern-Eyes

and post to:

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FROM YOUR EDITOR

Hello again, everyone!

I hope you have all survived the rain!

Well, I guess it's that time of year again so all of us here at Modern-Eyes would like to wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

Now, unfortunately, paperwork and administration has held up our plans for the future for a while so I can't tell you our news just yet but watch this space! We hope to be able to start the new year with lots of news and interesting ideas and we may be asking for your help!

Now, it's time to say thank you again to everyone who helps make this magazine possible:

- All of you who have sent in donations over the past year – we can't do it without you!**
- Rob – who proof reads it for me and checks all my spellings!**
- Leila – who reads it to tape so beautifully for us**
- David – who keeps the webpage up to date and puts the magazine up there for us**
- Paul – who stuffs the envelopes and copies the tapes then takes it all to the post**
- All of you – who send in articles, interesting news and, most important, read it!**

So, a big thank you to everyone for another successful year.

Do remember, the magazine is free and anyone can receive a copy. So, if you have any friends, family members or supporters who would like a copy, just let me know and I will organise it for you. All I need is an address or email address and what format you would like and I can put you on the list.

So, on with the mag! There is a tasty recipe from Helen, some useful websites, some tech news and much more.

So, break out those mince pies, pour a drop of your favourite tippie – or a cuppa! – and read on ...

Sue

TAKE CARE!

PHONE AND MAIL SCAMS

We are sorry to have to report more scams out there. The scammers are using Christmas to try to scam you.

Please be extra careful about unsolicited phone calls and cards telling you of parcel deliveries.

One postal scam is raising money by pushing a card through your door telling you a company called PDS (Parcel Delivery Service) has tried to deliver a parcel. You are asked to phone a number to rearrange delivery. Just calling this number will cost around £15!

This is entirely bogus and you should not call the number. Because it is Christmas, you may easily think a parcel you haven't ordered could be from someone else! That's how they get you. If you get one of these cards, contact your local police.

A nasty phone scam is also going around telling you a bill hasn't been paid and you will be cut off. Do not respond to this as they can make it appear that your phone has been cut off and then you are charged for a really long expensive call. Again, if you get any odd calls of this nature, contact your local police.

Details of how to contact the police are below. We printed this in the last magazine but I thought it well worth printing again, with all these scams and tricksters around at the moment.



aPOLICE CONTACT NUMBERS

NON-EMERGENCY NUMBERS

You will probably know that the Police would prefer you to call a non-emergency number if you need to speak to someone. This leaves 999 calls for emergency use only.

However, you probably don't know the number to call if you want to report anything that isn't an emergency or you just need to talk to someone.

Here are the numbers you will need. Please only call 999 in an emergency.

Gloucestershire only:

Telephone: 0845 090 1234

A list of numbers for the rest of the country can be found on the website

Website: <http://policingpledge.direct.gov.uk/contacts.html>

A TASTY RECIPE!

FRUIT TEA CAKE

Helen, one of our readers sent in this recipe. Helen says it keeps well and is a really useful standby. I have made it myself and it is good!

For HELEN'S TEA CAKE you will need:

¾ lb (350 g) mixed Fruit
7 ozs (200 g) Soft Brown Sugar
10 ozs (270 g) Self Raising Flour
¾ pt (350 mls) Freshly made Tea
2 Eggs, beaten

Method

- 1) Make the tea and let it brew'**
- 2) Put the fruit and sugar in a bowl and cover with the strained tea**
- 3) Cover and allow to stand overnight.**

- 4) Next day, most of the tea will have been absorbed and the fruit will be nice and plump. If it is too wet, drain off any excess tea
- 5) Mix in the flour and beaten eggs
- 6) Put into a greased 2 pound tin
- 7) Cook for about 1 hour 10 minutes, or until cooked. Oven temperature Gas mark 2, 300F, 150C.
- 8) Test with a skewer after about one hour, as ovens can vary.

Helen says this is delicious sliced and spread with butter! It also keeps well.

Helen also says that if you double the recipe, you can fill three tins. This is a good idea as the cake freezes well.

A TONGUE TINGLER?

ELECTRIC VISION?

A portable device that allows blind users a degree of 'vision' through gentle electrical stimulation of the tongue looks set to be released by the end of the year by US company Wicab.

The 'BrainPort' translates pixelated information from a digital video camera into a tactile stimulation pattern which is 'painted' on the tongue. First unveiled in 2006, the BrainPort is now awaiting approval from the Food and Drug Administration, after which it will be released commercially for around ten thousand US Dollars!

Website; <http://fastlink.headstar.com/bport1>

Sue's comment:

I guess this is out of our price range! But it is interesting to see what developments are going on out there and, eventually, a useable, affordable tool may become available as a result of this research.

(E-Access Bulletin
September 2009)

CAN YOU SEE WHAT I'M SAYING?

SIGN ONLINE – REAL TIME INTERPRETATION

A real-time online sign language interpretation service, originally created for the recent Deaf Olympics or 'Deaflympics' in Taiwan, has been developed by IBM and the Chinese Deaf Association. Users install an application onto a laptop with wireless internet and a webcam, and can connect to the service when communicating with someone who doesn't know sign language. An interpreter from the web-based service centre then uses a webcam to sign.

Website: <http://fastlink.headstar.com/signon1>

CLOCKS AND WATCHES

APPLE CLOCK – NO, NOTHING TO DO WITH IPODS!

This cute all-white apple-shaped talking alarm clock is fully accessible to the visually impaired.

Features:

- Speaks the time as an am/pm or 24 hour clock
- Gives the temperature in Fahrenheit or Centigrade
- Five alarm sounds

- The hourly announcements can be set for 24 hours or from 7 am to 9 pm or turned off completely

This talking clock is apple shaped with a stalk button on the top which when pressed will speak the time and temperature. There is a visual display on the front.

On the back you will find the set up buttons and battery compartment. The buttons are arranged down the right. The middle button is the mode button and the battery compartment is beneath these buttons.

Available from:

Maplin

Cost: £3

Plus £2.99 post and packing if you order online:

Website: www.maplin.co.uk/module.aspx?moduleno=226059

Note:

The clock uses two double A batteries, which are not supplied.

READING ON THE MOVE?

PRE-LOADED BOOKS FROM MI-VOX

Pre-loaded audio books from Mi-Vox come ready to listen to straight out of the box. They are lightweight and small enough to fit into the palm of your hand, therefore ideal for use on the go and when travelling, as well as just sitting down and listening to. They are supplied with a battery and headphones and to listen to a book, simply put the earphones in, press the on button and then the play button.

You can also play a book through a set of speakers, stereo, in-car or it can be shared with someone else. You can fast forward and re-wind, and if you stop the book or turn it off, it automatically places a bookmark which can also be cleared and re-set easily. The following ten books are now available:

- **Being Positive and Staying Positive**

By Pauline Rowson

Product code: MV06

Cost: £17.99

- **Cranford**

By Elizabeth Gaskell

Product code: MV02

Cost: £19.99

- **Huckleberry Finn**

By Mark Twain

Product code: MV10

Cost: £10.99

- **Just William**

By Richmal Crompton

Product code: MV08

Cost: £11.99

- **Peter Pan**

By J M Barrie

Product code: MV07

Cost; £11.99

- **Persuasion**

By Jane Austen

Product code: MV03

Cost: £19.59

- **Pride and Prejudice**
By Jane Austen
Product code: MV01
Cost: £17.49

- **The Odyssey**
By Homer
Product code: MV04
Cost: £17.49

- **The Valley of Fear**
By Arthur Conan Doyle
Product code: MV05
Cost: £19.99

- **The Wind in the Willows**
By Kenneth Grahame
Product code: MV09
Cost: £11.99

RNIB Customer Services
Telephone: 0303 123 9999

BOOMBOX SPEAKER FOR USB BOOKS

This portable speaker enables you to listen to MP3 files straight from a USB stick. With the steady decline in cassette tapes, some Talking Newspapers are converting from cassette to USB stick and this speaker provides a simple and cost effective method of listening to Talking Newspapers. Simply plug in a USB stick and the first track will begin playing automatically. It has four controls and an on/off switch on the back. These controls are arranged vertically between the two speakers and the volume control is at the top followed by play/pause, skip forward and skip backwards.

Cost: £27.60

**RNIB Customer Services
Telephone; 0303 123 9999**

CLASSIC AUDIO BOOK COLLECTION

Audio Book Radio is delighted to announce a deal with www.ipodity.com that brings our listeners the bargain of a lifetime in audio books.

Website: www.ipodity.com

They are thrilled to be able to offer a collection of great audio titles – 46 short stories and 15 volumes of poetry – (hours and hours of listening pleasure) for an introductory offer price of ten pounds.

This entitles Audio Book Radio newsletter subscribers to download all the available books.

To allow for demand on this terrific offer, and to take the strain off the website server, please order up to eight titles per month until you have the full collection. That way, they can get the titles to you much quicker!

You can begin choosing titles once the full £10 payment has been made through the donation PayPal button on the "Programme Schedule" page and all the titles will be sent to you on M P 3 files via the website

Website: www.yousendit.com

You will receive them within three days of ordering and you can download them directly to your computer or iPod.

A single payment of £10, payable on our donation PayPal button on the "Programme Schedule" page, gets you all of the titles and you can order up to eight per month via the "Contact Us" form on the website

Website: www.audiobookradio.net

What's more for every purchase made, a £2 donation goes to BCAB's Eye-T-4-All project.

Happy listening!

GET FIT THIS SPRING!

WALKS FOR HEALTH IN THE STROUD DISTRICT

Stroud District Council Press Release: Date 2nd December 2009

Popular health walks take a Christmas break

Over the Christmas season the popular health walks that take place across the district will suspend for a two week period from Monday 21 December 2009.

The health walks, part of the 'Strolling in the Stroud District' scheme, will start again on Monday 4 January 2010.

The walks are led by volunteers and aim to help improve people's health as well as encouraging them to explore their local surroundings.

The weekly walking group has been in existence since 2007 and is part of the wider national programme 'Walking the Way to Health'.

There are currently walks that take place at a number of locations across the district. These include:

Health Walks (Weekly):

Cainscross

Wednesdays: 12:30pm

Meet at Ebley Mill Reception

Contact: John Little

Telephone: 07842 201 243

Chalford

Mondays: 11am

Meet at Chalford Baptist Church

Contact: Councillor Liz Peters

Telephone: 01453 887 594

Dursley

Thursdays: 2:30pm

Meet at Dursley pool

Contact: John Little

Telephone: 07842 201 243

Dursley

Wednesdays: 10:30am

Meet at Variable starting points

Contact:

Telephone: 01453 544 933

Nailsworth**Tuesdays: 2:30pm****Meet at Nailsworth Library****Contact: John Little****Telephone: 07842 201 243****Stonehouse****Tuesdays 10:15am****Meet at Community Centre****Contact: John Little****Telephone: 07842 201 243****Stroud****Wednesdays 2:30pm****Meet at Tesco****Contact: John Little****Telephone: 07842 201 243****Wotton-Under-Edge****Wednesdays 2:30pm****Meet at Chippings Car Park****Contact: Gina Humphris****01453 754322**

Gina Humphris, Physical Activity Referral Co-ordinator at Stroud District Council said:

'Joining in this activity is a fantastic opportunity for people to become more active, as walking is inexpensive, accessible for all, and most importantly improves their health and well being.'

Regular walking is a great and easy way to improve our health. It has shown to help heart strength, provide more energy, reduce stress, and help in managing our weight.

For further information

Website: www.strollinginstrouddistrict.org

Sports and Health Development

Telephone: 01453 754 322

Sue's note:

More information about the walks can be found on the website

Website: www.strollinginstrouddistrict.org

Go to Walks in Your area and choose the area you are looking for then select the Submit query button. You will be able to find out more about the walks and the terrain and speed of the walks.

Whilst every attempt is made to ensure the walks are as accessible as possible, I would suggest you contact the walk leader beforehand to let them know you are coming. Some walks, such as in Stonehouse make good starters as there are several walk leaders.

All walks are led by fully trained volunteers.

Guide dogs are welcomed. Lewis and I are going to try the Cainscross one in the New Year! Shhh, don't tell him, he doesn't know yet!!



PLEXTALK POCKET UPDATE

FIRMWARE UPDATE AVAILABLE

Update your Plectalk Pocket DAISY player today and start listening to Microsoft Word documents using its built-in text-to-speech engine.

This update will also enable you to listen to unprotected WMA (Windows Media Audio) files.

The key responses have also been improved giving faster navigation around menus and files. There are a number of other improvements and full details can be found in the [firmware release note](#).

Once you have read the details of the update you can read the [firmware update instructions](#) and then [download the firmware](#).

ELECTRONIC MAGAZINES

WIDE RANGE OF ELECTRONIC MAGAZINES AVAILABLE

RNIB has an extensive choice of magazines catering for a variety of customers including journals for professionals, titles specifically for children and numerous leisure magazines. Whether you're interested in IT, music, current affairs, health, relationships, books, puzzles or parenting, there is a magazine to suit you.

AccessIT magazine caters for both novice and experienced access technology users. If you want to know about the newest high-tech products, screen reading software and web accessibility, or if you'd like advice on making your access technology work better, AccessIT has something for you. Available monthly, electronically and in braille,

Cost: £0.63 per issue

If you're interested in all the latest computer-related news and developments, be it on hardware or software, then Compute IT magazine is for you. We look at what's in the news, review the latest products, offer help with your computer-related problems, and generally help you get the most from your computer. Available monthly, electronically and in Braille.

Cost: £0.63 per issue

E-Access Bulletin is a monthly, text-only email newsletter containing independent, lively news and features on access to technology by blind and partially sighted people. Coverage includes access to the internet, digital books, mobile phones, online learning, and digital TV and radio. It is free for anyone to receive in plain text format.

Email: eab-subscribers@headstar.com

For more information on magazines available from RNIB, or to order

Telephone; 0303 123 9999

ON THE WEB**GOOD FORM?**

Help for older people with completing complex online forms for key services such as a housing benefit application or buying a train ticket is being developed by an EU-funded research project, Delivering Inclusive Access to Disabled and Elderly Members of the community (DIADEM). Researchers in three countries (the UK, Norway and Italy) have developed web-based technology which can simplify the path taken to complete the online activity and provide other assistance including audio help.

LITE UP YOUR FACEBOOK!

Facebook now has a lite version with a less complicated interface.

Website: <http://lite.facebook.com>

AUDIO DESCRIPTION LAUNCHED ON IPLAYER

The BBC has announced that approximately 25 hours per week of the BBC's audio-described programmes are now available on BBC iPlayer.

Audio-described programmes from a variety of different genres are available including dramas, such as Doctor Who, Being Human and EastEnders; comedy including Little Britain and Jam And Jerusalem; and children's programmes such as Tracy Beaker and The Sarah Jane Adventures.

There are also plans to extend the coverage of the service to include more of the BBC's weekly broadcast audio-described programmes in the future.

To access the service:

- 1) Go to the audio-described category in BBC iPlayer

Website: www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/categories/audiodescribed

- 2) Select the programme you would like to play from the list of the audio-described programmes available from the last seven days

ON LINE MANUAL FOR IPHONE

If you have succumbed to the temptation and got an iPhone, then you can find the complete manual for version 3.1 of the iPhone, including the accessibility section, can at

Website: <http://help.apple.com/iphone/3/voiceover/en/>

DICTIONARY OF INTERNET TERMS

Baffled by internet terminology? Try this!

Website: www.Webopedia.com

This is an online dictionary of technology-related terms and abbreviations.

You can search for definitions using the search engine or browse terms by topic. Term definition also includes a short history about the term and a list of related terms.

TWEET ALARM

Do you Tweet? Whether you're a Twitterer or mostly a follower, you might like TweetAlarm, a site that lets you get email alerts regarding content that appears on Twitter:

Website: www.tweetalarm.com

THE ROYAL SOCIETY'S COLLECTION – PODCASTS NOW AVAILABLE

Are you interested in science? The Royal Society has a large and diverse collection of podcasts on various science topics.

Website: <http://www.royalsociety.org/page.asp?id=7476>

THIS ONE IS NOT FOR OLD MOTHER HUBBARD!

Do you often have odd ingredients left over in the cupboards or fridge? No idea what to make for tea? Then try this website, as recommended by Susie from FIVE's Gadget Show. It was in her top five best or most useful websites

Website: www.supercook.com

You simply fill in the details of your ingredients and then you will be offered recipes using whatever you have. Neat!

DOLPHIN-LED ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES PILOT LAUNCHES MYTEXTBOOK.ORG

The Accessible Resources Pilot Project team, funded by the UK government's Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has launched a new website

Website: www.MyTextbook.org

The Accessible Resources Pilot Project, led by a consortium fronted by Dolphin Computer Access, is testing a model for the provision of textbooks and other curriculum materials in electronic files for pupils who struggle to read books in their standard format due to problems with sight or reading.

MyTextbook.org provides a fantastic area for individuals taking part in the Accessible Resources Pilot Project, including students, teaching staff and parents; to log in and access electronic textbooks and interact on discussion forums. The website also provides

interested parties with continuously updated news regarding the progress of the pilot project.

Project Leader Jim Russell said: "At present, many children are not able to access the full curriculum because materials are not made available to them in a format that they can use and at the time that they need them. It is hoped that these trials will lead to a sustainable model that can be extended throughout schools to meet the needs of many more pupils who are disadvantaged by the lack of curriculum materials in formats that they can readily access. We also aspire to providing pupils with valuable skills and tools that they will be able to use throughout the rest of their education and lives."

MyTextbook.org is launched in advance to the commencing of the Pilot Project in November 2009. Pupils participating in the project are currently receiving training on the use of the laptops and specialist alternative format conversion software.

To find out more about the project, including a description of the project and an extensive list of frequently asked questions, visit the website

Website: www.MyTextbook.org
(external link).

EASY LINKS WEBSITE

This could be really useful if you are a Guide/Dolphin Guide user.

The Easylinks website now has headings to make it easier for screen reader users. So a Guide user can now tap the letter H to go through the headings instead of having to arrow all the way down to get to where they want to go. There are 6 headings on the page, these are News and Information Websites, News Video and Audio, TV Listings, Irish Radio Stations, Regional Radio Stations, International Radio Stations. This should make it easier to navigate around and save you constantly arrowing down or constantly

tabbing. Hope you find it user friendly. For anyone not familiar with headings it won't impact on the way you currently use the site. The address again is

Website:

<http://easylinks.yolasite.com/>

COMPUTING

SYSTEM ACCESS

This article has been sent in by Stephen, one of our readers. He makes some interesting points!

SYSTEM ACCESS AND SAMNETT.

Firstly, System Access is not a replacement to the other screen readers but works quite differently.

I still have JAWS (Version 6).

As my SMA for JAWS had lagged behind, I took advantage of the offer from Serotek of purchasing System Access together with Neo speech engine for \$200 below the market price.

How does it work?

SYSTEM ACCESS TO GO

System Access is a product of Serotek

Website: www.serotek.com

You can set up a free online account so that you can use this access programme at any time, you can also access the program from another computer, providing the web browser is at least Internet Explorer 6 or Firefox 3.

Firstly, you need to create an account from the website

Website: www.satogo.com

A synthetic voice will announce

"Welcome to System Access To Go. Please press enter to begin".
(allow approximately two seconds before pressing the ENTER key at each of the three steps).

Having pressed this key, the voice will eventually announce "Please press Alt R to continue",
after a longer interval the voice will announce "Please press Alt R again to continue".

You will then hear a musical jingle followed by several announcements:

At this point press the TAB key or SHIFT TAB until you hear "Create an account"

Press ENTER

You will then be asked to fill in your name, telephone number and your email address, having completed these formats, you will receive an email advising you of your account number (based on your phone number) together with a four digit PIN.

The next time you go to www.satogo.com, you only have to log on to your newly created account after the jingle and the announcement inviting you to fill in your account details and log on, having logged on, you are ready to go.

In order to return to your pc desktop, press the WINDOWS key together with the letter M (for Minimise all apps).

To change any settings and receive any help: press modifier key F. The modifier key could be INSERT F, NUMPAD ZERO F or

CAPSLOCK F.

A useful way to find out how to operate the program is to arrow down to HELP.

This offers the choice of an audio help which you can download, or you can download the manual as a text file.

System Access is chiefly a support for accessing the internet, email clients, it will also support word processors and Microsoft Excel.

It is recommended to studying the operating manual so as to make full use of all the features.

I also decided to subscribe to Samnet.

Not only are there a huge number of games, radio stations you can hear from all round the world, there are also a lot of books you can read online. You can download or transfer any of your files to your online Serotek library. This enables you to access any of your files from any computer which is connected to the internet. You can even remotely connect to another person's PC (with their permission of course!).

To me, the greatest benefit from Serotek is the automatic updates you get:

for example: on October 22nd, I was sent set files for Windows 7 (and at no extra cost) without the laborious task of buying an update and reinstalling the screen reader.

If however, you wish to carry out scripting, or dictionary pronunciation, you will not be able to do this, which is why I pointed out that system access is not a replacement for other screen readers.

Subscribing to Samnet gives you the additional support such as fixes: if any of the download facilities (such as what happened to

me), the problem will be fixed electronically; you will be notified of the fixes and repairs by email (your Samnet email).

The browser and download manager are very user friendly, there is also an email client.

You can contact me

Email; h-stephen46@samobile.net

Stephen Hassall



COMPUTER CLASSES

IT WORKSHOPS

Don't forget our workshops at Coney Hill.

If you would like to come to a class, let us know and we will do our best to find you a place.

Telephone: 01453 757 047

Email: sue@modern-eyes.co.uk

Or rob@modern-eyes.co.uk

We are also taking names of anyone in other areas who would like a class nearer to them. If you would like to join a class but can't make it to Coney Hill, let us know and we will do our best to encourage enough people in your area to come along!

Whether you are using Guide/Dolphin Guide or one of the Dolphin products – Supernova, Hal or Lunar, we can help! We are now including all these in our workshops so do get in touch.

WORKBOOKS

If you are using Hal, Lunar, Lunar Plus or Supernova, you may like to know that we at

Modern-Eyes have written some work books to help you get to know your software, set it up how you want it and practice a few exercises.

We have one for guiding you through the magnification and colour schemes and one for helping you to choose your voice, amount of reading and more. They are currently for Windows XP systems.

We also have books to help you get started with word processing and how to manage your files and folders on your PC. And there is now a new one to help you with digital photography!

We also have a workbook to help you if you use Dolphin's Cicero to scan and read documents. It helps you set up the program to your

own preferences so you can read things in exactly the way you want.

The books cost from £7.50 each and are available in any format.

A comprehensive guide to using the internet with Dolphin software, as well as a complete guide to emailing with Outlook Express are also available at a cost of £35 each.

We have added books to help you if you are using Guide or Guide Hands Free software.

For the full list of workbooks please visit our website

Website: <http://www.training-me.co.uk/pages/services/workbooks.html>

Telephone: 01453 757 047

Email: sue@modern-eyes.co.uk

TRANSCRIPTION

LET US CONVERT YOUR UNREADABLE TEXT!

Don't forget that we can convert documents into almost any format! We can offer BRAILLE, large print, standard audio, MP3, DAISY and, if you can think of it, we can probably do it!

We can now also put your documents onto a memory stick or SD card so you can read them on your computer.

Also, if you have CDs you want to convert into an MP3 player, we can do that for you too! We the music to MP3 and then put it onto a disc or card or stick for you to transfer to your MP3

MP3 to play on can convert memory player.



So, if you have documents or music you need converting, let us know.

Or if you know of any organisation which needs documentation converted then tell them about us!

We also have a FREE leaflet advising friends, family and organisations to be BIG, BOLD and BEAUTIFUL!

Telephone: 01453 757 047

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Merry Christmas Everyone!
And a very happy
New Year