

24 of the best apps
for people with a
visual impairment



If you have a visual impairment a smart phone has the potential to open up your world, enabling you to understand objects, to 'see' colour, to 'read' books, emails and letters, to connect with people and to travel around independently.

Ultimately, a smart phone (with the right apps!) can empower an individual with sight loss to get more out of life, to be more independent and to go beyond expectations. That's what we're all about at Henshaws and so we've pulled together a list of 24 of our favourite apps (most are free, some paid for) and organised them in to seven categories to help you navigate what you're looking for; **Identification, Reading, Social Networking, Navigation, Entertainment, Shopping and Work.**

Download, have a play and let us know how you get on.



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1



BeSpecular

@BeSpecular

Category: Identification

Description: “Let blind people see through your eyes” is their tagline and this app matches sighted volunteers with visually impaired users. The visually impaired person takes a photo of what he or she needs help with and attaches a voice message, which is sent to a community of volunteers (or sightlings as they call them). Within minutes, the user receives a reply and then rates out of five stars the helpfulness of the volunteer. This app is great because you get a description from a real human being, it’s very accessible and it’s quick. **Watch our BeSpecular video to see it in action.**

Available on: iOS and Android

Cost: Free

Website: www.bespecular.com



Download from
the App store



email to a friend

2

Aipoly Vision



@Aipoly

Category: Identification

Description: Aipoly Vision is an object and colour recogniser that uses artificial intelligence to help people with a visual impairment to understand their surroundings. Simply point your phone at the object of interest and press any of the recognition buttons at the bottom of the screen to turn on the artificial intelligence. The app will keep running and recognising objects until you switch to a different mode. Aipoly Vision can recognise 1,000 essential items for free, and many more through a subscription. You get the odd (often humorous!) inaccuracy but generally it's pretty impressive.

Watch our Aipoly video to see it in action.

Available on: iOS and Android

Cost: Free or £4.99 for monthly subscription

Website: www.aipoly.com

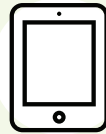


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the App store



3

iDentifi



Category: Identification

Description: iDentifi is an app that uses artificial intelligence to enable a visually impaired user to click a photo and get an instant description. It's able to recognise objects, brands, colours, facial expressions, handwriting and text, and delivers an audible description of the image's contents to the user. The interface is very accessible and gives the option to choose from three different modes of object and text recognition, as well as how fast you want the app to speak.

Available on: iOS

Cost: Free

Website: www.getidentifi.com



Download from
the App store



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Be My Eyes

@BeMyEyes

Category: Identification

Description: “Lend your eyes to the blind” is their tagline and Be My Eyes is very similar to BeSpecular in that the app matches a visually impaired user with a sighted volunteer. The difference is that you are connected through a live video connection and the sighted volunteer can tell the user what they see when the user points their phone at something using the rear-facing camera. **Watch our Be My Eyes video to see it in action.**

Available on: iOS

Cost: Free

Website: www.bemyeyes.com



Download from
the App store



5

TapTapSee



@TapTapSee

Category: Identification

Description: TapTapSee uses a phone's camera and VoiceOver functions to photograph objects and identify them for the user. You double-tap the device's screen to photograph any two or three dimensional object at any angle, and the app analyses the image and gives you a description, out loud, within seconds. **Watch our TapTapSee video to see it in action.**

Available on: iOS

Cost: Free

Website: www.taptapseeapp.com

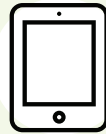


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the App store



6

Color ID



Category: Identification

Description: Color Identifier uses the camera on your phone or tablet to identify and speak the names of colours in real-time. It's an augmented reality app that helps you discover the colours around you. There are many free apps that do this though so have a play and if you don't like it try one of the others, such as, AidColors, Color Visor and Aipoly Vision.

Available on: iOS and Android

Cost: Free



Download from
the App store



7

Light Detector



Category: Identification

Description: Light Detector transforms any natural or artificial light source it encounters into sound. Just run the application and point your phone's camera in any direction. You will hear a higher or lower sound depending on the intensity of the light, enabling you to understand where light fixtures and windows are in a room.

Available on: iOS

Cost: £1.99





Camfind



@Camfind

Category: Identification

Description: CamFind allows you to do an online search by simply taking a photo of an object – the app then uses mobile visual search technology to tell you what it is. It provides fast results with no typing necessary. Snap a picture and learn more. Search results include related images, local shopping results and a selection of web results, which are also easy to share through the app.

Available on: iOS and Android

Cost: Free

Website: www.camfindapp.com



Download from
the App store



9

Magnifying Glass with Light



Category: Reading

Description: This app enables the user to very simply magnify text or objects up to 10x. You can have the light on or off and simply tap to focus. The simple features all work well with VoiceOver and it's great for someone with a low level visual impairment for things like reading menus or receipts.

Available on: iOS

Cost: Free



Download from
the App store



10

DAISY Talk



Category: Reading

Description: DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) is an international standard for digital books designed for people with print disabilities. DAISY Talk is an app that reads out text of a DAISY book using a synthesized voice incorporated into an iOS device. This app is very accessible but there are a number of other apps that will do the same job, including **Read2Go**.

Available on: iOS

Cost: £25.99



Download from
the App store



11

KNFB reader



Category: Reading

Description: KNFB Reader takes a photo of text and then reads it aloud in clear synthetic speech. It is fully accessible using VoiceOver and if you're worried about getting all the text in the photo, a tricky task if you're blind, the app will help you. It has text detection so you know you have the printed side of the page. It also has tilt assist and viewfinder assist, helping you to get the whole page photographed. It could read letters, receipts, bills, menus or any other text and it does so instantly. This one comes with a much heavier price tag than any of the other apps we've listed but can be a real life changer.

Available on: iOS, Android and Windows

Cost: £99.99

Website: www.knfbreader.com



Download from
the App store



12

Kindle



Category: Reading

Description: This fully accessible app enables you to turn your iPhone or iPad into a Kindle and carry all your eBooks with you. You're able to turn any eBook in to large print and all the eBooks (including those with narration) that you have purchased on Amazon will automatically appear in your app. Kindle Unlimited and Amazon Prime members can select and download eBooks directly in the app.

Available on: iOS, Android, PC and Mac

Cost: Free

Website: www.amazon.co.uk/kindle-dbs/fd/kcp



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Blindfold Greeting Card



Category: Social Networking

Description: Blindfold Greeting Card is an e-card app for sending audio cards to your friends and family. You create a greeting card by first selecting a sound effect, and then recording yourself saying something. After both steps are done, prepare and listen to the card to make sure you like it, and then send the card. Cards can be sent via email, text message, facebook, twitter or any other social networking app that your phone may have.

Available on: iOS

Cost: Free up to ten cards then you can purchase more credits

Website: www.blindfoldgames.org/card



Download from
the App store



14



@BlindSquare

Category: Navigation

Description: BlindSquare is an accessible GPS app, which describes the environment, announces points of interest, streets and user specified points as you travel. The most important BlindSquare functions can be accessed through an audio menu via any headset or speaker that supports Apple's music controller. Once BlindSquare has determined your location using your phone's GPS, it will look up information about your surroundings, for example, you could use it to find restaurants within a 200 meter radius or to find the nearest post office or the library.

Available on: iOS**Cost:** £40**Website:** www.blindsquare.comDownload from
the App store

15

City Lights



@CityLightsApp

Category: Navigation

Description: City Lights aims to help visually impaired people to move around freely and safely. Once downloaded the app alerts the user every time a traffic light is nearby by discreetly vibrating 3 times and with an audio message. It doesn't run GPS in the background so won't drain your battery. This app is in development though and is currently only available in 19 cities worldwide, and in the UK, only in Manchester.

Available on: iOS

Cost: Free

Website: www.citylightsapp.com



Download from the App store



16



Station Alert UK

Category: Navigation

Description: Knowing where to get off the train is not easy when you have little or no vision – in fact many sighted people often miss their stop. The Station Alert UK app allows you to select your stations and save them as favourites. It will then alert you at whatever distance from the station you have selected, so you can sit back and relax.

Available on: iOS and Android

Cost: Free



Download from
the App store



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ATM Finder

Category: Navigation

Description: This fully accessible app was developed with the Thomas Pocklington Trust (TPT) to enable visually impaired people to locate Link ATMs more easily. Users can filter their search to find ATMs that have audio assistance, are free to use, belong to a specific organisation, such as your bank, and are wheelchair accessible. The app is GPS-enabled and shows you the ATMs that are closest to you on a map and also allows you to search for ATMs in other locations to help you plan ahead.

Available on: iOS and Android

Cost: Free

Website: www.link.co.uk/atm-locator/mobile



Download from
the App store



18



Audible

@AudibleUK

Category: Entertainment

Description: Audible is an audio book service brought to you by Amazon. It has all the best sellers as well as classics, non-fiction and much more, professionally narrated by actors. The app is free but membership to the service is charged at a monthly subscription. The service is very accessible and you can try a month's free trial to see if you like it before you commit.

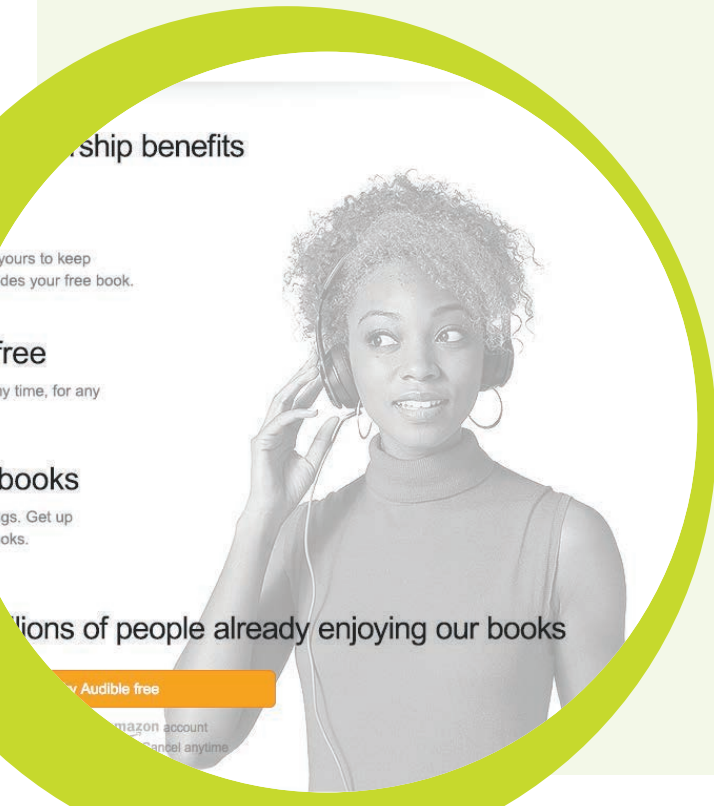
Available on: iOS, Android and Windows

Cost: One month free trial then £7.99 a month

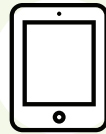
Website: www.audible.co.uk



Download from the App store



19



Able Road

@AbleRoadAccess

Category: Entertainment

Description: AbleRoad connects people with accessible businesses, allowing you to locate, rate and review them. AbleRoad reviews hotels, restaurants, shops, theatres and other venues, giving details of their level of accessibility for people with sensory and physical disabilities. It uses your phone's GPS to show businesses in your location.

Available on: iOS and Android

Cost: Free

Website: www.ableroad.com



Download from
the App store



AbleRoad™



20



@BlindBargains

Category: Shopping

Description: Blind Bargains is a great source for the latest deals and news for the visually impaired community. Browse the latest deals on things like computers, screen readers, note takers, Braille printers, hard drives, phones, memory cards and talking products. They also present articles, news, and podcasts.

Available on: iOS

Cost: Free

Website: www.blindbargains.com



Download from
the App store



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@Digit_eyes

Category: Shopping

Description: Digit-Eyes reads manufacturer's barcodes and tells you the product name. In some cases it will give you a full description, usage instructions and ingredients. You can also record your own audio labels or make text labels that are read aloud by your phone, so that you know the difference between a can of dog food and a can of soup!

Available on: iOS**Cost:** Free version available with upgrade for £9.99**Website:** www.digit-eyes.comDownload from
the App store

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Prizmo



Category: Work

Description: Prizmo is a photo-based scanner app that lets you scan and recognize text documents, business cards, and images, and then export them as PDF/Text, vCard, or JPEG/PNG. It supports multiple documents, has loads of great features and works really well with VoiceOver.

Available on: iOS

Cost: £9.99

Website: www.creaceed.com/iprizmo

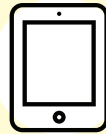


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the App store



23

Access Note



Category: Work

Description: AccessNote is a note taker used and developed by the American Foundation for the Blind. AccessNote is highly efficient, with a lot of additional features compared to other note taking apps, making it invaluable for visually impaired users in the classroom or business environment.

Available on: iOS

Cost: Free



Download from
the App store



24



@BlindAbilities

Category: Work

Description: Blind Abilities pulls together podcasts and blogs dealing with accessibility and technologies and products for people with sight loss. They interview developers, users and advocates in the world of visual impairment and share experiences and offer advice when needed.

Available on: iOS and Android

Cost: Free

Website: www.blindabilities.com



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the App store



The apps listed in this e-book have the potential to increase independence and as such improve well-being, crucial when you may be struggling with little or no vision. They will require a level of ability with technology to get you up and running. If you don't currently feel confident with technology then please don't let that put you off. We run free digital assessments and training for people of all abilities, digital demos and also have a monthly drop in group called Tech Talk. Call to see if there's anything in your area. If not we can also provide support over the phone and online.

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