**Overview of Orbit Reader 20**

**Refreshable Braille Display**

 *(Note: This overview contains extracts from a review in AFB Accessworld magazine)*

Vision Australia joined other leading organizations with an interest in the future of braille to form the **Transforming Braille Group LLC (TBG)**, to look at how refreshable braille could be placed into the hands of more braille readers:

* American Printing House for the Blind (APH)
* Association Valentin Hauy (AVH)
* Blind Foundation (formerly RNZFB)
* Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
* National Federation of the Blind (NFB)
* Norwegian Association for the Blind and Partially Sighted (NABP)
* Perkins School for the Blind (Perkins)
* Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)
* SightSavers
* Vision Australia (VA)

Until now, the cost of current refreshable braille products has meant such products remain out of the reach of many.

The challenge was to develop a refreshable braille device that could be sold for less than $600.

The TBG examined 63 potential technologies.

The **result is the Orbit Reader 20**, a 20-cell refreshable braille display that allows you to read, edit, and browse files, as well as provides braille input and output to a computer, smart phone or tablet.

The cost price of the Orbit 20 to TBG founding members is US$320.

It will display braille files and a range of text based formats from sources such as books from Vision Australia’s i-access online library.

The Orbit 20 is simple when measured beside other braille devices on the market. But at a quarter of their cost is robust and provides a remarkable feature set.

Most importantly, according to independent testers of pre-production units, the braille is crisp and equal to any other device on the market.

The Orbit 20 is primarily a braille reader. It also enables the user to read information generated by a computer screen reader (JAWS, Window-Eyes, NVDA, Voiceover), or Voiceover or Talkback when paired with an iOS or Android tablet or smart phone.

In keeping with its purpose, Orbit Reader 20 does not have on board translation capabilities or complex applications. That said, it allows the braille user to manipulate those files in all the usual ways.

The Orbit 20 has basic text editing capability. It is possible to edit within a file, cutting or copying text, or making notes on material being reviewed, etc.

You can insert bookmarks, and when returning to a book, it remembers when you last stopped and resume from that place.

With the increase in digital information and eBooks, the organizations involved in the Transforming Braille Group, including Vision Australia, believe that if refreshable braille can be put into the hands of more braille readers, braille literacy and opportunity in the blind community would significantly increase.

Vision Australia is proud to be supporting the Orbit 20 and will be the sole distributer in Australia. The Orbit 20 will be available to our clients and for purchase from our Vision Store from early 2017.

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