# Handy apps during COVID-19

## Introduction

At a time when technology is becoming increasingly important for enabling blind and partially sighted people to live the life they want to lead, Thomas Pocklington Trust has identified a variety of accessible apps and services, offering access to solutions for greater independence, support, communication and entertainment for blind and partially sighted people.

## Reading text

### Seeing AI

Seeing AI narrates the world around you, harnessing AI to read text, describe photos, identify products by scanning barcodes, and much more.

* Price: free
* Availability: iOS (iPhone/iPad)
* Further information: [Seeing AI (AppleVis)](https://www.applevis.com/apps/ios/utilities/seeing-ai) | [Seeing AI homepage](https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/ai/seeing-ai)
* Download: [Seeing AI on the App Store](https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/seeing-ai-talking-camera-for-the-blind/id999062298)

### Envision AI

Envision can read and magnify all kinds of text, describe photos, identify products by scanning barcodes, and much more.

* Price: free 14-day trial; monthly subscription for approximately £1.79 – please refer to App Store and Google Play listings
* Availability: iOS (iPhone/iPad), Android
* Further information: [Envision AI (AppleVis)](https://www.applevis.com/apps/ios/productivity/envision-ai) | [Envision AI homepage](https://www.letsenvision.com/)
* Download: [Envision AI on the App Store](https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/envision-ai/id1268632314) | [Envision AI on Google Play](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.letsenvision.envisionai&hl=en_GB)

### Voice Dream Scanner

Voice Dream Scanner can scan and read aloud paper documents.

* Price: £5.99
* Availability: iOS (iPhone/iPad)
* Further information: [Voice Dream Scanner (AppleVis)](https://www.applevis.com/apps/ios/productivity/voice-dream-scanner) | [Voice Dream Scanner homepage](https://www.voicedream.com/scanner/)
* Download: [Voice Dream Scanner on the App Store](https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/voice-dream-scanner/id1446737725)

## Reading audiobooks

### Dolphin EasyReader

Browse, download and read books from RNIB Reading Services.

* Price: free
* Availability: iOS (iPhone/iPad), Android
* Further information: [Dolphin EasyReader (AppleVis)](https://www.applevis.com/apps/ios/books/dolphin-easyreader) | [EasyReader homepage](https://yourdolphin.com/en-gb/products/individuals/easyreader-app)
* Download: [Dolphin EasyReader on the App Store](https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/dolphin-easyreader/id1161662515) | [Dolphin EasyReader on Google Play](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.yourdolphin.easyreader&hl=en_GB)

### Audible Stories

Audible Stories offers a selection of free children’s audiobooks for streaming through computers, phones and tablets.

* Website: <https://stories.audible.com/>

### Audible

Audible is a commercial digital audiobook service with hundreds of thousands of titles for purchase.

* Availability: iOS (iPhone/iPad), Android, Windows 10, Amazon Fire Tablet, Alexa-enabled smart speaker
* Further information: [Audible (AppleVis)](https://www.applevis.com/apps/ios/books/audible-audiobooks-originals), [Audible.co.uk homepage](https://www.audible.co.uk/)
* Download: [Audible on the App Store](https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/audible-audiobooks-originals/id379693831) | [Audible on Google Play](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.audible.application&hl=en_GB)

## Reading e-books

### Kindle

Amazon Kindle is a commercial e-book service with millions of books for purchase.

* Availability: iOS (iPhone/iPad), Android, Windows 10, Amazon Fire Tablet, Alexa-enabled smart speaker
* Further information: [Kindle app (AppleVis)](https://www.applevis.com/node/6062)
* Download: [Kindle on the App Store](https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/kindle/id302584613) | [Kindle on Google Play](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.amazon.kindle&hl=en_GB)

## Obtaining sighted assistance

### Be My Eyes

Be My Eyes connects blind and partially sighted people with sighted volunteers for visual assistance through a live video call. Some companies such as Microsoft and Google enable blind and partially sighted people to access specialist technical support services through Be My Eyes.

* Price: free
* Availability: iOS (iPhone/iPad), Android
* Further information: [Be My Eyes (AppleVis)](https://www.applevis.com/apps/ios/lifestyle/be-my-eyes) | [Be My Eyes home](https://www.bemyeyes.com/blog/google-is-extending-their-opening-hours)
* Download: [Be My Eyes on App Store](https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/apple-store/id905177575) | [Be My Eyes on Google Play](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bemyeyes.bemyeyes&hl=en_GB)

## Group communication

Here are links to some popular, accessible apps for group communication.

### WhatsApp

* Availability: iOS (iPhone/iPad), Android
* Further information: [WhatsApp (AppleVis)](https://www.applevis.com/apps/ios/social-networking/whatsapp-messenger) | [WhatsApp homepage](https://www.whatsapp.com/)
* Download: [WhatsApp on the App Store](https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/whatsapp-messenger/id310633997) | [WhatsApp on Google Play](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.whatsapp&hl=en_GB)

### Google Hangouts

* Availability: iOS (iPhone/iPad), Android
* Further information: [Google Hangouts (AppleVis)](https://www.applevis.com/apps/ios/social-networking/hangouts)
* Download: [Hangouts on the App Store](https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/hangouts/id643496868) | [Hangouts on Google Play](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.android.talk&hl=en_GB)

### Zoom Cloud Meetings

* Availability: iOS (iPhone/iPad), Windows 10, Android
* Further information: [Zoom Cloud Meetings (AppleVis)](https://www.applevis.com/apps/ios/business/zoom-cloud-meetings) | [“a Guide to Zoom Cloud Meetings from a blindness perspective” (free audiobook, Mosen Consulting)](https://mosen.org/zoom/)
* Download: [Zoom Cloud Meetings on the App Store](https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/zoom-cloud-meetings/id546505307) | [Zoom Cloud Meetings on Google Play](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=us.zoom.videomeetings&hl=en_GB)

## News and podcasts

News and Podcast services are built-in to most smartphone, tablet and smart speaker devices. Additionally, most mainstream news organisations provide their own content through digital channels. Try searching for your preferred news provider or for podcasts on your device or ask your smart speaker for a news briefing.

## Radio

It’s possible to listen to many radio stations through smartphones, tablets and smart speakers. Check out this TPT blog “[Accessible radio listening and broadcasting in 2020](https://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/radio/)” to find out more.