



TECHSTYLE

CLIENT NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Summer edition of our HumanWare client newsletter, "TechStyle". This is Issue 54 dated February 2009 & is our first combined Australian & New Zealand issue. So in future – 3 times a year – we will be bringing you interesting news from both countries. However the future TechStyle newsletter has been designed for email distribution – **so make sure your email particulars are registered with us. Please call us now in Sydney on (02) 9686 2600 or in Christchurch on 0508 225 5734**

In this edition we feature news on the following:

- * Low Vision solutions
- * Stevie Wonder in NZ
- * BrailleNote Notes
- * BrailleNote Testimonial
- * Breeze GPS Excitement
- * Setting Sail with ZoomText
- * ClassMate – news Update
- * Trekker Testimonial
- * Stream Notes
- * myReader Update
- * TrekAbout in Adelaide
- * For Sale / Special Offers

HUMANWARE RELEASE 4 NEW LOW VISION SOLUTIONS

It's new, it's for Education and it's a price breakthrough!

The new **SmartView Graduate** is the perfect companion for any student.

It's ideally suited for those who need to see things on their desk as well as across the room.

The **SmartView Graduate** is easy to use, light to carry, and simple to set up - whether in a classroom or library situation.

At 1.1 kilograms its super light for easy transport & being so compact, it will fit into a laptop bag. Setup is quick, going from bag to desk in under one minute.

With its optional case, there is a secure place for all its components.

The Graduate gets its power from your laptop using two USB 2.0 cables, so it doesn't have to be near a wall outlet. You can use it just about anywhere you take your laptop!

The **SmartView Graduate** can even take a snapshot of images & store them on your laptop as an easy to use JPEG file.

It can do this in two ways with simple key strokes. It has zoom-in and zoom-out buttons right on the camera, or via the simple but powerful keystrokes on your laptop. Flip the image, freeze the image, invoke high-contrast colours to read text, and save images where you want them. Cost is only A\$3,895



SmartView Mobile video magnifier has an impressive feature list that includes low pricing, long battery life (five hours), and weighs just 766 grams. You view a fold out 7 inch (17.8-cm) colour TFT LCD screen showing the image from underneath the unit or via a mouse.

Centrally located, intuitive buttons make the SmartView Mobile simple to use. Change magnification with the click of a button on the main unit or the mouse camera. It is easy to select the viewing mode that best meets your needs. Choose from full colour, B&W, inverse or one of the high contrast combinations.

Magnification ranges from x10 to x19. Cost is only A\$3,095



SmartView Nano is the baby of the group. Small & compact.

It is a handy aid for those with Low Vision & weighs less than 4oz (or 106gms). On its small LCD 1.8" (4.6cm) screen you can magnify from x5 to x20. And it's always ready to use, thanks to its 3 x AAA rechargeable batteries & auto-shutoff mode. Usage time is 3 hours of continuous use & cost is only A\$395.



The **SmartView Pocket** video magnifier is 'super lightweight' at 140 grams but packs many features into a portable pocket device.

With x3 to x9 magnification, image capture, full colour, gray scale, black/white & white/black viewing modes, it is the smartest & cheapest solution on the market today.

Charging is a breeze via the normal power outlet or straight from your laptop. When required you can even connect direct to a TV for much higher magnification. The 3.5" (9.1cm) screen is excellent for spot reading. Cost is only A\$985.



For further information on these exciting new Low Vision aids, check out www.humanware.com or (in Australia) email us at au.sales@humanware.com or phone our head office on (02) 9686 2600 & we will put you in touch with a Consultant in your home state. In NZ email: nz.info@humanware.com or phone 0508 225 5734.

STEVIE WONDER SETS NZ GPS ON THE RIGHT PATH.

"It's a feeling of being independent," he told an Auckland gathering to launch the New Zealand availability of HumanWare's **Trekker** and **BrailleNote** versions of a GPS system for blind users.

Hosted by HumanWare in association with Mike May, founder of Sendero Group, the event was attended by 100 enthusiastic people coincided with Blind Week, the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind's annual appeal.

Stevie Wonder, a passionate user of technology, said he wanted to spread the message of accessibility for the blind.

"Access to technology is so very important in the sighted world and the product developers at HumanWare understand that by creating accessible solutions, they are giving the blind the kind of freedom we previously couldn't even imagine."

Wonder has enjoyed a long association with HumanWare and is a dynamic advocate for technology that makes life easier, more fascinating and exciting. "I have been excited for the several years I've known the various people from HumanWare, and I am excited about the things you are doing..."

Trekker Breeze is a very simple and affordable GPS for people who have poor vision. As simple as your TV remote, it verbally announces street names, intersections and landmarks as you walk.

BrailleNote GPS software may be installed on Humanware's **BrailleNote** and **VoiceNote** products. **BrailleNote GPS** users can pinpoint exactly where they are, learn about area attractions, and find out how to get to specific destinations. Virtual roaming allows you to place yourself anywhere within New Zealand, determine points of interest, and formulate directions to your chosen destination.

For more information on these exciting new products please contact HumanWare New Zealand on 0508 225 5734.



BRAILLENOTE CRACKS THE CODE

The official braille code for Australia is now Unified English Braille (UEB) and braille-reading students and braille teachers and producers Australia-wide are making the transition to this new code through their use of hard copy and electronic braille.

HumanWare quickly led the response to the implementation of UEB by introducing support for UEB into KeySoft, the software at the heart of the BrailleNote family of products. **BrailleNotes** and **VoiceNotes** have supported UEB for over a year now. If you have a BrailleNote using student, ensuring that they are running the latest version of KeySoft will guarantee they are able to work in the UEB code and thus have the correct code at their fingertips.

The **BrailleNotes** and **VoiceNotes** are small, portable computers, specifically designed for vision impaired people, allowing them to efficiently produce, store and retrieve information easily and quickly - a multi-purpose education tool which can perform a range of tasks.

Reflection on caring for the BrailleNote - by Joan Paule.

Precision instruments need to be kept clean.

Steps towards achieving this are simple:

Wash your hands before using your **BrailleNote**. Hands may feel clean, even when they are not. Any slight stickiness on the machine provides a resting place for dust on the braille display or keyboard.

Store the **BrailleNote** in its carry bag at all times, because covering it will keep out dust. To ensure that the braille display is clean, wet a clean cloth & wring it out tightly. Ensure that it is only slightly damp & wipe over the keyboard and the braille display.

IT'S CHILD'S PLAY – IT'S A BREEZE!

Trekker Breeze is the most affordable and easy to use accessible GPS orientation device. Just switch it on and start walking and you will hear where you are – no programmes to load, no tricky interface or menus to struggle with and no fiddly small buttons.

For Teachers and Mobility Instructors, it will serve as a tool to help you teach your students about things like compass direction, distance travelled and speed. The Breeze gives blind and vision impaired users confidence, greater independence, awareness and reassurance when walking outside or travelling in a vehicle. It is giving them “location literacy”. You can rest easy that your student will always know where they are.



What can Breeze do for you, the traveller?

Trekker Breeze will automatically announce the name of the street you are on and approaching cross-streets. When you want to get back to your starting point just press one button and **Trekker Breeze** will guide you back by retracing your steps. You can add your own landmarks such as a bus stop, front gate or an obstacle like overhanging bushes.

You can also walk and record routes with a sighted friend or aide, for example, from home to school. Each time thereafter you want to walk that route **Trekker Breeze** will guide you to your destination.

Call HumanWare for further information or to request a demo.

SETTING SAIL WITH ZOOMTEXT.

Right now, Scott Duncan & his sailing partner Pam Habek are in Vanuatu, an island nation in the south Pacific. And they arrived there with the help of ZoomText.

On October 11th 2004, Scott & Pam began their mission to become the first legally blind people to circumnavigate the globe independently in a sailboat. They are now almost four years into their voyage.

Scott was born with bilateral congenital Coloboma, which is a condition that prevents parts of the eye from developing prenatally. As a result of this condition, Scott has blind spots throughout his visual field, with almost complete blindness in his right eye & overall visual acuity of roughly 5%.

Growing up, Scott was exposed to a wide variety of resources and became familiar with the latest advances in adaptive technology from an early age. This gave him a comfort level with technology that has really empowered him to adapt to his vision loss throughout his life. He also studied for dual Bachelor degrees in Human Development and Sociology from the University of California, before furthering his education by achieving a Masters degree in Special Education and Rehabilitation Teaching.

In 2002, he sold to HumanWare the “AccessAbility” business he had developed from nothing & began serious training in San Francisco Bay & eventually completed training to the highest level of US Sailing coursework available. Scott had known Pam for over twenty years & she expressed interest in wanting to go with him around the world. So they departed San Francisco in October 2004.

This year’s itinerary began in Australia in May, and continued on to New Caledonia, Vanuatu, and will include the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Darwin, Indonesia, Malaysia, and finally to Thailand to rest before the Indian Ocean cyclone season.

Pam and Scott are both passionate ZoomText users and it’s their primary way to access the computer. Computers are an essential piece of sailing for anyone, but especially for Pam and Scott who depend on it to read charts and maps. In addition to ZoomText, they use JAWS as a backup, the VoiceNote (speech synthesized GPS), Trekker (speech output GPS system), Color PocketViewer (video magnifier), along with traditional optical aids (monocular telescopes, magnifying glasses).

They've had many challenges along the way.

“We were in New Zealand with 60 knot winds and 30 foot waves with lightning striking more than once a second,” said Scott. “There have been very few times we've been really scared - and in those cases, there's really nothing to do but go down in the boat and wait it out.”

“The world has a way of placing limitations on you and often people see people with disabilities and have already made up their minds about what they are capable of doing,” said Scott. “Don't buy into these limitations - you can do anything with adaptations and determination.”

CLASSMATE – for Reading Difficulties

A total of 29 college bound students identified with severe language based learning disabilities & or ADHD, ranging in grades from 9 -12, participated in a study over 24 weeks at the Lab School of Washington, in Washington DC. All the students were instructed in the use of and had access to a ClassMate Reader from HumanWare as part of a 45 minute assistive technology lesson everyday. For 12 weeks students were able to take the ClassMate Readers home & work independently.

A student sharing his experience said, “Now I know why people read books; it's like a movie but the pictures are in your head. If I have a ClassMate Reader I can do my homework without help.”

The weak reader is always playing “catch up” for the years of reading experience they have already missed. With the integration of the ClassMate Reader, students started reading for pleasure & finally understood the pleasure of reading.

Over the course of an academic year, integrating audio books & the use of the ClassMate Reader led to significant increases in students' phonetic skills, listening & reading comprehension, as well as fluency. The results were surprising for the instructor who oversaw the assistive technology program. It was the first time students had been able to read material commensurate with their intellect. “Non-readers can now experience what a fluent reader can; reading for pleasure. I can now teach critical reading skills, & teach students how to engage with text & truly comprehend it. The ClassMate Reader allows students to be independent. They can read, when & where they want, for the first time,” claims Alison Gammage, Reading Specialist.

FUNNIES:

*The only difference between a tax man and a taxidermist is that the taxidermist leaves the skin
....Mark Twain*

*A government which robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend on the support of Paul.
....George Bernard Shaw*

*What this country needs are more unemployed politicians.
....Edward Langley, Artist*

BLAKE ISON'S BRAILLENOTE TESTIMONIAL

Hi. I have had my mPower a while now, and it is serving me very well. I have just purchased a wireless card for it, which is making life a lot easier. I can just hook up to the web whenever I please. And, as always, the HumanWare staff have been mighty Helpful.

It is hard to think that technology has advanced so far in our lifetimes, I just wonder what it will be like in another 50 years? The BrailleNote has opened a lot of doors for me, and it will continue to open a lot more. I can do all my school work on the BN, as well as a lot of emailing. It is a really great tool for me, because before this I was using a Perkins braille.

I think that if I did not have the BN, I do not know where I would be today, I certainly wouldn't be able to connect with people all over the world, and I wouldn't be able to learn interesting things via the internet. The BN has created a lot of opportunities for me - opportunities I know I most certainly would not have had before I had the BN. Thanks to the BN, I was able to email someone to start working at a surf club near me on the radio tower. Thanks to my BN I was able to search for and find really interesting things on the internet. Thanks to my BN, I was able to read and revise to become one of the top maths students in NZ.

So, in closing, I would just like to say thanks to all the HumanWare staff. You have given me a lot of help with all my problems and my worries.

BLAKE ISON, Queensland, Australia

TREKKER Testimonial

Robert Costello, a **Trekker** user in Victoria, recently contacted us to give us his feedback on Trekker. He said:

“It’s like having another person with you. It has really changed my life. I use it every time I go out. It’s a unit that will get used all the time. For example: it is great for knowing if a taxi driver is taking you on a taxi trip around the world. It is hard for them to do that when I have my Trekker. I use it on public transport, and walking to the shops. I wasn’t confident before, now I am.

I go to the Gold Coast once a year or so and I have found that in the past I had to ask drivers to let me know when to get off at my stop and now I don’t have to because I know when to get off with **Trekker**, and so I don’t ask the driver anymore. I reckon it is fantastic! I’m happy!

I want people to know that they are not wasting their money when they buy **Trekker**.”

VoiceOver Support for BrailleConnect and Brailiant Displays

Mac OS X v10.5 Leopard includes a powerful screen reading technology for the blind called VoiceOver that supports the HumanWare Brailiant and BrailleConnect refreshable braille displays.

When the display is connected to your computer, VoiceOver automatically detects it & sends information about what is displayed on the screen. Sighted parents and teachers can take advantage of the built-in Collaborator to magnify or see what is shown on the braille display.

Accessibility begins the moment you power on your computer. No need to purchase or install a dedicated screen reader or for students to work at an assigned computer. Students can simply walk up to any Mac & connect their BrailleConnect for instant access.

STREAM - Product Evaluation

A Review of the Victor Reader Stream – by Deborah Kendrick

Few new products in the assistive technology arena have drawn as much enthusiasm as the debut of the Victor Reader Stream from HumanWare.

What sets the Stream apart, in large measure, is the multiplicity of tasks it can perform. On this single device, you can store and listen to Talking Books from NLS, DAISY books from Bookshare, your music collection, and any text file from your computer. The Stream doubles as a handy voice recorder for personal notes, meetings, or lectures, and is equipped to play books and programs from Audible.com. Perhaps most surprising is that it sells for \$525 (including SD card) - an unusually affordable price in the assistive technology market.

The Stream is a handheld device (similar in size to a deck of cards and weighing about 6 ounces) that has been designed for users who are blind or have low vision. Its controls are all tactile and easy to operate, with the only visual indicator being a small LED (light-emitting diode) that enables the user with low vision to know when the unit is off, on, or charging. There are, of course, audio indicators for all the operations as well.

All content to be played on the Stream must be stored on an SD card. Although a USB cable is included in the package, it is recommended that you transfer data directly from your computer to the SD card using a card reader (a small device about the size of a thumb drive, with a USB connector for plugging into your computer at one end and a slot for the SD card at the other). Whether you transfer material to the card directly or to the Stream itself, the process could not be simpler. Material is simply copied from one place to the other using Windows Explorer; no special software is required.

Everything in the Stream is voice guided. For permanent messages--power on, power off, the names of folders, the number of books on a bookshelf, the functions of navigation keys, etc.

What really makes the Victor Reader Stream shine is the range of navigation possibilities that it offers. All navigation is done using the 2, 4, 6, and 8 keys on the keypad and is highly intuitive and easy to learn. In a Digital Talking Book or magazine from NLS, for example, you may be able to move forward and back by chapter, section, or other heading. Victor's time-jump feature allows you to move back or forward by 1-, 5-, or 10-minute intervals. With the bookmark feature, you can set bookmarks to highlight particular spots to return to, or you can place a highlight bookmark to bookmark a specific passage or quote.

Nice Touches

- * You can jump from textbook to newspaper to music to your favourite fantasy, and the Stream will remember where you left off and resume playing from that point when you return.
- * Variable speed is available in all books, including those from Audible.com. In the music folder, however, where altered speed is not desirable, the speed is automatically set to 0 (normal). Then, when you return to a book or file in one of the other areas, the speed setting that you chose there is resumed.
- * Bookmarking capabilities are available in all areas, including the music folders.
- * When moving through the music folder--as is the case anywhere else in the Stream--Vocalizer announces the file number & name of the track.
- * You can delete a note or book or other file with the press of a button.
- * The lithium battery (which is user replaceable) takes 4 hours to charge fully and lasts for 12-15 hours.
- * By pressing the Info key, 0, you can find out at any time how much battery power is remaining, how much of the file you have heard and how much remains, plus the number of headings and bookmarks in the current book.



PRAISE FOR THE STREAM

By Graeme Guildford, Coordinator Annerley Campus MSIT, Brisbane.

Hi Sam,

Some feedback for you regarding **Victor Reader Stream**.

This is the best product that I have seen in a long time. The features that it contains, enables a large range of users to operate in a number of different areas.

My wife bought one and she is a Lawyer in the ATO, where she uses it to hold & read tax procedures using the bookmarks & read back features & during training she uses the notetaker feature to record important items. During lunch she can read her book or listen to music, pod casts etc.

I also bought one & use it in a similar way to Amanda - using the text file feature to read the courses I have to study for work while I'm travelling or away from my computer.

Well done Humanware!!

A STREAM NAMED VICKY

By Vanessa from Tassie

Just letting you know that I love my Stream “Vicky.” I love being able to listen to stuff in ogg. Saves converting it to mp3. Have a 4gb card, and on it I have a number of e texts, a daisy talking book, about 20 pod casts. It’s great!!! I can listen to pod casts where ever I go and don’t always have to have head phones.

Thanks Ramona. Yay the Stream!!!!

JOKE:

It was mealtime during a flight on Hooters Airline. ‘Would you like dinner?’ the flight attendant asked John, seated in front. ‘What are my choices?’ John asked. ‘Yes or no,’ she replied.

myReader Auto-reader FEEDBACK

A Teachers perspective

My goal was to enable a severely visually impaired, Grade 8 student to access the curriculum and gain everyday life/independence skills in order to keep up with her peers.

Eleanor lost her vision over a four month period last year. She went from perfect 20/20 vision to 6/400 in that time. (6/60 is legally blind.) The successful adaptive technology is called **MyReader 600**. This enables a VI person to magnify written material up to x45, allowing easier navigation of printed pages than the old X-Y CCTVs. MyReader is portable & so can be taken with Eleanor on school excursions/camps.

The outcomes expected are that she will be able to be an independent reader and learner which she very much desires. She will also be able to work on assignments and study for exams at home. While being at the VI unit at High School, Eleanor has found this piece of equipment to be the easiest to use. It encourages her to still want to read. With any of the older technology, her eyes become too tired to read for more than a few minutes at a time - which can be very frustrating.



TrekAbout Adelaide

On the 7th of November, the Guide Dogs Association of SA.NT held an event called TrekAbout Adelaide. This was a “come and try” day where Guide Dog clients could experience outdoor mobility assisted by the use of electronic travel aides that are based on GPS (global positioning system) technology. This is a system that uses satellite signals sent to a small hand-held device, which in turn can provide guidance to the user on where they are, what’s around them and how to get where they want to go.

HumanWare and NAVTEQ proudly sponsored TrekAbout Adelaide. NAVTEQ are a worldwide company that makes high quality maps which form the basis of a wide variety of GPS products. NAVTEQ generously funded the venue hire, catering and prizes for the day.

The GPS devices that were used in TrekAbout Adelaide are designed specifically for vision impaired people. They included HumanWare’s PDA-based **Trekker** and the newly released, simple to use, **Trekker Breeze**. In addition, one client used the Sendero GPS software which runs on a **BrailleNote** or **VoiceNote** computer.

Each client was also accompanied by a sighted Guide Dogs SA.NT staff member – which was just as well because the areas to be traversed were dotted with unexpected road and building works causing frequent obstacles that needed to be carefully negotiated.

The purpose of the day was to inform & demonstrate to the community that GD SA.NT has GPS-based assistive technology and what it can offer vision impaired travellers. It was a chance to teach skills in using such devices. Most importantly, it was to have fun! It was an extremely enjoyable and interesting day.



One TrekAbouter wrote

By Peter Ellson from Kangaroo Island

I would like to express my appreciation for the input you and your colleagues from HumanWare made in preparing for, & making, the TrekAbout day last week happen. It was most successful & enjoyable.

I chose the **Trekker Breeze** because of its simplicity & ease of use. I have always done hard manual work which has reduced my fingertip sensitivity to a very low level. I can not read Braille for example. Not having to use menus or take several steps to turn the unit on or adjust the volume is great. It has a simple on off switch, and a simple wheel for volume. There are only nine buttons and these are each a different size and shape.

A few minutes after getting it out of the box, I was already using it, and had located my position and put in my son's home as a location. Next day I walked with it on a route that I take my dogs on for a doggie walk - that is, no harness. Faith took me diagonally across an intersection and we managed to get lost. After a while I took notice of what the **Breeze** was telling me and I was able to work out where I had to go, but I still needed the **Breeze** to name the streets for me. When I was as far away from my son's house as I could get and still know roughly where I was, I put in his home as a destination and the **Breeze** Tooke me right there. When it announced that I had arrived, I reached out and found the mailbox which I had put in as a POI. This exercise shows not only the accuracy and usefulness of the **Breeze**, it also shows how quickly I was able to pick it up.

I am extremely impressed with the **Breeze** and look forward to going for walks just to play around with it. It is all I ever wanted in a GPS and more. Could I suggest to any one thinking about going down the Mobile phone path of GPS they do not bother! It is more expensive, and will be more complex to use. Of course the other **Trekker** will suit some people more than the **Breeze**, but I think there will be a large number of people who find the **Breeze** will do all they want.

I have no hesitation what-so-ever in recommending the **Breeze**.

FOR SALE by clients:

- * Smartview 3000 black & white CCTV complete with monitor.
Approx. 3 years old & in good condition. Asking price \$1,000.00 o.n.o.
Contact Robyn Burgess on (02) 9949 1673
- * SmartView 5000 Video Magnifier (CCTV). Auto focus, full colour and 50 x magnification.
Very good condition. Asking \$2,100 o.n.o.
Phone (02) 9523 5165
- * SmartView Xtend video magnifier. New model complete with remote controller.
As new condition. Asking \$3,500 o.n.o.
Phone (07) 5537 8474
- * SmartView 5000 Video Magnifier (CCTV). Auto focus, full colour, up to x60 mag, false colours, pre-set function. Paid \$5,100 but asking only \$2,490 o.n.o.
Phone 0417 352700
- * BrailleNote 18 for just \$600. Contact Rachel Keyte for full details on:
rachelk@tpg.com.au or phone: 03 9877-5574 or 0412-255-583
- * BrailleNote PK & GPS running Keysoft Version 7. PK is 1 year old but hardly used.
The GPS is still in its box. Price: \$6,500
Contact Joanne on (03) 9925 5269 or Joanne.webber@rmit.edu.au
- * VoiceNote QT running KS 6.11. Fully complete & hardly used.
Price \$1,500 o.n.o. Contact John Bastiaans on: (08) 8369 3556
or email: josb52@bigpond.com.au
- * BrailleNote 32 for just \$2,500 o.n.o. Contact Phil Menzie on: 0403178805
or email: phillip.menzie@centrelink.gov.au

CHANGE OF PRESENTATION

Please note that this will be the last time that we are able to supply the newsletter "TechStyle" in all the formats that we have in the past.

In future we will be sending it in email format & posting it on our web site at www.humanware.com

If you don't already receive TechStyle in email format & to ensure we don't miss sending you your copy, please be sure to email or phone us to tell us your email address.

I hope you understand why we need to keep modernizing our presentation.

**Thanks for joining us for this
summer issue of Humanware
Australia's Newsletter
TechStyle**

**We look forward to your
company again for the Winter edition.**

Best Wishes



Ron Hathaway



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