ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

INTRODUCTION
This project aims to provide supportive services for visually impaired users in support of a culture of inclusion and to encourage independence in information seeking.

“...it would be great to walk through some of the e-book options and databases... the library could provide an alternative space to work in...”
~ Legally blind academic

“...for reading journal articles... Orca [screen reader] will read [the text]... if I want to type stuff... I would need a magnification feature... For printed [articles] the only way to go about it is the OCR, so having an OCR equipment would be good. It [a desktop magnifier] would come in handy.”
~ Former staff with low vision

PROCESS
- Formed taskforce in Feb 2014
- Consulted books, articles & websites
- Visited SAWW
- Interviewed visually impaired users
- Prepared project proposal
- Sourced equipment & installed software
- Trained 15 library staff
- Created webpages & guides
- Carried out publicity in Sep 2014

USER WISH LISTS

SOLUTIONS

SPACE
A dedicated room that offers peace and privacy.

HARDWARE
1) Speakers
2) Large 24-inch monitor
3) Large-print keyboard
4) Laptop
5) Visualiser (print magnifier)
6) Scanner
7) TV screen

SOFTWARE
1) Screen Readers
2) Text to Speech Readers
3) Screen Magnifiers
4) OCR Technology
5) Browser Accessibility Add-Ons

SERVICES
Highlight: Personalised assistance

Check out our enhanced services
http://tinyurl.com/nielbss

Check out our new Online Guides
http://tinyurl.com/nielbasg

CONCLUSIONS & BEST PRACTICES

CHALLENGES
1) Gauging user demand
2) Getting budgetary approval to acquire hardware or software
3) Accommodating potential users’ information needs

“Thanks very much for spending time to walk me through the various steps [on searching selected databases]. That was very helpful!”
~ Legally blind academic

BEST PRACTICES
1) Getting input from the target user group and experts in the field
2) Employing free/open source software and reusing existing hardware
3) Testing webpages for accessibility

“GREAT to hear the good news!...it’s good that Microsoft is paying more attention to accessibility...”
~ Former staff with low vision

FUTURE DIRECTIONS
1) Monitoring usage and gathering feedback
2) Creating a dedicated office to connect people with relevant services
3) Exploring the possibility of creating a tactile guidance system

FEEDBACK