# Using Braille on Android:

## Introduction:

We were incredibly privileged to be joined by Steve Nut, renowned Android advocate, passionate Braille user, frequent exhibiter at Sight Village and owner of Computer Room Services for this session.

Computer Room Services offer a wide variety of products and services geared towards the blind consumer. Learn more on their website (https://www.comproom.co.uk) or email Steve directly at steve@comproom.co.uk

This handout is designed to supplement the content provided within the master class. Whilst it is possible to consume the handout on its own it is anticipated that the reader will first and foremost listen to / read the transcription of the master class, consulting this handout as and when required to find information they may have missed.

## Overview:

Steve considers Braille on Android to be less refined than Braille on iOS, but also feels that the experience is generally more consistent on Android than it is on iOS - E.G. he feels that Apple have a habit of breaking Braille support as part of software updates whereas Google do not.

It should be noted that in contrast to iOS where Braille is built into VoiceOver and by definition iOS, Braille support is currently not built into Android.

Android includes a screen reader, previously called TalkBack but now called Android Accessibility Suite which is an amalgamation of various accessibility products.

Braille support comes in the form of BrailleBack although this is currently not part of Android Accessibility Suite.

## Downloading BraileBack and turning it on:

* Download BrailleBack from the Play Store and install it: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.googlecode.eyesfree.brailleback&hl=en\_GB&gl=US

### To turn it on:

* Settings
* Accessibility
* Enable BrailleBack and agree to warnings

## Paring a Braille display:

### To pair:

* Settings
* Connectivity
* Bluetooth
* Pair the display as you would any other device (you should hear a jingle type sound once it's ready)

### To enable typing using the display:

* Settings
* Language input
* Enable hardware Braille keyboard

## Common hotkeys across displays with keyboards:

* Space + h: home
* Space + r: recents
* Space + b: back
* Space + n: notifications
* Space + l: view a list of hotkeys that are specific to the connected Braille display

## Writing using Braille screen input (a virtual Braille keyboard):

NB: Steve considers this functionality to perform best under Android 11 due to its support for multi-finger gestures.

### To enable it:

* Settings
* Accessibility
* TalkBack
* Enable Braille screen input

2 different modes which are chosen automatically by the device:

* Table top: triggered when the device detects that it is on a flat surface. Device typically oriented such that the charging port is on the left and the camera on the right. Type using 3 fingers on either side of the screen.
* Screen away: triggered when the device detects that it is not on a flat surface. Device typically oriented such that the charging port is on the right and the camera on the left, with the back facing your chest and the screen facing away from you. Use your middle fingers to type.

### Gestures common to both modes:

* 3-finger flick up: invoke BSI if not invoked automatically
* 1-finger flick left: backspace
* 1-finger flick right: space
* 2-finger flick right: enter
* 3-finger flick down: done (exits the keyboard)

## Additional resources:

* Android accessibility overview: https://support.google.com/accessibility/android/answer/6006564?hl=en-GB
* Install and turn on BrailleBack: https://support.google.com/accessibility/android/answer/3535226?hl=en-GB
* Use the TalkBack Braille keyboard: https://support.google.com/accessibility/android/answer/9728765