

July 2015

Dear Clients and Friends:

Blind people have tools today that can help them “see.” By picking up almost any can or other labeled item and taking a photo with their smartphone, they can identify it with a barcode reader. The phone will then speak to them, giving details about the product. Handheld GPS devices are able to announce the names of streets and landmarks as a person walks by, describing public services and businesses in the vicinity.

That’s all well and good, but it doesn’t work in every situation. Sometimes a blind person will need someone else to see for them, and then provide guidance or suggestions. It might be as simple as reading the expiration date on a milk carton.

Be My Eyes is a brand new iPhone application, soon to be available for Android phones as well, that solves this problem. The program is international, but in the United States alone, there are seven million adults who are blind or have significant loss of vision.

Sighted persons can volunteer by signing up with Be My Eyes. When a blind person needs help, they start the smartphone application and turn on the video feature. A link is established to an available volunteer, who can see the real-time video of whatever the phone is pointed at, and answer questions.

For more information about the program and how to sign up, go to www.bemyeyes.org.

The non-profit’s founder, Hans Jorgen Wiberg, says “It’s my hope that by helping each other as an online community, Be My Eyes will make a big difference in the everyday lives of blind people all over the world.”

Regards,



Charles M. Shackelford