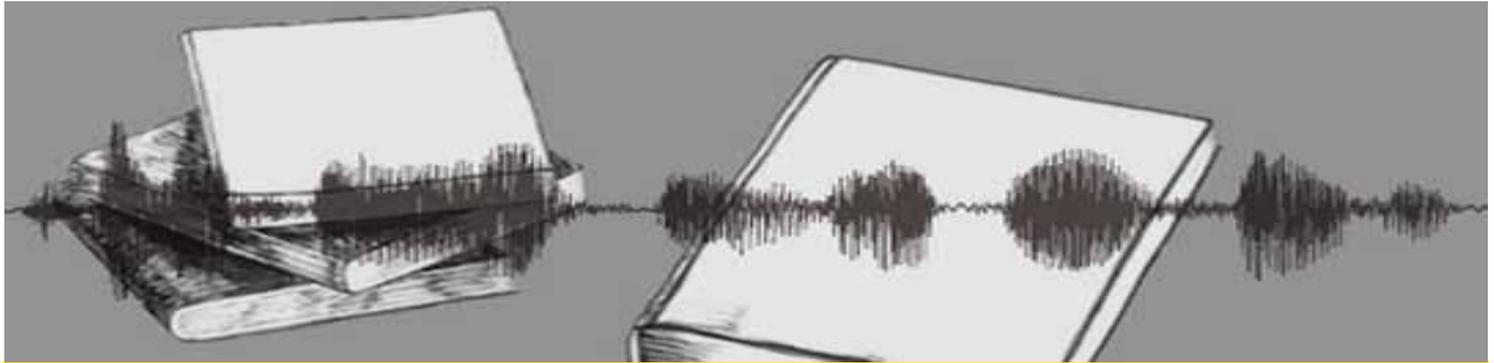


MIC-ING ABOUT **AUTUMN 2017**

QUEENSLAND NARATING SERVICE VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER



In this Newsletter

**QNS Celebrates 50YRS - VIP Book Club - News & Interesting - QNS in the Community
Quality Assurance - Donations**

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QNS CELEBRATES 50 YEARS 1967-2017 The Early Years

The Queensland Tape Recordists Association (QTRA) was formed in November 1967 as a social club for those interested in tape recording as a hobby. Many members were associated with radio broadcasting.

In May 1968 the QTRA introduced a bylaw setting up an Auxiliary for the Blind, the first project being completed in June 1968 for the Narbethong School for Visually Handicapped Children. Mr Max Vines was the Chairman of this Auxiliary.

In February 1969 Don Cottrell and Eric Searle, the Principal of Narbethong, discussed the possibility of the expansion of the service to include the physically handicapped and to also establish a lending library.

The Inaugural Meeting of the QTRA Auxiliary for the Handicapped was held on 13 May 1969. Eighteen people were present. Don Cottrell was nominated President; Vice President: Archdeacon Richards; Secretary: Miss R. Langworth; Registrar: Mrs P. Hicks-Hill. The Representatives for the Handicapped were Ian Stewart and Fred Turner.

QTRA presented a donation of \$20 to the Registrar and people present at the Inaugural Meeting were asked to donate \$4 on a loan basis, the money to be used for the purchase of the initial tape stock. The recordings were to be made on open reeled recorders.

QNS CELEBRATES 50 YEARS Ctd

By the meeting of 3 September 1969 more than 100 projects had been transcribed, including plays by Drama Groups at Bundaberg. There were 35 registered "transcribers" (three of whom were inmates of correctional facilities). The number of transcribers (as the narrators were then referred to) was to fluctuate over the years. Recruiting was mainly by word of mouth, although radio programs, articles in newspapers and letters to community organisations brought additional transcribers.

The consumers receiving the audio productions were students of Narbethong and a number of blind students at tertiary institutions, people with other disabilities and elderly people with degenerative eye conditions or poor sight.

Offers of assistance were to come from the JC's, Lions and Rotary. Appeals were made to churches in the community. A team from the Auxiliary appeared on Play Your Hunch (a television games show) winning \$30.00.

In later years donations were to come from the Lady Mayoress' Social and Welfare Committee, Lady Bjelke-Petersen Welfare Committee and the Department of Community Welfare and Sport. Clan Mackenzie has given an annual donation since the early 1970's. UTAH, MIM and Jupiters have given large donations for the purchase of specific recording and copying equipment.

At the AGM of 25 May 1970 Mr T R Wielaert was elected President and held that position until 1982. During this time he was actively involved in transcribing, was chief copier of tapes and delivery man. He was awarded the BEM in 1977 and upon retirement from the Presidency he was presented with the first Life Membership of the Association.



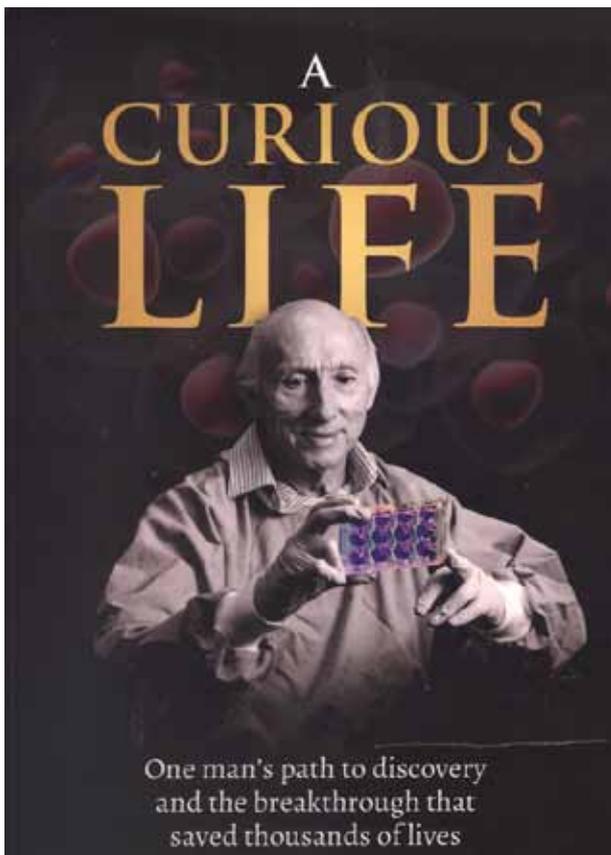
Mr T R Wielaert, Second President of QTRA 1970 - 1982

VIP BOOK CLUB APRIL 2017

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the recent VIP Book Club. We were privileged enough to have Robert Tindle as guest speaker, who graciously gave his time to speak to us about his book 'A Curious Life'.

Robert Tindle is a stem cell pioneer whose relentless curiosity led him to a remarkable career in fields as disparate as evolutionary biology and immunotherapy for cancer. From years of field work on the Galapagos Islands to pioneering breakthroughs in biomedical research in Australia and the United Kingdom, 'Curious Life', conveys the excitement of scientific discovery and chronicles how his own discoveries were used to save the life of his daughter. A testament to the relentless expansion of scientific knowledge, and what this means for humankind's perception of its identity in the cosmos, this book captures an incredible journey of discovery and the deeply personal implications of progress.

Our next VIP Bookclub will be held in October 2017



One man's path to discovery and the breakthrough that saved thousands of lives. From the slums and religious indoctrination of northern England to front-line research institutions worldwide, stem cell pioneer Robert Tindle's relentless curiosity led him to a remarkable career in fields as disparate as evolutionary biology and immunotherapy for cancer. From years of field work on the Galapagos Islands to pioneering breakthroughs in biomedical research in Australia and the United Kingdom, this book, conveys the excitement of scientific discovery and chronicles how his own discoveries were used to save the life of his daughter. A

testament to the relentless expansion of scientific knowledge, and what this means for humankind's perception of its identity in the cosmos, this book captures an incredible journey of discovery and the deeply personal implications of progress.

NEWS & INTERESTING INFORMATION

Australia's copyright reform could bring millions of books and other reads to the blind

Proposed changes to Australia's copyright law should make it easier for people to create and distribute versions of copyrighted works that are accessible to people with disabilities.

The Copyright Amendment (Disability Access and other Measures) Bill was introduced to Parliament on Wednesday.

If passed, it would enable people with disabilities to access and enjoy books and other material in formats they can use, such as braille, large print or DAISY audio. The Australian Human Rights Commission has long been calling for action to end the "world book famine" – only 5% of books produced in Australia are available in accessible formats. This means that people with vision impairment and other reading disabilities are excluded from a massive proportion of the world's knowledge and culture.

Under the current law, educational institutions and other organisations can produce accessible copies of books, but the system is slow and expensive. Only a small number of popular books are available, and technical books that people need for work are often out of reach.

Technology should make accessibility much easier, but publishers have been slow to enable assistive technologies.

People with disabilities have long complained that they are not able to take advantage of new technologies such as inbuilt screen reading software on computers and smartphones.

Amazon's Kindle, for example, used to allow text-to-speech to help blind people read books, but Amazon gave in to publishers' fears and allowed them to disable the feature. Apple's electronic books are much better, but there are still major gaps.

Our research looked at books available through electronic academic databases, and found that most ebook libraries have some features that frustrate full accessibility. The Copyright Act in its current form does grant statutory licences for copying by institutions that assist people with disabilities, but there are no comprehensive exceptions for individuals. Research shows that even students in resourced universities have trouble accessing the materials they need to study.

NEWS & INTERESTING INFORMATION

Australia's copyright reform could bring millions of books and other reads to the blind (Continued)

A fair right for people with disabilities

The new Bill aims to create a clear right for individuals to copy materials into accessible formats. Critically, this new "fair dealing" exception also allows other people to help out by creating and sharing accessible versions of books and other materials.

This is a major milestone in making copyright law more fair. It implements Australia's obligations under the Marrakesh Treaty, a landmark international agreement designed to stop copyright getting in the way of accessibility.

The Marrakesh Treaty, once implemented around the world, will enable organisations to share accessible books to the people who need them in other countries. This is an extremely important change as the costs of scanning and making a book accessible are so high that most blind people are denied access to most works.

Once the laws are clarified, the accessibility of books will increase dramatically. Google has been busy digitising the world's books, and it has given those books to a charity called Hathi Trust. Soon, Hathi Trust will be able to share those books with blind people around the world.

Google's partnership with Hathi Trust means that blind people will soon be able to access more than 14 million volumes almost overnight. This figure may grow quickly as Google has already digitised more than 30 million books. Very soon, the proportion of accessible books might jump from 5-10% to closer to 30%.



NEWS & INTERESTING INFORMATION

Australia's copyright reform could bring millions of books and other reads to the blind (Continued)

A missed opportunity

The Bill also proposes a number of other long awaited updates to Australian copyright law. But one thing the Bill does not do is fix a drafting error that has plagued Australian copyright law for the past decade.

When Australia signed the Australia - US Free Trade Agreement, we introduced a system of "notice-and-takedown" that would protect copyright owners. The system provides a way for people to ask online service providers to remove content that infringes copyright.

But the law was poorly drafted. It applied only to a small number of Internet Service Providers (such as Telstra, Optus and iiNet) but not the larger category of search engines and content hosts.

This means it does not apply to giants such as Google and Facebook. It also means that other organisations that host content uploaded by users, such as The Conversation, are also excluded.

These safe harbours provide a shield in case people - outside of the service provider's control - use their networks to upload content that infringes any copyright laws.

The reason they are so critical is that it is often prohibitively expensive for the companies that host internet content to check all content before a user uploads it.

But the safe harbours aren't free. The quid pro quo is that the ISP must introduce a notice and takedown scheme. This is one of the few effective mechanisms to get content removed from the internet, and has been a crucial part of protecting the rights of publishers and authors online.

When the new Bill was first drafted, it was set to fix the drafting error that excludes content hosts, search engines, universities and other organisations from the scheme. But the Bill introduced this week contains no such fix.

NEWS & INTERESTING INFORMATION

Australia's copyright reform could bring millions of books and other reads to the blind (Continued)

The extension of these safe harbours has become highly politicised, with major rightsholders warning that it looked like a win for Google and Facebook. The past two decades of the internet in the United States have shown how critical the safe harbours are to all developers, both large and small. They reduce uncertainty and allow innovation in the ways that people access content.

So while this new Bill is important, it is also a missed opportunity. The drafting error in Australia's copyright safe harbours means that neither tech companies or authors and publishers are well protected.

www.theconversation.com/australias-copyright-reform-could-bring-millions-of-books-and-other-reads-to-the-blind-67709

David Pogue on iPhone VoiceOver

<http://finance.yahoo.com/news/david-pogue-on-iphone-voiceover-163733668.html>

A few years ago, backstage at a conference, I spotted a blind woman using her phone. The phone was speaking everything her finger touched on the screen, allowing her to tear through her apps. My jaw hit the floor. After years of practice, she had cranked the voice's speed so high, I couldn't understand a word it was saying.

And here's the kicker: She could do all of this with the screen turned off. Her phone's battery lasted forever.

Ever since that day, I've been like a kid at a magic show. I've wanted to know how it's done. I've wanted an inside look at how the blind could navigate a phone that's basically a slab of featureless glass.

This week, I got my chance. Joseph Danowsky offered to spend a morning with me, showing me the ropes.

Joe majored in economics at the University of Pennsylvania, got a law degree at Harvard, worked in the legal department at Bear Stearns, became head of solutions at Barclays Wealth, and is now a private-client banker at US Trust. He commutes to his office in Manhattan every morning from his home in New Jersey.

NEWS & INTERESTING INFORMATION

David Pogue on iPhone VoiceOver Ctd

Joe was born with cone-rod dystrophy. He can see general shapes and colors, but no detail. (Only about 10 or 15 percent of visually impaired people see no light or color at all.) He can't read a computer screen or printed materials, recognize faces, read street signs or building numbers, or drive. And he certainly can't see what's on his phone.

Yet Joe spends his entire day on his iPhone. In fact, he calls it "probably the number one assistive device for people who can't see," right up there with "a cane and a seeing eye dog."

The key to all of this is an iPhone (AAPL) feature called VoiceOver. At its heart, it's a screen reader—software that makes the phone speak everything you touch. (Android's TalkBack feature is similar in concept, but blind users find it far less complete; for example, it doesn't work in all apps.)

You turn on VoiceOver in Settings -> General -> Accessibility. If you turn on VoiceOver, you hear a female voice begin reading the names of the controls she sees on the screen. You can adjust the Speaking Rate of the synthesized voice.

There's a lot to learn in VoiceOver mode; people like Joe have its various gestures committed to muscle memory, so that they can operate with incredible speed and confidence.

But the short version is that you touch anything on the screen—icons, words, even status icons at the top; as you go, the voice tells you what you're tapping. "Messages." "Calendar." "Mail—14 new items." "45 percent battery power." You can tap the dots on the Home screen, and you'll hear, "Page 3 of 9."

You don't even have to lift your finger; you can just slide it around, getting the lay of the land.

Once you've tapped a screen element, you can also flick your finger left or right—anywhere on the screen—to "walk" through everything on the screen, left to right, top to bottom.

Ordinarily, you tap something on the screen to open it. But since single-tapping now means "speak this," you need a new way to open everything. So: To open something you've just heard identified, you double tap. (You don't have to wait for the voice to finish talking.) In fact, you can double-tap anywhere on the screen; since the phone already knows what's currently "highlighted," it's like pressing the Enter key.

NEWS & INTERESTING INFORMATION

David Pogue on iPhone VoiceOver Continued

There are all kinds of other special gestures in VoiceOver. You can make the voice stop speaking with a two-finger tap; read everything, in sequence, from the top of the screen with a two-finger upward flick; scroll one page at a time with a three-finger flick up or down; go to the next or previous screen (Home, Stocks, and so on) with a three-finger flick left or right; and more.

If you do a three-finger triple-tap, you turn on Screen Curtain, meaning that the screen goes black. You gain visual privacy as well as a heck of a battery boost. (Repeat to turn the screen back on.)

Joe, however, doesn't see that battery boost, since he's on the phone all day long. In fact, he's equipped his phone with one of those backup-battery cases.

The Rotor

Joe also demonstrated for me the Rotor: a brilliant solution to a thorny problem. There are dozens of settings to control in a screen reader like VoiceOver: voice, gender, language, volume, speaking speed, verbosity, and so on. How do you make all of these options available in a concise form that you can call up from within any app—especially for people who can't see controls on the screen?



Have you check out and 'liked' the QNS Facebook page?

QNS has its own Facebook page - Queensland Narrating Service. We suggest that everyone with access to Facebook go online and "Like" the page. Please share our page and any of the posts. This helps to improve our profile in the community. Thank you!

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Things to avoid when recording:

Sibilance

Vocal sibilance is an unpleasant tonal harshness that can happen during consonant syllables (like S, T, and Z), caused by disproportionate audio dynamics in upper midrange frequencies. When this is occurring, you will notice that whenever there is a word with an "S" sound, it will seem to be quite loud and harsh and almost jump out of the recording. If you find that you are experiencing this problem in your recordings, it can be tamed by slightly lowering the direction of the microphone so that it is pointed towards your neck/chest instead of your mouth. This is because the "ssss" sound is produced from forcing air towards the top palate of your mouth. The microphone that you are using will be directional to some degree so if you aim it away from this area it can alleviate the sibilance. Moving closer to the microphone will add extra bass to your voice because of what they call "the proximity effect". This can help even out the tone of your voice.

Plosives

As mentioned earlier, Plosives are the "pops" that permeates your narration when strong letters such as 'B', "P", "G", "T", "D" & "K" are pronounced. To put this into perspective, if you hold a lighted candle in front of your mouth while speaking the flame would flicker because of the "expelled air" emitted when making these plosive sounds.

The problem is made considerably worse if your mouth is too close to the microphone. The "plosive" air blasts are strongest close to the mouth, and when they reach the microphone's diaphragm, it produces a large output signal that in some cases is so large it can distort the audio recording. In other words - "Plosives" force a large amount of air into the microphone, which then distorts the microphone signal and renders the "take" unusable. Not good! If you listen back to your recording and notice these sounds, the best way to rectify this is by moving the microphone further off to the side of your mouth. An ideal position is 7 - 15cm from your mouth and off to the side at a 45 degree angle to your face.

Mouth Clicks

It is a good idea to listen back to your narration whilst wearing headphones. This will make any obtrusive sounds audible, as they will be amplified. A common issue that can arise is that a "mouth clicking" sound is produced when the narrator opens their mouth to speak. This usually occurs from the narrator having a dry mouth and can easily be rectified by stopping occasionally to have a drink of water.

DONATIONS

A big thank you to the people and organisations who have recently made a donation towards helping QNS to continue to deliver a much needed service to the vision inspired community.



Grill'd Restaurants

We recently received \$100 donation from the Grill'd's 'Local Matters' venture. This was also a great opportunity to raise public awareness of the service that we provide.

Clan Mackenzie Association graciously donated \$1000. Each year the Association donates proceeds from their fundraising activities to QNS to assist with organisations activities.

Keith Evans who recently retired after 26 Years as a dedicated and valuable volunteer narrator donated \$500 to QNS.

If you would like to make a donation to QNS, please contact us at qns@qns.net.au or head to the link on our website

Text Publishing continue to support the work of QNS in providing audio books for people with print disabilities living in the community who borrow from their local library.



Re-use or recycle this newsletter or pass on to a friend or family member