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Orbit Research Introduces the Orbit Chat Communication System

The unique app enables face-to-face communication for people who are deafblind without the need for interpreters

WILMINGTON, DE – November 5, 2019 –

Orbit Research today announced the launch of the Orbit Chat Communication System. People who are deaf and blind typically communicate with others through various means including tactile sign language and often require a trained interpreter since most people are not familiar with such methods. The Orbit Chat system changes this forever by offering a free solution that enables a deafblind person to use their Orbit Reader 20 braille display and an app running on a smartphone or tablet to communicate with a sighted, blind or deaf person. The system can be used in any situation – in public settings such as markets, restaurants and classrooms or in private conversations.

Through specialized interfaces on Orbit Research's braille and tactile graphics products, and an app that runs on smartphones or tablets, the system connects via Bluetooth to provide the breakthrough ability to converse using a simple chat-style experience.

"While mobile phones and refreshable braille displays have enabled deafblind people to connect to the digital world, face-to-face communication has remained a challenge. We are thrilled with the introduction of the Orbit Chat. It will be a game-changer for the deafblind community world-wide." said Akhil Paul, Director of Sense International India, one of the world's leading organizations working for people with deafblindness

"With the Orbit Chat system, we are excited and humbled to be able to provide the basic facility of communication that most of us take for granted." said Dr. Gina Spagnoli, Orbit Research's founder. "With no additional hardware or software to purchase, a deafblind person can utilize her Orbit Reader 20 braille display to engage in conversation with anyone using a smartphone or tablet. Previous solutions cost thousands of dollars and required heavy and cumbersome hardware and even the most basic ones required the use of external keyboards connected to an expensive braille note-taker. Even as a complete communications-only solution, the Orbit Reader 20 coupled with the Orbit Chat app is less expensive than anything else available by an order of magnitude while offering unmatched portability, reliability and ease of use. The Orbit Chat is yet another step in our journey towards a level playing field."

The system allows a sighted person to use a familiar chat or messaging user-interface to type messages using the phone or tablet's on-screen keyboard, which are immediately translated and displayed on the deafblind user's Orbit Reader 20 device in braille. The deafblind user types her messages in braille using the braille keypad on the Orbit Reader 20 and these are translated to plain text and instantly displayed on the phone or tablet. The app is self-voicing, which allows a blind person to use it to communicate with a deafblind person without needing any special screen-reading software.

The system also includes other innovative features such as a broadcast mode which allows the deafblind user to send messages to multiple people who have the app installed, the ability to save conversations on the Orbit Reader 20 as well as on the app for later review and a file transfer feature to exchange files

between the Orbit Reader 20 and the phone or tablet. The system allows the use of contracted and uncontracted braille in English and offers support for other languages through localization.

The app is available now for free download from the Google Play Store and the Orbit Research website: <http://www.orbitresearch.com/product/orbit-chat>

Orbit Research also offers a bundled solution including the Orbit Reader 20, and an Android tablet with the Orbit Chat system pre-installed, providing the most affordable full-featured communication and accessibility solution for people who are deafblind.

About Orbit Research:

Orbit Research develops and manufactures innovative and affordable products that enable an independent lifestyle for people who are blind or visually impaired. Founded with the mission to fulfill the urgent need for affordable assistive technology products, the company has introduced breakthrough products like the Orion family of accessible scientific and graphing calculators, the iBill Talking Banknote Identifier and the Orbit Reader 20 refreshable braille display that define the state-of-the-art in features, functionality, convenience and affordability. For more information, visit www.orbitresearch.com.

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