



The Torch



Edition 38

JEEMT Long Cane Rally Feedback

Sharon, O&M Practitioner, shares her thoughts on the Long Cane Rally

The annual Long Cane Rally is definitely the highlight of the year for all the participants. It allows the participants to show off their cane techniques and participants from different organisations need to socialise.

“It makes me so excited to see how my clients can confidently move around in an unfamiliar environment, it's a very fulfilling to think that every orientation and mobility practice has a part in their children's achievements.”

She likes to observe all her participants during the event to see which persons still needs to be captured.



A participant from the Long Cane Rally last year

Sharon fondly remembers the boy who finished last, he walked with effort, and never gave up.

A beautiful example of a person who keeps winning!! Definitely the togetherness and to see how everyone, despite what Organization you are, just simply becomes a family on the day.

The highlight for Sharon is everyone working together. The input of everyone is important and everyone's needs for the planning of such a day are taken into account. The goodie bags with a few cremation items always remain a winner and of course the lucky draw prizes.

She is very pleased that the competitive factor has been removed and that all participants are winners.

The O and M practitioners also get the opportunity to share some ideas and just have a nice chat.

Terelga, LCR Participant, share her thoughts on the Long Cane Rally

As a participant, Terelga enjoys the LCR because of the awareness it brings to the public. She enjoys the challenges of the unknown area. The socializing factor with other visually impaired peers is one of the many things she enjoys



A group of participants for one of the previous Long Cane Rallies

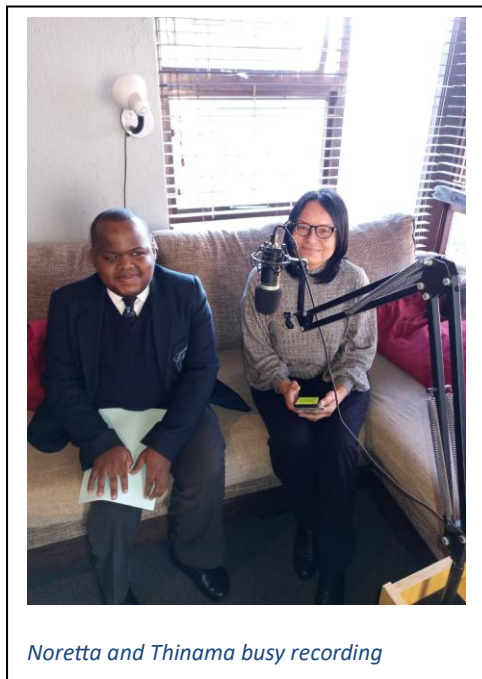
The previous Long Cane Rally was a safe environment and obstacle-free with very nice sidewalks.

For this year she is looking forward to showcasing her Long Cane techniques and show off a bit.

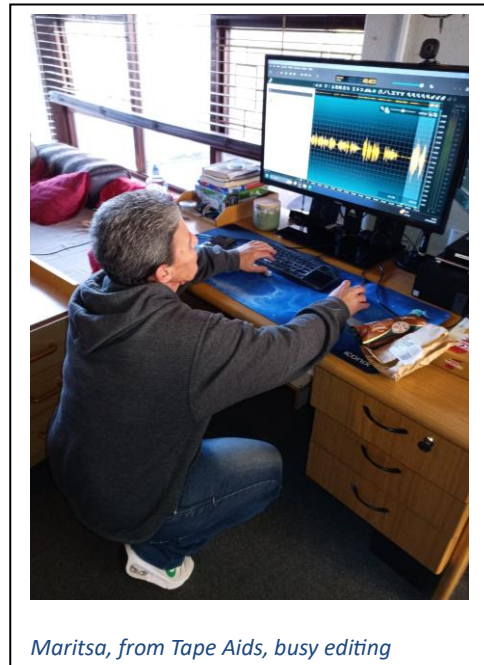
Behind the scenes

Noretta recently teamed up with, Thinama Mgudlwa, a grade12 learner at Athlone School For The Blind and Tape Aids for a recording to create awareness of the Long Cane Rally. Tune into Smile FM and listen to them.

Suritha will talk about the Long Cane Rally on 9 September. Tune into Radio Pulpit on the day at 9:45. Andrea will also do the same on Bok Radio on 28 September at 9:45.



Noretta and Thinama busy recording



Maritsa, from Tape Aids, busy editing

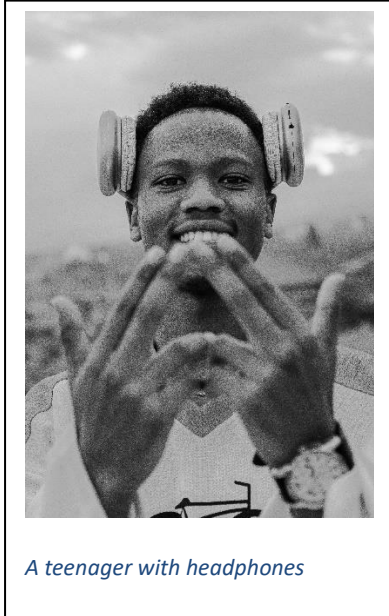
Audio Description: The ‘visual made verbal’ art form

Watch your favourite film on your TV, cinema or other screen

By selecting one of the available audio narration tracks.

Through the mobile assistive app, ShazaCin, visual content is made accessible to persons with visual impairments.

The world of Information, education and entertainment are becoming increasingly video based. Television, the internet, streaming channels, social media and mobile apps transmit visual content on every aspect of our daily lives, and Covid-19 has accelerated this trend.



As we study, work, relax, catch up on news, pursue healthy lifestyles, shop, bank and keep in touch with our loved ones online, we rely more and more on video.

Which is great news, except that people who are blind or visually impaired are being left behind. They are denied accessible visual content that connects sighted people to each other and the world. Audio Description (AD) removes this barrier.

Through skilful use of the spoken word, the visual is made verbal. AD is a method through which the innovative use of words can communicate visual events, either in real time or pre-recorded. AD has diverse applications and is relevant to a growing range of industries. According to the creators, it is “an oral and literary art form that creates access for visually impaired persons to the visual world through language”.

The app promotes inclusivity as members of the blind community can now ‘watch’ films along with family and friends. Through the skilful use of words, the ShazaCin app describes the visual to persons who cannot see – including motion and still imagery, both in real time and recorded. This enables blind people to participate, contribute and function independently.

About ShazaCin

ShazaCin is a young, South African based, innovative company operating in the digital space, providing a 360-degree solution, from AD content creation to AD delivery through their mobile assistive app of the same name. The app promotes inclusivity as members of the blind community can watch films along with family and friends and be a part of conversations around films and TV shows.

The team is made up of a diverse mix of talented graduates. The company is an AD award winner and is skilled in film, IT, business, disability and

human rights. They are passionate about audio description, accessibility and inclusion.

The company creates Audio Description scripts and Audio Description tracks for all visual content, feature length films and short videos, for commercials and logos, audio described tours for art galleries, museums, heritage sites and tours, and real-time description for live events such as theatre, concerts and sports. They also create audio described illustrations for audio books for education and entertainment.

About the founder and creator – Shakila Maharaj

When Morningside resident Shakila Maharaj lost her sight, she continued to visualise the world through her imagination. As an avid film-lover, she continued to go to the cinema and watch television but soon realised how much of the story she was missing.

“When I started to lose my sight, I realised that I continued to ‘see’ through my imagination. I realised that most blind people continue to ‘see’ in this way even if they have never seen anything in their life – they perceive the world. AD is so important for us, to keep that visual frame of reference alive, to keep our imagination alive,” she says.

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Through Maharaj and her team’s development of the innovative app, ShazaCin, which launched in 2020, people with visual impairments can now ‘watch’ films through the art of audio description. The app was created along with co-directors, Mthokozisi Mtshingila, who is the content management and development lead, and Prashant Maharaj, the technology lead.

Similar to a streaming service like Netflix – but without the video – the app is currently free to download from the ShazaCin website and will soon be available on various platforms, including Google Playstore and the Apple store.

The app is currently free to download from the ShazaCin website.

How it works:

The video is scripted and recorded to integrate the voice into the film. The content is uploaded to the app, and when the film is on ‘watch’, and when the ‘listen’ button is tapped, the app recognises the film being played and

synchronises to the right track in the ShazaCin App using artificial intelligence, and the voice comes through and describes the scene alongside the dialogue.

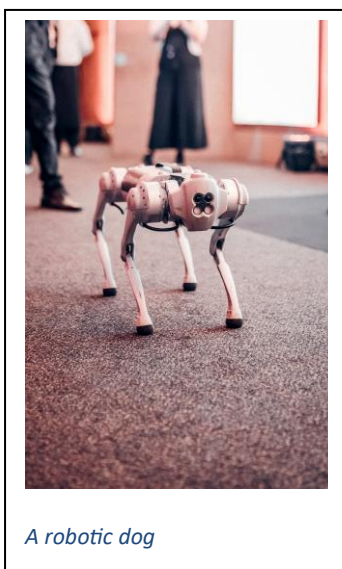
“Visually impaired people enjoy interacting with the visual world but are not catered for. I am totally blind – I lost my sight in my 20s. I realised, when I was losing my sight, that I still wanted to engage with the visual world. I wanted to be part of it – like most blind people do. This is when I became increasingly aware of audio description as an artform and the need to make it known in this country and in Africa,” concludes Maharaj.

Find out more about the app here: [Shazacin](#)

Source: [Disability Connect](#)

Chinese researchers test robot ‘guide dogs’ to help the visually impaired

Shanghai — It’s less furry than a traditional companion, but a six-legged Chinese robot “guide dog” could one day help vision impaired people live with more independence, according to its research development team in Shanghai.



A robotic dog

The robot dog, which is currently being field-tested, is able to navigate its physical environment via cameras and sensors, including recognizing traffic light signals, which traditional guide dogs are unable to do.

Roughly the size of an English Bulldog but a bit wider, it can communicate by listening and speaking with a visually impaired operator with AI-technology incorporated in its voice recognition, route planning capabilities and traffic light recognition. It also has six legs, which the researchers say help it walk smoothly and with maximum stability.

“When three legs are lifted, there are still three legs ... like the tripod of a camera. It is the most stable shape,” said Professor Gao Feng, the head of the research team at Jiao Tong University’s School of Mechanical Engineering in Shanghai.

Married couple Li Fei, 41, and Zhu Sibin, 42, are among the visually impaired people helping the Jiao Tong University team test the robot using Chinese-language commands.

Li is completely blind, and Zhu sees only a little, normally using a cane to assist him in getting around.

“If this robot guide dog comes onto the market and I could use it, at least it could solve some of my problems in traveling alone,” Li said. “For example, if I want to go to work, the hospital or the supermarket (now) I cannot go out alone and must be accompanied by my family or volunteers.”

Robot guide dogs are under development in other countries, including Australia and Britain, but China has a drastic shortage of traditional guide dogs.

In China, there are just over 400 guide dogs for almost 20 million blind people, Gao said.

Pet ownership and service animals are also relatively new concepts in the country, meaning many workplaces, restaurants and other public areas wouldn’t welcome a more traditional helper like a Labrador.

Unlike those dogs, which will always be limited in supply due to the natural limitations of breeding and the intense training required, Gao said the production of robot guide dogs could be scaled, especially in a major manufacturing hub like China.

“It’s a bit like cars. I can mass-produce them in the same way as cars, so it will become more affordable,” Gao said. “I think this could be a very large market, because there might be tens of millions of people in the world who need guide dogs.”

Source: [Edition CNN](#)

Gmail Shortcuts

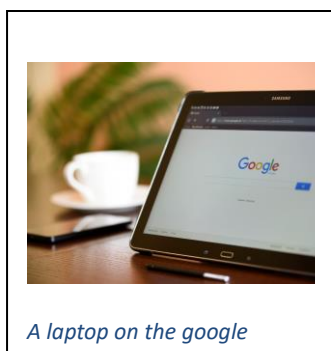
Sent by Garth Long

Guys,

Greeting from a Rainy and Damp Cobh.

Well, that is the status for January on the most northern land mass below the Artic Circle!

I know most of you use Gmail through Outlook, but for those still using the web-based interface of Gmail, here is the complete list of keyboard shortcuts for Gmail Standard view.



Basic HTML is due to close on 1 February 2024.

However, below is a link to guide you and to generally help you use Gmail on the web directly with your favourite Screen Reader.

Full help page [here](#). At the bottom of the page, Gmail even tells you how to customize these shortcuts.

Compose & chat

Action	Shortcut
Previous message in an open conversation	P
Next message in an open conversation	N
Focus main window	Shift + Esc
Focus latest chat or compose	Esc

Advance to the next chat or compose	Ctrl + .
Advance to previous chat or compose	Ctrl + ,
Send	⌘/Ctrl + Enter
Add cc recipients	⌘/Ctrl + Shift + c
Add bcc recipients	⌘/Ctrl + Shift + b
Access custom from	⌘/Ctrl + Shift + f
Insert a link	⌘/Ctrl + k
Go to next misspelled word (Mac only)	⌘ + ;
Open spelling suggestions	⌘/Ctrl + m

Formatting text

Action	Shortcut
Previous font	⌘/Ctrl + Shift + 5
Next font	⌘/Ctrl + Shift + 6
Decrease text size	⌘/Ctrl + Shift + -
Increase text size	⌘/Ctrl + Shift and +
Bold	⌘/Ctrl + b
Italics	⌘/Ctrl + I

Underline	⌘/Ctrl + u
Numbered list	⌘/Ctrl + Shift + 7
Bulleted list	⌘/Ctrl + Shift + 8
Quote	⌘/Ctrl + Shift + 9
Indent less	⌘/Ctrl + [
Indent more	⌘/Ctrl +]
Align left	⌘/Ctrl + Shift + l
Align center	⌘/Ctrl + Shift + e
Align right	⌘/Ctrl + Shift + r
Remove formatting	⌘/Ctrl + \

Actions

Note: These shortcuts won't work unless keyboard shortcuts are turned on.

Action	Shortcut
Move focus to toolbar	,
Select conversation	x
Toggle star/rotate among superstars	s
Archive	e
Mute conversation	m
Report as spam	!
Delete	#

Reply	r
Reply in a new window	Shift + r
Reply all	a
Reply all in a new window	Shift + a
Forward	f
Forward in a new window	Shift + f
Update conversation	Shift + n
Archive conversation and go previous/next] or [
Undo last action	Z
Mark as read	Shift + i
Mark as unread	Shift + u
Mark unread from the selected message	_
Mark as important	+ or =
Mark as not important	-
Snooze Note: This shortcut isn't available in classic Gmail.	b
Expand entire conversation	;
Collapse entire conversation	:
Add conversation to Tasks	Shift + t

Jumping

Note: These keyboard shortcuts won't work unless keyboard shortcuts are turned on.

Action	Shortcut
Go to Inbox	g + i

Go to Starred conversations	g + s
Go to Snoozed conversations	g + b
Go to Sent messages	g + t
Go to Drafts	g + d
Go to All mail	g + a
Switch between the Calendar/Keep/Tasks sidebar and your inbox.	⌘/Ctrl + Alt + , and ⌘/Ctrl + Alt + .
Go to Tasks	g + k
Go to label	g + l

Threadlist selection

Note: These keyboard shortcuts won't work unless keyboard shortcuts are turned on.

Action	Shortcut
Select all conversations	* + a
Deselect all conversations	* + n
Select read conversations	* + r
Select unread conversations	* + u
Select starred conversations	* + s
Select unstarred conversations	* + t

Navigation

Note: These keyboard shortcuts won't work unless keyboard shortcuts are turned on.

Action	Shortcut
Go to next page	g + n
Go to previous page	g + p
Back to threadlist	u
Newer conversation	k
Older conversation	j
Open conversation	o or Enter
Go to next Inbox section	`
Go to previous Inbox section	~

Application

Note: These keyboard shortcuts won't work unless keyboard shortcuts are turned on.

Action	Shortcut
Compose	c
Compose in a new tab	d
Search mail	/
Search chat contacts	q
Open "more actions" menu	.
Open "move to" menu	v
Open "label as" menu	l

Open keyboard ?
shortcut help

So, I hope this helps?

Garth Long

PS.

I use MS Outlook as my interface but if you need any help please do revert.

Birthday Wishes

A very happy birthday to the 2 special women who celebrated their birthdays last month.



Charmaine



Magriet

Beneficiary News

Empowerment through learning and development. Aponia on her new journey towards realizing her goal in retail design



Aplonia wearing the t-shirt she designed



Aplonia showing the bag she designed