

Mentoring Program Checklist Series

Braille and Graphics

Following are areas to consider when incorporating Braille into your documentation production for your staff and organisational communication requirements.

The nature of Braille is that of a linear medium so that the use of tables and graphics do not translate well. For those who are unfamiliar with screen reading software it is important to recognise that braille and graphics are incompatible without the assistance of specific editing tools.

The screen reader will always read what is there. However for blind or vision impaired users, sometimes, depending on the formatting, it will make no sense at all. Complex images could be read by screen reader in the wrong order, or be a mixture of unrelated letters, numbers and symbols and this is the same using voice output, Braille displays or note takers. This is why captions, alt text and clear descriptions are important for pictures, logos, diagrams and images.

It is also important to remove all graphics and tables from documents if material is being prepared to be embossed in Braille as precious editing time and paper will be wasted.

There is specific software for the production of images and diagrams as in books where the shape of natural elements such as animals, trees, houses and landscapes can be brought to life under the fingers of blind or vision impaired people and Picture Braille is one example of this technology. There are also standalone machines where images can be embossed with little knowledge of Braille. One example of this type of unit is the TactPlus Braille embosser which can be viewed, demonstrated and obtained from Quantum RLV.

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Canberra Blind Society

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Braille or audio mediums are the paths to ongoing literacy for blind or vision impaired people so it is important to offer a choice or mixture to any new team member. Also important to consult to ensure that the most effective software is obtained. For example, check to ascertain whether the new employee thinks in pictures or words to gauge whether graphic or audio material will be more suitable to conduct their work effectively. The choice of audio, braille, or a combination of both will depend on the task to be performed and the abilities and preferences of the worker.

Always ask about the use of Braille as blindness or vision impairment may have occurred later in life or through an accident and hands may have been affected.

Keep the Information Technology Team up to date so they can assist when required.

Informal discussions with your new employee will always produce the most productive outcomes.

Useful Links:

Quantum RLV - <https://www.quantumrlv.com.au/>

TactPlus Braille - <https://www.tactplusprinter.com/>

Picture Braille - <https://www.pentronics.com.au/PictureBraille.html>