

# Smartphone Apps

## 8 Great Android Apps to Help Partially Sighted People



Today, there are dozens of specialist Smartphone apps available to assist a person who is Blind or partially sighted. There are also dozens of mainstream apps that are extremely useful. There are simply too many to list them all. However, the following 8 apps for your Android Smartphone, could provide you with the tools to make life a whole lot easier, both in and out of work!

### 1. EnVision AI

EnVision AI describes the visual world around you with the help of artificial intelligence and OCR. Envision has been carefully designed with the help of the Blind and Partially Sighted community, to allow you to read text in over 60 languages, magnify text, scan barcodes or your environment and so much more.

With full screen reader support, Envision AI helps you to:

- Read Instantly - read text instantly in over 60 different languages. Available fully offline for Latin-based languages like English.
- Read documents - scan documents with one or multiple pages at once, with the help of Envision in framing the document.
- Read Handwriting - read handwritten postcards, letters, lists or any neat handwriting.
- Describe Scenes - describes any scene around you with accuracy.
- Scan Barcodes - scan barcodes easily and get more information about products.
- Teach Envision - train Envision to recognize your friends and family when describing scenes.

Envision AI is a free app and is available from the Play Store. Your device needs to be running version 7.0 (Nougat) or later for this app to work.

### 2. WeZoom

WeZoom turns the display on your device into a hand-held magnifier! You can freeze the image, change the background and foreground colours and adjust the size of magnification right up to 8 times the original size.

WeZoom is ideal when out and about, for example when you are at the Supermarket and you need to read the ingredients on a food item. It's also great for reading menu's and train tickets!

WeZoom is a free app and is available from the Play Store. Your device needs to be running version 6.0 (Marshmallow) or later for this app to work.

### **3. Be My Eyes**

The Be My Eyes app allows a blind or partially sighted user of a Smartphone or Tablet to request sighted assistance to help them perform a wide range of tasks. For example, you might want to know the use by date on a bottle of milk, the content of a letter that has just come through the post, the location of something you have dropped on the floor and even assistance with mobility when you are out and about!

Be My Eyes works by connecting the user to a sighted helper via the internet. The rear facing camera on the users' device is then used by the sighted helper to see the surrounding area, therefore being able to support the person. Hence the name, 'Be My Eyes'!

Be My AI, a feature built-in to Be My Eyes, offers incredible picture recognition through the use of artificial intelligence. Once a picture has been recognised, you can ask questions about the picture and receive incredible detailed results.

Be My AI can also be used to ask questions about Microsoft applications and receive step-by-instructions on how to achieve common tasks. The Be My AI feature alone makes it essential to download this app!

Be My Eyes is a free app and is available from the Play Store. Your device needs to be running Android 7.0 (Nougat) or later for this app to work.

### **4. Lookout**

Lookout, by Google, uses computer vision to assist people with little or no sight to get things done faster and more easily. Using your phone's camera, Lookout makes it easier to get more information about the world around you and perform daily tasks more efficiently, such as sorting mail, putting away groceries, and more.

Built with guidance from the blind and partially sighted community, Lookout supports Google's mission to make the world's information universally accessible to everyone.

With Lookout, you can:

- **NEW:** Use Images mode to describe the contents of an image. The new Image Q&A feature offers detailed description of images plus the ability to ask questions via voice and text.(Available in English in US, UK and Canada only).

- Use Food Label mode (beta) to quickly identify packaged foods by their label, in addition to scanning barcodes. Available in some countries.
- Read a whole page of text with Scan Document mode. Take a snapshot of a document, and Lookout will scan the text, so that it can be read aloud by your screen reader or magnified on your phone.
- Use Quick Read mode to quickly skim text and hear it read aloud - for performing tasks such as sorting mail.
- Use Currency mode to identify US and UK banknotes quickly and reliably.
- Use Explore mode (beta) to find out information about objects in the home or outside.

Lookout is a free app and is available from the Play Store. Your device needs to be running version 6.0 (Marshmallow) or later for this app to work. A minimum of 2GB of RAM is required for best performance!

## 5. Legere Scanner

Legere Scanner, formerly Voice Dream Scanner, allows you to scan printed documents with the camera and then have the text read aloud using built-in text-to-speech. It uses state-of-the-art AI (Artificial Intelligence) for OCR (Optical Character Recognition) and text recognition. It's fast and accurate, even in poor lighting conditions. It works entirely on your device, so there's no need for an internet connection.

You can export scanned documents as plain text or PDF with embedded text to another app, or save them on your device, iCloud, Dropbox, or Google Drive.

Additional Features Include:

- Automatic detection of document edges for stretching and cropping.
- Automatic detection of document orientation and auto rotate.
- Automatic image enhancement.
- Batch mode for scanning multiple pages quickly.
- Spoken words are highlighted in the text or the image.

Legere Scanner costs £3.99 and is available from the Play Store. Your device needs to be running version 6.0 (Marshmallow) or later for this app to work. This is a must app for your device if you intend to read lots of printed documents!

## 6. Synapptic

The Synapptic app offers easy-to-follow menus, large high-contrast text, voice control and clear speech feedback making your existing Android Smartphone or tablet effortless to use. The advantage of the Synapptic software is that all of its features

work in the same easy-to-use way, so once you've mastered one feature, you've mastered them all! Synapptic allows you to stay connected with family and friends in a simple, accessible way.

Some of the features of the Synapptic app include High Contrast Colour Schemes, Large Fonts, Voice Recognition for dictating Text and Email Messages etc, SKYPE, an OCR text scanner, Magnifier, Colour Detector, Calendar, Address Book, BBC iPlayer, Talking Book player, Music Player and access to News Articles and popular web sites such as YouTube and Google.

Synapptic costs £249. However, there is a 15 day trial version available. Synapptic only works on Android devices that are running version 7.0 (Nougat) or later. It can only be downloaded from the Synapptic web site ([www.synapptic.com](http://www.synapptic.com)).

## 7. Trainline

The Trainline app is a superb and easy to use app for planning your train journeys. The interface is very simple, with one box into which you type your starting station and the other into which you type your destination station. When you perform the search, a list of train times is displayed and there's also an option for viewing the intermediate stations on the journey.

Other features include an option for reversing the most recent journey, choosing a specific date and time of travel, a history of journeys you have planned in the past and even options for finding out the price of a ticket and purchasing it! The Trainline app is one which you should definitely install onto your device if you use the trains regularly!

Trainline is a free app and is available from the Play Store. Your device needs to be running version 5.0 (Lollipop) or later for this app to work.

## 8. Lazarillo

Lazarillo is a specialized GPS app that includes mobility tools for blind and partially sighted people. Using audio messages, Lazarillo will inform you of nearby places, the street you are walking on, road junctions and more! Lazarillo will announce the places around you as you move around.

Lazarillo was designed and implemented with active feedback from blind and partially sighted people. The GPS resource is used even if the App is in the background. This allows the user to keep using the app without active usage of the screen, so that they can still enjoy the features of Lazarillo even when their phone is in their pocket or when using other apps.

Lazarillo allows you to use its accessibility functions for free, it just requires mobile data or a Wi-Fi connection. It contains the following features:

- Exploration: Provides your actual position, nearby places, and street intersections
- whilst you are walking on the pavement, sitting on a bus or travelling by car.

- Category searches: Allows you to find nearby places from a specific category such as banks, health, food, shops, art, entertainment, etc.
- Specific searches: Allows you to find a route to any place using your voice or the keyboard.

Lazarillo is a free app and is available from the Play Store. Your device needs to be running version 5.0 (Lollipop) or later for this app to work.

For further information on these apps and others, please contact Gary Eady, Access Technology Trainer at Sight For Surrey, using the following email address:

[geady@sightforsurrey.org.uk](mailto:geady@sightforsurrey.org.uk)