Android
An Introduction to Be My AI

This document has been designed to introduce you to the Be My AI feature, found within the popular app called Be My Eyes on an Android Smartphone.

Assumptions Made in the Creation of this Document

Certain assumptions have been made in the creation of this document. They are as follows:

- The latest version of Be My Eyes has been downloaded and installed onto your Android Smartphone. At the time of writing (16 April 2025), the latest version is 3.2.2 (265).
- Your Smartphone is running Android version 14 or later.
- Your Smartphone is connected to the internet.

Note: The instructions given in this document have been created using a Samsung Galaxy S21 Smartphone, running Android version 14. If you are using a non-Samsung device or a later version of Android, you may find some minor differences. However, it isn't anticipated that you will!

What is Be My Eyes?

Be My Eyes is a free smartphone app. It connects blind and low vision users with sighted volunteers or company representatives for visual assistance through a live video connection, using the rear-facing camera on their device. In more basic terms, it allows users to have a sighted person on demand through video chat. The service is free to use and you can use it as many times a day as you like! The app can be used from anywhere in the world, with no language restrictions!

About Be My Eyes Volunteers

Be My Eyes uses sighted volunteers to power their service. Anyone can become a sighted volunteer by signing up for the app as a volunteer. Volunteers receive no background checks or formal training to help blind and vision impaired people, which is not necessarily a negative thing as many of the tasks are simple.

When a user needs assistance, a notification is sent out to several volunteers, and whoever answers the call first is the one who gets to help. Volunteers remain anonymous during calls and do not appear on video, their voice is the only thing that is transmitted.

Be My Eyes volunteers in numbers

- Over 150 countries represented
- Over 180 languages supported
- Over 7 million volunteers worldwide
- 24 hours a day, 7 days a week access

What is Be My AI?

Be My AI is a feature, within the Be My Eyes app, which uses Artificial Intelligence to describe images taken using the camera on your device. It analyses the contents of an image and displays the results on screen. The text can then be read back using the built-in speech feature.

You can ask follow up questions about the picture, for example, "tell me more about the person with blonde hair" or "tell me more about the vegetarian dishes on the menu". A few seconds later, Be My AI will provide you with any additional information it can.

The Be My AI feature in Be My Eyes is a fantastic leap forward in image description and one which in time, will change the lives of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people worldwide!

Using the Be My AI Feature

When you first open the Be My Eyes app, you will be prompted to allow access to the camera, microphone and Bluetooth. It is important that you grant permission, as it will allow a sighted volunteer, as well as the Be My AI feature, to communicate with you!

Running along the bottom of the Be My Eyes app, you will find 5 Tabs. From left to right, these are Home, Be My AI, Service Directory, Community and Settings. The currently selected Tab will most likely be "Home".

Activate the Be My AI Tab. Upon doing this, the screen will change. The upper portion of the screen will be dedicated to the view-finder of your camera. At the bottom of the screen, just above the row of Tabs, you will find a large blue button, labelled "Take Picture".

Point the rear-facing camera on your device at the image you want to be described and then activate the Take Picture button. Upon doing this, you will hear a series of tones, which indicate that Be My AI is processing and analysing the image!

When the tones stop, a description of the image will be displayed onscreen. You can get Be My AI to read out the text by activating the Play button, situated towards the top right corner of the screen. Visually, this looks like a picture of a blue loud speaker. When this button is activated, the description of the image is read aloud and the button changes to become a picture of a loud speaker, blaring out sound.

You will now find an additional button on the screen. This is the "Ask More" button. This is situated towards the lower right corner of the screen, to the right of the Take Picture button. Activating the Ask More button results in a screen being displayed, consisting of the following:

The Share Button

The Share button is situated at the upper right corner of the screen. Activating this button results in a popup window being displayed, in which you can choose to share the image and its description with someone else using one of many apps.

The Image Description

This takes up the majority of the screen. It is situated directly beneath the Share button. You can get Be My AI to read the description aloud by activating the Play button. Remember, this is depicted by a picture of a loud speaker.

The Call a Volunteer Button

This button is situated beneath the image description. It is used to call a volunteer. You may want to do this, if you need further assistance.

The Add Picture Button

This button is situated at the lower left corner of the screen. It is used to take another picture. Why you would want to do this, I'm not quite sure!

The Message Text Field

This is situated to the right of the Add Picture button. Activating the Text Field results in the Virtual keyboard being displayed at the bottom of the screen. Use the keyboard to enter your question into the text field.

The Send Message Button

Once you have typed a question into the text field, the Send Message button appears to the right of the text field. Activate this button to send your question. A few seconds later, additional information relating to the picture will be displayed onscreen. You can have this read aloud to you by activating the Play button.

To close the Ask More screen, activate the Android Back button. Upon doing this, you will be asked if you are sure you want to end the chat and then you will be prompted to rate your experience of using the Be My AI feature.

Getting Descriptions of Existing Images

Be My AI can describe any photo stored on your device, or from third party apps such as WhatsApp. The ability to do this can make photos pretty enjoyable!

Describing a Photo Stored on your Device

To describe a photo stored on your device, follow these steps:

1.   Open the app which contains your photos and locate the photo you want to be described by Be My AI.

2.   Activate the photo. Upon doing this, it will be displayed in the Photo Viewer.

3.   Activate the "Share" button, situated at the bottom centre of the screen. Upon doing this, a popup window will be displayed, containing a list of commonly used apps for sharing images.

4.   Locate and activate the "More" button. Upon doing this, a list of additional apps will be displayed.

5.   Now locate and activate the "Describe with Be My Eyes" button. Upon doing this, Be My AI will analyse the image.

6.   Once the image has been analysed, a description of the image will be displayed onscreen. Activate the Play button to have the description read aloud. Hopefully, the description will provide you with enough information to know what the photo pertains to.

7.   If you would like to ask a question about the image, activate the Reply Text Field, situated at the bottom centre of the screen, then type your question using the Virtual keyboard. When done, activate the Send Message button. A few seconds later, the answer to your question will be displayed onscreen. Activate the Play button to have it read aloud.

8.   When you have finished with the description, activate the Android Back button. Upon doing this, you will be asked if you are sure you want to end the chat. Activate the "Yes" button at this stage. You will then be prompted to rate your experience of using the Be My AI feature. Upon activating an option, you will be returned to the Share popup window in the Gallery app.

9.   To close the Share popup window, activate the Android Back button again. Upon doing this, you will be returned to the Photos Viewer, in the Gallery app.

10. Activate the Android Back button again. Upon doing this, you will be returned to the main Gallery app screen.

11. Finally, Activate the Android Back button again, to return to the Be My AI feature, in the Be My Eyes app.

Conclusion

The Be My AI feature found in the Be My Eyes app, is a real break through in providing blind and vision impaired people with accurate descriptions of pictures. It can be used for a wide range of things, including finding out what's available on a menu, reading printed documents and hand-written letters, reading the instructions on medication packages and so much more. For many people, one of the most useful things might be to be able to read their own Christmas and Birthday cards.

In time, the Be My AI feature will almost certainly be available in a pair of glasses, such as the Meta Ray-ban SmartGlasses. It's also pretty likely that in time, Be My AI will be able to recognise faces and inform you when someone you know is nearby.

All-in-all, the Be My AI feature of Be My Eyes is a real game changer for blind and vision impaired people, and is one which you will probably use on a regular basis!

This is the end of the introduction to the Be My AI feature, found in the Be My Eyes app. If you want to find out more about Be My AI, contact the author, Gary Eady, using the following email address.

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