How technology is helping people with print disabilities read the local news

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| Less than five percent of the world’s print information is avaliable in a format that someone with a print disability can access.  But now, thanks to technology, this growing number of people can keep up to date with news about what is happening in their local area.  Vision Australia, the nation’s leading blindness and low vision services, has been working in partnership with the Dandenong Leader for more than twenty years to produce the “The Talking Dandenong Leader.”  The service was previously being managed by local volunteers, Tom and Joyce Hurle. They coordinate a team of volunteers who select articles from the paper and record them onto cassette in their own homes. However cassettes will soon become obsolete so Vision Australia has developed a new service to keep residents up to date with their local news.  “The Talking Dandenong Leader volunteers have done a terrific job in providing this vital service over many years and it has made a huge difference in the lives of our clients,” says Michael Ward, National Coordinator Audio Description and Talking Newspaper, Vision Australia.  “The new system builds on the current service by using digital technology to produce a high quality product that can easily be navigated. Vision Australia clients can skip through the content to find the information that is of interest to them and they will receive their newspaper at around the same time as their sighted neighbours,” he added.  The new service will be produced centrally in a Digital Access Information System (DAISY) format and can be played on a specially designed digital playback device, avaliable from Vision Australia.  To access the service people will need to contact Vision Australia on 1300 84 74 66. | * **Less than five percent of print information is available is accessible formats** * **By harnessing digital technology, Vision Australia helps people who have a print disability remain connected in their local community** * **To find out more call Vision Australia on 1300 84 74 66** |
| Combining the skills and resources of several leading blindness organisations to create one national voice, Vision Australia is committed to delivering exceptional and efficient services that open up exciting possibilities for our community.  For more information or to support Vision Australia call 1300 84 74 66 or visit www.visionaustralia.org |  |