



**Deafblind Newsletter - December 2007**

## **DeafBlind Communicator to Tap the Power and Simplicity of KeySoft**

The DeafBlind Communicator (DBC) is being designed to provide a simple way to handle TTY communications and to be a portable way to deal with face-to-face communications.

### **Simplicity**

A simple conversation approach is provided through an intuitive Chat Menu which is automatically entered when the DBC is first turned on. When in a conversation, whether it's Face to Face or TTY, the way you communicate is identical. Our goal is to produce a DeafBlind Communicator that is simple and straight forward which any Braille user can learn to use with minimal training.

### **Hidden Applications Activated**

We realize that some deafblind people will want to do more or grow into doing more than basic communications, so we have built the DBC on a much more powerful platform that offers additional capabilities. A secondary goal for the DBC is to ensure that any user can choose to activate other, more powerful applications (initially hidden from the user), which provide access to the kinds of capabilities and functions available in mainstream technology (note the chart below). KeySoft, the environment (user-interface) that is used in the

DBC, is the same one used in the BrailleNote and has reached its celebrated friendliness through over twenty years of constant improvement. Once a user chooses to activate the full-blown features of the DBC, the Chat Menu noted above becomes one of the applications listed in the Main Menu. From that menu, a simple press of the character “C” instantly takes you to the KeyChat Menu and from there everything “looks” exactly the same as the basic DBC.

Main Menu	
—	<u>W</u> ord processor
—	<u>P</u> lanner
—	<u>A</u> ddress list
—	<u>E</u> mail
—	<u>I</u> nternet
—	<b><u>C</u>hat</b>
—	<u>M</u> edia center
—	<u>B</u> ook reader
—	<u>S</u> cientific calculator
—	<u>D</u> atabase manager
—	<u>G</u> ames
—	<u>F</u> ile manager
—	<u>U</u> tilities
—	<u>T</u> erminal for screen reader
—	<u>R</u> emote synthesizer
—	<u>K</u> eyboard learn

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## Q & A

I’ve been receiving emails from our readers asking various questions and one of those readers, Mr. Leslie, suggested that I add a “questions and answers” section to the newsletter. This is a great idea so that we can all benefit from the dialog regarding the DBC. So as to keep the size of the newsletters down, I’ll try to limit these to the top 3-5 questions depending on the length of the answers.

Q: When do you plan to release the DBC?

A: We plan to start accepting orders in April and shipping in June 2008.

Q: Will the DBC resemble the TeleBraille in basic functionality?

A: The basic DBC will have many similarities to the TeleBraille in both feature and function. Although the KeySoft user interface will “feel” somewhat different from that of the TeleBraille, it is still very easy to use. Of course, if the user chooses to activate the more powerful features, the DBC will be a fully functional BrailleNote that includes TeleBraille-type functionality.

Q: Will the DBC support my BrailleNote PK?

A: Probably not. Unfortunately, the PK does not have a landline connection on it to enable TTY communications. Also, the BrailleNote mPower, on which the DBC is based, has significantly more memory and power to handle the added functions of the DBC.

Q: Will the DBC include the screen reader Mobile Speak Pocket (MSP)?

A: No. All of the functions relating to the cell phone (DB Companion) will be controlled from the DB BrailleNote. As noted in the article above, if the user chooses to activate the full functionality of the BrailleNote applications, the DB BrailleNote becomes a fully functional PDA on its own that does not require the complexity of a screen reader or any other additional software.

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