



The iOS Survival App Kit
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Introduction

The first series of popular iPhone commercials employed the tag line, “there is an app for that.” Apple simply nailed one of the key reasons the iPhone, iPad and the iPod Touch quickly captured the attention of the blind community. Whether you need to OCR your mail, obtain directions to a store, complete office related tasks, or any other objective related to independent living, there is an app for blinded individuals to use. This informative paper aims to highlight some of the more popular and useful apps. Some applications require you to purchase it and/or purchase content within the app. This will be identified with a (\$) or (\$ for content), respectively, next to the title. Similarly, apps requiring an active data or internet connection to use the app will possess (E) next to the title. Despite many apps requiring these two items, it's the authors' opinions each app is worth it. At the time of writing, these applications possessed either full or partial accessibility with Voice Over. Consult with WWW.Applevis.com for further information.

Starting Off

iOS includes a Voice Over Practice mode to learn Voice Over. Users will be able to perform swipes, gestures, and keyboard commands, immediately hearing the action for each. Here are the three main methods to enter this mode. It is assumed that Voice Over is already activated.

Method 1: Conduct a four-finger double tap.

Method 2: Press Command plus Option plus “K” on a paired keyboard.

Method 3: Open settings on your iOS device, Settings > General > Accessibility > Voice Over, and tap on Voice Over Practice.



The Blind Vet Tech Quick Guides and Tutorials podcast contains an introductory episode outlining these different methods to open the help menu along with demonstrating some of the basic swiping gestures. Navigate to the below link to listen:

<http://blindnotalone.com/2016/08/27/basic-voice-over-gestures/>

Here is another application: LookTel's VoiceOver Tutorial (\$)

When starting the learn how to use VoiceOver, we have many different routes. LookTel's tutorial is probably the best app for doing this. It offers very easy to understand instructions and skill development tests to learn about interacting with VoiceOver and its gestures. If anything, this app serves as a great instructional guide on how to use the iPhone.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/looktel-voiceover-tutorial/id598788231?mt=8>

There are also two blinded Veteran lead teleconferences where you can learn more about iOS devices. The Hines Blind Center Alumni iOS and GPS users teleconference occurs on the first Tuesday of each month at 10:00 central time. Call in by dialing the 800 number with the access code (800) 767-1750,44125.

The Blind Vet Tech team possesses our own array of teleconferences, podcasts, and other methods to learn more about iOS devices. Our Monthly Tech Talk occurs on the third Thursday of each month at 1900 central time, and participation requires you to just call (866) 820-9940. During these calls, we will demonstrate how to use an app, feature, or device, followed by an open question and answer session. If you are unable to attend, we publish regular podcasts covering the material from the call in more detail through the Blind Vet Tech Quick Guides and Tutorials podcast channel. Just type in Blind Vet Tech in your Victor Reader Stream, iOS podcast app, or however else you listen to podcasts. Finally, we also host a private Facebook discussion group and several other services. Learn more about us by visiting us at: <http://blindnotalone.com/blind-vet-tech/>

App Store Categories



Books

NLS BARD Mobile

The National Library Service created an iOS app that makes reading BARD talking books a breeze. From within the app, you can search their database, download books and magazines, and start enjoying the material. Due to the size of the average BARD audio book, it is strongly recommended that you only download audio books while connected to a home or business wireless network and not over cellular connections.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/bard-mobile/id705229586?mt=8>

iBook's (\$ for content)

Whether you wish to read a recent book or something from the past, if it is on iBook's, you can do so. With iCloud, you can pick up where you left off on whatever devices you have synced with iBook's.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/ibooks/id364709193?mt=8>

Audible (\$ for content)

The leader in Audio Books through individual purchases or subscriptions released its own iOS app. You can search, download, and listen to Audible titles, the high-quality readers offers the best experiences to reading pleasure.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/audiobooks-from-audible/id379693831?mt=8>

Read2Go (\$)

Book Share is the leading Daisy book provider offering thousands of titles. This app offers its own Text to Speech capabilities unlike iBook's. This means you can listen to the book, while either navigating with Voice Over elsewhere on your device or with your device in your pocket.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/read2go/id425585903?mt=8>



Kindle (\$ for content)

Like iBook's, Kindle finally made both its app and many of its books accessible for Voice Over users. Offering probably the largest collection of material on the web, you are sure to find some book you wish to read. Please note that only those books marked as Kindle books on the Amazon.com website will be accessible in Kindle. Additionally, if you wish to purchase the audible.com version of a book, you have that option within this app.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/kindle-read-books-ebooks-magazines/id302584613?mt=8>

Business

Audio Memos (\$)

Audio Memos is a voice recorder for the iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch. It is easy to use, with a simple and intuitive interface. It has many features including pause record, pause play, slider, quality control, volume meter, volume boost, volume normalizing, voice activated recording and more.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/audio-memos-pro/id290160980?mt=8>

Catalogs

NO ENTRIES AT THIS TIME

Education

Voice Dream Reader (\$)

Voice Dream Reader is the best method to read Daisy formatted and eBooks from sources like Book Share, Project Gutenberg, PDF's, webpages, and many more locations and formats. This



app allows Voice Over users to quickly read a document through an array of Text to Speech voices for clarity. You can highlight text, export highlights and text, and share what you are reading with your social networks. The author of this document personally uses this app to read most his text and research articles required for graduate school.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/voice-dream-reader/id496177674?mt=8>

Entertainment

Sero (formerly iblink Radio) (\$*)

Serotek evolved iblink Radio into the new Sero app by bringing forward the System Access Mobile Network (SAMNet). The main page provides quick access to your news, DocuScan Plus, OCR scans, media content for the blind, descriptive audio, and their voice chat rooms. * As a Veteran, you may receive free access to SAMNet through the SAMNet Vets program, which your VIST or CATS instructor must submit documentation about your blindness and Veteran status.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/iblink-radio/id332027117?mt=8>

Netflix (\$)

The biggest supplier of streaming movies and TV Shows also has an accessible iOS app. While you are required to also have a Netflix account, finding something to watch cannot be any easier. Even better is the expanding number of titles with the audio description track, enhancing accessibility.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/netflix/id363590051?mt=8>

Finance

NO ENTRIES AT THIS TIME



Food and drink

NO ENTRIES AT THIS TIME

Games

NO ENTRIES AT THIS TIME

Health and fitness

Health (\$*)

The Health kit is the integrated iOS app found on iPhones updated to iOS 8.0 or higher. This provides a place to input vital signs, record fitness goals, and sync with a variety of health and fitness trackers, like the *Apple Watch and Fitbit. For those with an iPhone 5S, iPhone 6, iPhone 6 Plus, or newer, the Health app will automatically record your steps and distance traveled, just by leaving your iPhone in your pocket as you move. Additionally you can record your medical information, so in the event of an emergency, a person would be able to access this information. Users of iOS 10 can register as an organ donor.

Kids

NO ENTRIES AT THIS TIME

Life style



NO ENTRIES AT THIS TIME

Magazine and newspaper

NO ENTRIES AT THIS TIME

Medical

Vision Sim

The hardest thing to do at times is explain what blindness looks like. The Braille Institute managed to do that with your iOS' camera. You can select from several different conditions, and use a slider to adjust its severity. Then a normally sighted person can look at the screen and understand how we see the world.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/visionsim-by-braille-institute/id525114829?mt=8>

Music

Apple Music (\$)

You can purchase music by connecting with your iTunes music account. In addition, listen to radio stations created from your favorite artists or songs, and play any song by just asking Siri. One of the best features comes from listening to streaming radio. Music contains many genre specific radio stations, national and local NPR stations, ESPN, and many more. The app is pre-installed.



Pandora

As one of the leaders for internet radio, Pandora's app is the easiest way to listen to or create new music stations. Whether you like rock, classic, or need to entertain small kids with Elmo, you are certain to find a genre for your listening.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/pandora-radio/id284035177?mt=8>

Navigation

NOTE - No amount of GPS solutions can fix sub-par orientation and mobility skills. The below options should only be used to supplement existing orientation and navigation skills you learned with a white cane or Service Animal. Generally, GPS navigation apps require an active internet and/or cellular connection to function.

Apple Maps

The app has integrated mapping and turn by turn solutions within iOS. It uses complete Siri integration. For example, if you have an address for a person in your Contacts, you can simply ask Siri for directions there. Likewise, if your home address is appropriately set-up, asking Siri to take you home will provide turn by turn directions home. Relevant to the blind, you can toggle on a mode that will provide you with updates on your location, approaching intersections, and other orientation features. The addition of public transportation routes and navigation via the routes has greatly enhanced the usability of Apple Maps for individuals living in the supported cities. Basically, each iOS update improves Apple Maps, and it's my primary navigational and mapping solution. The app is pre-installed.

Google Maps

Thus, far, Google Maps is the best free turn by turn navigation app that offers two features for blind travelers. First, directions includes public transportation options with fares and schedules. Second, the pedestrian mode offers better routing options than other apps. As a perk, this app works internationally, unlike Seeing Eye GPS.



<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/google-maps/id585027354?mt=8>

Blind Square (\$)

Blind Square finds a “point of interest” with navigation features for the blind. It will provide straight line distance and orientation to POI’s, intersection alerts, current location information, and link to other GPS apps for turn by turn navigation. This app was specifically designed for the blind. A very useful feature is the ability to create your own points of interest and ability to use the action button on your headset to navigate the menus. A new in app purchase allows you to purchase credits to use the integrated voice controls, which will not work with a Bluetooth headset.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/blindsquare/id500557255?mt=8>

Seeing Eye GPS (\$)

This app has a lot to offer a blind user in ways of turn by turn navigation and many other features. It has a subscription based pricing plan.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/seeing-eye-gps/id668624446>

NAVIGON (\$)

This full featured turn by turn GPS app will allow you to search for points of interest, look around, insert an address, and receive precise directions to that location. All maps are pre-downloaded into the iOS device, so it only requires an active GPS connection, like cellular reception or a GPS receiver.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/navigon-north-america/id321506742?mt=8>

News

Apple News

The pre-installed News app by Apple brings you only the articles you wish to read. The first time you launch News, a step by step process queries your interests and news sources, while



further refinement occurs through analyzing what you read. Additionally, you can paste in a URL into the search field to extract the latest posts from your favorite websites. Give Apple News a try, and you might not need another news app.

NPR News

For those who listen to NPR, this companion app provides access to those top articles from the day. You have the choice to either read the article or listen to the story.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/npr-news/id324906251?mt=8>

BBC News

Provides news from around the world. The app allows you to read the articles or listen the BBC live radio.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/bbc-news/id364147881?mt=8>

Access World

The AFB compiles their monthly magazine into this free app. Articles generally include assistive tech, living skills, blindness related research, and other material around blindness.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/accessworld/id460177148?mt=8>

NFB Newsline

If there is a newspaper or major magazine you wish to read, Newsline probably has it. Newsline partners with local newspapers, national newspapers, multiple magazines, and other print sources so you remain informed of current events. The weather feature pulls information from the National Weather Service about your location in a very easy to navigate and read format.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/nfb-newsline-mobile/id530470425?mt=8>

Photo and video

YouTube



This app lets you see what the world is watching in music, gaming, entertainment, news and more. Subscribe to channels, share with friends, edit and upload videos, and watch on any device.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/youtube/id544007664?mt=8>

Productivity

iOS Office

Pages, Keynote and Numbers

Apple created its own line of office products. These include Pages for word documents, Keynote for presentations, and Numbers for spreadsheets. If you find yourself needing to turn your device into a mobile office, these apps will make it happen. If you also use a Mac computer with each of these programs, iCloud enables you sync the document with all your devices.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/pages/id361309726?mt=8>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/numbers/id361304891?mt=8>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/keynote/id361285480?mt=8>

Mail

The pre-installed Apple Mail app handles all your emailing needs. Simple swipe gestures and flicks allow you to navigate through your inbox, delete unwanted messages, and reply to your contacts. Mail supports IMAP and POP mail accounts, so any email address will work.

Microsoft Office

Outlook

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/microsoft-outlook-email.../id951937596?...>

Word

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/microsoft-word/id586447913?mt=8>



Power point

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/microsoft-powerpoint/id586449534?mt=8>

Excel

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/microsoft-excel/id586683407?mt=8>

Office 365 (\$)

A subscription to Office 365 provides authorization to run the Microsoft Office apps on your Windows computer, internet applications, and on your idevices. They are all linked together on One Drive (cloud storage, 1 terabyte).

Other Cloud Services:

Dropbox and Google Drive

The two most common cloud services possess an app. Both are very similar, allowing you to add documents to your cloud, share files and links, and access your files from anywhere.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/dropbox/id327630330?mt=8>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/google-drive/id507874739?mt=8>

TC Conference

For those who wish to participate in a Talking Communities (TC) call but are not able to connect from a computer, there is a Talking Communities iphone/iPad app that works very well. It does not contain all the features of the computer version and so might not be appropriate for a call moderator who might wish to use some of the TC options such as recording, but for call participants who just need to participate in the call, then this is a very good option.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/tcconference/id442789079?mt=8>

CAPTi



Occasionally we encounter a webpage that we just might want to save and read later. This app does that in a unique way. Instead of bookmarking a page, why not turn it into an MP3 file so you listen to it.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/capti-web-player/id437052502?mt=8>

KNFB Reader (\$)

This is quite possibly the best iOS OCR solution for those with visual impairments. It offers a very simple to use interface that requires only a few minutes to train an intermediate skilled iOS user. This is the first OCR app to provide clear directions regarding the orientation and angle of a document being scanned prior to taking the picture. With a quick tap on the screen, you can orient your document, take a picture, and start listening via built in Text to Speech functions. This app also allows one to import PDF's and image files stored on your email, Dropbox account, or other file storage service.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/knfbreader/id849732663?mt=8>

Prizmo (\$)

This app conducts OCR of scanned text. It offers auditory guidance to help line up an image for an optimal scan. Keep in mind that text must be typed and clear, with proper lighting, and a stable hand or stand. When compared to KNFB Reader, more individuals with visual impairments prefer KNFB Reader.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/prizmo-scanning-ocr-speech/id366791896?mt=8>

Voiceye

This is a new and emerging alternative for QR Codes. Voiceye creates its own codes capable of storing two pages of text in a square inch. The Blinded Veterans Association is using this Voiceye on many of their materials. Different from a QR Code, Voiceye does not require an active internet connection, as the Voiceye app translates the information. <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/voiceye/id496389982?mt=8>



Reference

Wikipedia

Find a quick fact, or dive down a Wikipedia rabbit hole with the official Wikipedia app for iOS. With more than 39 million articles in nearly 300 languages, your favorite free online encyclopedia is at your fingertips.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/wikipedia/id324715238?mt=8>

Shopping

NO ENTRIES AT THIS TIME

Social Networking

Messages

The pre-installed Apple Messaging app lets you send texts, photos, videos, and audio messages.

A great feature includes sending you location to a contact. Simply create a text message and insert the individual you wish to send your location. Then tap on the more information button in the upper right corner, and select either “Send My Location” or “share My Location.”

Here's My Location

If you ever need to send someone your exact where about, this app does exactly that. Designed for the blind user, it sends your coordinates via email or text message to anyone you wish. If that



person uses a smart phone, they can simply click on the linked coordinates and pull up a map with your location.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/heres-my-location/id400919008?mt=8>

Facebook

This platform has grown to become one of the largest social networking sites on the internet.

This corresponding app is accessible and continues to be improved.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/facebook/id284882215?mt=8> breeze.

Twitter

The Social networking site that made hashtags and 144 character posts famous. However, this has more possibilities than brief encounters. Many organizations and entities post links to resources and news onto Twitter shortly after publishing. Twitter may be also used as an aggregated newsfeed, accessibility resource, and numerous other ventures.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/twitter/id333903271?mt=8>

Twitterrific

While the Twitter main client is fully accessible with Voice Over, Twitterrific includes a layout and features enhancing accessibility for both Voice Over and Zoom users. These items offer more user experiences that many visually impaired users prefer Twitterrific over most other platforms for Twitter.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/twitterrific-5-for-twitter/id580311103?mt=8>

LinkedIn

The LinkedIn app makes it easier to connect to the people and things that matter in your professional world. You can find people and jobs, get updates on your professional industry and interests, and grow your network.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/linkedin/id288429040?mt=8>

Face Time



Standard on all iOS devices, Face Time enables you to conduct video chats with other iOS and Apple users. Both parties must be using either an iPhone, iPad, or Mac computer for it to work. On the iPad, there is a separate app for making Face Time calls. On the iPhone, you can make a call by going into your contacts and selecting the option to Face Time with the user. Easiest way is to simply call up Siri and ask to Face Time with John Smith with either their email address or phone number.

Skype

The most infamous video conferencing tool is available for your iOS device. Unlike Face Time, you can communicate with anyone with a Skype account and using the Skype program on whatever device they might be using. Additionally, the ability to leave Video messages and preform multi-person video conferences is enabled for all users. Since iOS 10, Siri may be used to start a Skype call or send a message through Skype.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/skype-for-iphone/id304878510?mt=8>

Google Hangouts

Like Skype, Hangouts is a video or audio conferencing tools allowing you to connect with one or multiple people. The app is very accessible and easy to learn, but generally is not as preferred by the blindness community like Skype is.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/hangouts-free-messaging-video/id643496868?mt=8>

Sports

24/7 Football

Compiling articles and news from your favorite NFL Team, blogs, and writers, you will stay up to date with your team. Additionally, you may follow as many or few teams as possible.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/24-7-football/id405496055?mt=8>

Travel



Uber (\$)

This is a ridesharing app for fast, reliable rides in minutes—day or night. There's no need to park or wait for a taxi or bus. With Uber, you just tap to request a ride, and it's easy to pay with credit or cash in select cities. Requesting your Uber is easy

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/uber/id368677368?>

Trip advisor

The TripAdvisor mobile app is free and easy to use. You can browse millions of reviews, opinions and candid photos by travelers, download maps, reviews, and your saves for over 300 cities worldwide onto your phone for free; avoid using expensive data roaming plans while you travel.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/tripadvisor-hotels.../id284876795?mt=8>

Utilities

Tap Tap See

This is a simple app that allows you to take a picture and receive a response describing it. For example, if you took a picture of a dog, it may return with verbiage stating the color or type of dog, background surroundings, and various other things. Additionally, it can also recognize pictures in your photo library, to help with later recognition. This app is completely free with no in app purchases.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/taptapsee-blind-visually-impaired/id567635020?mt=8>

Cam Find

This is like Tap Tap See, but differs in that it is geared towards product recognition and shopping. Images taken are recognized, but feedback is slated towards purchasing the product. This app is completely free, with no in-app purchases.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/camfind-point-shoot-discover/id595857716?mt=8>



LookTel Recognizer

This app requires sighted assistance; in that you take a picture of an object and record your own voice in identifying it. An example involves using it to identify various credit cards and ID's one might have in their wallet. This is completed securely as the images remain on your phone, and are not sent off to a third-party service for recognition.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/looktel-recognizer/id501088555?mt=8>

Look Tel Money Reader (\$)

This will recognize various paper currency rather quickly and accurately. The app uses the video from your device and only requires a portion of the bill to be successful.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/looktel-money-reader/id417476558?mt=8>

Eye Note

For those requiring a free alternative to Money Reader or do not require the ability to recognize international currency, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing released this handy app. It quickly informs on the denomination and side of the currency facing the camera.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/eyenote/id405336354?mt=8>

Drop Vox

This app is streamlined to record and upload voice memos to Dropbox; there's no need to name files or choose where to send them. If you need more control, Drop Vox might not be right for you.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/dropbox/id327630330?mt=8>

Weather

Red Cross Hurricane and Tornado



These apps push alerts from the National Weather Service to your device along with appropriate updates. Please note that local coverage still offers the best coverage, this app will at least help you know when to tune into local news channels.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/tornado-by-american-red-cross/id602724318?mt=8>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/hurricane-by-american-red/id545689128?mt=8>

Weather Underground

The world's first online full feature weather service offers this full featured weather forecast and alerting app. Different from all other weather services, Weather Underground receives its information through crowd sourcing. This means that individuals with weather stations influence your results. This truly ensures weather information is accurate to your desired locations. As a note of caution, Voice Over users may encounter some minor accessibility issues with various parts, like the maps. However, the overall experience, and it being free, makes it worth a try.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/weather-underground-radar/id486154808?mt=8>

iOS Service Animal Apps

Prior to the release of smart phones, a Service Animal handler must either remember the federal and state regulations and statutes related to service animal access or carry a copy. While both practices are still encouraged, one now simply needs to install these two iOS apps on their iPhone or iPad for good measure. Please note that it's advisable to keep up to date with the regulations, statutes, and local ordinances related to service animal usage in areas you travel, in the event an update occurs that is not reflected within the below apps.

NAGDU Service Animal Legislation by State

The National Association of Guide Dog Users, and affiliate of the NFB, pushed out this app to provide a single location for legislation related to service animals and blindness. This app contains excerpts from the ADA, Air Carriers Act, individual state statutes, and general guidelines. This takes the place of the booklets or fact sheets many carried around depicting this same information.



Where to Go (titled Service Animal once installed)

This was the first app developed that focused specifically on Service Animals in the iTunes app store. This app pulls together locations of Service Animal relief areas from airports throughout the country, the ADA 2010 revision related to Service Dogs, and the most important Department of Justice ruling, which establishes the civil and legal power for the ADA.

Thank you for reading this document. All items expressed in this guide are the opinions of the authors, and as such may vary between individuals. While we do not mind if individuals share any of the information contained in this document or the document itself, do not pass this off as your own work and cite the authors. The iOS Survival App Kit was developed by Blind Vet Tech, a program of Blind Not Alone, LLC. For more information, visit us at BlindNotAlone.com.