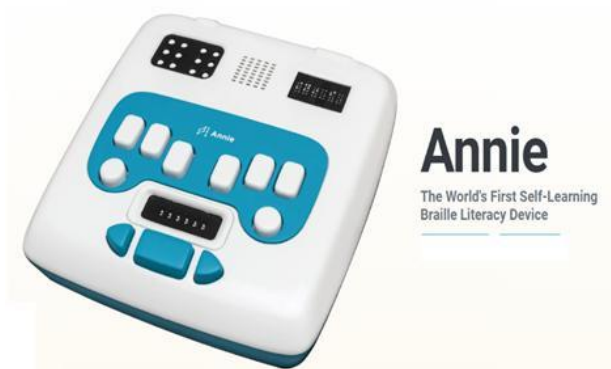


Breaking the barriers of blindness with Annie

By Dr. Bilqeesa Bhat



Annie is a device by Thinkerbell labs which enables users to self-learn braille in a fun a gamified manner. It allows special educators to focus on multiple students at the same time thus allowing easy tracking of student's progress (analytics) and downloading of new content by seamlessly integrating with the ecosystem.

Annie is one of its kind products across the globe wherein all the hardware modules of the device are tailored to teach braille along with interactive content. The interactive content is a blend of both braille as well as audio. The analytics suite allows for the scheduling of tests and lessons as well as enables the educators to give homework.

The braille literacy rate around the world is abysmal. Literacy rate correlates to employability and affects the economy. Braille literacy is a huge hurdle for visually impaired individuals around the globe. There is a huge gap because learning the language needs a person to person contact. The teacher needs to spend time with the students individually.

To address this need and eliminate the need for teacher's physical presence, Annie, a voice coordinated device accelerates the braille learning process itself and provides a self-learning environment. This would further bridge the gap between opportunities available for sighted and visually impaired.

The Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), New Delhi, supported innovation device can be used by beginners having no prior knowledge of braille. The device

also comes equipped with first-time digital braille games in single or multiplayer modes with challenges, lessons and exercises. Also, the students can receive instant feedback.

Some of the remarkable features of Annie are that it is smart, innovative, gamified, user-friendly, self-learning and offers interactive content

With Annie, a world is envisioned where education becomes accessible for the visually impaired as it is for the sighted ones. A visually impaired student through Annie can learn to read, write and type in braille on their own while having fun.

Contact details:

Dr Hafsa Ahmad nbm9@birac.nic.in

Ms Ginny Bansal pmubmgf6@birac.nic.in