

## Infosound finds Alexa

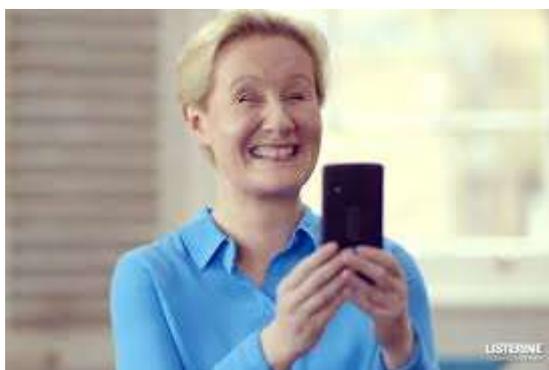


*"Alexa, discover my devices."*

The equipment is proving as reliable today as it was the day it was installed - once we had, as you know, ironed-out a couple of niggles. It is usually in use seven days a week and has never let us down. So, so mission accomplished - we needed reliability and your helpful grant provided us with just that!

We are in the process - well, at the end stages - of re-shaping the charity's service delivery, simplifying and streamlining what we do and, we hope, making it an easier listening experience for blind and partially-sighted people. As you may have gleaned from our web site, we have now opened up new and exciting ways for vision-impaired people to hear us; most notably using voice-controlled smart speakers, like the full Amazon range - the "echo", "dot", etc. I know we have updated you on this before, but we are still trying to develop our own presence on these devices (we only have an experimental platform at the moment). As I know I have mentioned to you before, for us, the beauty of these units is that they can be bought in the high street for as little as £25, they are mainstream and not one of the more expensive specialist listening devices and, of course, best of all, listening to us can now be done just with the voice - and that includes not just choosing what you listen to, but controlling how you hear it.

If you haven't tried listening to us in this way (and you happen to have an Amazon smart speaker), you can just say "Alexa, ask My Talking Newspaper for Infosound" and take it from there. It's probably best if you choose the "Infosound Select" option as that enables you to scan through all our current audio items. Confusingly for vision-impaired listeners (we are told), our presence on "Alexa" is just a part of the general "My Talking Newspaper" service which is not designed according to how we deliver our



audio content - chiefly because we are not a talking newspaper, of course! That, as I may well have mentioned in the past, is the reason we are so keen to get our own "skill" developed.

We are in partnership with a freelance software programmer in South Wales who, to put it mildly, is something of a genius at this type of work. We have now approached him to quote for developing a specific Alexa "skill" for us. Separately, he has said he can also make our existing phone delivery service for blind and partially-sighted people (01273 300001, select option 9) completely voice-controlled as well! We believe that would be a 'first'.