

Title

The use of smartphones and ereaders as low vision aids

Summary

In this debate I want to talk about consumers' technology and the role they can have for optometrists working in vision rehabilitation. To do this I am sharing some questions that I think we should talk about.

Are people with visual impairment using consumers' technology as low vision aids?

To start the conversation I will introduce some numbers of a survey that I recently conducted in Portugal about the use of these devices by people with low vision or blindness. With my results in mind it will be interesting to know the scenario in other countries across Europe.

3 minutes presentation + 5 minutes debate

In which type of tasks do people with low vision use these devices?

The idea here is to discuss if people use their devices for reading (books, magazines, newspapers), other written information, taking pictures at products and prices for shopping, pictures in information boards, and are using digital imaging capabilities of their devices to enlarge and record visual information.

1 minute introduction + 4 minutes debate

What features in electronic devices are more important for people with visual impairment?

People with low vision and professionals always discuss which device is better based on characteristics such as large font size, type of screen (lcd, E Ink, etc), contrast, background colour, audio navigation etc.

1 minute introduction + 4 minutes debate

What are the current limitations of these devices?

Here it will be interesting to talk about complexity of handling devices that were not designed for low vision, discuss price other limitations that you will bring to the discussion.

1 minute introduction + 3 minutes debate

What is the current potential of these devices?

The idea here is to start by discussing if consumers' technology has the potential to overcome the limitations that we find in the currently available products. Just to give one idea, these devices are of massive use and extremely well designed -- the first good thing is that they avoid people with visual impairment to be "discriminated" by the traditional bulky (strange) device that they are carrying.

1 minute introduction + 2 minutes debate