

DIGITAL AUDIO-BOOK PLAYERS PROVIDED TO STATE SCHOOLS

The Arizona Braille and Talking Book Library has begun loaning handheld, digital audio-book players to blind and visually-impaired students.

Thirty of the players - formally known as Victor Reader Streams - will be distributed to students of the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind. The devices, specially designed for easy use by the visually-impaired, were purchased by Arizona Friends of Talking Books through a special \$10,000 grant from Thunderbirds Charities.

"The library staff is very excited about the transition to a digital format," said Linda Montgomery, director of the Arizona Braille and Talking Book Library. "It's easier to use, has better sound quality and is much more durable than the now-outdated cassette books."

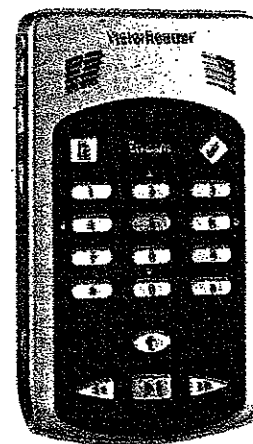
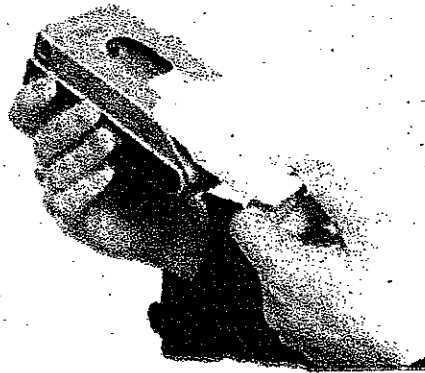
The new handheld players allow students to download and listen to audio books. Digital technology, rather than cassette tapes, makes the devices smaller and easier to handle and operate. State Library staff members are teaching students and teachers how to download audio books for use with the new players.

Handheld, digital players are the latest advancement in technology for the Talking Book program that in 1934 began recording books for use by the blind and visually-impaired. Most of the audio books and special equipment are produced

by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Additionally, the Arizona State Library - through the Braille and Talking Book Library - makes these and locally-produced reading materials available at no cost to any Arizonan who has difficulty reading standard-sized print or is unable to hold a book.

"These handheld, digital readers are a tremendous resource and open a new world of reading material to visually-impaired students in Arizona," said State Librarian GladysAnn Wells. "We're thrilled that this grant from Thunderbirds Charities has helped make this resource available."

For more information about the Arizona Braille and Talking Book Library, contact Director Linda Montgomery at 602-255-5578, or visit www.lib.az.us/braille.



Digital players are the latest advancement in technology for the Talking Book program.

From "The Lopper Dome" OCT. 2010