

Government Grants. Do you know what funds are available for your students?



highlights

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Contact Us:

Quantum Reading Learning Vision
 NSW & ACT: 02 9479 3100
 VIC: 03 9545 4100
 QLD: 07 3831 4894
info@quantumrlv.com.au

Welcome

It is becoming increasingly hard to provide face to face training within special education. Students and teachers are often located at some distance, and there are many other issues to try and fit into regular monthly meetings.

Read inside about our new Webinar training sessions, and the fantastic feedback we have received from teachers across Australia and New Zealand.

Webinars are just one way we keep in touch. Our consultants also regularly;

- attend your PD day in person, for updates and training
- organise open days and expo's in your area
- work directly with you and your students in trialling solutions

We also try and keep you up to date with the latest assistive technology solutions through this newsletter. If there are subjects you would like us to cover in a future issue please let us know.

We hope you enjoy this latest edition!

How to get digital copies of all your text books!

LearningField is an initiative of the Copyright Agency and is supported by all the major publishers of text books used in Australian High Schools. The website and application provide an industry solution for the distribution of digital text books to Secondary School students.

LearningField allows teachers to select the best material to support the differing needs of Years 7–10 students across all subject areas. Initially content is provided by publishers Cambridge University Press, Jacaranda, Oxford University Press and Pearson. Other publishers are expected to join during 2014.

For a single subscription fee per student, schools can enable teachers to access texts, both by chapter or whole text and with advanced search functions. The content is mapped to the Australian curriculum, State curriculums and the NSW syllabus. It also provides single sign-on with anywhere, anytime access including iPad, Android and PC reading applications.

Need Different Formats: Easy (Converter)!

“With just one program you can create any format and manage all your alt format documents”



There is a growing need across education to be able to work with and create information in alternative formats. EasyConverter from Dolphin Systems empowers you to make reading materials and other information accessible to people with visual impairments and dyslexia.

With EasyConverter you can quickly and easily create accessible Word docs, large print, MP3 audio, DAISY talking books and Braille (UEBC and multi-lingual options).

EasyConverter is easy to learn if you are new to creating accessible documents. Equally, EasyConverter is suitable for experienced professionals looking for a flexible accessible format creation tool.

EasyConverter is ideal for educational institutions, charities, transcription centres, government and commercial organisations. In Australia EasyConverter is being used as a resource tool by various education authorities, as well as government agencies. The Parliament of NSW is a user of EasyConverter and is now able to respond to requests for alternative format materials by any citizen of NSW.

EasyConverter quickly and easily creates alternative format versions of your documents which can be any of the following;

- Microsoft Word documents
- EPUB files (open or unprotected files)
- PDFs
- HTML
- Text
- Scanned paper documents
- DAISY XML
- Rich Text Format
- Image files

EasyConverter will quickly and accurately convert any documents in the formats listed above into one or all of the following formats;

- DAISY digital talking books
- MP3 audio
- Large Print
- Braille
- Text

So, how is this going to help your students?

A student who likes to listen to text. Take any document; a chapter of a text book, a secure PDF document, or even scan a classroom handout. Open it in EasyConverter and choose to convert it to MP3 format. Then email the file to your student or copy onto a USB memory stick, and they can upload the document to their phone and start listening.

A student who prefers Large Print. EasyConverter will convert any document into large print, and most importantly, maintain the correct page numbering (page 1 of the original document may convert into 3 pages of large print, which will be numbered 1a, 1b, 1c)

A Student who uses Braille. Any document can quickly and easily be converted to Braille. Once the Braille preferences are set, classroom teachers, teachers aides or anyone else can create formatted Braille versions of typical day to day classroom documents.

Quantum Webinars

Webinars are the fastest growing media platform for training and professional development in Australia. Quantum has already held a number of Webinars with participants from around Australia and New Zealand. The following is a list of up-coming events that you are invited to.

Date	Subject
Wed 21st May	EasyConverter: produce documents in alternate format in a few easy steps
Wed 4th June	Software Solutions for people with Dyslexia
Wed 25th June	Mountbatten and iPad connectivity
Wed 16th July	Introduction to the internet using JAWS
Wed 30th July	Stand alone scanning and reading solutions
Wed 6th August	Tactile imaging
Wed 21st August	MAGic screen reader
Wed 4th September	Introduction to braille displays
Wed 17th September	Duxbury Basics

We have also held a number of private webinars for organisations or groups of teachers who have asked for specific training sessions or seminars on product areas. These have proven to be very effective for groups that are widely dispersed and only physically get together rarely, such as itinerant teachers.

We can tailor sessions at a time of your choosing and can develop highly customised training opportunities to meet your particular needs. If you want further information on this drop a note to Rebecca Clark at info@quantumrlv.com.au

Some of our Webinars are recorded and can be viewed later such as this one on teaching keyboarding skills using TypeAbility on YouTube <http://youtu.be/g717WBbYZIQ>

Meet the Trainers

The reason our Webinars have been so successful is due to the quality of our trainers! Here they are;



Trevor Boyd (aka St Trev!) has worked in the VI field for over 25 years including 17 years in Victoria with Quantum.

Rebecca Clark organises, manages and also presents our Webinars! Despite the English accent she is now a bona fide Aussie!



Peter Cracknell (aka Crackers) has worked in AT in Australia and the UK for over 20 years including 12 years in Queensland with Quantum.

Rob Drummond first started working in Low Vision in the 1980's (but he's really not that old) and is one of the owners and Directors of Quantum.



Danny Keogh has just notched up 10 years with Quantum and is recognised as a leading trainer in blindness products.

New Quantum Office in Northern NSW.

Northern NSW and southern Queensland are among the fastest growing areas in Australia. Based on our philosophy that the best service is personal service, we have opened a new office in Ballina to better assist all of our clients in that region.

The new office will be managed by Mark Bettiens who has joined us with a background working in the Aged Care field as well as a medic in the Australian Defence Forces.



Mark can be contacted via email at mbettiens@quantumrlv.com.au or by phone on 0437 042 314.

The location of the office is;
Sight Support Centre:
Unit 2A 85 Tamar Street
Ballina, NSW 2478

We will hold an Open Day on the 11th June to officially kick things off, and everyone in the area is welcome to attend. There will be a permanent display of Low Vision equipment at the office and we will be holding various events to highlight the technology solutions for the different groups of people that we are working with, including specific Open Days for Educators.

The Ballina office is now our fifth office. In addition to our Head office in Sydney we have offices in Brisbane, Melbourne and Gympie (Southern Sydney).

Teaching an old dog new tricks.

Some people find all the new technology options a bit daunting. Here are some tips on how to best teach an old dog new tricks!

1. *Don't be afraid to ask for help.*
2. *Ask if you can trial any new equipment so you can learn about it in your own time and at your own pace.*
3. *Don't expect one device to solve every problem. You may need to use a combination of solutions to achieve everything needed for your students.*
4. *Practice!*
5. *See Point 1.*

Having been a leader in this field for many decades we know that it takes much more than just a product to be successful. You need a wide choice of options, the opportunity to try them, and support and training to ensure success.



And don't forget that your best teacher may be your student. They have the natural ability to assimilate technology by osmosis! So when it comes to evaluating new products it can sometimes be best to consider yourself as a 'co-learner' alongside your students.

Government Funding – the MSSD Program

In the last edition of LiveWire for Education we brought you news of how Education Queensland had used funding provided through the *More Support for Students with Disabilities* (MSSD) initiative, to provide District Licences of JAWS and MAGic software to support students with low vision and blind students across all Queensland state schools.

This month we would like to highlight another application of MSSD funding, this time in Victoria through the Statewide Vision Resource Centre (SVRC). It is very exciting to see MSSD funding bringing such tangible and practical outcomes for teachers and students.

MSSD funding was provided by the Federal Government to each State, though each state has chosen to use the funds in different ways.

Under the MSSD National Partnership program, one of the strategies being implemented in Victorian Government Schools is "Vision Assistive Technology and Teacher Training" initiative.

During 2012-13, approximately 1000 items of new equipment - braille embossers, braille note-takers, scanners, iPads etc - were deployed across the state to improve access to information for eligible students with vision impairments. Teacher training was also made available through this funding.

This is possibly the largest and most systematic deployment of assistive technology within a defined geographic region in Australian history! It has also been a huge planning and logistical undertaking by SVRC, a task that they have acquitted magnificently.

For the VI itinerant teachers in the field it has made a dramatic impact on the tools and

resources they have available. For students, it has meant every vision impaired student in Victoria is able to access a range of options to meet their technology needs.

Kingsvale PS is a good example of how new assistive technology has been deployed.



In the picture above Carmel Cooper and Kim Cassidy are using some newly acquired technology. In the foreground is the Romeo Pro50 Braille embosser, which is connected to a laptop. There is also a Pearl digital camera attached to the same laptop which has both OpenBook and Duxbury software programs on it. On the desk is a PIAF for making tactile diagrams. Additionally the student they are supporting has a BrailleNote note-taker.

Training and installation were provided by Trevor Boyd of our Melbourne office.

With this set up they now have the flexibility to scan any hard copy document, or take any electronic document, and to convert them into any format the student may require.

With these tools;

- Teachers are so much more productive
- They spend a lot less administrative time applying for products and funding
- There is no waiting to get the tools the students need

In Victoria, assistive technology is now readily available to the people that need it!

Connect your Mountbatten to an iPad!

The Mountbatten LS has a new feature, Bluetooth!! Thanks to this addition your Mountbatten can now talk with a variety of iOS devices.



The Mountbatten can now communicate with iPads and iPhones!

New Mountbattens purchased in 2014 will have this capability built in, and any existing Mountbattens (LS models) can have this feature installed as an up-grade. The cost for the up-grade is \$565 plus installation.

With the Mountbatten Bluetooth Dongle you can magically convert your regular Mountbatten into a Bluetooth Smart device. Just install it at the back of your unit, upgrade the firmware and you're good to go.

This new feature really brings interactive braille education into the 21st century.



Distance and Near Viewing – in HD!

The Magnilink S is a new portable option for classroom use that combines near and distance viewing with a very high quality image.



The MagniLink S is powered by the computer's USB 3.0, with no additional battery to charge. Monitor models are connected through HDMI and include an AC power adapter. MagniLink S comes with a clever two-in-one carrying case with space for a laptop and accessories.

Easily carried between home, school or work, it can be deployed in seconds. The MagniLink S is easy and fast to connect to a computer – or directly to a monitor. Plus, there is an option to have text-to-speech capability so it can even read text aloud.



Automaticity in Learning

There is a great deal of evidence that the consistency of how information is presented is important to many groups of students including those with learning disabilities, such as Dyslexia, Autism, ADHD and Asperger's.

As technology is increasingly used in classrooms, information is presented to students through the User Interface (UI) of the device they are using (computer, tablets, iPads, interactive whiteboards etc.)

It has been shown that consistency leads to habituation and habituation assists automaticity in learning. Automaticity is the state of being able to complete tasks without conscious thought. Fluency is the result of automaticity; to be able to recognize and comprehend written words reflexively, without having to decode or pause to consider their definition.

When it comes to UI's we talk about this as "seamless operation" and "intuitive design"; and what we really mean is that the software uses very consistent commands to access the features of the software. This makes it easy to learn, easy to retain in memory and easy to operate.

Automaticity is a well-researched topic important to learning.

WYNN is a Windows program that has a highly consistent user interface. It has been designed to provide consistency, flexibility, and a short learning curve. Colour-coded toolbars have intuitive, large buttons along with background colours that can be turned on or off to suit each student's visual preferences.

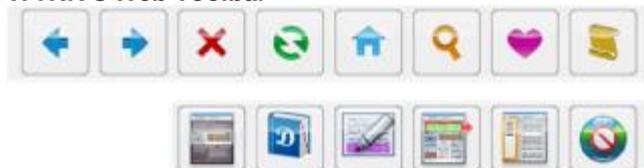
Most features within WYNN can be accessed by a single click, making it easy for students to explore and learn.

Reading ToolBar



From the Reading ToolBar you can change the size of text, spacing between lines and words, change background and foreground colours, and control how information is spoken.

WYNN's Web Toolbar



WYNN's Web browsing module supports the latest innovations in Web technology. Using the integrated tools, students can easily conduct online research assisted with a range of literacy tools at their fingertips. WYNN's new Web browsing module includes the ability to highlight text on a Web page and then to extract the highlighted text, to mask areas of the page to de-clutter and assist reading and the ability to read online e-mail.

WYNN also boasts one-click PDF file conversion, so the student can spend valuable time on the content, not the process of converting it. The Web module also includes a built-in pop-up blocker to allow students to focus with fewer distractions.

In addition to the Web toolbar, WYNN toolbars focus on assisting students by providing a consistent, clean and uncluttered user interface, using;

- Easy-to-use rotating toolbars that provide all functions.
- Intuitive buttons and icons that allow a short learning curve.
- Simultaneous auditory and visual presentation to support all learning styles.
- Clear, natural-sounding speech.

Trial versions of WYNN are available to trial with your students.