

OrCam brings revolutionary artificial vision devices to South Africa

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A voice-activated, wearable device the size of a finger, OrCam's MyEye enables the blind or visually impaired to read, perform daily activities, and live more independently. Voted one of TIME Magazine's Best Inventions of 2019, the OrCam MyEye is now available in South Africa.

Of all disabilities faced by South Africans, visual impairment, [at 32%](#), is the most prevalent. In such a landscape, OrCam's assistive vision technology devices are poised to make a massive impact. An Israeli company specialising in personal artificial intelligence, OrCam Technologies was founded by innovators Hebrew University Professor Amnon Shashua and his business partner Ziv Aviram.

Now OrCam is offering distributors in South Africa that work with ophthalmologists and eye care professionals a unique opportunity to bring the company's ground-breaking technology to those who need it most.

How do OrCams's devices work?

In addition to the company's flagship MyEye device, OrCam will also launch the wearable OrCam MyReader device in South Africa within the next two months and the handheld OrCam Read by the end of 2020. These devices all use a tiny high-resolution smart camera and clever artificial intelligence algorithms to turn images into spoken words in real time. Wearable devices weigh just 22.5 grams and fit magnetically onto the frames of sun or eyeglasses.

In addition to discreetly reading digital and printed text aloud, the OrCam MyEye orientates wearers to their surroundings, offers facial recognition, identification of money notes, consumer products, colours and more. "Newspapers, books, computer and smartphone screens, restaurant menus, labels on supermarket products and street signs become instantly accessible," explains Bari Hayoun, OrCam's Regional Director for Africa.

OrCam MyEye has been meticulously designed by leading minds in the computer vision and machine learning fields to offer intuitive and user-friendly functionality for those with visual impairments, he continues. "The device is the only wearable artificial vision technology that is activated by an intuitive pointing gesture or simply by following the wearer's gaze – allowing for hands-free use – without the need of a smartphone or WiFi, resulting in real time audio communication while ensuring data privacy."

OrCam has partnered with soccer great, Lionel Messi, to be a voice for the blind and visually impaired community. Messi will help raise global awareness of OrCam's innovative, life-changing technology that promotes equal access and opportunities. To easily see how the technology works, [watch these magical moments](#), where Lionel Messi met exceptional individuals from the blind community and gave them the gift of independence, OrCam MyEye.

Technology brings new hope to the visually impaired

Thousands stand to benefit. “The OrCam MyEye solution is relevant to the low vision patients of ophthalmologists and similar practitioners when corrective lenses are no longer able to help amplify their declining vision,” explains Hayoun. The lack of medical treatments available to improve vision once impaired, means such technological developments are more important than ever. Indeed, OrCam MyEye is already catching the attention of South Africa's eye care professionals.

According to local ophthalmologist, Greg Stoch, the device is potentially life-changing for those who are visually impaired. “Through the OrCam MyEye, a visually impaired patient of mine has found a new lease on life,” he says. “From being able to identify what’s around him to simply read the newspaper, he now has the kind of independence that would be impossible without this technology.”

Distribution model

“Our business model is primarily business to business,” says Hayoun. “We’re therefore looking to partner with ophthalmologists and other eye care professionals, particularly those who specialise in patients with low vision, to educate and distribute our products.”

Already supplying their devices, which are available in over 25 languages, to people in over 50 countries, OrCam is excited to now share their vision with South Africa. “Beyond relevant eye care professionals, OrCam’s distribution model will initially focus on private hospitals and clinics,” says Hayoun. “Once OrCam’s activity in the medical field is successfully developed, we will then seek partners in the educational sector.”

For more information, go to <https://www.orcham.com/en/>

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