

AccessMind and Orbit Research Announce the Optima Braille Laptop Computer

With mainstream laptop performance and flexibility, the revolutionary modular and upgradable device brings an end to the era of the proprietary braille notetaker

Anaheim, California – March 14, 2023 –

AccessMind and Orbit Research announced the launch of the Optima™ Braille Laptop Computer today at the 38th Annual CSUN Assistive Technology Conference. Providing all the capabilities of a state-of-the-art laptop computer and adding complete modularity and flexibility in hardware and software, the Optima Braille Laptop pioneers an entirely new class of products.

Traditional braille notetakers are extremely expensive, have very limited hardware capabilities, lock users into a closed system that is obsolete the day it is released and offer software upgrades that are few and far between. These notetakers require both students and teachers to learn specialized proprietary user-interfaces and then have to re-learn the use of mainstream computing platforms such as Windows or Mac computers as they enter the workplace.

The Optima changes this forever by offering all the power, features, functionality, configurability and upgradability that people have come to expect from common desktop computers. It is an optimal combination of a full-featured mainstream computer with braille and speech output and a QWERTY keyboard in a sleek and compact handheld form-factor; a high-performance Windows-based machine that can accomplish any task from word-processing and internet-surfing to highly demanding professional workloads such as video editing and software development. It is the only product that puts users in complete control by offering them complete configurability before they purchase it and full upgradability after.

The modular platform allows users to configure every aspect of the hardware and software. Built upon state-of-the-art hardware, the Optima offers the latest generation of Intel Core i5 and i7 laptop processors, memory options from 8GB to 64GB, onboard storage from 256GB to a massive 2 terabytes and beyond. A choice of braille technology options is also available – Orbit's signage-quality and affordable TrueBraille™ or traditional piezo cells.

With the latest WiFi 6E standard and Bluetooth 5.2 technology, Optima allows fast and reliable wireless network speeds. The product is also the first Thunderbolt 4 certified Braille device, offering industry-leading data transfer capabilities with speeds of up to 40 GBPS. It also includes the peripherals expected in a high-performance mainstream laptop, such as high-quality stereo speakers, beam-forming microphones, and a fingerprint sensor and adds accessibility enhancements such as haptic (vibration) feedback.

Optima's hardware flexibility extends to its ports, allowing users to pick any four from a wide range of popular ports including, USB Type C, USB A, HDMI, SD cards and storage expansion modules. The modular ports offer plug-and-play interchangeability and can even be swapped on the fly. Optima also provides a Braille Terminal mode and can be connected to any smartphone or computer and used as a braille display and keyboard.

The software on the Optima Braille Laptop is equally flexible. The unit comes pre-installed with the Microsoft Windows 11 operating system, the best mainstream computing platform for accessibility and

productivity. With Optima, users no longer have to use out-of-date versions of operating systems or wait for the device vendor to push updates to them. They can always stay secure and up-to-date through Microsoft's upgrade facilities. Since it is a standard Windows computer, the user also has a choice of screen readers, with support for NVDA, JAWS, Narrator, and Supernova screen readers. The Optima comes with the NVDA Screen Reader pre-installed, configured with speech and braille output and ready to use out of the box.

For users who prefer a dedicated braille-optimized user interface, the Optima includes AccessMind's specially developed BrailleUI software. BrailleUI provides a simple notetaker-like custom-designed braille-first user experience for a set of common applications such as a book reader, braille editor, calculator and file manager to seamlessly bridge the gap between a dedicated user interface and the mainstream Windows experience. BrailleUI also includes high-quality speech synthesis from Cerence (Vocalizer), in addition to the voices built into the Windows operating system.

Weighing just over 3 lb. and measuring 11.7 x 7.5 x 1.3 inches, the Optima is compact and lightweight but rugged and durable. The Optima Braille Laptop will begin shipping in the first quarter of 2024.

After the transformative changes that have been brought about in the educational and professional assistive technology field by Orbit's breakthrough products such as the Orbit Reader and the Graphiti, the Optima now further levels the playing field by offering a no-compromise solution that bridges the gap between mainstream and assistive technology products.

Visit www.orbitresearch.com/product/Optima for more information.

About Orbit Research:

Orbit Research develops and manufactures innovative and affordable products that enable an independent lifestyle for people who are blind or visually impaired. Founded with the mission to fulfill the urgent need for affordable assistive technology products, the company has introduced breakthrough products like the Orion family of accessible scientific and graphing calculators, the iBill Talking Banknote Identifier Orbit Reader family of refreshable braille displays, the Orbit Slate family of multi-line refreshable braille displays, and the Graphiti family of interactive tactile graphic displays that define the state-of-the-art in features, functionality, convenience, and affordability. For more information, visit www.orbitresearch.com.

About AccessMind:

AccessMind is a new enterprise founded by Orbit Research and a team comprising Adi Kushnir and Avi Mann, with a mission to transform the Assistive Technology industry by bringing the benefits of mainstream technologies to products for people who are blind or visually impaired. With decades of experience in the Assistive Technology industry and a proven track record in developing world-leading breakthrough products and technologies at affordable prices, the AccessMind team brings a unique combination of a modern, innovative mindset and tremendous depth of skills and experience to usher in a new era in Assistive Technology. For more information, visit www.accessmind.net.

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