

APH and Orbit Research Announce the Availability of the Orion TI-84 Plus Talking Graphing Calculator

Available now, in time for the fall 2013 school year! A specially adapted version of the Texas Instruments TI-84 Plus™ transforms STEM education for blind and visually impaired students.

LOUISVILLE, KY and WILMINGTON, DE – July 29, 2013 -- The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) and Orbit Research announced today the availability of the Orion TI-84 Plus Talking Graphing Calculator (TGC), the world's first fully accessible handheld graphing calculator. Based on the popular TI-84 Plus™ model from Texas Instruments, the market-leader in calculators and educational technology, the Orion TI-84 Plus TGC represents a breakthrough in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education for students who are blind and visually impaired.

The Orion TI-84 Plus TGC is available for sale by contacting APH at <http://shop.aph.org/> or by calling customer service at 1-800-229-1839. In addition to normal sales, this product is also eligible for purchase by APH Ex Officio Trustees through the federally funded Quota Program.

"The excitement we have witnessed when displaying working prototypes at various conferences has been tremendous and so rewarding," stated Ken Perry, Project Lead at APH. "This type of product has been needed and wanted during my 20 years in this industry. With the Orion TI-84 Plus TGC, the learning opportunities for those who are blind or visually impaired have been greatly enhanced. Imagine a blind or visually impaired student not just fully participating in classroom discussions, but now leading the discussion with their calculator, which functions and looks just like the original TI-84 Calculator."

"Technology is an increasingly important element in STEM education, and millions of teachers and students are using TI-84 Plus handhelds every day," said Melendy Lovett, president of Texas Instruments Education Technology. "We are just thrilled to combine our products with Orion's accessibility features to provide visually impaired students access to the same technology their peers are using to gain a deeper understanding of math and science. This TI-84 Plus technology enhancement creates a powerful and exciting new way for students to learn math and science, thus leveling the playing field for visually impaired students."

A lot of excitement over the Orion TI-84 Plus TGC was also expressed during the product's field testing:

"I honestly feel that I would not have been able to complete the last month of Honors Geometry without the aid of the Orion TI-84 Plus TGC. Before receiving this unit, I did not have any type of scientific calculator. This calculator was invaluable in sections introducing trig. The ability to scroll back through the history to find previous answers, or typos in calculations was very useful. The Orion TI-84 Plus is very nice to use and I look forward to using it for years to come in math and science classes."

"This product is truly a "game-changer" for students with visual impairments in STEM courses. The lack of a high-quality graphing calculator has been a major problem for the field for years. The fact that APH was able to partner with Orbit Research and Texas Instruments to provide an

accessible calculator that is one of the most commonly used graphing calculators is wonderful. Students with visual impairments will now be able to complete most of the assignments with their peers using the same or very similar technology. This is critical for students with visual impairments who want to attend college. This is truly leveling the playing field and it is very exciting."

"Though we have been keenly aware of the need for a TGC, we are overwhelmed by the intensity of the response from the field testing and demonstrations. It is extremely exciting and humbling to be able to make such a difference in the lives of these students" said Dr. Gina Spagnoli, Orbit Research's Founder. "Blind or visually impaired students want to be just like other students and we are glad we were able to make this accessible unit resemble the original TI-84 Plus," she added.

"Collaboration with Orbit Research is a significant opportunity that will allow us to bring high quality Text-to-Speech (TTS) synthesis to compact, handheld, embedded devices, said Roger D. Dudley, SpeechFX CEO. "The innovative FonixTalk synthesizer, which gives the Orion TI-84 Plus its voice, demonstrates the ability and expertise of SpeechFX to lead the embedded speech industry. We're pleased to deliver and integrate our high-quality synthesized speech (TTS) to the Orion TI-84 Plus Talking Graphing Calculator."

The outcome of collaborative efforts between Orbit Research, APH, Texas Instruments and SpeechFX, the Orion TI-84 Plus TGC consists of a compact accessory (the Orion) that is attached to the top of the TI-84 Plus Calculator; enabling a user who is visually impaired to interact with the TI-84 Plus using speech, audio, and haptic (vibration) feedback. All textual and symbolic information on the screen, as well as each key-press, is spoken using high-quality synthesized FonixTalk™ speech from SpeechFX™. Most importantly, graphs can be explored using either spoken announcements or the SonoGraph™ audio and haptic feedback. Contents on the screen can be reviewed at any time, without affecting the calculation.

The unit is fully expandable with hardware accessories through a USB port and can print or emboss graphs, when connected through a PC, to a printer or braille embosser.

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 Talking Scientific Calculators and the iBill Talking Banknote Identifier that define the state-of-the-art in features, functionality, convenience and cost. For more information, visit www.orbitresearch.com.

About the American Printing House for the Blind:

APH, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is the world's largest company devoted solely to researching, developing, and manufacturing products for people who are blind or visually impaired. Founded in 1858, it is the oldest organization of its kind in the United States. Under the 1879 federal Act to Promote the Education of the Blind, APH is the official supplier of educational materials for visually impaired students in the U.S. and outlying areas who are working at less than college level.

APH produces textbooks and magazines in braille, large print, recorded, and digital formats. APH also designs and manufactures hundreds of educational, recreational, and daily living products. For more information, visit www.aph.org.

About Texas Instruments:

Education Technology, a business of Texas Instruments, provides a wide range of tools connecting the classroom experience with real-world applications, helping students and teachers to explore mathematics and science interactively. TI's products and services are tested vigorously against recognized third-party research, which shows that the effective use of graphing calculators improves the mathematical skills of students and their attitudes toward mathematics. For more information, visit www.education.ti.com. Texas Instruments Incorporated (TI) is a global semiconductor design and manufacturing company that develops analog ICs and embedded processors. By employing the world's brightest minds, TI creates innovations that shape the future of technology. TI is helping more than 100,000 customers transform the future, today. Learn more at www.ti.com.

About SpeechFX, Inc.:

SpeechFX, Inc., delivers embedded speech software, both text-to-speech and voice recognition for ARM-based, SH4 and DSP processors found in mobile devices, interactive software and video games. The Company owns proprietary speech and voice technologies, with seven issued patents. For more information, visit www.speechfxinc.com.