

# PODCAST Episode 457

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Assistive technology, Dolphin, Supernova, sight loss, magnification, screen reader, AI integration, image descriptions, print resources, Easy Reader, accessibility, low vision, education, workplace, innovation.

## SPEAKERS

Simon Kitchen, Steve Barclay, Ryan Fleury, Rob Mineault

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**R** Rob Mineault 00:17  
Hey and welcome to another episode of AT Banter.

**S** Steve Barclay 00:22  
Banter

**R** Rob Mineault 00:25  
We only got one.

**S** Steve Barclay 00:26  
Did it only get one?

**R** Rob Mineault 00:27  
Yep, just one.

R

Rob Mineault 00:29

There was only one that came through

R

Rob Mineault 00:34

Yeah, so repeat. Go ahead, give me, give me. Give me one. Once more, with feeling.

S

Steve Barclay 00:42

Banter banter.

R

Rob Mineault 00:46

There you go. That's better. That's why we edit the show right there. Hey, this is, of course, the podcast where we talk with advocates and members of the disability community to educate and inspire better conversation about disability. Hey, my name is Rob Mineault, and joining me today, Mr. Ryan Fleury,

R

Ryan Fleury 01:09

You sound way too chipper for this time of day.

R

Rob Mineault 01:13

It's all a clever ruse, my friend and hey, look who else is in the room. Mr. Steve Barclay.

S

Steve Barclay 01:24

I've had espresso. Espresso is excellent. I really like espresso, especially the first thing in the morning.

R

Ryan Fleury 01:30

Espresso is fabulous. Sammy the squirrel joining us.

R

Rob Mineault 01:35

Yeah, I know it's definitely an espresso type of morning. Of course it's we're coming off of a four day long weekend, which really spoils you. I was talking to Ryan about this earlier, but it also doesn't feel long enough. It feels like your body just starts to get into like, Hey, are we on vacation? And then it's like, no, no, sorry,

R

Ryan Fleury 01:51

I'll take four days. Thank you, Steve,

S

Steve Barclay 01:54

Yeah, you're welcome. You know, I only give you guys four days because I really want the four days after, after government year end, March, 31 you know that March is mayhem, so, yeah, that that vacation at the beginning of April is gold.

R

Rob Mineault 02:12

Yeah, I'll bet, I'll bet, I'll bet. Did anybody do anything fun over the long weekend?

S

Steve Barclay 02:19

I gardened and I played Fallout four, okay.

R

Rob Mineault 02:27

Good, good,

R

Ryan Fleury 02:29

Yeah, nothing much here, played music.

R

Rob Mineault 02:33

Nothing wrong with that. I just did a smattering a little bit, you know, had a, had a dinner one of the days, and then just tried to, like, yeah, just tried to relax, and did a little bit of work as well. Went for some walks. The weather finally started to kind of get nice here in Vancouver.

S

Steve Barclay 02:49

Oh, it's gorgeous, yeah.

R

Rob Mineault 02:51

Wasn't it? If it really felt like spring, finally. And so I got out, got out a bit, got for some walks, and just tried to, like, I really did try to, like, actively opt out of the the news cycle and screens as much as I could. It's hard, but, you know, I tried, because I feel like these days and it's just more important than ever to just have some, have some downtime away from, away from everything that's going on.

S

Steve Barclay 03:20

Yeah, it's great time to opt out of the news cycle right now.

R

Ryan Fleury 03:25

But it's so funny.

R

Rob Mineault 03:27

I don't know...

S

Steve Barclay 03:29

Holy smokes, I don't know. Man, Trump's threatening genocide. Holy Yeah.

R Ryan Fleury 03:34

Anyways, yeah...

R Rob Mineault 03:36

Yeah, that's a whole that's a whole other podcast. That's where I feel like I need to be adopted into the news cycle, like, do I need to stock up on canned food and bottled water? That's, you know, this is the big question.

S Steve Barclay 03:51

Yeah, well, I'm preparing myself by playing Fallout four.

R Rob Mineault 03:57

Perfect. It's research, honey. It's research.

S Steve Barclay 03:59

Right? Exactly.

R Rob Mineault 04:02

All right. Well, anything else to add to the convo before we get started, I'm excited to get to today's show.

S Steve Barclay 04:10

Yeah I think, I think we all need to ask ourselves the question, why are we up doing a podcast at 8am on a Tuesday, especially Tuesday after a long weekend? Yeah.

R Rob Mineault 04:24

No, it's great. It's a great time. And that way, you listen, we've done all the hard, the hardest work before the day is even started. So look at it that way.

R Ryan Fleury 04:36

Have you seen my calendar for today? Have you seen my inbox?

R Rob Mineault 04:41

Well, that's where that four day weekend is a mixed blessing, I tell you. Yeah. Anyways, all right. Well, Mr. Ryan?

R Ryan Fleury 04:55

Yes Mr Rob?

R Rob Mineault 04:57

What the heck are we doing today?

R Ryan Fleury 04:59

Well today, this conversation is long overdue. We've had them on in the past, but we are welcoming to the show. Simon Kitchen from dolphin to share all the information on what's new over at [www.yourdolphin.com](http://www.yourdolphin.com). So Simon, welcome to the show.

S Simon Kitchen 05:15

Hi, Ryan. Hi Rob. Hi Steve. Thank you very much for having me today.

R Ryan Fleury 05:19

Thanks for being here and putting up with our nonsense.

S

Steve Barclay 05:23

and pushing into your evening at the same time. What time is it there?

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Simon Kitchen 05:27

You've been very kind. So you guys have got an early start. It's about 4pm here, so you've been very kind to me.

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Steve Barclay 05:33

Excellent.

S

Simon Kitchen 05:34

It's not too bad I'm just finishing up. You know, hard days work. You guys just getting started.

S

Steve Barclay 05:39

Right? You head to the pub after this.

R

Rob Mineault 05:41

We're chugging coffees. You're chugging beer. It's gonna it's great. Well, okay, well, why don't we get started by maybe you can just for anybody in the audience who isn't familiar with with Dolphin, who isn't familiar with with the products that you guys make. Maybe you could just give us a little bit of a brief overview.

S

**Simon Kitchen 06:04**

Yeah, absolutely. So at Dolphin, we're a world leading assistive technology company, and as you can probably tell from my accent, we're based in the UK, but we work with lots of partners, such as Canadian Assistive Technology and lots of different partners around the world to make our assistive technology available, and the products that we make at Dolphin are all about enabling people with sight loss to read, to study, to learn, to work and to live independently in a way that is accessible for them. So we're not a new company. We've been established for a long time, you know, as a central part of the assisted technology community. So we're actually this year celebrating 40 years of Dolphin and that's 40 years of accessibility, of innovation and empowering people with sight loss around the world. So yes, quite a quite an exciting, exciting time.

R

**Rob Mineault 06:58**

It's such an interesting perspective, too. Because, you know, in in tech years, yeah, you know that's like, that's like being around since the Cretaceous Period.

S

**Simon Kitchen 07:09**

I mean, when Dolphin were first formed - so I've actually been at Dolphin - you did ask me to introduce myself as well. So, yeah, so I'm Chief Commercial Officer at Dolphin. So I work with lots of the different teams here, the product teams, the sales team and the marketing team as well. But I've been with Dolphin now for about 18 years, so a fair amount of time. But Dolphin had a long and rich history from way before, but I joined the company. So I mean, initially today, we're providing magnification and screen reading products, but we're talking about the days before Windows and the kind of original products that the Dolphin were creating. We didn't have things like screen readers. We were sort of building synthesizers which looked a bit like speakers and rather than being installed on the computer like today's magnification and screen reading products are this. These would be synthesizers, like, they look like speakers, and they'd be connected to the to the computer. So we're going way back to to those sorts of days, and you know, since then, there's been, you know, a number of innovations throughout, you know, the this is the technology industry, whether that's things like, you know, the first screen readers. So, you know, before the days of Windows, we were developing screen readers such as for DOS. You know, way back before even, even Windows was a was a sort of thing. And then moving on, you know, we've been developing products such as smart how and pocket how. When Windows Mobile became a thing, and making, you know, those devices accessible for people with sight loss, mobile devices accessible for people with sight loss. But, yeah, you reflect on some of those innovations and then bring in our products like Supernova on a USB pen. We call it the Dolphin Pen, and it's just, you know, the first, the first option to make screen modification, screen reader available on different devices. So on a USB Pen, you could plug into different computers, and you reflect on some reflect on some of those innovations, and then where we are today with some of our products like Supernova and Easy Reader and and Guide Connect as well. You know, the industry has moved on a lot, and is, you know, helping people in so many wonderful ways.

R

Rob Mineault 09:16

I would imagine as a strategy, when you're when you're developing products, how important is, sort of, whatever the tech trend of the time is.

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Simon Kitchen 09:32

I think it's incredibly important. And actually, hopefully we'll get on to talking about some of this, sort of, you know, newer things which are happening, but in terms of the technology landscape, but even, you know, making sure, I mean fundamentally, Dolphin exists to enable people with vision impairments to be able to interact with, you know, everything that their Windows environment, you know, could potentially provide for them. Seeing lots and lots of changes to, you know, rolling updates for Windows, rolling updates to Office365 you know, people are needing their assistive technology to be keeping up to date with those applications, you know, to be able to, you know, continue in education, to, you know, do their jobs in the workplace, etc. So it's really important that the technology evolves on a fundamental level, but then also looking at some of the newer aspects as well. And actually, where you've got, you know, things like AI, which have wonderful potential, but then, you know, should we be looking at AI, you know, in sort of general terms, or are there things that we can do specifically within the assistive technology to help make more content accessible, or to remove more barriers for people as well? So absolutely, I think it's fundamental to be on top of the trends so to speak, right?

R

Rob Mineault 10:52

And, you know, absolutely, we can't have this conversation without talking about AI. I can hear all the eye rolling going on in the audience. Because, you know, we talk about AI all the time, but you kind of have to when you're talking about tech, because it's it's so ubiquitous, and it is so important, and there is so much potential in what AI can do, especially in this in the assistive technology and the accessibility field. So can you talk a little bit about what that's been like for you guys?

S

Simon Kitchen 11:23

Yeah, absolutely so at Dolphin, we provide Supernova, which is world leading magnification and screen reading, and this is empowering people in supporting 1000s of people around the world, whether they're blind or partially sighted, to be able to do the things that they want to be able to do, whether they're in education, you know, accessing the curriculum and being able to succeed in education and then going on into the workplace. We know actually, that there are, unfortunately, more people with with vision impairments who are sort of out of a labor force, but that's where introducing the assistive technology early really helps to kind of help people to realize their potential and to go and have successful careers. So we're helping people in employment to kind of have those successful careers supporting all the applications they need so they can use their Windows device in a way they find accessible. And equally, people at home, you know, we know that there's lots of correlation between age related site conditions,

you know, and sight loss. So enabling people to be, you know, in the home, being able to use their computer, to be able to access in more content as hopefully, will come on to whether that's print based or or other as well. So with Supernova, as I mentioned, we're talking about magnification and screen reading. So we know that everybody's sort of experience with sight loss is different and can change over time as well. And this is why Supernova comes in a number of different editions. So you can have Supernova Magnifier as the first edition, which includes all of the magnification sort of elements of Supernova, and connects to things like cameras, which we can kind of touch on shortly the second and that's more for people with low vision. And we also then have Supernova Magnifier and Speech, which is for people with low vision who perhaps need a little bit of support for with speech, for reading back documents and web pages and those sorts of things. It's also very useful if eyes are getting tired throughout the throughout the day, and so, you know, can turn on the speech to read back a document, etc. We also have Supernova Magnifier and Screen Reader. So we often get that question about, what's the difference between speech and a screen reader? Well, the screen reader will whereas the speech will read, but will just read what's on the screen. It will announce what's on the screen. So it will speak it. The screen reader will describe it as well. So it will tell you, for example, if a checkbox is checked or not checked, all those sorts of things. And the Magnifying Screen Reader Edition Supernova is particularly useful for people, maybe with progressive sight loss that's, you know, getting worse over time, and are becoming more reliant on the screen reading aspects than perhaps the magnifying magnification aspects. But we also have Dolphin Screen Reader, which is more for people with severe sight loss, where actually interacting with a computer using any remaining sight isn't as productive, and so focusing very much on the screen reading features rather than the magnification. So because Supernova comes in those different editions, it's ideal first of all, for individuals, if perhaps site is changing over time or progressively deteriorating over time, it means that you don't have to learn a new product. You can stay with your product and choose a different edition. So that's really important. But also for people, for businesses or for public you know, multi use set. Things where perhaps we're supporting people with a variety of different levels of vision because it encompasses, you know, all of the different aspects of magnification and the screen reader in one product. It's really suitable to kind of, you know, have one product to support every sort of level of vision. So hopefully that gave a good kind of overview. And now I'll get back to your actual question. How is the advent of AI kind of impacting? And obviously AI can do lots of weird and wonderful things. And we're seeing lots of sort of memes on social media where people end up with, you know, additional fingers or, you know, and there's clearly AI generated, and people are using it for lots of different ways. But at Dolphin we're very much on the level of, how can we use this wonderful technology in a way to help to remove barriers for for people with vision impairments. So Supernova now includes a couple of options, which are very much focused on, on AI. So first of all, like we're talking about, how can we help people to get their questions answered about Supernova? How can I learn the product? Or, you know, every product comes with a help manual, which is pages and pages and pages of of reading which you have to navigate at Dolphin, we've actually got a range, you know, lots of wonderful resources, as well as the in product help. We have application specific help pages to help you use Microsoft Word with Supernova or Excel with Supernova. We've got a knowledge base which is available for any technical problems. So I've got this error code. What does that mean? How do I fix it? We've also got a Learning Zone full of training courses for professionals, whether they're assistive technology trainers or educators or assessors and courses for individuals who are using the software as well. So lots and lots of fantastic resources, but we know, if you just want a quick question, you know quick answer to a question, I need to know how to change a mouse pointer, or I need to know how to choose a custom color scheme, because I have color vision deficiency. You might not want to have to trawl through all of these different resources. So you can actually use our new ask AI facility in the product which does all that heavy lifting for you.

So once you go into the Supernova help, you can ask a question, and then the Ask AI facility will trawl through all of those fantastic resources and come back with step by step instructions based on your query, which is a great use of AI in terms of making it easier to get those, those questions. So you know it's quite useful just for that, but also for any, any other use cases to kind of help people to really get the most out of the product. So that's our first kind of use of AI, and that's available across all the editions of Supernova as well, whether you're talking about magnifier all the way through to Magnifier Screen Reader and Dolphin Screen Reader as well. But secondly, the second kind of issue or challenge we look to overcome was with regards to images, because we know there's lots of images that are troublesome for people who are visually impaired, particularly if you know whether they're in print, family photos or any print based resources that we have, you know, in education - maybe printouts of worksheets and charts and diagrams, family photos and those sorts of things, but also images online. For example, we know that not all of the websites are WCAG Compliant and with, you know, accessible, you know, alt tag descriptions of images, or sometimes they're not very good image descriptions, etc. And sometimes, you know, inaccessible files like PDFs, which aren't aren't tagged for accessibility, etc.

S

Simon Kitchen 18:50

So we can take lots of these resources, and then we can use our Ask AI facility to ask questions about those images and actually get really rich descriptions. So whether you're in education and you have charts and diagrams, been able to have really rich descriptions without having a paraprofessional sat alongside you sort of describing that image. You can do that independently. You can get all of that rich information and ask follow up questions about it as well, to get you know to be able to learn more independently, exactly the same in the workplace, or, you know, whether you're, you know, one of the use cases, actually, which we found quite, quite popular, is greetings cards. Because, you know, particularly around, you know, seasonal periods. You know, perhaps over you were mentioning the Bank Holiday earlier. Sometimes, you know, you get cards around this period, and you know, being able to read them, including any handwriting, and using the Ask AI facilities to to read back that content, so you've got access to it independently, really is a wonderful thing. So, you know, for greetings cards or for product packaging, or for, as we said. For if you have inaccessible images online as well, and just being able to get those rich image descriptions and then ask those follow up questions as well is, is really important. So, so yeah, it's those are two other ways which we're kind of using this wonderful technology to help remove more barriers. And again, both of those facilities are available across all of the editions of supernova, because we know that, you know, once you start zooming into an image, it's very difficult to get the content, you know, the kind of the bigger picture for it. So it's really useful to have that, you know, for people, you know, with low vision, as well as people who are more, you know, with more severe sight loss as well.

R

Rob Mineault 20:39

Yeah, and I want to go back and talk a little bit about all the additions, because I think that a lot of people maybe might not realize the challenge that it is to be able to serve people with a variety of different needs, who may, you know, they may be in a work environment, they may be in a home environment. They may have been blind since birth, or they may be 70 years old, and their vision is just starting to decline, and to be able to provide solutions for that entire user base, I mean, that must be a real challenge.

S

Simon Kitchen 21:16

Yeah, absolutely. And that's it's exactly why there are different editions of Supernova, you know, to make your Windows environment accessible, you know, for whatever your needs are, but, but that, you know, taking it back a level, actually, it's really important at Dolphin, we really understand that, you know that where the assistive technology fits the purpose of the Assistive Technology serves. Because ultimately, we know that people don't want to be using, you know, just using Supernova. They want to be, you know, creating documents, finding information online, using those applications. So it's really important you know that, you know that that's the focus. You know, the assistive technology really is the means in order to get there. But in order to get there, the Windows environment needs to be made accessible for people with very different needs. So for example, if we're talking about people with low vision, you know Supernova is offering really clear magnification. We have advanced text moving, which we something we call true fonts, which works in Office applications and also on the Windows desktop. And that may that means that the text is incredibly smooth, even when you zoom into higher levels. Supernova is also unique in working with touch screens as well. But the magnification, you know, touch screen magnification means that it's a lot more flexible to move around the screen and to explore the screen. So you can explore using the mouse, or you can explore using the keyboard. Just to note on keyboards as well, use lots of shortcut keys in Supernova, but again, it's entirely flexible, because you've got laptop or desktop shortcut keys, but you've also got layered hot keys, which is more useful for people maybe who struggle to you know, to pressing more complex key commands, or struggle to remember lots of different key commands, you can use layers of hot keys as well, but you've also got hot keys for other products as well. So you can use your JAWS hot keys to control Supernova, or your ZoomText hotkeys to control Supernova. So if you are looking at alternatives, you've got options there, which kind of help you to try Supernova, but still use all those shortcuts that you've learned with another product. But as I mentioned, is around flexibility. So yes, you can use the mouse the keyboard, but you can also explore the screen using the touchscreen. And we find for people with low vision, this isn't This is extremely useful, because you're exploring the screen based on where your finger is, so you're in a lot more control. And when you zoom in, you're zooming into where your fingers are zooming in. So really helps to kind of, you know, helps you to kind of explore the screen in quite an intuitive way. You've also got the accessible color schemes, which are available for people, maybe with color vision deficiency. You've got a lot of presets, about 26 I think it is preset color schemes, including color schemes for people with color blindness as well. And we've got color replacement options. So if you do have particular colors you can't see, you can replace them with other colors and basically make this Windows environment accessible for you and your particular needs. The magnification also includes things like advanced tracking, so that it's following you around the screen you don't get lost or disorientated, or options to highlight the mouse and the cursor position as well, again, to ensure you don't get sort of lost. And the magnification also works across multiple monitors as

well, which is really important for sorts of workplace settings where productivity is essential. So we can have different applications magnified on different monitors, on different screens, with independent settings actually as well, which is really, really useful. So lots and lots of options. I'm not going to go through everything that's in in the products, but there's lots of options there. For people with low vision to be able to customize the Windows environment to make it accessible for them. We've also got magnification, Magnifier and Speech, and as I mentioned before, just exploring that in a little bit more detail. And this is for people, perhaps with fluctuating sight, or people with low vision who just need that bit extra support for reading back documents from a text to speech, voice, or, I should say, text to speech voice, they're very natural sounding voices now which are available from from Nuance, which were available in Supernova. So natural sounding voices, just in the latest version of Supernova, we've added the facility to install additional voices from a control panel. And this is particularly useful. You know, perhaps the voices you need weren't, weren't included when you first installed Supernova. Or if you're maybe speaking different languages or dual, you know, dual language, you know, you can choose to let at any point in time, go back and install an additional English voice or French Canadian voice, or perhaps German or Spanish or Korean or Mandarin. So if you know, if English isn't your native language, or if you do speak different languages, you've got that flexibility there. You can also do lots of things, like speaking the text under the mouse, because we know a lot of people with low vision, particularly benefit from exploring, you know, using either a touch screen or the mouse. So you can have the text under the mouse spoken support for, you know, typing echo, so character echo as you're typing, and then our read from here functions which allows you to do a continuous read through a document, through a web page, you know, play and pause or navigate as you're reading through a document as well. So, you know, lots more facilities there to really make the Windows environment accessible. But with the Magnifier Speech edition, it's not just about adding a voice. You also get the scan and read facilities, and this helps to make more content accessible. So this where we've got print based resources, and whether that's from a scanner or a connected camera, you can, or perhaps a file with an inaccessible PDF, you can scan and read it and have it read back to you in your in a natural sounding voice as well, and then building on that. So, you know, we've already covered quite a lot. But we go on to the Magnifier and Screen Reader E dition, and this, again, is for people with more progressive sight loss, and as I mentioned before, is more for people who are, you know, perhaps becoming a little bit more reliant on that screen reader to explore the screen rather than using remaining sites. So this is where we've got advanced verbosity levels. So you can control how much information the screen reader announces it has what we call speak keys to give, you know, people who are, who are blind, you know, important information, whether that's, you know, the character or the formatting or the date and time, just a single key press or remind me what's the if I'm in an Excel spreadsheet, what's the current row or what's the current column? So you've got these speak keys, you know, to help, you know, make the current object more accessible. You've got the dolphin cursor, which allows you to navigate the entire screen using a keyboard, so that's, you know, navigating web pages or applications using the keyboard rather than being reliant on on the mouse. You've also got the ability for quick navigation to go to, go to, you know, quickly skip to links or headings or buttons on web pages. You know, to kind of speed up that navigation and the magnification magnifier and screen reader edition also has support for refreshable braille displays as well. So if you are a braille reader or have a have a Braille display. You can navigate the screen using your Braille display. You can have the screen read back to you or displayed on your Braille display, relayed, I should say, on your braille display as well. So lots and lots which are kind of built in there with the Magnifier and Screen Reader edition as well. But with Supernova, one of the unique aspects with Supernova is, yes, we've covered a lot in a different editions. And I should say there that the Screen Reader element also includes all of those screen reader options, but without the kind of magnification elements as well. But you've got

all of these different options just to make the Windows environment accessible and help people with vision impairments, or at different levels of vision impairments, to be more productive and explore their screen in a way they find accessible. But this is where Supernova can go above and beyond to make more content accessible as well. So first of all, Supernova works with a range of different cameras and scanners to make print resources accessible. So you can plug in any scanner and use the scan and read feature. Or if you've got a camera, you can use sort of webcams, or more affordable document cams, all the way through to kind of more higher end, high definition video magnifiers, like the magnet link, for example, or other high quality video magnifiers. And this is great for making, you know, print based content, exciting and accessible. You can explore the screen, explore whatever you know, the print resource using magnification. You can do a scan and read on it, if it's you know, something like a worksheet. You can also add annotations. So this is a great way of maybe putting circles around the right answer, or writing in your text comments to answer questions as well, and then have that saved as a PDF. So again, we're making more content accessible. We're making all these print based resource accessible, and we all that also includes the image descriptions, which I mentioned earlier. So if you've got a printout with a diagram of a volcano or the human body or or a graph, you can have a really rich image description, which is then read back to you by the speech as well for print based resources. So we make the print resource the Supernova can help make print resource accessible if you're in education and need to be able to engage in the classroom environment where the teacher is sharing a whiteboard screen, or perhaps in the workplace, and you know, there's a presentation in the boardroom, we have a whiteboard assistant, which makes it easy for the presenter to share their screen with somebody using Supernova so that they can explore, explore the PowerPoint slides in a way they find accessible. And it basically uses the Wi Fi, so there's no wires, there's no cameras obstructing the view, but it means, again, more content is being made accessible. So a young person in education can be sat anywhere in the classroom and view the teacher's whiteboard on their screen in a way that they find accessible. So it includes, you know, connections to cameras, connections to whiteboards, but it also has, and this is another, you know, just to reflect back on where we started with today's podcast, another one of the great innovations over the last few few decades has been accessible reading material. And Supernova also includes Dolphin Easy Reader app. And this is just a wonderful a wonderful app. It's available on lots of different devices. It's included with Supernova, so it's available on Windows devices, but also on, you know, things like iPads and iPhones and Android smartphones and tablets. It's also available on Chromebooks, where they're allowed to run Android apps. And it provides connections to more than 50 different libraries around the world, making millions and millions of titles accessible. So in Canada, it's it works with the CELA library, which has actually grown quite considerably in terms of the amount of content. So there's over a million titles available in the CELA library, which you can then read in a way you find accessible using Easy reader. So it's included with Supernova. But one of the great things as well is if you have an active software maintenance agreement for Supernova, you also get active access to the premium features of Easy Reader as well, and that means you can join up your reading between different devices. So perhaps you don't want to be reading on your Windows laptop. You want to be continue reading on your iPhone or your iPad. You can pick up where you left off. You know, with the premium features, you can add additional reading voices, high quality reading voices. You can import things like PDFs as well, text based PDFs to read them in a way you find accessible. So lots and lots of sorts of premium features unlocked by having that software maintenance agreement as well. So so yeah, I think the point with just coming back and doing a bit of a circle round. So yes, the question was very much about, how can we make, you know, the Windows environment accessible and support people with, you know, a range of different needs. And that is why Supernova includes, you know, three different editions. So you can choose your, you know, choose the edition that's right for your level of site today. And you know, perhaps if your site

changes over time, you have the option then to move between different editions as well. But Supernova also includes these, you know, fantastic utilities to make more content accessible, whether that's the print or whiteboards or accessible books or images as well, which are available across, you know, or all editions of a product as well.

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Steve Barclay 34:15

You know, Steve, Ryan and I, we've been involved in the assistive technology field for many, many years. And you know, as you're going down the list, I'm just like, yeah, that used to be like, its own dedicated piece of at that you needed to to be able to do that and and now you're talking about being able to roll all of this stuff in. It's a really exciting time.

S

Steve Barclay 34:41

You know, I've already mentioned some of the new innovations that we've made for, for example, for for Supernova, with AI, for AI help and image descriptions. But you know, what other barriers can we resolve as well? We know that, you know, being able to in, you know, everything's got a challenge associated to it. So I mentioned in the latest version of Supernova, you can install additional voices. You know, we know what the challenge is there. But you know, someone doesn't have, you know, with someone speaking different, you know, text in different languages they want to be able to read, and, you know, using a natural sounding voice for their particular language. So, you know, how can we solve that barrier, or another barrier, which you recently resolved in the latest version of Supernova? So we know that for for people with vision impairments, you know, it can be quite easy to miss important notifications. So you may miss notifications from, say, an Outlook email has popped up, or a team's notification has popped up, or the battery's low, which actually my battery is getting low, and better, rush off and get the charger quickly. But we've got a new notification finder, which means that you know any notifications that you've missed, you can quickly catch up on and notice everything has you know. You know, it's not about just adding in functionality, because you can, it has to solve a problem, and, you know, has to have a have meaning and and solve a problem for for an individual who who's experiencing vision impairments,

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Steve Barclay 34:46

Simon, one of the things that's happened here in Canada over the last, probably the last 10 years, is our federal government has switched from Jaws and ZoomText over to Supernova. Can you talk a little bit about why a large government agency like that might choose your product over the competition? What sort of benefits that might might be there for them?

S

Simon Kitchen 34:46

Absolutely. So it's great to hear about the switch. So there is, yeah, there's lots of sorts of benefits. So really, with the licensing of Supernova, it's incredibly flexible, because it, you know, it's based on, you know, the customer who, who's purchasing. So, you know, if you are an individual with sight loss, you can choose, you know, you get personal license, and you can choose any addition of Supernova to meet your needs today or then change in the future. But then, if you're in the workplace, we have Professional and Enterprise licenses available, which are much more flexible. It means it makes it really easy to roll the assistive technology out across a network. It includes access to all editions as well. So if different team members need different editions, they can either have different editions provided for them, or they can use we've actually got a profiles feature within Supernova, so you can quickly set Supernova up to as a Magnifier or as Magnifier and Speech. You know, it's flexible in those ways as well. But equally with our Enterprise Edition license, I should say, getting my licenses and additions with the Enterprise license organizations also have a lot more flexibility in how they deploy and in terms of their environment as well. So if you're on an environment which is Citrix, using Citrix or remote desktop environment, that's where the Enterprise Edition works. So that's where the software is actually not installed locally, is installed on on a central service. So it works for, you know, different configurations, different network configurations, etc, as well. So, yeah, that's, you know, very flexible. And again, it's easy for the IT team to manage and to deploy. And again, it's, you know, this is where that that benefit of having one product to suit people with different levels of sight really comes into, you know, it comes into benefit because then organizations, you know, can be guaranteed that, if you choose supernova, you know, whether you've got, you know, team members who have low vision or team members who are more severely sight impaired, they got the accessibility that they need.

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Steve Barclay 34:46

So from a from a design point of view, when you when you have such a feature rich product, and when you have have these products that that are really trying to make it as usable as possible for the most people as possible, in the most situations as possible. From a design perspective that must be very challenging, because on some levels, you know, you're designing for power users, but then you're also designing for for sort of novices, or people who may be even new to to a lot of technology. How does that impact the design process? And has AI taken a bit of the pressure off of that, you know, when it comes to, you know, the built in AI help?

S

## Simon Kitchen 34:46

Well, we've just had the Supernova 25 which was released a couple of months ago. Wasn't a month while we were April now, gosh, so that was released in February. So fairly recently, and I've already, I've kind of touched on some of some of the new innovations which are in there, like, for example, adding the voices in, you know, via the control panel. We've got the notification finder if any missed notifications. We've also introduced additional, lots and lots of additional Braille tables using the lib Louie Braille table. So that's 160 new Braille tables available as well. And we've made improvements for using websites which perhaps have their own navigation keys. So one of the aspects, I'm not sure if I mentioned when we when we covered the screen reading aspect, is that with Supernova you have these quick navigation keys to be able to jump to different links or headings or buttons or all those sorts of things when you're on web pages. But sometimes there's websites that actually have their own navigation functions, or that, you know, to make their website easier to use. So for example, if you're on YouTube, and you press the K button that's used to play and pause a video, whereas in Supernova, when you have Supernova running, if you press K, that will jump you to the next link. So you've now got the facility to turn supernovas quick navigation keys on and off again to help you know when you can turn it off to use YouTube to access those navigation keys, and you can turn it back on again for when you're used you know when you want to navigate to a different website, etc. So those are some of the improvements that we've just released. Yes, there's lots of different ideas that are in the in the roadmap, but that's where you know we really need to get the insights in before we start to to plan, because we want to make sure that as we go forward, you know our, you know, if we, if we're adding additional facilities using AI, that we're solving real world problems that you know, if we're looking at, you know, other features, you know that they're that, you know, again, that they're based on customer Need and not just doing improvements, you know, just because we can. So it's a little bit of a, you know, sort of fluffy answer in terms of what's coming up next. But there's so many different options. It would be irresponsible of me to go through all of the different options, you know, for you know that we're actually, you know, but the team is kind of working on and discussing at the moment.

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Simon Kitchen 35:30

I don't think that you should rely on AI for those purposes. It can definitely help to unearth and help to, you know, educate in terms of, how do I do this, or how do I, how do I sort of do that. But I think it's important to make sure that those first experiences with a product, you know, are nice and straightforward. You get your quick wins. You can turn your modification on and off. You can explore the screen in a way that is intuitive to you. You know, some of the things that we get really good, you know, feedback on, actually, as I mentioned before, is the touch screen, because it's such an intuitive way of exploring the screen. And why can't people with low vision, just, you know, use one finger to explore the screen and two fingers to pinch and zoom, etc, or to have the text read back to them. It's under their finger. Why you know? Why can't you know? Why can't they just just pick up the device and just use it in a way that, as you say, is just intuitive to them? But then, as we know, there are, you know, power users, but people you know, who do want to get more out of their assistive technology? And that's where you can delve into, you know, we don't expect everybody, you know, who's using supernova to really go in, into the into the depths, etc, but we, you know, we do have lots of, you know, functionality. It's a very powerful tool, as we've mentioned, going through the different traditions. And we've got lots of shortcuts and in the new layered hot keys, etc, where you can really go to go into the depths of Supernova. But I think, you know, it's really important that we design the product in a kind of universal way. You know, we follow universal design principles. We make sure that we do the usability testing, you know, to make sure that, you know, the products are easy to use, you know, if we're adding, you know, we did, you know, improvements, you know, for accessing the camera features, you know, and making sure that we're getting that feedback in, you know, and then doing the run throughs with our, you know, in the UK, we have qualified teachers supporting young people with vision impaired, so we're getting all of our feedback in about what are the students struggling with? How can we improve on that and making sure that any changes that we do make are actually, you know, in the right direction, etc. So, yeah.

S

Simon Kitchen 36:41

Yeah, absolutely. I couldn't agree more. And it's it is very important, like we said, before getting, you know, all of the you know what we're working on next needs to be informed by, you know, by what people are telling us. But it's also important to add that, you know, there's a constant development cycle, because we know that the technology landscape is always evolving. We know that there's rolling updates to Windows, that there's rolling updates to Office, 365, to web browsers, you know. So there's all these important accessibility improvements that you know, or fixes that are kind of needed. Because at any point in time you know, we know that Microsoft could release an upgrade to to Office and, and it have an impact on, you know, on the accessibility. And so we need to be able to be proactive. You know, in terms of getting access to the early versions, testing them. Quality Assurance is really, really important to dolphin and making sure that you know, that that you know, all of those improvements come through into the products and don't affect people in the you know, as part of everyday lives, if that makes sense.

S

Simon Kitchen 36:41

Absolutely so first of all, speak to our friends at Canadian Assistive Technology and our website, where you can find out about lots of different products. So I've very much focused today on Supernova, but we also have Easy Reader, which we touched on in terms of access for, you know, accessible titles from for CELA Library, from Bookshare and different libraries around the world as well. We also have Guide Connect, which, as we said before, you know, for some people designing technology to make it, you know, suitable for lots of people with, you know, very different needs can be challenging. And for, you know, for lots of people with sight loss, actually, the Windows environment itself can be challenging, so we've developed Guide Connect, which, you know, makes your computer much easier to use by, you know, completing everyday activities in a menu based structure so you can, you know, select emails to send your emails or to view your inbox, and then just use your up and down arrow keys to explore the different options, enter for the one you want or escape to go back to the previous screen so you can write your emails, you can search web pages, you can access all of the great things we spoke about, from scanners and cameras for your image descriptions and zooming in and out. You've got access to books as well, built into Guide Connect. So lots more, yeah, via Guide Connect as well. So definitely, again, want to sort of check out, but yeah, for more information, the Dolphin website is [www.yourdolphin.com](http://www.yourdolphin.com) and that's where you can choose your product and find out more.

R

Rob Mineault 37:50

So what's sort of next for Supernova, like, what's sort of in the works?

S

Simon Kitchen 37:50

Well, so for people who are interested in checking out dolphin, checking out Supernova, checking all the different editions, or if they want to reach out and contact you, ask you any questions, what's the best way to that people can find you?

S

Simon Kitchen 39:57

Yeah, just a couple of products that haven't been mentioned so far. And I'm wondering if you can just do a brief pitch on on both of them, Easy Converter and Publisher.

S

Simon Kitchen 40:08

In some ways, we are in this golden age, like things are new products and new technology seems to be popping up every year. I imagine that your work with with the actual community can be really important. You know, getting their input and getting their thoughts about what they what their needs are.

S

Simon Kitchen 45:30

So yes, Easy Converter Express is all about making Word files accessible. So it's a plugin for Microsoft Word. And then you can take your word file and you know, perhaps if you need to create a large print version real quickly, or a an mp three audio version really quickly. So this is particularly useful where perhaps, you know, we're working in a in an environment where maybe a student needs access to a physical, large print or a braille version, or maybe in university where we need to be sending out letters in accessible formats and those sorts of things as well. That's Easy Converter Express. Lots more information available on on the dolphin website. And publisher is a tool which we've provided for for organizations who are making accessible published material. So some of our libraries that we're working with use Dolphin Publisher, and it allows you to create accessible DAISY and ePub books using either a natural sound invoice or pre recorded audio. So you can actually create human, narrated talking books with Dolphin Publisher as well. So and again, more information on on Dolphin Publisher is available on the website, just to revert back to where we were with with Supernova and Easy Reader again and Guide Connect, if you're an assistive technology trainer or an assessor, we have lots of lots of fantastic learning resources available on the Dolphin website. We have Learning Zone courses for assessors, for trainers, for educators. These are actually authored by our blindness product manager, Neil McBride, who's vision impaired himself. He's extremely thorough, and, you know, gives great bite sized lessons in terms of learning, the different editions of Supernova learning how some of these fantastic utilities work, such as making whiteboards accessible or print based resources accessible, or even using Easy Reader as well. And you've got a quiz at the end of it where you can request a certificate as well. So lots and lots of fantastic learning resources to help you know, find out more about Dolphin products.

S

Simon Kitchen 45:30

Is there anything you guys don't do? You guys are like the Swiss Army knife of technology. All right. Well, that's your dolphin.com. People, check it out. Simon, we want to thank you so much for taking some time out of your evening to come to come chat and to come visit.

S

Simon Kitchen 46:16

Well, thank you very much for accommodating me. You've been very kind. So thank you everyone. Okay, have a good day everyone.

R

Rob Mineault 46:16

Well, there you go. Actually, I didn't even realize quite the scope of their product offerings. That's wild.

S

Simon Kitchen 46:16

Yeah, that's a lot to stuff into an hour, right? This there's, there's a lot going on over there. And it's funny, because we, we are so versed in JAWS over here, because it was the, you know, it was the North American product that spread the fastest, right? But Dolphin does have some, some specific advantages over jaws. You know, the federal government was, was pretty, pretty clear on that, because they use a lot of, I believe it's Cisco products, and the Dolphin stuff just works better with the stuff that they're using. So there's, there's, there's definite areas where they, they've been able to show definite advantages over the competition.

S

Steve Barclay 52:11

It was on the Canadian Assistive Technology Facebook page. Do you want me to give you a little? Let me just pull it up here. So it's it, there's a there's a picture associated with it. It's a picture of Greg. He's He's holding on to a tool that's resting against an arm, and he's got this maniacal look on his face, visor pulled down over his his eyes, and his tongue is sticking out to one side. And the caption is, we're incredibly proud to introduce Skin Braille, a new tactile tattoo system. Skin Braille uses sub dermal silicone beads to produce permanent Braille dots on nearly any part of the body. They are compatible with conventional tattoos for a true 3d piece of art on your body. Sessions typically take a half hour to several hours, depending on the amount of Braille being implanted. Customer Reviews, "Skin Braille is amazing. I went to watch a friend having it done, and the results were incredible. Although the police were called because of the screaming. " "I've never been in such pain. I was going to get the Lord's Prayer on my back, but I had to stop immediately. So now I just have the word MY on my back for no good reason". Visitors to our Vancouver office can now schedule a Skin Braille session with Greg in a mostly hygienic environment.

R

Rob Mineault 52:14

All right. Well, anything, anything else, before we begin our respective days? All right, so where can people find us?

R

Rob Mineault 53:20

People can find us at [www.atbanter.com](http://www.atbanter.com)

R

Ryan Fleury 53:20

They can also send us an email at [cowbell@atbanter.com](mailto:cowbell@atbanter.com)

R

Rob Mineault 53:20

Could be become a thing, I could I could see that. I could see the kids be being into that. So absolutely, yeah, there you go. So keep, keep that idea, write that down and keep it and put it in a drawer or something. Because you never know. Okay, so yeah, that is going to do it for us this week. Big thanks, of course, to Simon for joining us, and we will see everybody next week.

R

Rob Mineault 54:06

And where else can they find us? Steve?

S

Steve Barclay 54:06

If they so desire, and they're they want their minds corrupted by social media, well, I'm told that they can find us on social media. There's all kinds of different places. There's let me see, there's Mastodon, there's Facebook.

R

Ryan Fleury 54:22

Oh, did you see Steve's Facebook post on April 1? Well done Mr. Steve.

S

Steve Barclay 54:29

Thank you very much. That was supposed to be a video, but Greg and I never quite got around to it.

R

Ryan Fleury 54:36

Yes, yeah, everybody. Check it out. Okay.

S

Steve Barclay 54:39

Yeah, that's amazing, actually. That that's such a great April Fool's post is because there's part of you that's like, hey, that's kind of a cool idea. Well, there you go. Who knows? Who knows that could become a thing,

R

Ryan Fleury 55:38

The next technology fad.

S

Steve Barclay 57:28

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