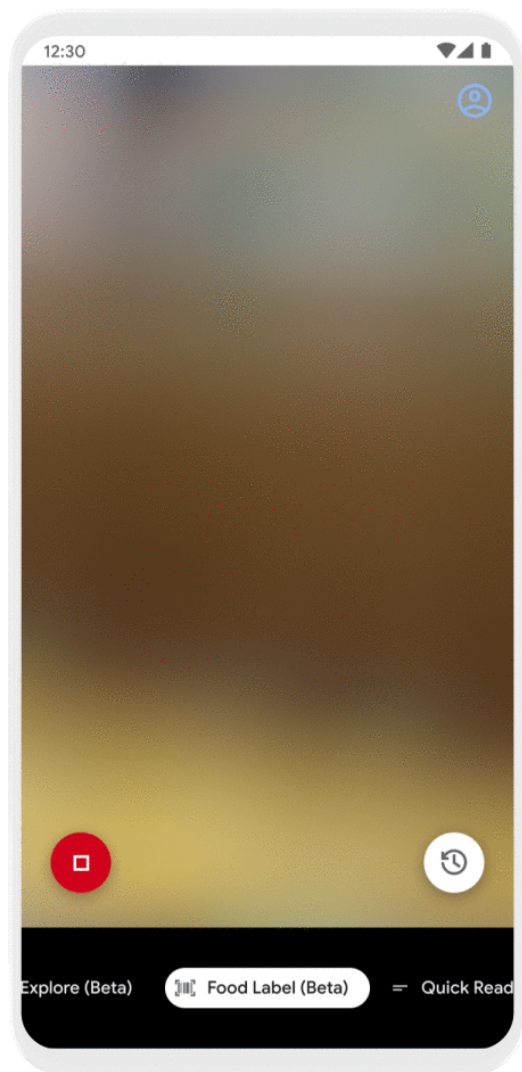


Google improves document, food scanning on app for visually impaired

August 12 2020, by Peter Grad



Credit: Google

Google announced a boost to its Lookout app that will further assist visually impaired or blind users. Lookout allows users to point their camera at objects and then tell them what it sees. And it lets users scan text and have it read back to them.

The two new features are Scan Document and Food Labels.

Food Label allows users to quickly identify products on store shelves by reading text, identifying images and scanning barcodes. This means visually impaired shoppers can not only find what they are looking for more easily, but can obtain important details concerning nutritional contents, expiration dates, and other relevant notifications marked on product labels. The app will guide users to focus on the most relevant sections of the product, nudging them to change the camera angle if they zero in on the wrong spot.

Scan Document will make it easier to navigate documents such as letters and instructions. Paired with Talkback, Android's screen reader that provides spoken feedback as well as audible and vibration cues, users can now more easily scan long documents. Google provided more screen [real estate](#) for the camera view, thus allowing users to capture a greater [document](#) area with more ease.

Other changes include improvement to the app's layout. Navigation is now easier and quicker as users can scroll between modes at the bottom of the screen.

Other features make Lookout a must-have app for users with impaired vision. Quick Read will read back short snippets of text on signs or

posters. The update makes Quick Read even quicker. The Currency option will detect the denomination of cash, even if the bill is folded. Currently, only American bills are recognized. And Explore will identify objects in a room as the user points the camera at them.



Credit: Google

The update to Lookout, an app introduced last year on all Pixel phones, broadens the range of phones that can utilize Lookout. All Android devices with at least 2 GB running Android 6.0 or higher can run the app.

The app also expanded the number of languages that can be used: In addition to English, Spanish, French, German, and Italian are now supported.

"Expanding this app to more people and devices is part of our commitment to make the world's information universally accessible and to build helpful products with and for people with disabilities," said Scott Adams, product manager for Google's Accessibility Engineering.

There are numerous other apps available for people requiring visual assistance. LookTel Money Reader identifies currency and speaks the denomination. It supports 21 currencies, requires no internet connection and is available on iOS devices. Ariadne GPS works with Google maps to provide talking maps that not only provide direction, but alert users to traffic signals and to approaching stops on trains and buses.

Dolphin Easy Reader for Android devices lets users browse and download from a massive collection of talking book and newspaper libraries. It will also read email and documents on the phone.

For help with identifying colors, Color ID for iOS will say the names of colors the camera is pointing at, even specific shades and hues.

More information: <https://blog.google/products/android/five-new-android-features—/>

play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.android.accessibility.reveal

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