BRITISH WIRELESS FOR THE BLIND FUND
KEEPING BLIND PEOPLE IN TOUCH WITH THE WORLD

Alexa and Google Talking Newspaper Skill

The following document provides full details for the BWBF/TNF Alexa and Google Skill carrying Talking Newspaper audio.

The Smart Speaker service is provided to any Talking Newspaper who is part of the BWBF Streamed Service. Which also provides support for the Talking Newspaper App and Web outputs through 'BWBF WebPlayer'.

This guide is broken down into sections and provides every detail needed to download, access and get the most from the skill. The instructions for Alexa and Google are also separate as their features and command phrases differ.

Contents

Accessing the skill for the first time

IMPORTANT:

If you are transitioning from 'Waveney Words'** (as provided by Talking Newspaper Services), **it will be need to be disabled first. This can best be completed by using the Alexa App:-

Open the app select More > Skills and Games > Your Skills > Enabled Skills, select the skill and disable.

Alexa

Once the Alexa device is fully set up, connected to the WiFi and ready to go, the enable command can be used using your voice. "*Alexa enable Talking Newspapers*", then follow the prompts given by Alexa, until confirmation is provided that the skill has been enabled.

In some instances the skill must be enabled using the Alexa app on your smart device as below:

Open the app select More > Skills and Games > Search > "Talking Newspapers" > Enable

Google

Once the Google device is fully set up, connected to the WiFi and ready to go, you don't need to enable the skill to use this, it can just be opened, please see the opening skill instructions further on in this document.

Opening the skill

Alexa

The command once the skill is enabled is "Alexa open Talking Newspaper", this will open the skill. How to use the skill's Features and Functions can be found further on in this document.

Additionally, you can directly access the newspaper you want in Alexa. You can say "Alexa Ask Talking Newspaper for Liverpool Talking Newspaper" or any publication name. This will immediately play the talking newspaper selected.

Google

The command to open the skill is "Hey Google Talk to Talking Newspaper", this will open the skill. How to use the skill's Features and Functions can be found further on in this document.

Features and functions available

Due to the functionality of the smart speakers themselves there are slight variations in Alexa and Googles functionality.

Alexa

Once the skill is open the intro message will be played, this will vary as the skill gets more used to the user.

For the first time of opening or if the skill has not been used for a while, you will hear the standard welcome message, the user will then be asked for a Talking Newspaper name or the name of a town or city in the UK.

When providing a response to the Talking Newspaper or Area name we suggest the following should ensure a good user experience.

Talking Newspaper names, Alexa will only find the newspaper under the exact name that it has been added to the service as. Variations, or what is called synonyms can be added, so that shortened versions of the name, nick names or even mis spellings due to annunciation or pronunciation issues such as TN or Tee En can be accommodated. If you want any support with this, please contact us at alexa@blind.org.uk and we would be delighted to help you. Once these synonyms are set however, Alexa can provide the same response however the listener asks.

Area names in some instances are associated with other areas, for example, if you say Winsford, Alexa will respond with here are the newspapers nearest to Northwich. In Alexa it is not feasibly possible to add every area of the UK to the search as individual entries, there are literally ten thousand plus. This is completed by associating one or more area names to one entry, for example Northwich is associated with Vale Royal and Winsford. There are currently 555 area locations loaded into Alexa, so we are sure this will support users in finding the ones in their local area. The same action with synonyms can be completed for Area names, for any help or guidance please contact alexa@blind.org.uk and we would be delighted to help you again.

If having listened to a newspaper you return in any 24-hour period, Alexa will ask if you want to carry on listening, just say yes to carry on, or no to browse others.

If you listen to a regular newspaper after a period the skill will recognise this, Alexa will say Welcome back to Talking Newspapers I can see that you have been enjoying listening to (newspaper name). Do you want to listen to this newspaper?' You can simply say yes to play or no to browse others.

Moving between tracks, both "Alexa next track" and "Alexa previous track" can be used to move between tracks where there is more than one track for the publication you are listening to.

You can use the pause/stop or play functions whilst listening to any publication, ask "Alexa Pause" or "Alexa Stop" to stop the publication from playing, then maybe "Alexa Play" to resume playing. Or "Alexa Cancel" to completely exit from the skill.

Google

Once the skill is open the intro message will be played, you will hear the standard welcome message, the user will then be asked for a Talking Newspaper name or town or city in the UK.

When providing a response to the Talking Newspaper or Area name we suggest the following should ensure a good user experience.

Talking Newspaper names, Google will only find the newspaper under the exact name that it has been added to the service as. Variations, or what is called synonyms can be added, so that shortened versions of the name, nick names or even mis spellings due to annunciation or pronunciation issues such as TN or Tee En can be accommodated. If you want any support with this, please contact us at alexa@blind.org.uk and we would be delighted to help you. Once these synonyms are set however, Google can provide the same response however the listener asks.

Area names in some instances are associated with other areas, for example, if you say Winsford, Google will respond with here are the newspapers nearest to Northwich. In Google it is not feasibly possible to add every area of the UK to the search as individual entries, there are literally ten thousand plus. This is completed by associating one or more area names to one entry, for example Northwich is associated with Vale Royal and Winsford. There are currently 555 area locations loaded into Google, so we are sure this will support users in finding the ones in their local area. The same action with synonyms can be completed for Area names, for any help or guidance please contact alexa@blind.org.uk and we would be delighted to help you again.

[Google contd.]

If you listen to a regular newspaper after a period the skill will recognise this, Alexa will say Welcome back to Talking Newspapers I can see that you have been enjoying listening to (newspaper name). Do you want to listen to this newspaper?' You can simply say yes to play or no to browse others.

Moving tracks, both "Hey Google next track" and "Hey Google previous track" can be used to move been tracks where there is more than one track for the publication you are listening to.

You can use the pause/stop or play functions whilst listening to any publication, ask "Hey Google Pause" or "Hey Google Stop" to stop the publication from playing, then maybe "Hey Google Play" to resume playing. Or "Hey Google Cancel" to completely exit from the skill.

Currently there is no ability for Google to remember the position, nor to gather data on the users' habits. Suggestions and bookmarks are not available on the Google Skills currently, this may change in the future.