



How We Read: A Sensory History of Books for Blind People

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How We Read was a public exhibition exploring the history of reading technologies designed for blind people over the past two centuries.

The exhibition involved:

- historical artefacts
- hands-on activities
- interactive workshops
- live performances
- descriptive tours led by an experienced museum curator
- a tactile storytelling workshop
- a panel led by visually impaired readers
- a live reading by a professional actor who has recorded books for blind people



Key Lessons

- **Involve those your topic affects.** This can be invaluable for creating an interesting, relevant exhibition
- **Be opportunistic.** The exhibition evolved in unexpected and exciting ways, be flexible enough to depart from the original plan and make adjustments
- **Have a plan b.** When dealing with many different partners, things can be delayed or go wrong, try to plan for this and leave enough time to address any problems



Through touch, sound and sight, 'How We Read' opened up the many ways in which we do something as simple as read a book



Results:

The exhibition introduced visitors to reading formats beyond the conventional book whilst encouraging reflection on the societal shifts reflected in the history of their development.

The exhibition successfully included blind and partially sighted people at every stage. They offered feedback, loaned items, and participated in engagement events. This community can be difficult to reach but was definitely worth the effort.