

## MOBILE VOICE-BASED NAVIGATION AND EMAIL FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Rahinj Neha\*<sup>1</sup>, Gharde Khushi\*<sup>2</sup>, Dubey Dhananjay\*<sup>3</sup>, Tiwari Krishna\*<sup>4</sup>

\*<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Computer Engineering, PK Technical Campus, Pune, India.

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.56726/IRJMETS63522>

### ABSTRACT

The initiative called "Mobile Voice-Based Navigation and Email for Visual Impaired" is focused on creating a mobile system that helps visually impaired individuals with mobility and communication. Those with visual impairments face significant obstacles when it comes to moving through their environments and using digital communication tools like email. These challenges often force them to depend on others for help, which can restrict their independence and affect their quality of life. This presents a voice-controlled solution that combines two main features: a GPS navigation system and a voice-activated email assistant. The navigation component uses GPS technology to deliver real-time audio instructions, making it easier for visually impaired individuals to navigate their surroundings safely. Furthermore, ultrasonic sensors are included to recognize obstacles, alerting users with voice prompts when objects are detected in their path.

This capability allows users to navigate with greater confidence in both known and new locations. The navigation system is fully operational on a mobile phone, enhancing its convenience, portability, and accessibility. Combining navigation and email functionality offers a well-rounded solution for visually impaired individuals, addressing two vital daily needs - mobility and communication. Through the use of a mobile platform, the system ensures ease of use and implementation into everyday activities, while the voice interface ensures accessibility for the blind. By improving both navigation and communication skills, this system fosters enhanced independence and self-sufficiency for visually impaired individuals, reducing their dependence on external assistance while increasing their ability to interact with the digital world and their environment.

**Keywords:** Mobile, Voice, Navigation, Visually Impaired, Email, Independence, Communication.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Mobile phones have become essential for practically everyone in today's technologically advanced society, performing a variety of functions like music listening, information access, and email and other app communication. People with visual impairments still struggle to complete everyday tasks, especially when it comes to utilizing email systems and digital communication on their own, despite the growing usage of mobile devices. Despite the fact that screen readers, speech recognition software, and braille keyboards were created to aid those who are blind or visually impaired, these devices usually fall short of offering a seamless and natural experience.

Identifying the accessibility gap, our project intends to create a novel Voice-Based Email System designed especially for those with visual impairments. The principal aim is to empower visually handicapped individuals to autonomously handle their email correspondence via voice instructions, eliminating the necessity for conventional visual interfaces. Through the use of text-to-speech (TTS) and speech-to-text (STT) converters, the system gives users complete voice control over their email accounts, providing a more effective and inclusive method of email interaction.

The existing solutions for email access, such as screen readers, often fail to provide a fluid and enjoyable user experience, especially for tasks requiring precision, like composing and managing emails. Our research addresses these limitations by offering a system that allows users to perform basic email functions such as composing, sending, receiving, and managing emails with simple voice commands like "send email" or "check inbox." This user-friendly design ensures that visually impaired individuals no longer have to struggle with small buttons or complex interfaces. Instead, they can simply speak their commands, and the system will respond by performing the necessary actions.

The proposed system also integrates features that go beyond email functionality. The mobile application includes additional utilities like reading out information related to the user's current location, checking the weather, determining battery status, and even managing tasks such as reading time and date, making it an all-

in-one tool for individuals with visual impairments. By leveraging Google's speech input technology, the system allows users to navigate through their phones with ease, swiping right or left to activate voice commands.

Using ultrasonic sensors and microphones to enhance mobility through wearable technology, such as shoes, is one of this system's unique advantages. In order to provide safe and autonomous navigation, the voice prompts give real-time updates and the ultrasonic sensors assist in detecting obstructions in the user's route. This not only enhances the user's experience with email communication but also significantly improves their ability to move around their environment safely.

This program is a comprehensive attempt to address the mobility and communication demands of people with visual impairments in order to enhance their quality of life. Users can autonomously traverse their environment and utilize digital communication tools thanks to the system's mix of voice commands, speech input, and improved sensor technologies. With a focus on inclusivity, this voice-based email system helps reduce reliance on traditional aids like guide dogs or walking canes while fostering independence and social inclusion for the visually impaired.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Assistive Technologies for Blind People

Screen readers like JAWS (Job Access With Speech) and NVDA (NonVisual Desktop Access) have greatly improved the quality of life for blind people by allowing them to interact with digital environments and obtain information. Braille displays and speech-to-text converters are examples of traditional assistive technology that has been extensively studied and used.

These technologies provide auditory feedback by converting on-screen content into speech or braille, allowing users to interact with computers and smartphones. However, while these tools enhance general accessibility, they still have limitations, especially when it comes to email management. As noted by Barata et al. (2018), there is a need for more intuitive, specialized tools for handling specific tasks, such as accessing library resources or managing email accounts.

### Email Accessibility for Blind People

Managing emails presents unique challenges for blind individuals. Many email systems are designed with visual interfaces, making them cumbersome to navigate solely through auditory means. Research by Lazar and Wentz (2012) found that blind users often face difficulties with email applications due to inefficient navigation, lack of effective shortcuts, and inadequate labeling of elements for screen reader compatibility. While efforts have been made to address these limitations through keyboard navigation and alternative text formats, these solutions often fall short of providing a fully comprehensive and efficient email experience. The need for specialized email management systems that cater specifically to the blind has been recognized, but there remains a gap in terms of fully voice-based solutions for handling emails.

### Voice-Based Systems and Virtual Assistants

Virtual assistants and voice-based systems have become more popular tools in recent years. Voice assistants such as Microsoft Cortana, Apple Siri, Google Assistant, and Amazon Alexa, you can send messages, make reminders, and operate smart home device. However, these software can detect human speech and carry out a variety of tasks. However, while these mainstream voice assistants are highly versatile, they are not specifically optimized for blind users in terms of managing email accounts. Existing systems still rely on some degree of visual feedback or non-voice-based interaction, which reduces their effectiveness for users who are entirely dependent on voice navigation.

In light of this, the work of Kiruthika and Vijayalakshmi (2018) on voice-based navigation systems for blind individuals offers an important perspective on how voice technology can be leveraged for assistive purposes. Their project utilizes speech recognition to allow blind users to interact with their environment and navigate through real-world spaces using voice commands. This demonstrates the broader potential of voice-based technologies in supporting blind individuals, though there is still room for more specialized development, particularly in the realm of email management.

### Innovations in Voice-Based Email Solutions

There is a growing need for voice-based systems that go beyond the general functionalities of mainstream virtual assistants. As mentioned in Sheetal et al. (2018), intelligent assistants that incorporate both speech

recognition and synthesis offer a promising direction. These assistants, designed specifically for visually impaired individuals, aim to provide more accurate and tailored interaction, bridging the gap between traditional assistive technologies and modern voice-driven systems. In particular, integrating speech-to-text and text-to-speech functionality with email management systems presents a significant opportunity to enhance email accessibility for blind users.

Our project, which focuses on developing a voice-based virtual assistant for blind individuals, addresses the limitations identified in the existing literature. Unlike mainstream voice assistants, our system is designed specifically for email management, allowing users to compose, read, and manage their inboxes entirely through voice commands. This eliminates the need for additional visual cues or keyboard input, ensuring a seamless and efficient email experience for blind users. Furthermore, our solution leverages advanced speech recognition technology to ensure accurate email composition and retrieval, addressing the issues highlighted by earlier studies on the challenges faced by blind individuals in using email systems.

In conclusion, even though assistive technologies for the blind have advanced significantly, there are still a lot of unanswered questions about email accessibility. Even if they are helpful, traditional solutions like screen readers are insufficient to provide a smooth and effective email experience. Although the emergence of voice-based systems offers new possibilities, the unique requirements of blind users in terms of email management are not sufficiently met by popular virtual assistants. Our project intends to close this gap by creating a customized voice-based virtual assistant that will provide blind users with a more efficient and user-friendly method of interacting with their email accounts.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The methodology for developing a mobile voice-based navigation and email system for visually impaired users involves several critical steps, integrating human-computer interaction principles, accessibility considerations, and advanced speech recognition and synthesis technologies. The core focus is to create a user-friendly and intuitive system that enhances independence by providing voice-guided navigation and email functionalities.

#### 1. Requirements Analysis

The initial step involves gathering requirements through stakeholder interviews, including visually impaired individuals, assistive technology specialists, and mobility experts. The goal is to understand the challenges faced by visually impaired users in navigating unfamiliar environments and managing digital communication (email). Functionalities such as real-time voice feedback, obstacle detection, and accessible email management are prioritized.

#### 2. Design of the System Architecture

The system is designed with two core modules:

- **Navigation Module:** This module is designed using GPS and GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data to provide voice-guided, turn-by-turn navigation. Advanced features such as pedestrian-safe routes and obstacle detection using sensors like ultrasonic or camera-based systems are integrated. The system must also account for real-time location updates, rerouting, and street information through audio prompts.
- **Email Module:** This component uses speech-to-text (STT) and text-to-speech (TTS) technologies. Users can compose, send, receive, and read emails using voice commands. The interface design emphasizes simplicity, with email interaction fully controlled through voice to eliminate visual dependency.

#### 3. Implementation of Voice-Interaction Technologies

The voice interaction is a critical part of the system:

- **Speech Recognition (STT):** For email composition and navigation inputs, Google Cloud Speech or other machine learning-based models can be integrated to convert user voice into text commands accurately.
- **Speech Synthesis (TTS):** For reading emails and providing navigation instructions, TTS models like Amazon Polly or similar systems convert text into natural-sounding speech. The system is optimized for various languages and dialects to cater to a diverse audience.

#### 4. Testing and Iterative Feedback

Testing is conducted in real-world settings to ensure the system's usability. Usability testing focuses on the system's response to different accents, speech patterns, and environmental noises. Navigation accuracy is validated through field tests, while email features are tested by users for error handling and clarity. Feedback from visually impaired participants helps refine the system's functionality.

## 5. Deployment and Maintenance

The final step involves deploying the system on mobile platforms like Android and iOS. The application undergoes continuous updates based on user feedback and advances in voice recognition technologies, ensuring long-term relevance and user satisfaction.

By focusing on user needs, integrating advanced technologies, and continuous iteration, this voice-based system for navigation and email aims to significantly improve the autonomy and digital inclusion of visually impaired users.

## IV. FEATURES

Building a Mobile Voice-Based Navigation and Email system for visually impaired users on the Android platform involves integrating several features that enhance accessibility, usability, and independence. Here are the core features of this project:

### 1. Voice Command Interface

- Speech-to-Text (STT) Input: Users can navigate the app using voice commands, eliminating the need for visual interaction. They can compose emails, set destinations, and access different functionalities by speaking commands.
- Text-to-Speech (TTS) Feedback: The app reads aloud navigation instructions, emails, and other relevant information to users. It provides clear audio feedback for every action, ensuring that visually impaired users can use the app hands-free.

### 2. Turn-by-Turn Navigation System with Voice Control Voice Guidance:

The application offers detailed, real-time navigation assistance with voice prompts. The system will use data from GPS and Google Maps to guide users when they voice-input their destination.

- Real-Time Rerouting: The system automatically modifies and offers updated voice instructions for safe rerouting if a user veers off the intended path.
- Walking -friendly routes : The navigation system avoids areas that might be hazardous or inaccessible to those with visual impairments or blindness .
- Obstacle Detection: Integrated with external sensors or using smartphone cameras, the app can detect obstacles and alert users via audio cues. This feature helps users navigate safely through complex environments.
- Landmark Identification: The system announces nearby landmarks (e.g., restaurants, bus stops) and street names as users pass by them, providing situational awareness.

### 3. Voice-Controlled Email Management

- Email Composition Using Voice: Users can dictate and send emails using only their voice, with the system converting speech into text. This allows visually impaired users to communicate without relying on physical keyboards or screens.
- Read Emails Aloud: Incoming emails are read aloud using TTS technology. The system can read emails line-by-line or summarize them, depending on user preferences.
- Email Actions by Voice: Users can reply, forward, delete, or archive emails using voice commands. The system supports inbox management, enabling hands-free email organization.

### 4. Offline Support for Navigation

- Offline Maps: Users can download maps for specific areas to use navigation without internet access. This ensures continuous access to voice-based navigation even in areas with weak or no network connectivity.

### 5. Multilingual Support

- Multiple Language Support: The app supports various languages for both TTS and STT features. Because of this, individuals with visual impairments from a variety of language backgrounds can utilize the system.
- Accurate Dialect and Accent Recognition: The speech recognition technology has been refined to identify various dialects and accents, increasing the precision of voice commands.

### 6. Customizable Voice Settings

- Personalized Voice and Speed: Users can customize the voice type, speed, and pitch for the TTS feature to suit their preferences, ensuring better clarity and comfort in using the app.

### 7. Accessibility Integration

- Android Accessibility APIs: The app integrates with Android's native accessibility features like TalkBack, Voice Access, and Magnification, enhancing overall usability for visually impaired users.
- Haptic Feedback: To supplement the voice-based system, the app offers vibration-based alerts for critical notifications, such as approaching obstacles or important emails.

### 8. Battery Efficiency

- Low Power Mode for Navigation: To conserve battery life during long navigation sessions, the app can switch to a low-power mode where it reduces background processing and optimizes GPS usage without compromising safety.

### 9. User Profiles and Learning Adaptation

- User Preferences: The app allows users to save their preferred settings, including navigation routes, email preferences, and voice control configurations.
- Learning User Behavior: Over time, the system can learn user preferences, such as frequently used destinations and common contacts in the email, offering suggestions to streamline navigation and communication.

### 10. Emergency Assistance

- SOS Feature: In case of an emergency, users can trigger an SOS command via voice. The system sends the user's location to pre-saved contacts and emergency services while providing real-time navigation to the nearest safe location.

### 11. Integration with Smart Devices

- Wearable Integration: The app can be paired with wearable devices (e.g., smartwatches) to provide additional navigation cues and notifications directly on the wearable, enhancing mobility and independence.
- By integrating these features, the mobile voice-based navigation and email system becomes a comprehensive tool that empowers visually impaired users to navigate their environments and manage digital communication independently, using only their voice.

## V. TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

The creation of a mobile voice-based email and navigation system for people with visual impairments depends on a number of technologies and tools that improve usability, performance, and accessibility. These include of several hardware parts, frameworks, APIs, and software development kits (SDKs) that are necessary for email management, speech recognition, and navigation. The following are the key tools and technologies involved in building this system on the Android platform:

### 1. Android SDK and Development Tools

- Android Studio: The Android Studio provides testing, emulation, and debugging tools for ensuring proper app performance across Android devices.
- Java/Kotlin: Programming languages used for developing Android applications. The Android ecosystem is fully compatible with Kotlin's modern, concise syntax.
- Gradle: The build automation tool used in Android projects to manage dependencies, compile code, and generate APKs for deployment.

### 2. Voice Recognition and Synthesis Technologies

- Text-to-speech API by Google Cloud (STT): Converts user speech to text. This is essential for enabling voice commands for navigation and email composition. The STT engine at Google supports multiple languages and dialects, ensuring accuracy across regions and languages.
- -API for Text-to-Speech: converts text into natural-sounding speech for visually impaired people.
- It supports customizable voice parameters like tone, pitch, and speed.
- Android Speech API: For simple speech recognition tasks, the built-in Android Speech API can be used to process voice commands locally on the device, reducing dependency on external services for basic operations.

### 3. Navigation and Mapping Technologies

- Google Maps SDK for Android: This SDK provides map data, routing, and geolocation services. It is the backbone for generating accurate, real-time navigation instructions. It allows for pedestrian routing and provides access to real-time traffic and location data.
- Google Location Services API: The Google position Services API is used to follow a user's movement in real time and determine their present position. Based on the user's location, this API offers turn-by-turn voice-guided instructions in tandem with the navigation system.
- Offline Maps: Google Maps' offline functionality or open-source alternatives like Mapbox can be used to download maps for specific areas, enabling navigation without an active internet connection.

### 4. Obstacle Detection Technologies

- Device sensors (compass, accelerometer, and gyroscope): These enable the navigation system provide precise directional cues by detecting the device's orientation and movement.
- Using the device's camera with image recognition software, such as OpenCV, to identify barriers (such as walls or objects) and notify users through aural cues is known as camera-based obstacle detection.
- This may be enhanced using AI models for object detection.
- Ultrasonic Sensors: External ultrasonic sensors can be connected to the phone via Bluetooth for more advanced obstacle detection, offering tactile feedback (vibration) along with audio cues.

### 5. Email Management Technologies

- Gmail API/IMAP & SMTP Protocols: To manage email operations, the system integrates with the Gmail API or standard IMAP/SMTP protocols, allowing the app to send, receive, read, and manage emails via voice commands.
- Firebase Authentication: Firebase can be used for user authentication, making it easier to securely log in users to their email accounts without manual intervention.

### 6. Accessibility Tools:

- Android Accessibility APIs: These APIs enable the application to incorporate native Android accessibility capabilities like Voice Access (voice control of the device) and TalkBack (Android's screen reader). This makes the program easier for those with visual impairments to use.
- Haptic Feedback: Vibration APIs may be used to activate Android smartphones' built-in haptic feedback features, which can be used to deliver tactile warnings for barriers or crucial messages.

### 7. Database and Backend Services

- Firebase Realtime Database/Firestore: The program may store user preferences, navigation history, and frequently visited destinations thanks to these Google cloud-based databases. A smooth user experience is ensured by the data's real-time device syncing.
- A lightweight local database called SQLite is utilized to store offline app data, including user preferences, cached emails, and map parts that have already been downloaded.

### 8. AI and Machine Learning Technologies

- TensorFlow Lite: For on-device AI processing, TensorFlow Lite can be used to implement machine learning models that improve voice recognition accuracy and obstacle detection. Pre-trained models can be deployed for tasks such as object recognition and environmental awareness.
- Dialogflow: A natural language understanding tool used to interpret user voice commands more effectively. It can help manage the voice interactions, making the user experience more intuitive and fluid.

### 9. Wearable and IoT Integration

- Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE): For integration with external devices like wearable sensors or smartwatches, BLE is used to ensure real-time communication with minimal power consumption. This can expand the app's functionality to external assistive devices.
- Wear OS Integration: If the user has a Wear OS-powered smartwatch, the app can push notifications and navigation instructions to the watch, providing a secondary, hands-free interface.

## 10. Testing and Debugging Tools

- Espresso: Android's UI testing framework, used to automate and validate user interactions with the app. This ensures the voice-based interface works as intended across different scenarios.
- Robolectric is a testing framework that expedites the development process by enabling local testing of Android apps on PCs without the requirement for an emulator or actual device.
- In order to test the app's operation across a variety of screen sizes, resolutions, and Android versions, the Android Virtual Device (AVD) is used to simulate various Android devices throughout the development stage.

The software will offer a robust, user-friendly interface that enables those with visual impairments to access and manage their emails independently with the use of these tools and technologies. Voice commands will be used for smooth, hands-free engagement.

## VI. SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE

The system architecture of a Mobile Voice-Based Navigation and Email app for visually impaired users consists of several key layers and components working together to deliver a voice-controlled experience on Android.

### ○ **Presentation Layer (User Interface):**

- Voice Command Interface: Users interact via speech, using speech-to-text (STT) for commands.
- Text-to-Speech (TTS): System reads emails and navigation instructions aloud.
- Minimal Touch Interface: Fallback visual/touch elements designed for accessibility.

### ○ **Application Layer:**

- Voice Processing Module: Handles voice recognition (STT) and generates voice feedback (TTS).
- Navigation Module: Uses GPS and Google Maps for real-time, turn-by-turn voice-guided navigation with obstacle detection and offline map support.
- Email Management Module: Composes, reads, and manages emails via voice commands, integrated with Gmail or IMAP/SMTP protocols.
- User Preferences & Accessibility: Stores user settings and integrates with Android accessibility features like TalkBack and haptic feedback.

### ○ **Service Layer:**

- Google Maps & Location Services: Provides real-time navigation, rerouting, and location tracking.
- Speech Recognition (STT) & Text-to-Speech (TTS): Cloud-based (Google APIs) or native services for converting voice input and output.
- Email Services: Manages email through Gmail API or standard email protocols.
- Cloud Database: Firebase or SQLite for storing user data and preferences.

### ○ **Data Layer:**

- Local Storage (SQLite): Saves offline data like user settings and map sections.
- Cloud Storage: Syncs data across devices (Firebase/Google Drive).

### ○ **Integration Layer:**

- Wearable/IoT Integration: Supports Bluetooth devices like smartwatches for notifications and voice prompts.
- Third-Party APIs: Optional integration with weather or public transit APIs.

### ○ **Security Layer:**

- Data Encryption: Ensures secure transmission and storage of user data.
- Authentication: Uses Firebase or OAuth for secure login and session management.

This architecture ensures a seamless, voice-first experience for visually impaired users, enabling hands-free navigation and email management with accessibility and security at its core.

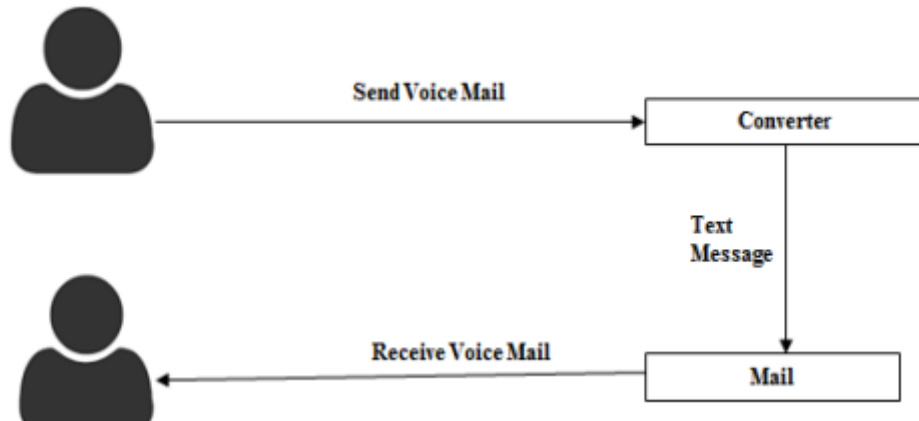


Fig 6.1 - Architecture for Voice based email for Blind



Fig 6.2 - Option choosing page

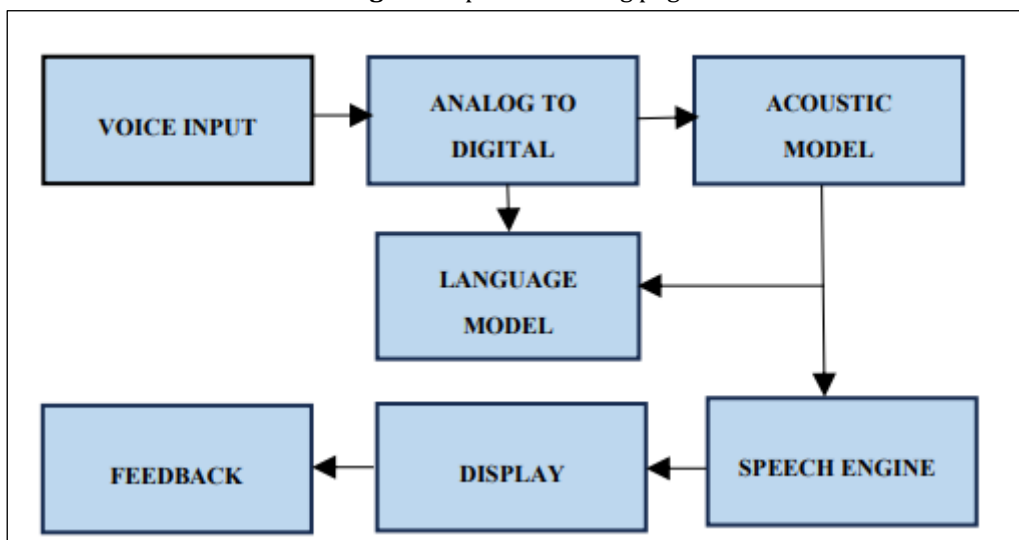


Fig 6.3-- System Block diagram for Voice Recognition.

## VII. CONCLUSION

By offering a hands-free, voice-controlled solution for everyday chores, the Mobile Voice-Based Navigation and Email System for Visually Impaired empowers people with visual impairments. The system promotes increased independence and accessibility by improving mobility and communication through voice recognition, real-time



navigation, and email management. By integrating GPS navigation, email services, and accessibility capabilities like text-to-speech and obstacle detection, the application offers a comprehensive solution that makes it easier for visually impaired users to navigate their surroundings and handle emails. This project shows how those who are blind or visually handicapped may live much better lives because to mobile technology.

### VIII. REFERENCES

- [1] M.F.Story, "Expanding Ease of use: The Standards of All-inclusive Plan", Assistive Innovation 10:1, 1998, pp. 4-12
- [2] Kaikkonen, T.Kallio, "Convenience Testing of Versatile Applications: A Correlation among Lab and Field Testing", Diary of Ease-of-use Review, Issue 1, vol 1, Nov 2005, pp 4-16.
- [3] S. Vidal, G. Lefebvre, "Motion Based Communication for Outwardly Impeded Individuals", procedures NordiCHI 2010, Oct 16-20.
- [4] S.K.Kane, J.P. Bigham, J.O.Wobbrock, "Completely Available Touch Screens for the Visually impaired and Outwardly Impeded", College of Washington.
- [5] B.Buxton, "Portraying client Experiences: getting the plan right and the right plan", Morgan Kaufmann Distributers, Elsevier, 1997
- [6] "Client Experience definition" on Wikipedia , [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User\\_experience](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User_experience)
- [7] "Accessibility definition" on Wikipedia , <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Openness> [17] "Availability
- [8] Programming Guide for iOS. Client Experience"
- [9] Wu, Xiangyu and Jiang, Yanyan and Xu, Chang and Cao, Chun and Mama, Xiaoxing and Lu, Jian. (2016). Testing
- [10] Android Applications through Directed Motion Occasion Age. 201-208. 10.1109/APSEC.2016.037.