

ECE4011/ECE 4012 Project Summary

Project Title	Blindle
Team Members (names and majors)	Jordan Altaffer Cameron Davis Dimitry Jean-Laurent Annie Luo Emmy Perez
Advisor / Section	Jennifer Hasler / Section D1A
Semester	2020 Fall
Project Abstract (250-300 words)	<p>Blindle is an e-reader for users who are visually impaired. Blindle's main feature is a Braille interface made from an electrotactile display and a minimal user interface that allows users to seamlessly navigate a book of their choosing. The goal of Blindle is to optimize accessibility and portability: many current e-reader prototypes for the visually impaired are unwieldy, whereas we want Blindle to be able to fit in a handbag.</p> <p>Our prototype for Blindle will not be an entire e-reader, but rather something to test the interaction of the various technologies involved. We see the prototype as likely being a small screen that can produce eight letters, as well as a single button to allow the user to parse forwards through a preloaded sentence and display each letter in the sentence as a Braille character. We will likely use arrays of 6 LEDs to first test the functionality of our code and the microcontroller to make sure the correct patterns are being displayed. This design will access a microSD card with some additional sentences stored for testing. A simple mobile app interface will allow us to select from a small selection of text files to translate into braille and transmit to the storage device.</p> <p>The main goal of this semester is to create a "proof of concept" prototype in which we show that our signal select is able to output to the rows and columns of our display separately and then intersect to create a logical high when both are high as well as out electrotactile stimulation node on the side to show we are able to generate the voltage and current needed for feeling. If there is time, we hope to integrate the two at least on a single braille cell.</p>

Project Title	Blindle
List codes and standards that significantly affect your project. Briefly describe how they influenced your design.	<p>Braille Standards: Braille standards will dictate how we actually display the data, including the spacing of the Braille, the actual formation of the Braille characters, and other ways to make our product accessible to the visually impaired. Translation of readable text to Braille script will be done using the standard translation tables (Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3) for English Braille.</p> <p>Communications Standards: Both the communication protocol we use to interface with the application, as well as working at an acceptable communication frequency (if we use Bluetooth, then this second part is not important).</p>
List at least two significant realistic design constraints that applied to your project. Briefly describe how they affected your design.	<p>Size: The Blindle is designed to be portable, thus there will be constraints on the size of the device. There is a lot of hardware that needs to go into the small display, so figuring out the optimal placement to minimize the size of the final product will be a challenge.</p> <p>Power: The Blindle will require a good battery life to function well as a portable device. In order to achieve the stimulation for the nodes, a large voltage has to pass through. Maintaining this voltage will either mean keeping the device plugged in constantly, defeating the purpose of portability, or would mean a short usage time before needing to recharge.</p>
Briefly explain two significant trade-offs considered in your design, including options considered and the solution chosen.	<p>Accessibility vs Functionality : Greater functionality complicates accessibility for visually impaired. A device design is needed that strikes a balance between having enough features to be a viable e-reader device while not being complex to the point that the device is difficult for the visually impaired to use. This is a uniquely difficult problem to solve through a non-visual medium.</p> <p>Ease of use vs. Cost : While it may be beneficial to replicate the interface of braille books as closely as possible, designs on the market such as these have so far come at a high cost for end users. From our research we can conclude there are other approaches that have potential in significantly reducing cost, but mostly at the expense of possible discomfort and a short battery life due to the power consumption on an electric display.</p>
<p>Briefly describe the computing aspects of your projects, specifically identifying hardware-software tradeoffs, interfaces, and/or interactions.</p> <p><i>Complete if applicable; required if team includes CmpE majors.</i></p>	<p>To simplify the microcontroller code and reduce its memory requirement, it might be beneficial to perform the braille translation in a separate application. The program would take the PDF version of a book and convert it into a readable, plaintext file that could then be translated into Braille script. The program's output is stored into an SD card or USB drive. Once the memory has been connected to the Blindle, the DMA (direct memory access) inside of the UART system would take care of the file retrieval process.</p> <p>Braille translation could also be implemented onto the actual device. A separate application would still be required to convert any file format (specifically PDF) into plain text before the transferring of data.</p>

Project Title	Blindle
<p>Leadership Roles (ECE4011 & Forecasted for ECE4012) (NOTE: ECE4012 requires definition of additional leadership roles including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Webmaster 2. Expo coordinator 3. Documentation 	<p>Documentation: Jordan Altaffer Webmaster/Team Leader: Annie Luo Hardware Lead: Dimitry Jean-Laurent Design/Testing Lead: Emmy Perez Software Lead: Cameron Davis</p>
<p>International Program: Global Issues (Less than one page) (Only teams with one or more International Program participants need to complete this section)</p>	<p>(10 point font, single spaced)</p>