



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

# Video magnifiers on the move – the Amigo

Bill Harvey takes a look at one of the newest videomagnifiers on the market

**T**he Amigo portable desktop magnifier is one of the latest video magnifiers on the market in the UK. It has several features that make it a useful addition to the market. Firstly, it is very slim and light to carry (just over 2cm thick and around 750g weight), so easily carried in a bag or, as I can testify, an outside jacket pocket. The unit uses a rechargeable battery, offering up to one and a half hours' continual use (though spot task usage obviously allows much longer), but the unit is supplied with a spare and a charger so that the patient should always have a power supply.

The screen is around 16cm wide, so offering a useful field of view even at higher magnifications and this may be

## PATIENT TRIAL

VC is a 41-year-old female with Stargardt's disease. She suffered profound vision loss during her first decade and, as is often typical of the disease, significant photophobia in her fourth. Her best distance acuity is 1.4 log with eccentric viewing and we have prescribed a tinted spectacle with side shields for outdoor use to help with her glare. The patient has given up with conventional optical aids and uses a variety of voice recognition software for correspondence. Her frustration with optical aids (illuminated 12X stand magnifier, 8X distance spotting telescope) were the familiar ones of restricted field of view and difficulties in locating and relocating print. Her familiarity with electronic devices is helpful, and the patient found the Amigo easy to use on print. She achieved N8 fluently on 14X magnification and with reverse contrast. Interestingly, she felt it might be too bulky for spot tasks in supermarkets and so on, but would find it useful for correspondence and domestic tasks.

tilted towards the viewer for comfort (Figure 1). A writing stand also allows a pen to be used in view (Figure 2). Operation is simple. Once the on button is pressed, two wheels on the side allow either the magnification to be changed (scrolling from 3.5 to 14X, Figures 3 and 4) or the viewing setting to be established. This allows reverse contrast viewing (Figure 5), altered colour contrast (Figures 6 and 7), or full-colour viewing (Figures 8 and 9).

The portability makes the unit useful for spot viewing of uneven surfaces (such as a label on a tin or medicine bottle) as it has a good depth of focus. As with many such devices, an outlet allows the image to be transmitted to a laptop (where it could be stored if needed) or directly to the AV input on a television. More usefully, in my view, there is a freeze-frame facility. If

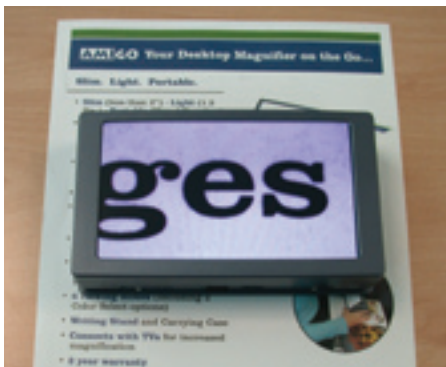


Figure 4

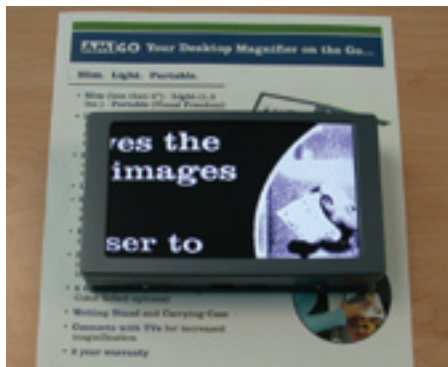


Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

a patient sees a telephone number they might want to remember, this button may be pressed and the number stored on screen until it may be written down at a later date.

**Discussion**

As technology proceeds apace, we are no longer as impressed by the minification and capabilities of gadgetry as we once had been. The application of this technology outside the home entertainment arena has been, in my view at least, less obvious. The use of digital imaging technology in helping visually impaired people is considered a niche market and this

has meant that accessibility and cost of many modern electronic low vision aids have been somewhat restrictive. It is good to see, at last, a broadening of the range of such devices and, I am convinced, as patients start to demand them and we as practitioners become more comfortable demonstrating, recommending and supplying them, there will necessarily be a reduction in the cost of the instruments.

It is wrong to assume that all elderly or visually impaired people have no disposable income, and worse to conclude that what might be considered a luxury item by some might not be a desirable item to many, offering real

benefits. It took me a while to start discussing electronic aids with elderly AMD patients. I was prompted to do so by the numbers actually asking me about them and suggesting that 'cost might not be an issue'.

We have a duty to explain all possible options to patients rather than make assumptions about what they might like. This is as true in low vision as it is in contact lens and spectacle recommendation. ●

● The Amigo currently retails at £1,295. For further information contact Enhanced Vision on 0115 944 2317 or [www.enhancedvision.com](http://www.enhancedvision.com)

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