



LITERACY BRIDGE

Device Name: Talking Book

Area of Focus: Agricultural extension/information (and other non-agriculture applications)

How it works: The Talking Book is a small, handheld audio computer (12cm x 12cm x 6.5 cm) that allows user to play, record and categorize audio recordings. Units can also transfer audio directly to other devices. It can be pre-loaded with, for instance, agricultural information by extension workers and then shared with a community or group of users. Users can then record their own audio, which they can categorize under programmable subject headings. The device also supports programmable multiple choice quizzes.

The device includes a built-in speaker and microphone, and can also be used with external headphones or microphone. It has no display, relying entirely on audio and navigation buttons. All recordings are stored on an internal SD card with current capacity at between 35-140 hours of recordings per device.

Technology used: Handheld audio recording and listening device that runs on D batteries and uses SD memory.

Implementer/Funder: Literacy Bridge has received grants from multiple funding sources.

Fees: The current version of the Talking Book costs about \$35 per device. It runs on two zinc-carbon D batteries, which last about 12-15 hours of typical use and cost about \$0.35-0.40. The device fees are currently covered by external funding agencies or governments, with the batteries presumably the responsibility of the user.

Primary Markets: It has been piloted in Ghana, although Literacy Bridge is also focused on expanding into other markets as well.

Users: Smallholder farmers and agricultural extension workers.

Business Model: Literacy Bridge is currently developing a new version of the Talking Book that would reduce energy consumption and unit costs. They plan to shift their focus to seeding a consumer market, and will use profits from sales in more developed countries to subsidize their devices in poorer markets.

Impact: According to Literacy Bridge, an evaluation of 37 users from their pilot site in rural Ghana conducted from August 2009 to January 2010 revealed that 91% of users applied a new health or agriculture practice as a result of their use of the Talking Book. Farmers with access to the Talking Book also had an increase in crop production of 48% compared to non-users who had a decrease of 5% (out of a sample of 33 users and 40 non-users).¹

For more information visit: <http://www.literacybridge.org/talking-book/>

Sources: ¹ <http://www.literacybridge.org/files/impact-ICTD2010.pdf>

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