



For Immediate Release:

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Indoor Explorer Pilot Project in Use at Louisville International Airport

First of its kind in the region; innovative app helps visually impaired travelers navigate airport

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (December 19, 2017) – As the holiday travel season kicks into high gear, travelers who are visually impaired have a new tool to help them navigate the airport and find their gate. The “Indoor Explorer” app, developed by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH), based in Louisville, Kentucky in partnership with Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer’s Office and the James Graham Brown Foundation, presents a groundbreaking opportunity that could completely alter travel for people with vision loss. The feature is currently being tested and is in use at the Louisville International Airport. Using lessons learned from the pilot project, the technology will be deployed to airports across the country. The app is the first of its kind implemented at an airport in the region.

APH has taken advantage of Bluetooth, beacon technology with the app for use on iOS devices. Once travelers download the app, they can easily navigate every aspect of the airport from the ticket counter, through security and directly to their gate. It gives travelers the freedom to independently find the baggage claim, security, bathrooms, emergency exits, airport shops, restaurants and specific gate numbers.

“We can all relate to wanting a stress-free experience of quickly finding our way through an airport, especially when we are in a hurry or anxious to get home,” said Craig Meador, president of APH. “Travelers who are blind or have vision loss want that too. No one wants to wait for assistance to get where they need to go. ‘Indoor Explorer’ is essentially signage that can be heard, telling a traveler where they are each step of the way as they navigate independently.”

“Indoor Explorer” makes use of beacons and indoor information stored in the OpenStreetMap® database. More than 140 beacons are currently located throughout the terminal at Louisville International Airport. The beacons were installed over a two-week period in September in designated

spots. When used, the app looks up the beacon's latitude, longitude and floor number. It also looks up points of interest on that same floor and reports their name, distance and position as you move. It also lets you use the GeoBeam or Compass feature to point your device to locations inside the building. When using the app indoors, the compass, in addition to reporting the direction, names all the building features in that direction.

"We are proud that Louisville International is the first airport in the region to install and utilize this technology," said Karen Scott, interim executive director, Louisville Regional Airport Authority. "This is a great tool to enhance accessibility for the blind and visually impaired and provide a positive customer experience, one of our top priorities for all travelers and airport visitors. We are also pleased to partner with the American Printing House for the Blind on these efforts."

"Indoor Explorer" takes advantage of small beacons that periodically transmit brief bursts of data. The app can correlate each beacon's identification with information about its precise location. "Indoor Explorer" uses this information along with the signal strength of the beacon and any other beacons that may be in the vicinity to help determine your location. Once the app has a location, it can access points of interest (POIs) such as ticket counter, shops, restaurants, security, bathrooms and specific gate numbers.

The technology was developed in partnership with Mayor Greg Fischer's Office. Mayor Fischer's team worked closely with APH and Louisville International Airport to see that it would be supported and implemented quickly.

"We're proud to be partners in this project, which removes barriers that some visitors and residents experience during travel," Mayor Fischer said. "For many visitors, Louisville International Airport is the first experience of our city, and 'Indoor Explorer' underscores our city's commitment to improving accessibility through innovation and collaboration."

B Roll and Sound: <http://bit.ly/2CXWRt5>

About American Printing House for the Blind

The American Printing House for the Blind is a worldwide leader in designing innovative lifelong learning solutions for children and adults who are blind or visually impaired. In this fast-changing world, we believe in the power and necessity of learning to open the doors to educational success, satisfying employment, social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal well-being. We level the learning playing field by providing specialized technology, materials, products, and services that are essential for education and life. The American Printing House for the blind is headquartered at 1839 Frankfort Avenue in Louisville, Kentucky. For more information, please visit www.aph.org.

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