



The History of APH

- American Printing House for the Blind (APH) was founded in 1858 and is the oldest organization of its kind in the United States. APH is dedicated to research and product development of educational materials for people who are blind or visually impaired.
- The Act to Promote the Education of the Blind, mandated by Congress in 1879, designates APH as the official supplier of educational materials to all students in the U.S. who meet the definition of blindness and are working at less than college level.
- APH has been a vital part of the Louisville community for more than 160 years with 300 employees producing more than 1,000 products that are available to students, teachers and parents across the country.
- In 1866, APH produced its first book, *Fables and Tales for Children*, in Boston Line Letter.
- In 1883, APH outgrew its space in the basement of the School for the Blind and constructed its own building on land next door located at 1839 Frankfort Avenue.
- In 1928, APH began printing Reader's Digest in braille, and by 1939, the first audiotope was recorded.
- In 1936, the recording studio and record production was established. Later that year, Hugh Sutton narrated APH's first Talking Book, *Gulliver's Travels*. By 1938, 32 books had been recorded.
- After World War II, the *Act to Promote the Education of the Blind* expanded to include large print, and additional production of braille and talking books.
- During the 1950s, International Business Machines (IBM) and APH partnered to write an English text-to-braille computer translation program.
- In 1964, APH completed the largest braille project ever worked on – the World Book Encyclopedia in braille.

- In 1980, a new \$2 million addition was completed bringing the facility to 283,000 square feet.
- In 1994, the Museum of the American Printing House for the Blind opened.
- In 1997, APH launched *Louis*, a database named after Louis Braille. The database allows teachers, parents, and students to locate thousands of textbooks in braille, large print, recorded, and computer file formats available from producers across the United States.
- In 1998, new research positions are created in the areas of low vision, technology, adult living, early childhood, and assessment to accommodate growing demand for products in those areas from the ex-officio trustees.
- In 2000, APH celebrates its 173rd new product to hit the market.
- In 2003, APH releases 49 new products into the market.
- In 2008, APH conducts its first video webcast, a workshop on accessible tests. 88 new products are introduced including the Braille+ Mobility Manager, Azer's Interactive Periodic Table, and the Next Generation APH/Perkins Brailier.
- In 2012, APH produces its last braille and large print editions of Weekly Reader, published since 1936. APH ends its duplication of Talking Books on cassettes and switches its production line to flash drive cartridges. APH and 18 other non-profit organizations concerned about the high cost of refreshable braille devices begin a quest to create a low-cost option by forming an international consortium to work on the issue.
- In 2017, APH introduces the Orbit 20, its new braille display, the first display available for less than \$500.
- In 2019, APH partners with Microsoft on the computer coding tool Code Jumper.
- In 2020, APH receives the AFB Helen Keller on January 28, 2020, on a ten-year loan agreement.
- In 2020, APH begins work and research on a refreshable braille display that will also display tactile graphics on the same device. The working name is "DTD"
- In 2022, APH reveals the "DTD" is now called the Monarch and is being field tested by researchers in the field.