

## Ask the Expert Radio Interview

Date: November 7, 2018

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**00:00 Speaker 1:** For a second cup of coffee with WICC's Tony and Mike in the morning as another interesting guest joins the show. Here's Tony's conversation piece on WICC 600.

**00:09 Tony:** Alright, with me here in the studio is Scott Krug and he is with New England Low Vision and Blindness, and it's a pleasure to have you here Scott. How're you doing?

**00:19 Scott Krug:** Thank you Tony, good to be here. Thanks for having me. It's a real treat.

**00:23 Tony:** Sure, absolutely. Tell the audience a little bit about your company and exactly what you do.

**00:27 Scott Krug:** Sure. New England Low Vision and Blindness. We're located in Shelton, Connecticut and what we have is technology that's unique for people who are blind or who are visually impaired. So most people think when people, when someone is blind, they have no sight whatsoever, but most people have limited vision. And our technology allows them to more easily access information; printed material found in their mail, their newspapers, their work documents. Anything that someone would give you in your hand to try to read and access is very difficult for someone to read if they have limited vision, and our technology, our lab in Shelton, Connecticut, would allow people to see this information much more easily.

**01:09 Tony:** Can you explain that? Can you expound on that a little bit? Because now I'm thinking, What are these? Like magic glasses? Is it like laser vision? Like what happens here now?

**01:18 Scott Krug:** Sure, the number one reason why people come to us usually is from a disease called macular degeneration, which is the loss of the center part of your vision. So if you have that you're kind of forced into a handheld magnifying glass, which is very limited in the amount of magnification that it can provide you; only about 2X or 4X. What our technology does, is kind of like a super-sized, jumbo magnifier which will give you not only 2X, but then it will give you 8X 10X, 20, 30, 40, 50 times original size 60, 70, 80 over 100 times original size magnification, which would allow someone who's visually impaired to more easily access print because it will magnify that information onto a large monitor screen, usually a 20 or a 24 inch monitor, but you can have any sized monitor, even a 70 inch monitor if you'd like to put the information on that size screen, so you can more easily read things that are very difficult for you to see.

**02:15 Tony:** And there's nothing worse than not being able to see. I know that I suffered from cataracts.

**02:22 Scott Krug:** Yeah.

**02:23 Tony:** And I had that taken care of. It was like I was reborn once I had it done. But for a little while there it was like, it could be very, very scary, it really could be.

**02:34 Scott Krug:** It is scary. And then if you ask most people, the one sense you would least like to lose, is vision. It comes back time and time again. And so when someone's diagnosed with a low vision condition, like macular degeneration or glaucoma or a diabetic retinopathy or sometimes even cataracts or even as a result of injury, it's very difficult if the doctor is unable to help anymore with surgery or injections to know what to do. And so we have this technology, which has been around for

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about 30 years, for people to come for free and to make an appointment with us and to try it out in our lab. Or if you can't come to us we can bring even this right up to your home.

**03:13 Tony:** Who do you typically work with? Is it like you say, macular degeneration, but can this help people with diabetes and all of that as well?

**03:21 Scott Krug:** It certainly can. And just by way of the demographics, it mostly affects people as a result of age. So, typically we're seeing people in their 70s, their 80s and 90s. We see a lot of people who are younger, obviously, as well in college or even in grade school and youth, but mostly it's 70s, 80s and 90s where people have had vision their entire lives and then suddenly get diagnosed with an eye disease. And so then they're left with, "What do I do?" And so when you find us it really is a really nice oasis of help and support. The demonstrations last very long. We're always up against the constraints of times with life, with the doctor's appointments, even on this radio show. [chuckle] But what we have normally with people that come to us is two hours of time to slowly evaluate the technology, and usually people come to us with no technology experience. So it's designed for people to really access very simply.

**04:13 Tony:** And now correct me, but you said just a few seconds ago, this has been around for 30 years?

**04:16 Scott Krug:** About 30 plus years. Yeah.

**04:18 Tony:** What took it so long to get it to this point?

**04:20 Scott Krug:** Well, you don't really need to know about it until you need to know about it.

**04:24 Tony:** Yeah. That's a good question.

**04:24 Scott Krug:** So it usually is not in your frame of...

**04:26 Tony:** Yeah.

**04:26 Scott Krug:** Your self-concept until someone tells you you have macular degeneration or glaucoma or you can no longer drive anymore or you're legally blind. That's a very scary word to hear all of a sudden. And so typically an ophthalmologist or optometrist has tried to help you in other ways and they don't really let you know of this technology; not their fault. But it's just not part of everyone's normal routine and psyche. So when people find us it's usually by a radio show like this or through different non-profit organizations or their doctor will tell us or they'll just mainly just find us by searching on the Internet.

**04:57 Tony:** Okay, we're talking with Scott Krug. He's President of New England Low Vision and Blindness. And very, very interesting stuff here and learning a lot of things here this morning. Do you work with eye care professionals as well?

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**05:10 Scott Krug:** We do work with eye care professionals all the time and so we're constantly receiving referrals from ophthalmologists, from optometrists. When they can no longer help with surgery or injections or low vision optometric care they'll say, "You know what? Give these guys a call." They'll make a referral to us and then the patient will then transition into looking at this technology. It's usually if someone can use a hand-held magnifying glass, they're not our customer. But when the hand-held magnifier is no longer a help; it's too frustrating and they can't see through it anymore, then it's time to call us.

**05:41 Tony:** Yeah, this is a major breakthrough as far as I'm concerned, because you hear about it more and more, macular degeneration, and things like that. And I'm glad to see that there are these new technologies that you can go to make life a little bit easier.

**05:57 Scott Krug:** Yeah, we are seeing more and more people, just as a result of people living longer...

**06:01 Tony:** Yeah. Yeah.

**06:01 Scott Krug:** Getting these eye diseases more and more. So it's really nice to get the word out.

**06:05 Tony:** When I talk to somebody like you, I think to myself, anyway my mind goes, "What did they do back in 1885..."

**06:12 Scott Krug:** Right.

**06:12 Tony:** "When these things..." You just had to sit there and go blind.

**06:15 Scott Krug:** You do, and that's a big part of when you receive the diagnosis you have low vision or you're legally blind, you hear blind, total darkness and it's not the case. And so normally, if you don't have this technology, you're kind of sitting in your house with not a whole lot of activity because you can't access. You can't see your mail. You can't see your newspaper. You can't write your bills, your checks out. You can't see prescription labels. You can't expiration dates. All of these normal things that our eyes glance at day-to-day, even just cooking a microwave dinner, are very, very difficult and challenging. And so you're kind of left dependent upon other people all the time. And so with this technology, it allows you to restore that kind of lost independence that you're used to having.

**06:54 Tony:** Nothing worse than losing your independence. I think that's the one thing I think that we all fear in our lives. Scotty, we have run down at time. If people want more information, what's the best way to get in touch with you?

**07:05 Scott Krug:** The best way is to either look at us at our website, which is, it's [NewEnglandlowvision.com](http://NewEnglandlowvision.com) or we make it short [nelowvision.com](http://nelowvision.com) or our toll free number if you wanna call us is 888-211-6933. Again, it's 888-211-6933.

**07:24 Tony:** And when people finally do get in touch with you, What, do they make an appointment to come and see you?

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**07:28 Scott Krug:** They do make an appointment. It is a technology lab, or a technology showroom by appointment only. We want to make sure that we have all the suppliers basically in the market in one place. You have a lot of choice. But we want to make sure the technology that's right for you, is there at that time. So it's often being deployed in multiple parts of all six New England states. But we want to make sure the people and the technology is there for what you need to have. So first you have a pretty thorough consultation. But it's on the phone; about 20 to 30 minutes. And then the time with us at our lab is probably a good... You want to budget about almost two hours of time with a family member or a friend who can help you walk through the technology step-by-step.

**08:05 Tony:** What's two hours if it means you're going to see better? Really that's nothing. Scotty, my first choice, my first thought, you're a genius, and second of all, I think you gave a lot of people a lot of hope that are listening to this radio station this morning.

**08:18 Scott Krug:** Well, thank you very much, it's a real wonderful to be here a real treat, and we really hope people check us out and just see it for themselves.

**08:25 Tony:** Very, very good. That's Scott Krug, President of New England Low Vision and Blindness. Once again, what's that website?

**08:33 Scott Krug:** It's nelowvision.com.

**08:35 Tony:** And that phone number.

**08:36 Scott Krug:** Is 888-211-6933.

**08:42 Tony:** Thank you Scott. And good luck to you.

**08:44 Scott Krug:** Alright. Thank you very much.