

this week was

1:43

world sight day and that got us thinking

1:45

about technology's potential for

1:47

preventing blindness Alex found out

1:49

about an app that's turning smartphones

1:51

into portable tools to combat sight loss

1:53

and he went to meet the team behind it

1:57

your eyes are amazing

1:59

they contain millions of light-sensitive

2:01

cells and allow our brains to see the

2:04

world

2:04

but they're also delicate and there's an

2:07

array of conditions that can cause

2:08

vision loss and in the worst cases

2:10

blindness and that's the huge problem

2:14

facing people across the developing

2:16

world the sting is that the majority of

2:19

blindness can be treated or avoided

2:22

altogether but for many of these

2:25

communities accessing this care has been

2:28

more or less impossible traditionally

2:31

medical teams trying to reach rural

2:33

communities in the developing world had

2:34

to lug expensive bulky equipment over

2:36

dirt tracks and when they got there

2:38

often there wasn't the power to operate

2:39

it so the people who needed the help the

2:41

most weren't able to get it but then the

2:44

solution presented itself in the form of

2:46

kit most people already had in their

2:48

pockets so what we have is this is a

2:51

universal clip which allows it to go on

2:53

any smartphone Andrew and his team have

2:55

developed these mobile ice scanners they

2:59

changed the optics of a smartphone's

3:00

camera allowing anyone to see into the

3:03

eye and share the results with medical

3:05

experts I switch their device on and as

3:08

you look into the distance I've been

3:13

that close to your eye and that gives me

3:16

a view of the inside of your eyes I see

3:17

your optic nerve there there's a direct

3:19

extension of your brain and the rest of

3:22

your retina is wrong it's not the

3:24

patients that need the phone it's the

3:26

caregivers and so what we're doing is

3:28

extending who can go and find those

3:30

patients so rather than having a doctor

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or a nurse or an optometrist having to

3:33

go and find people who can't see we are

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able to put it in the hands of non

3:36

specialist school leavers teachers which

3:39

means your workforce can expand hugely

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meaning those who occur in not getting

3:43

access to anything or being reached

3:46

Andrews team are about to expand their

3:49

operation with a view to helping people

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in more than 60 countries and there's

3:54

certainly a need globally there are 36

3:57

million people who are blind 89% of them

4:01

live in the developing world more than

4:03

75% of blindness can be avoided and by

4:07

2015 avoidable blindness is projected to

4:10

increase threefold due largely to an

4:13

aging and growing global population

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there are so many issues in the world

4:17

today people starving dying of disease

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and so forth and so poor vision is it's

4:23

really at the bottom of of the scale of

4:25

priorities but we believe that if you

4:27

think of it in terms of the productivity

4:29

education outcomes gender equality this

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is something that government leaders

4:35

need to take much more seriously our

4:38

eyes have evolved over countless

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generations but in just a couple we've

4:43

seen technology present new solutions to

4:45

some of the most debilitating conditions

4:47

Alex Morgan

4:49

Sky News