

Designability<info@designability.org.uk> 12/07/2016 15:17 >>>

A monthly round-up of the latest innovations, developments and useful information in the world of assistive technology

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July 2016

Welcome to the latest dispATches which is now ready to download [on our website](#).

Hello from Clive

How to promote accessible design

In our digital age in which so many of our social interactions and physical tasks are mediated in some way by a computer, it has become almost a cliché to suggest that technologies like the internet and smartphones are helping to make life easier for older and disabled people. And yet, the rapid pace at which the new technologies have emerged has left older and disabled consumers and their advocates striving to keep up. How can we ensure that the advances that we all have come to take for granted do not leave them behind?

In many cases they have been successful in encouraging governments and businesses to ensure that the benefits of new technologies are harnessed in a way that supports the inclusion of disabled people. Take, for example, the stream of new accessibility features that accompanied the release of each edition of the major operating systems, as exemplified by this month's story about upcoming versions of Apple's software. These large companies have been persuaded that there is a large enough share of disabled consumers to dedicate some of their resources to make their products more accessible.

Other stories in this month's bulletin highlight some of the obstacles to realising the benefits of technology. The All Party Parliamentary Group on Housing and Care for Older People reminds us of some of the factors that prevent and deter some people from moving into accessible housing, such as the cost of moving or adapting property, emotional attachments and unsuitability of much of the current housing stock in the UK. However, as the population ages,

there is increasing recognition of the need for more adaptable housing.

Another barrier to accessible design that is sometimes overlooked which underlies some of this month's developments is the fact that people's accessibility needs change over time, typically over a period of years but sometimes, in the course of their everyday routine. In her speech to the House of Lords supporting proposals to install audio-visual announcement systems on all new buses, Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson said while this would be particularly helpful for people with sensory impairment, it would be of a boon for anyone who finds it difficult to read the displays on the bus.

Joining these dots helps us to recognise that we all have a stake in the creation of accessible products and spaces.

Highlights in this month's

Public policy, legislation and campaigns

How disabled peers are making a bid to improve accessibility on public transport and a new report on what deters older people from moving into specialist housing.

Technological developments and innovations

A new website is launched to trigger memories for people living with dementia and Google gets set to launch 'Google Home' - a voice activation project which assists people to access web-based services.

Training and professional development opportunities

The Technology for Independence event in Sheffield will reflect the evolving and innovative ways that technology can help people with disabilities achieve greater independence.

Funding news

Health-related registered charities are invited to apply for a GlaxoSmithKline Impact Award. Up to ten winners will receive £30,000, with one overall winner being awarded £40,000. A maximum of ten runners up will also receive £3,000 each.

Have some feedback or news to submit?

If you have some feedback about dispATches, or if you would like to submit news of new

products and services, training and funding opportunities, please e-mail Clive at:
dispatchesbulletin@gmail.com

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