

Digital Inclusion (RNIB - Online Today)

NALC Digital Councils

May 18th 2016

Introduction

RNIB supports people with sight loss to live independent lives. Online Today is a National Lottery funded project supporting people with sight loss to gain the confidence and skills to get online.

Group sessions

RNIB deliver group sessions giving people with sight loss the knowledge and information to help them realise the benefits of being online. This is an initial introduction to how digital technology is accessible.

Visit <http://www.rnib.org.uk/online-today-event-search> to search for an event in your area.

One-to-one home support

RNIBs Technology Support Squad is a UK wide volunteer force empowering blind and partially sighted people to get the most out of technology.

Our volunteers provide free, one-to-one support to people with sight loss in their own homes, helping them become confident internet users. Tech Squad volunteers receive requests from people local to them, providing support to people in their own communities.

People with sight loss who would like to request technology support can call RNIBs helpline on 0303 123 9999 or get assistance to fill in our online request form here

<https://rnib.force.com/customerrequest>

We are reaching out to more people with sight loss over the next two years and we need volunteers in every nook and cranny of the UK.

We're looking for volunteers who have plenty of patience, love talking to people and are IT confident. We provide our volunteers with practical training and ongoing support. If you can think of anyone in your community that might like to join our Tech Squad, please ask them to get in touch via phone on 01733 375450 or email at volunteering@rnib.org.uk

Sight loss and digital exclusion

'Tackling Digital Exclusion'- RNIB & BT study 2011

Older people are more likely to be affected by sight loss.

- Almost two million people in the UK are living with sight loss. That's approximately one person in 30.
- One in five people aged 75 and over are living with sight loss.
- One in two people aged 90 and over are living with sight loss.

82% of respondents in the survey reported that their eyesight was a reason why they were not using the internet.

- "Well it's obvious; I can't see the screen to use it. I'm blind."
- "I'm too old, it's too fiddly and I can't see."
- "I used to have a computer before my eyesight started to fail but I got rid of it."
- "It was very convenient when I used to use it before I lost my sight."

The perception that the internet is longer available to you due to sight loss means a whole load of services are no longer available to you.

Depth of internet usage today

- Almost two thirds (64%) of online adults agree that being online is invaluable for keeping them informed about current issues, and six in ten (60%) agree it helps keep them in touch with close family and friends. (Ofcom, 2015)
- 20 million WhatsApp messages are sent every minute.
- 2.9 billion Google searches are made every day.
- Banking apps were used on average 10.5 million times a day last year, with Brits transferring £2.9bn through apps in a typical week.
- 48% of Brits shop for food online.

So if you believe that you can't get online, then suddenly none of these services are available to you. Digital exclusion is deeply tied up with financial exclusion and social exclusion.

Accessibility

Accessibility is: Making sure something is available to everyone.

Today's digital devices come with inbuilt accessibility features, meaning blind and partially sighted members of your community are not excluded from digital technology.

Magnification

Magnification settings exist for people who are partially sighted.

Activating magnification settings doesn't just mean zooming in, but changing the gestures that you use to interact with your phone so using it with large text/images becomes easier.

Also possible to change contrast and colour settings.

Screen readers

Screen readers are used by people who have no useful vision. This is inbuilt text-to-speech software that reads out the information on your screen.

This means you can explore the smooth screen by touch and it will talk to you to tell you what you're touching.

Activating a screen reader and using it in combination with a personal assistant such as Siri or Cortana means that audio/speech is an extremely powerful way of interacting with digital technology.

VIDEO: 'Screen Readers and Screen Magnification' (6 mins)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L962p6fzF7Y>

Smartphones have become the hub of our daily lives and are now in the pockets of two thirds (66%) of UK adults, up from 39% in 2012. The vast majority (90%) of 16-24 year olds own one, but 55-64 year olds are also joining the smartphone revolution, with ownership in this age group more than doubling since 2012, from 19% to 50%. Over half of UK households (54%) now have a tablet, a rapid rise in popularity from just 2% in 2011 (in August 2015)

Inbuilt accessibility settings mean that people with sight loss can access both the same technology and the same online services as everyone else.

VIDEO: 'Online shopping' (5 mins) -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7qO5Y5V41s&index=9&list=PLCE83CC9BE830400E>

How digital can make the real world more accessible

Reading printed text

KNFB Reader (<http://www.knfbreader.com/#welcome>) is an image-to-text reader, which means you can take a photo of some text – your train ticket, a coin, the writing on your prescription – and the app converts it to text then reads it out to you. It's a downloadable app that costs £80.

TapTapSee (<http://www.taptapseeapp.com/>) is less sophisticated than KNFB Reader but still very useful and free. It analyses and defines photos, describing them in text (which is spoken aloud if screen reader is activated on your device.)

Navigation

BlindSquare (<http://blindsquare.com/>) is a GPS navigation app developed for blind and visually impaired people. It determines your location and looks up info about your surroundings. It describes the environment, announces points of interest and street intersections as you travel.

Video: 'Independent travel' (4 mins) -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6CUml2eaiQ&list=PLCE83CC9BE830400E&index=10>

More info on accessible technology

TechKnowMore

RNIB's blog highlighting a different app for people with sight loss each month <http://www.rnib.org.uk/blogs/technology-blog>

TechTalk

A podcast all about accessible technology for visually impaired people on RNIB's Connect Radio

<http://www.insightradio.co.uk/tech-talk.html>

Accessibility for businesses

A review of how businesses should incorporate accessibility into their digital material <http://www.techworld.com/ux/heres-how-to-make-your-website-more-accessible-for-blind-people-3639014/>

Web accessibility auditing

RNIBS auditing service for organisations or web developers

<http://www.rnib-business.org.uk/audits>