

April's independent living technology news

Here's what's new in the world of independent living technology this month.

Public policy, legislation and campaigns

EdTech strategy champions assistive technology in schools

The Department for Education has pledged to [promote the use of assistive technology](#) to help children with special needs get on in school in its new strategy on education technology. The strategy outlines the government's plans to support teachers and improve student outcomes by forging stronger links between the education and technology sectors.

Wheelchair providers urged to realise the potential of personal wheelchair budgets

The Chief Executive of Whizz Kidz Ruth Owen MBE has [urged wheelchair dealers](#) to see the recent introduction of personal wheelchair budgets as an opportunity to increase their focus on consumer needs and diversify their product ranges.

European capital of smart tourism awards launched

The European Union has launched the 2020 edition of the [European Capital of Smart Tourism Awards](#), which sees cities compete to be recognised as the most welcoming destination for tourists. Award categories include accessibility and digitalisation.

Social care software suppliers form new association

Companies involved in the provision of software to the social care sector have come together to form the [Care Software Providers Association \(CSPA\)](#) to promote the growth of digital technologies in social care. The founder members of CSPA include Person Centred Software, everyLIFE Technologies and Nourish Care.

Technological developments and innovations

IKEA unveils 3-D printed range of accessible add-ons

IKEA has launched a [new range of add-on products](#) that aim to make the company's existing furniture and products more accessible for disabled people. The design plans for the ThisAbles range – which includes bumpers for bookshelves, user-friendly zips and easy-to-use lamp switches – can be downloaded for free and produced at any 3D-printing shop or facility.

Livescribe releases new smartpen

The smartpen manufacturer Livescribe has released a new affordable product which retails from \$99.95. Smartpens are able to record and speak back pieces of writing, which can be useful for people with reading and writing difficulties. [The Livescribe Aegir](#) uses a secondary device such as a smartphone or tablet to store recordings, providing for clearer audio and better usability.

All-terrain wheelchairs aim at riders with limited upper body mobility

The Mountain Trike Company has launched [two new all-terrain manual wheelchairs](#) designed to allow wheelchair users to enjoy freedom and independence on any outdoor

service. The MT Evo is adapted for riders with limited hand function while the MT Push is a buddy/attendant wheelchair which can be steered by riding partners.

Wireless gyroscopic mouse helps physically disabled people operate a computer

A Finnish electronics company specialising in computer access devices for disabled people has designed a wireless gyroscopic mouse for people with limited hand function. The [Quha Zono](#) gyroscopic air mouse can be worn on any part of the body over which the user has adequate control and interacts with a USB device which connects to the computer and tracks their movements in relation to the computer screen.

These stories were originally published in the dispATches newsletter – a free monthly e-mail about assistive technologies that empower disabled and older people to live more independently. [Click here to sign up for dispATches.](#)