

February's independent living technology news

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

Public policy, legislation and campaigns

Government sets up assistive technology pilot in schools

The government has [invested £300,000 in a pilot programme](#) that will trial the latest assistive technology for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in up to 100 English schools and colleges. The scheme is part of the Department for Education's EdTech strategy which aims to transform the way technology is used in schools, colleges and universities.

Research shows schools are failing to publish accessibility plans

The Alliance for Inclusive Education has published research showing that [secondary schools across England](#) are failing to meet their legal duty to publish plans of how they will improve access for disabled pupils.

Disabled people's organisations urge BBC not to scrap red button

A consortium of disabled people's organisations has [persuaded on the BBC to reverse a decision](#) made last year to remove its red button teletext service at the end of January 2020. Campaigners pointed out that some disabled and older people rely on the service to access programme-related information and services.

Central heating controls guide offers tips on accessibility and keeping costs down

The Research Institute for Disabled Consumers has [published new guidance](#) to help disabled and older people find the most accessible central heating controls for their needs. The publication provides an accessibility checklist and review of cost-saving features of central heating products.

Technological developments and innovations

Autonomous suitcase transports luggage hands-free

The United States-based robotics company ForwardX is developing a self-driving suitcase to help travellers transport their luggage hands-free. [Ovis](#) is designed to track its owner's movements through an airport or another holiday destination.

Gaming device enables users to play on Xbox using wheelchair controls

The US charity AbleGamers has partnered with open source assistive technology engineers ATMakers to create the [Freedom Wing](#) - a device that can interface with the user's electric wheelchair controls and Microsoft's Xbox adaptive controller to enable disabled people to play video games.

Augmented reality contact lenses sharpen vision and convey information

The California-based start-up Mojo Vision has developed [augmented reality contact lenses](#) designed to enhance the wearer's vision by projecting images directly onto the retina. The

lenses will also be able to display all sorts of information such as electronic diaries, the weather and maps.

Eye-gaze for the iPad Pro launches

Special educational needs provider Inclusive Technology has launched the first-ever eye-tracking device for the iPad Pro. [The Skyle](#) gives users full access to their iPad Pro, using iPadOS Assistive Touch Accessibility features such as Dwell Control to allow them to enjoy millions of apps.

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.](#)