

## **Blog title: October's independent living technology news**

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

### **Public policy, legislation and campaigns**

#### **Public sector web accessibility rules become law**

On 23rd September the [Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#) came into force. The new legislation transcribes into UK law a European Union Directive which requires online content published by public sector organisations to meet accessibility standards based on the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

#### **New funding programme tackles digital exclusion**

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has commissioned [digital inclusion charity Citizens Online](#) to run a funding programme that aims to uncover new scaleable approaches to tackling digital exclusion among disabled and older people. Winning projects will receive grants of between £50,000 and £200,000 for twelve months from January 2019.

#### **MPs call for inclusive virtual learning environment in further and higher education**

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Assistive Technology has marked the introduction of new public sector web accessibility regulations with a [report highlighting the importance of inclusive virtual learning environments](#) in further and higher education. The report argues that digital accessibility can benefit all students' educational and learning experiences.

#### **Rate it! opens for reviews of assistive products by and for disabled people**

A Lottery funded partnership of disability focused organisations has launched a new website that offers disabled and older people a space to share their views and reviews of products that can help to make life easier. Currently operating as a pilot project, [Rate it!](#) is working to build a community of online reviewers and looking for manufacturers and retailers to put forward products to be written about.

### **Technological developments and innovations**

#### **Smart trousers aim to increase mobility among physically disabled people**

A team of researchers at the University of Bristol have created [smart trousers with artificial muscles](#) for people with mobility impairments. Dubbed 'the right trousers' in reference to the Wallace and Gromit film 'The Wrong Trousers', the garment uses artificial bubble muscles to enable to stand up or lift objects.

#### **Start-up seeks to break the mould in wheelchair design**

A British entrepreneur has set up a company that makes adaptable wheelchairs with bicycle technology and seats using 3D printing. Paraplegic Rachael Wallach founded [Disrupt Disability](#) in response to the on-size-fits-all mentality that pervades wheelchair design.

#### **Communication software inaugurates 'shout' feature**

The alternative and augmentative communication software company Assistiveware has released the sixth edition of its symbol communication app Proloquo2Go. [Proloquo2Go 6's](#)

new features allows users to easily manipulate the volume, including a 'shout' function to make themselves heard in noisy environments.

### **WordQ 5 helps people with learning difficulties develop their literacy skills**

The Canadian literacy education software company Quillsoft has announced the forthcoming publication of a software package designed to support school pupils with learning difficulties become better writers. [WordQ 5](#) offers a range of practical strategies to assist writers such as word prediction, speech feedback, proofreading and web searches.

*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.](#)*