

September's independent living technology news

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

Public policy, legislation and campaigns

Access to Work announces Covid-19 extensions

The government has announced a series of [new extensions to the Access to Work programme](#) designed to help disabled people secure, retain or return to employment during the Covid-19 pandemic. These changes include funding for additional support and equipment to work from home, extra taxi fares, mental health support and fast-tracking for certain groups.

Interactive website offers advice on independent living technology

Hertfordshire County Council has [produced an interactive online guide](#) to show how assistive technology can support people to live independently at home. The website allows users to click on different parts of a technology house to view examples of products and where they can be obtained.

Research assesses technology benefits and challenges for care providers amid pandemic

Oxford Brookes University, NHSX and Digital Social Care have [published a report](#) identifying the challenges and benefits for social care providers of using technology during the Covid-19 pandemic in England.

New MSc in Educational Assistive Technology launched

The University of Dundee has launched a new [MSc in Educational Assistive Technology](#) for teachers, therapists and others supporting disabled learners in specialist and mainstream education.

Technological developments and innovations

Amazon Fire TV debuts Text Banner for visually impaired people

Amazon has unveiled a new accessibility feature on its Fire TV platform to help visually impaired people make onscreen text easier to read. [Text Banner](#) displays information such as the title and description of a film in a box that appears in a fixed location onscreen which users can customise to suit their needs.

Disney releases new range of adapted children's costumes for Halloween

Disney has launched a new range of adapted Halloween costumes inspired by popular characters such as Buzz Lightyear and Cinderella for disabled children. Available from [shopdisney.com](#), the inclusive clothing line features stretchy fabrics, openings for feeding tubes and long inseams.

Samsung TVs exemplify accessibility for blind and visually impaired people

Samsung's 2020 range of [new television models](#) have been awarded the Tried and Tested rating by the Royal National Institute of Blind People. The product range includes a number of useful accessibility features such as text-to-speech, the ability to magnify menus and a high contrast mode.

Wireless headset promises smooth and easy electric wheelchair control

A disabled inventor and entrepreneur has developed a wireless head-operated electric wheelchair control system. Marton Juhasz developed the [GyroSet Vigo](#) headset to provide an easier-to-use alternative to existing hands-free options such as chin-operated joysticks.

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.](#)