

## **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**

#### **UK commits funds to Indian assistive technology start-ups**

The UK government has partnered with the Indian disability start-up incubator ARTILAB Foundation to remove barriers to the growth of the assistive technology sector in India. The UK-India Tech Hub's [TechEnabled](#) accelerator programme is open to entrepreneurs tackling challenges faced by people with mobility, vision, hearing and speech impairments.

#### **Parliamentarians call for technology investment to support the ageing society**

In a [new report on ageing](#), the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee has called on the government to ensure that new technologies such as artificial intelligence and robotics are widely accessible and do not exacerbate health inequalities as people become older.

#### **New analysis points to a decline in new accessible housing in England by 2030**

The charity Habinteg has found that 70% of homes scheduled to be built in England over the next decade will not be required to meet basic accessibility standards. In an [analysis of local authority housing plans](#), the charity forecasts that the number of accessible and adaptable new build homes will decline as proportion of new housing by 2030.

#### **Disability Rights UK serves up recommendations for the National Strategy for Disabled People**

The charity Disability Rights UK has published a [series of recommendations](#) to inform the government's National Strategy for Disabled People due to be released this spring. The recommendations address a wide range of subjects including accessible public spaces and built environments, transport, housing and retail services.

### **Technological developments and innovations**

#### **Samsung reveals new domestic robots**

Samsung has unveiled [three new robotic assistants](#) designed to help around the house. While two of the 'Bots' - specialising in tidying up and providing personal assistance respectively - are unlikely to become commercially available for the foreseeable future, the JetBot 90 AI Plus vacuum cleaner and home monitoring device is expected to reach shops in the US later this year.

#### **Smart glasses tackle short- and long-sightedness**

The San Francisco based Voy Glasses has produced a pair of smart glasses that can be digitally calibrated to improve the vision of people with long-sightedness and moderate short-sightedness. [The VOY Tunable Eyeglasses](#) can be adjusted by rotating dials placed above both lenses.

#### **Lip reading technology trialled with tracheostomy patients**

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust has teamed up with visual speech recognition technology company Liopa to trial lip reading software to aid communication with non-verbal patients. [The SRAVI mobile app](#) is being used with people who have tracheostomies, converting their silent lip movements into text for family members and hospital staff.

#### **Keyboard design combines QWERTY with a Braille display**

The American Printing House for the Blind has produced the first Bluetooth QWERTY keyboard to have a built-in refreshable Braille display. [The Mantis Q40](#) removes the need for visually impaired people to choose between a keyboard and Braille device, making it easier for them to use a computer.

*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 hosted by Designability. [Click here to sign up for dispATches.](#)*