

May's independent living technology news

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

Public policy, legislation and campaigns

Smart and inclusive cities project seeks to outline best practice

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and French mobility technology provider Vulog have partnered to develop a [smart and inclusive cities tool](#) for urban planners around the world. The project will identify good practice in creating safe and accessible urban infrastructure for groups at the risk of exclusion such as disabled people.

Foundation publishes guide to housing adaptations for autistic people and those with learning disabilities

The national body for home improvement agencies in England Foundations has [released a guide](#) to housing adaptations for autistic people and those with learning disabilities. The guidance outlines the rules and regulations relating to the Disabled Facilities Grant and discretionary housing assistance policies.

ITU evaluates digital accessibility laws across Europe

The International Telecommunications Union has produced an [accessibility assessment](#) of laws and regulations governing information and communications technology in countries across Europe.

British Esports Association floats new FIFA tournament for disabled gamers

The British Esports Association is to explore the possibility of holding [gaming tournaments exclusively for disabled gamers](#). The idea was inspired by the experiences of three disabled people who took part in an annual online football tournament organised for college students.

Technological developments and innovations

Synthetic muscle technology promises cheaper and more flexible prostheses

A team of engineers at Northern Arizona University has developed a [new artificial muscle technology](#) capable of out-performing human skeletal muscles. The engineers believe the technology could be used to build robotics and assistive technologies such as exoskeletons and prostheses that are low-cost and more lightweight and flexible than is possible with current materials.

Voice-activated backpack guides visually impaired people around their environment

Intel and a team of independent artificial intelligence developers have collaborated to create a [voice-activated backpack](#) that can help visually impaired people navigate their surroundings with audible instructions and cues.

Wheelchair attachment tackles stairs

A team of engineering students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have designed a wheelchair attachment that allows users to glide up and down stairs. Designed as a cheaper alternative to robotic stair-climbing devices, [TILT](#) consists of a pair of ski-like objects that can be fixed to a manual wheelchair to help people traverse steps.

App translates the spoken word into sign language

EEQ4ALL – a South Korean assistive technology company - is developing [an app](#) that will translate the spoken word into sign language. The app will allow content to be translated automatically via a computer-generated avatar.

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.](#)