



ICT HUB CASE STUDY – ACCESSIBLE COMPUTING

Organisation name:

Change

Summary:

Change is a national rights organisation led by disabled people, campaigning for equal rights for all people with learning disabilities and raising awareness of the accessibility issues. They are also at the forefront of employing disabled workers.

Although the organisation is fully aware of their responsibilities to the Disability Discrimination Act, their organisation relies heavily on computers. This was sometimes a barrier for some of their employees with more cognitive and physical disabilities as they were unable to operate the computer themselves unless another person did the inputting.

Change felt they needed to make ICT more accessible for their employees and volunteers to enable equality for all, and also to learn more about accessibility to further support their target groups.

What happened?

The regional ICT champion worked with Change's ICT support worker and training manager to assess each employee and volunteer with learning disabilities in their ability to use a computer and their training needs.

Training was delivered to both the ICT support worker and training manager to cascade out to the rest of the staff team. They were shown how to:

- make further accessibility adjustments to the main Windows set-up which can be used in any combination that would suit individual users, such as activating Sticky Keys to allow one-finger operation for what is usually a 2 or 3 finger operation, i.e. CTRL, ALT and DELETE to open Task Manager.
- make better use of the accessibility options in Internet Explorer 7.0 for a better web browsing experience



Change also tested assistive hardware and software, such as:

- Penfriend XL – is a screen reader with text magnification, coupled with Word Prediction and On-screen Keyboards in many languages, and is designed to help those with dyslexia or physical disabilities;
- TextHelp – predictive software which also reads text out loud as it is typed
- SuperNova – is a combined screen reader and magnifier with Braille support, giving people with visual impairment the freedom to access Windows operating system
- Tested alternative keyboards such as IntelliKeys, Big Keys and other high-visibility keyboards
- Alternative mice such as the Roller II Plus joystick mouse – it allows the user to navigate the mouse pointer around the computer more easily as it has a large squeezy sponge ball to grab hold of. Combined with a large visible mouse pointer and a slower motion rate, it allows the user to move the mouse pointer with better ease. The sponge ball is interchangeable for more users to decide which one they prefer.



What difference has ICT made?

Change has benefitted greatly from making its ICT more accessible to all staff:

- Able to save time in setting up user profiles and ensuring each individual member of staff and/or volunteer is assessed much better, recommendations made and carried out to enable more workers to use the computers.
- The ICT support worker is now able to make more adjustments for free to the Windows set-up on each computer.
- The training manager will be using their new skills to prepare a funding bid to work in partnership with the local authority to improve access to employment for disabled people.
- New assistive technology has helped Change staff and volunteers better able to produce their own publications and materials.



What was learnt?

- Working in partnership with the regional ICT champion gave Change staff the opportunity to experiment adaptive equipment before purchasing.
- Learning was cascaded – staff and volunteers are now able to make accessibility adjustments to their own computer set-up.
- Making their ICT more accessible to their staff and volunteers has resulted in better use of ICT – staff and volunteers better able to produce publications independently of able-bodied helpers.

FIND OUT MORE:

Organisation's web address

<http://www.changepeople.co.uk/>

Regional Champion

Colin Harrison – Yorkshire & Humberside Regional Champion (Electroville)

Email: colinharrison@electroville.org.uk

Web: <http://yhictchampion.wordpress.com/>

Knowledgebase

Knowledgebase resources for using ICT for inclusive service delivery:

<http://www.ictHubKnowledgebase.org.uk/accessibilityinclusion>

Pen Friend XL Screen Reader:

<http://www.penfriend.biz/products/pfxl.shtml>

Text Help:

<http://www.texthelp.com/>

SupaNova screen reader:

<http://www.dolphinuk.co.uk/productdetail.asp?id=1>