



SITE eNewsletter February 2018 Issue No. 99

In this month's issue find out about our new Website, Mobile and app accessibility Services, a Bonnie Prince Charlie descriptive tour and some helpful kitchen tips!

Please email any questions, comments, articles and news leads to info@sitescotland.org

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Section 1: News Update

Website, Mobile and app accessibility Services

Did you know that SITE can provide Website, Mobile and app accessibility Services?

You can get expert advice from a SITE accessibility consultant. We can help ensure your desktop and mobile website is accessible.

Are you in the process of designing a new website? An SITE accessibility consultant will carry out a design review of your website designs or wireframes, indicating potential accessibility issues on the selected pages provided. This can then be used as a checklist during the web build; ensuring possible accessibility issues have been considered, saving you valuable time, money and resource.

WCAG AA desktop website audits

Is your website already live? The SITE accessibility team will audit your website against the industry standard WCAG 2.0 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

Our consultants use a range of tools and assistive technology to produce a technical report, indicating issues found. We will provide recommendations to resolve any issues found.

User testing for accessibility

Test your website or app's accessibility through SITE's observed user testing service, which uses blind and partially sighted testers or consumers with other disabilities, as required.

Users will be asked to complete a series of tasks designed around the core functionality of your website (or App) and a report will be provided detailing the outcome of the testing, highlighting issues that need to be addressed.

WCAG AA mobile responsive website Audit

Over 50% of website visits are now carried out on mobile platforms. We are specialists at auditing mobile sites against WCAG guidelines.

Get in touch

For more information on our web accessibility services and how we can support you get in touch with us directly on 0770 236 2105 or [email john.turley@sitescotland.org](mailto:john.turley@sitescotland.org)

Artlink information February to March 2018

Artlink has released details of gallery and library events designed for individuals with sight loss. These include;

Jacqueline Donachie: Right Here Among Them, Descriptive tour, Fruitmarket Gallery, Saturday 3 February, 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm,

A Fine Line, descriptive tour and handling, City Art Centre, Saturday 3 February, 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

When We Were Young: Photographs of Childhood, descriptive tour, Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Wednesday 21 February, 10:15 am - 3:30 pm

Splendours of the Subcontinent: A Prince's Tour of India 1875-6, descriptive tour, The Queens Gallery, Wednesday 28 February, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1745, descriptive tour and handling, Palace of Holyroodhouse, Wednesday 14 March, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Artist in Focus: Tessa Asquith Lamb, Descriptive tour and workshop, Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Wednesday 21 March, 10:15 am - 3:30 pm
Read more.

Tips for VIPs: Food and cooking

Below we share some kitchen tips provided by visually impaired people - if you

have any tips that you think our readers would appreciate just email them to info@sitescotland.org

Keep things secure

When putting a glass down, use one hand to feel the surface and the other to hold the glass until you are sure it's in the right place.

And when picking it up, slide your hand along the surface until you find the glass - don't reach for the top.

Use rubber matting to stop things sliding off trays.

Read more.

Eye Patients To Be Treated Earlier

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has cleared the way for eye patients to be treated on the NHS before they have to stop driving. The recommendation, which has been included in the new Clinical Guideline on the diagnosis and management of age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Currently, AMD patients with vision better than the legal driving limit are unable to receive treatment on the NHS, as their eyesight is deemed 'too good to treat'. Read more.

DWP promises no-one will lose out in huge review of 1.6 million PIP cases

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has promised that no disabled people will have their benefits reduced because of its decision to review 1.6 million personal independence payment (PIP) claims.

The review link follows last month's decision by the new work and pensions secretary, Esther McVey, that she would not appeal a court ruling that found new rules introduced last year by DWP were unlawful, "blatantly discriminatory" and breached the UN disability convention.

The rules, were rushed into law by the government last March, had meant that people who were unable to plan or undertake a journey due to overwhelming psychological distress would receive fewer qualifying points when assessed for PIP, with many receiving a lower level of financial support as a result, or even no PIP at all.

The new rules were only introduced because an upper tribunal ruling had found that DWP was wrong to say that such PIP claimants should not be entitled to those points.

Sarah Newton, the minister for disabled people, announced this week that, following McVey's decision not to appeal the court ruling, DWP would review every one of the 1.6 million PIP claims that have been made since the benefit was introduced in 2013 to see how many had been wrongly assessed and were now entitled to backdated PIP payments.

The review will include all those previously found ineligible for the benefit after being assessed by DWP and its contractors, Atos and Capita.

The cost of implementing the court judgement is estimated to be up to £3.7 billion over the next five years.

Section 2: Tech Talk

Websites Are Key To Accessibility

New research into screen-reader usage has revealed the majority of users feel that improving existing websites would have a bigger impact on accessibility compared to better assistive technology.

The newly published findings are taken from the seventh Screen Reader User Survey by non-profit organisation WebAIM, conducted in October 2017. A total of 1,792 people responded to the survey, 89.2% of which reported using a screen-reader due to a disability.

Asked whether they felt 'better (more accessible) websites' or 'better assistive technology' would have the greatest impact on improvements to web accessibility, 85.3% of respondents opted for 'better websites', with only 14.7% choosing 'better assistive technology'.

The results of the survey also shed light on a range of issues experienced by screen-reader users, as well as revealing preferred technology and browsing habits. CAPTCHAs were found to be the most significant problem for users, remaining the top problem reported by respondents since the last WebAIM survey in 2015.

Other issues noted in the report include 'unexpected screen changes', ambiguous links or buttons, Flash content, lack of keyboard accessibility, complex forms, and missing alt text.

Asked how they felt about the accessibility of web content overall during the past year, 40.8% of respondents said that content had become more accessible, 40.4% felt it hadn't changed, and 18.8% said it had become less accessible.

Another key finding was the continued popularity of mobile apps as a means of accessing the web and, similarly, increased usage of mobile screen-readers: 88% of respondents used a mobile screen-reader – the highest figure yet recorded in a WebAIM survey.

Read more at the WebAIM website.

Facebook uses AI to open up photos for blind users.
Blind and visually impaired users of Facebook will be able to find out which of their friends are in photos thanks to facial recognition technology.

Facial recognition is already used by the social networking site – for example, to suggest friends that users may want to tag in photos – but the company recently extended the use of this feature for screen-reader users. The new feature means that those users will be able to hear which of their friends are in photographs that appear on the user’s news feed, even if those friends are not tagged in the picture.

A post on the Facebook Newsroom site describes how the facial recognition feature works by using AI (artificial intelligence) technology. “Our technology analyses the pixels in photos you’re already tagged in and generates a string of numbers we call a template. When photos and videos are uploaded to our systems, we compare those images to the template.”

In 2016 Facebook launched an ‘automatic alt text’ tool that attempted to identify objects and people in photographs. The tool used object recognition technology to describe these elements for screen-reader users, though the scope of what it could identify was limited. Expressions, such as smiling, were described, but the tool was limited to mentioning the number of people in a picture, rather than their identities

The new feature means that screen-reader users will now be able to hear who is in a photo, with plans to continue developing the technology and what it can recognise.

However, as a privacy measure, all Facebook users will soon be able to switch this facial recognition feature on or off.

How contact lens computers could help those who are partially sighted see the future more clearly

It’s predicted that, by 2021, contact lens computers will be a reality. A recent patent and detailed tech-spec for such a device by Sony (see video below) shows how every element of a computer – from a screen to a battery and even a camera – can be condensed down to fit in a contact lens. Such tech could be a real eye-opener for people with disabilities.

Sony has submitted a patent (including a detailed technical specification) for a ‘contact lens computer’. It fits over the eye and contains everything that you need for a fully-functional computer, as well as wi-fi, storage, a built-in camera and even a piezo-electrically-charged battery that happily keeps the miniscule micro-components powered simply by your natural eye-movements. The company predicts that it will be available as early as 2021.

Read more.

SITE Apps Club!

The next meeting of the SITE Apps Club will take place on Wednesday 28 February in the Fairfield Room, the Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

Commencing 10:30 until 12noon (Enter from Granville Street where you will be

met upon arrival)

This month, in addition to our app and product reviews, Lucy Begley, Humanware will be demonstrating the new Victor Reader Trek. The VICTOR READER TREK is a powerful digital GPS and talking book player.

Look forward to seeing you there if you can make it, just email Fraser Fleming at fraserfleming@sitescotland.org to confirm your attendance.

You can also join the SITE Apps Club on Face Book by clicking the link below. SITE Face Book Group.

Firefox 58 is now available and includes many accessibility improvements. On January 23, Mozilla released Firefox version 58. The previous Firefox version, 57, known as Firefox Quantum, was a major Firefox release which changed how webpages were rendered, but unfortunately also [rendered Firefox much slower and less accessible to screen reader users

In version 58, NVDA users should notice improvements in Firefox's loading of webpages, improvements which should only continue with the forthcoming release of NVDA 2018.1, due in February. In Firefox version 59, Mozilla plans to focus primarily on speed improvements on webpages with many hyperlinks and formatted text.

Unfortunately for JAWS users, while some improvements have been made, there is an as yet undiagnosed issue resulting in continued slowness with Firefox which will need to be addressed by both Mozilla and Freedom Scientific to bring JAWS up to speed. For now, it is still recommended that JAWS users remain on Firefox version 52 ESR.

Google launches dedicated accessibility support

Ever wished you could get more help with the accessibility of your google products? Now you can. After being in beta for several months, Google now offers a dedicated accessibility support team for all your accessibility questions. The team can be contacted at disability-support-external@google.com

Security Software

The latest Which Magazine computer security software recommendations include the following for PC's.

Best buy - Bit Defender Internet Security. Price from £30.

Pros - Powerful and near comprehensive protection. Great at scanning USB drives and has useful features such as a password manager and a safe browser when you visit a banking site.

Cons include - menus could be clearer, does not have a tune-up feature to speed up your PC.

Best buy - Bit Defender Anti-virus free edition.

Pros - protects one PC for free, software easy to set up, offers same malware protection as the paid version.

Cons - lacks more premium features such as anti-spam, anti-ransomware and banking protection.

Section 3: Events

February

28 February - SITE Apps Club, Fairfield Room, Mitchell Library, Glasgow

10:30-12noon.

Please note that the statements and views expressed in this email and any attachments are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of SITE.

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