



SITE eNewsletter May 2018 Issue No. 102

Welcome to your May newsletter. In this edition we have an important update for you about the Social Security (Scotland) Bill, Blind car passengers and some opportunities to socialise!

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

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Section 1: News Update

New Rules For VAT On Digital Devices

Updated guidelines on which products can be sold to disabled people at a zero rate of VAT have now been published online along with a manual for internal use.

Changes to the rules were agreed with BATA in July 2017 after a VAT tribunal ruling involving assistive technology supplier iansyst.

As a result the definition of hardware was extended to include laptops, tablets, smartphones and e-readers, which can be sold at a zero rate, provided they are pre-loaded with assistive software.

[Read more.](#)

Blind car passengers Feel The View with amazing new technology from Ford

It's all too easy for drivers and their passengers to take the views out of a car's windows for granted. But for the visually impaired, the passing scenery has remained a mystery.

Now Ford believes it can help change that, with a prototype 'smart window' that uses

vibrations to let a blind or partially-sighted person ‘feel’ a passing landscape.

It was dreamed up by Ford’s Italian division in partnership with Aedo, a tech start-up that designs devices for the visually impaired. The system converts a visual image into vibrations of varying intensities so that a blind or partially sighted person can feel the landscape.

[Read more.](#)

Update on Social Security (Scotland) Bill

Last week the Social Security (Scotland) Bill had its final vote in the Scottish Parliament and will now become law after the Queen signs it. The Bill means that gradually 11 different Social Security benefits will be transferred to Scotland and paid by the Scottish Government – including vital carers and disability benefits such as Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Attendance Allowance and Carers Allowance.

Please note though that it will be at least another 3 years before disability benefits are administered and paid by the Scottish Government. That means that the re-assessment and transfer of disabled people receiving DLA to PIP will continue.

GDA - Future Visions: Dare to Dream! free event)

Wednesday, 23 May 2018 from 09:30 to 14:30 (BST)

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Glasgow Central
36 Cambridge Street, Glasgow G2 3HN

This free half day Conference will launch GDA’s “Future Visions, Dare to Dream” Report including Findings and Recommendations; the premiere of the Future Visions Film and a performance of GDA’s Purple Poncho Players.

[Read more.](#)

Glasgow W@M group

The Glasgow W@M group is a relaxed support group for people of working age who have a vision impairment. Although the group is supported by the Macular Society, it is open to individuals with any form of sight loss and their friends and family.

The purpose of the group is to offer mutual support, information and friendship, in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. There is no set agenda but topics covered include technology, employment, daily living and travel. Due to darker evenings in the winter months, the group meets on the last

Thursday of April, June, August and October, from 6-8 pm, in the Merchant Bar, 134-136 West George Street, Glasgow, G2 2HG.
Anyone wanting more information about the group should call Jamie Cuthbertson on 0141 942 1083 or 07903 520 350."

Talking Pictures by Charlotte Bennie

One morning, the lassie who books the films hailed me from the Cinema steps.
"Are ye coming tae see "Fifty Shades"?"
"No, I don't think so. Husband would be too nervous. And, anyway, it might upset the dog." Then, as I didn't want to appear prudish, I added, "Mind you, it does have audio description." Only the previous evening, I'd read my weekly e mail listing the latest films and DVDs with AD.
"Ooh! I keep meaning to check what that's like," the lassie Replied.

[Read more.](#)

Tactile Mapping System

A final year student at Stirling University recently provided a demonstration of a prototype tactile mapping system to SITE members.

Although at the early development stage the project certainly has great potential for those walkers along us!

[Read more.](#)

Glasgow Queen Street Update

The redevelopment of Glasgow Queen Street started on 7 August and is expected to last until Autumn 2020. We have new information from Inclusion Scotland's chair Terry Robinson, who sits on the Stakeholder's Forum for the redevelopment:

[Read more.](#)

Making Services Accessible

Edinburgh, Monday 11 May, 1:00pm - 4:00pm.
Young Scot are working in partnership with ECAS to engage with young disabled people (aged 18-25) across Edinburgh to better understand the barriers they face when accessing services and identifying gaps in current service provision. Young Scot will reimburse all reasonable travels costs on receiving valid travel receipts for any young person attending the workshop. If you would like to get involved please [email codesign@young.scot](mailto:email_codesign@young.scot) with your name, age, travel required and any additional support you required.

Section 2: Tech Talk

To read more about the apps mentioned below just click the link below.

[Monthly Apps Update](#)

Eye-D App

Eye-D is here to assist the visually impaired in independent living by helping them evaluate the world around them with help of their smartphone.

It will work as your companion when you travel, help you explore places, tell you about the objects in front of you and read text whenever you need.

Eyes-Free Fitness (iOS, Free With In-App Purchases)

Eyes-Free Fitness is the first app designed to help people who are blind and visually impaired reach their health and fitness goals. The cornerstone of the app is the variety of workout types for people of all levels and aspirations of health. All workouts are described fully, so they can be done 'Eyes-Free'. Additionally, access blog and podcast content from BlindAlive, and expand your health knowledge and horizons.

FlickType Keyboard (iOS, Free)

familiar? It's because it is! Using the standard QWERTY layout and 3 simple flick gestures, FlickType is the fastest available typing method for blind and low-vision users, ever. You don't need to learn a new way to type. Just tap where it feels natural and FlickType's powerful algorithms will get it right, almost every time!

No more spacebar or other control keys to hunt for. Simply flick right for space. To delete, flick left. Not the right word? Flick down for alternative suggestions.

An extremely fluid typing experience, and with enough additional functions to satisfy the book writer in you, FlickType will turn the chore of typing into something you may actually enjoy!

App Updates

Audio Memos

Audio Memos is a professionally made audio recorder. It has an amazingly intuitive interface, which is easy to use and full of powerful features. Use it in interviews, lectures, music session, briefings, ... and simplify your recording tasks.

Autour (iOS, Free)

Autour is an eyes-free mobile system designed to give blind users a better sense of their surroundings. Although other systems emphasise navigation from one specific location to another, typically accomplished by explicit turn-by-turn instructions, Autour uses spatialised audio to reveal the kind of information that visual cues such as neon signs provide to sighted users. Once users notice a point of interest, additional details are available on demand.

Microsoft Soundscape (iOS, Free)

Microsoft Soundscape uses 3D audio technology to enhance your awareness of what is around you, and thereby help you get around and explore your surroundings.

Soundscape will place audio cues and labels in 3D space such that they sound like they are coming from the direction of the points of interest, parks, roads and other features in your surroundings.

Pinterest (iOS, Free)

Pinterest helps you discover and do what you love. Find recipes, style inspiration, projects for your home and other ideas to try.

- Get ideas for every part of your life, from what to make for dinner, to what to put on your walls, to what to wear.
- Save ideas for later—organize ideas by topic, so they're always easy to find.
- Search by keyword or with your camera—discover ideas inspired by anything you point the Pinterest camera at.
- Collaborate with friends—save ideas together for your next group trip, party or project.
- Save ideas you find around the web—just use the Pinterest Save button on your mobile browser.
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SITE Apps And Tech Club!

The meetings of the SITE Apps And Tech Club are held on the last Wednesday of each month and offer participants the opportunity to share information on apps and technology that help improve the lives of people with sight loss.

Meetings are held at The Mitchell Library, Fairfield Room, Granville Street. Glasgow G3 7DR from 10:30 until 12 noon.

At SITE, we believe in the power of technology to assist people with sight loss; to be independent, access information, grasp opportunities and to be creative.

So why not come along to a meeting of the SITE Apps and Tech Club and find out the latest Technology news, views, Reviews, updates, and products for everyday living from blind and partially sighted people.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 30 May and we look forward to seeing you there if you can make it.

Please contact Fraser if you require any further information at fraserfleming@sitescotland.org or call Fraser on 07805353149.

PS If you can't make the meetings then why not join the Club on Facebook at the link below:

[SITE Apps and Tech Club.](#)

Section 3: Events

May

8 May Cross Party Group on Visual Impairment, 18:00 - 19:15, Clerk Maxwell Room, CR4, Scottish Parliament

11 May Making Services Accessible, Edinburgh

June

25 June - 1 July - Macular Week 2018

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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