



**Adapting Technology
Changing Lives**

Impact Report 2012

Mind the Digital Gap

We're proud to say that AbilityNet continues to help thousands of disabled people of all ages to improve their lives. Despite challenging times we have maintained our unique position as the only pan-disability charity in the UK to provide advice and support on the use of technology.

These are times of amazing technological change. Our phones, laptops and tablets give us new ways of communicating on the move. They connect us to always-on cloud-based services for our work documents, photographs, video, music radio and TV. These new tools are in turn encouraging new ways of working, learning and keeping in touch with family and friends.

On the one hand AbilityNet very much welcomes this new wave of digital evolution. It offers flexibility and cost-savings which we embrace within our own organisation as much as anyone. It can also transform the lives of disabled people, with an explosion of Apps bringing low cost solutions using mainstream devices, where once there was only very expensive single-function assistive technology.

However we are also acutely aware that this next wave of technology may not be equally distributed. Disabled and elderly people face enough of a challenge making ends meet without trying to keep up with a upgrade cycle that seems to constantly demand change.

We can also see that the people designing these new digital systems may be creating new barriers for disabled people.

Accessibility features built into desktop systems are not always being translated into mobile platforms. Features available on a phone or tablet may be switched off by the App developer who doesn't understand how it could enhance the life of a disabled person. The huge spending power of disabled people is often overlooked when designing ticketing or payment systems for everyday transactions.



**Nigel Lewis,
CEO**



**Dr Michael R Taylor,
Chairman of Trustees**

This is the backdrop to our new digital inclusion strategy, launched at a Parliamentary reception in November under the title of Mind the Digital Gap. It captures a range of goals, from better design by the people building tomorrow's digital technologies, to practical assistance for people who need help using everyday digital systems.

You can read more about this strategy online at www.abilitynet.org.uk/mindthegap and you will also see it come to life during 2013 as we start to work with partners in business, government and the third sector to make sure that as many as possible can benefit from a bright digital future.

Nigel Lewis, CEO

Dr Michael R Taylor, Chairman of Trustees





250 charities improved their websites, databases and other IT systems with help from the network of over 8,000 IT professionals who are signed up as iT4Communities volunteers



The Technology4Good Youth Awards were launched in September 2012, giving 13-21 year olds from across the UK a chance to win £5,000 to fund their tech innovations.



Prof Stephen Hawking was given a Special Technology4Good Award for his inspirational use of technology to overcome disability.

AbilityNet Highlights 2012

4,920,000,000

Pages viewed on the London Olympics and Paralympics websites. Abilitynet was the approved supplier of web accessibility testing services to the London 2012 games

520,000

Visits to our website – an internationally recognised source of advice and information about accessibility and assistive technology

£610,000

Of public benefit was delivered by our network of volunteers and other free services for disabled people

29,000

Downloads of our free factsheets about how disabled and elderly people can use computers and the internet

61,000

People used our services to improve their lives at home, at work or in education

350

Charities improved their websites, databases and other IT systems with help from iT4Communities

200

Businesses, charities, government departments and individuals entered the Technology4Good Awards. Winners were announced by Mariella Frostrup in July 2012 at a Ceremony hosted by BT

Accessibility Services

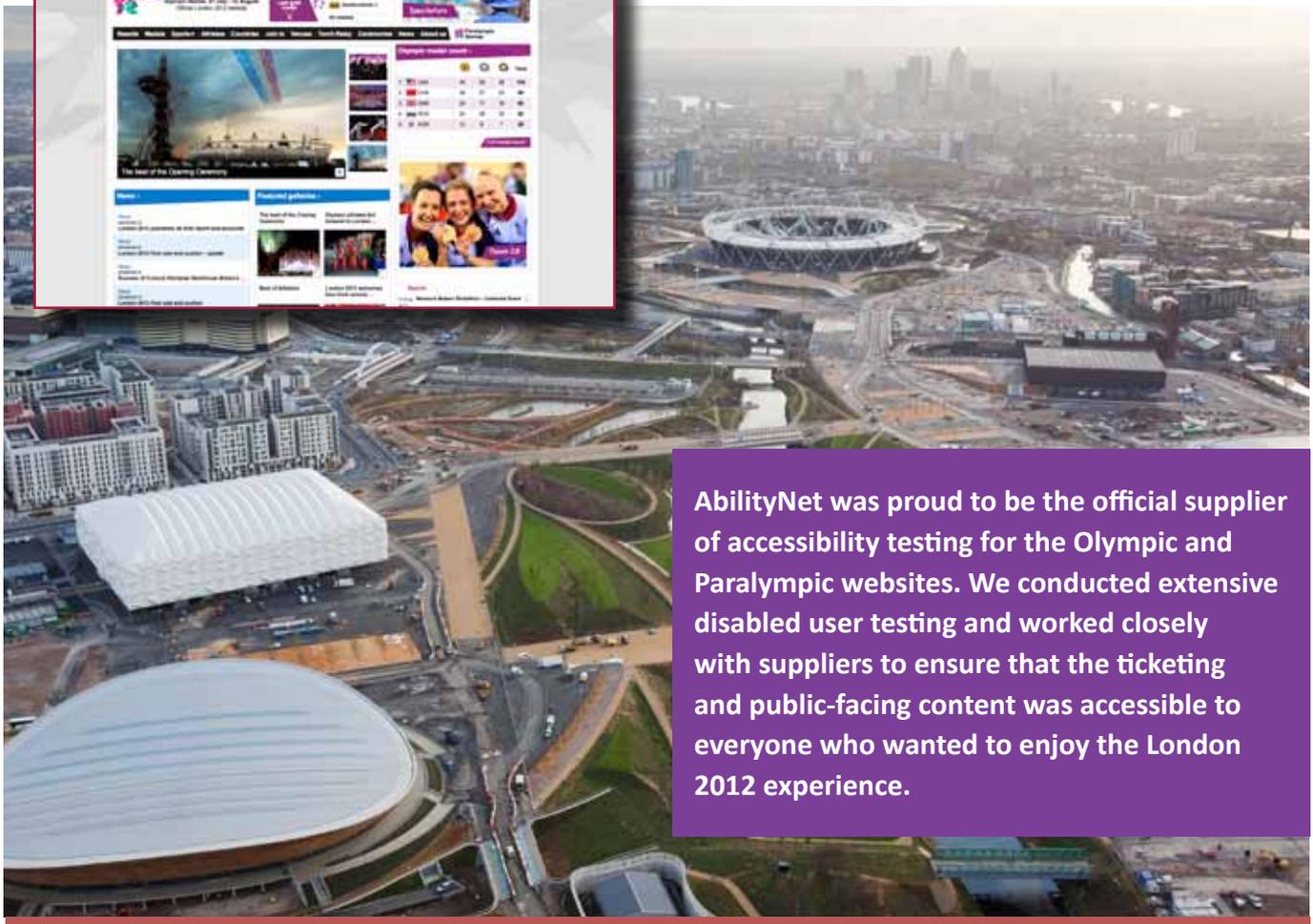
The world wide web enables disabled people to access and share information and services with family, friends and colleagues. But, despite being a legal requirement, it is estimated that fewer than 10% of websites meet the minimum legal standards to be used by disabled people.

AbilityNet has been a global authority on accessibility since the early days of the web and we work with the people who build websites and Apps as well as the people who pay them.

As well as a library of online resources our team of accessibility experts provide specialist services to make sure the web is accessible on desktop browsers, mobile phones, tablets and other devices. This includes testing by disabled people that is carried out in our specialist user testing labs in London.



Digital Accessibility: Web Essentials is a unique new e-learning module that helps people understand how digital accessibility relates to their work. Built with BCS and EHRC and it is available for individuals or on a corporate license. Full details and a demo at www.abilitynet.org.uk/dawe



AbilityNet was proud to be the official supplier of accessibility testing for the Olympic and Paralympic websites. We conducted extensive disabled user testing and worked closely with suppliers to ensure that the ticketing and public-facing content was accessible to everyone who wanted to enjoy the London 2012 experience.

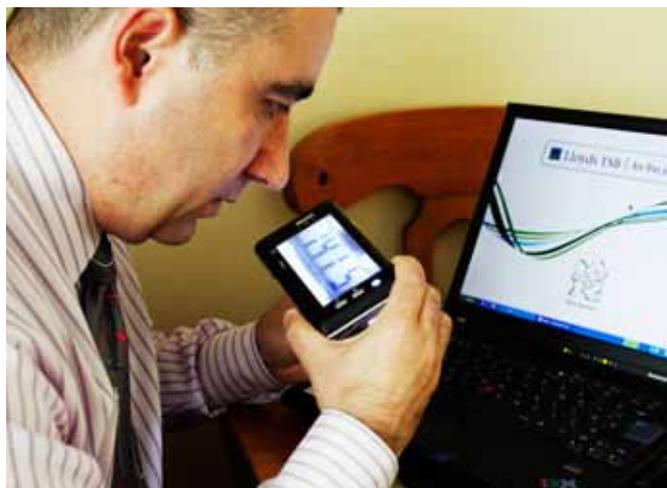
Assessment Services

AbilityNet makes a huge impact on the lives of disabled and elderly people by identifying the right specialist equipment to meet their needs. Our team of professional assessors provide a personalised service and we are the only charity that works with anyone regardless of their disability.

Launched in 2010 the MiDRAS workplace adjustment service has helped thousands of disabled people to achieve more at work.

The right equipment and working arrangements means disabled people can be more effective in their roles and employers such as Lloyds Banking Group have seen a significant return on their investment, including greater productivity and savings in recruitment costs.

AbilityNet also provides assessments to any student in higher and further education who is entitled to the Disabled Students Allowance. Our specialist teams work closely with Disability Advisers in Universities to ensure that students can get the most from their studies. This can include specialist computer equipment as well as mentoring and training to help them with their study skills.



“ The specialist equipment I use helps with my visual impairment and means I can be as productive as the rest of my colleagues. ”

Aslam Tanzir is one of over thousands of employees of Lloyds Banking Group who have received an AbilityNet assessment as part of our MiDRAS Workplace Adjustment Service.



AbilityNet's Assessment Team includes experts with backgrounds in occupational therapy, physiotherapy and ergonomists. They provide hundreds of face-to-face and remote assessments across the UK every month, identifying specialist software and hardware as well as recommending changes to furniture and work patterns.

With their help disabled people can fulfil their potential in the workplace, and employers get more productive staff who are likely to be more loyal - reducing the costs of recruitment.

Free Services for Disabled People



Our free services help disabled people get to grips with computers, tablets, mobiles and the internet. We are the only charity that can help people of any age and with any disability and can help with specialist assistive technology as well as adapting everyday systems such as Windows, Apple Macs, mobile phones and tablets.

Our services for disabled people are:

- Free telephone helpline and email support
- Free factsheets about how disabled people can use computers
- Free home visits from our IT Can Help volunteers, who are all CRB/Disclosure checked
- Free online tools including My Computer My Way and an online assessment tool.

Factsheets and full details of all services can be found at www.abilitynet.org.uk.

Top Six Calls to the Freephone Helpline

1. How do I get funding for a computer for a disabled person. What low cost alternatives are there?
2. My computer has stopped working at home. Who can I trust to fix it?
3. My child has support needs such as dyslexia and autism. How can I help them keep up with their peers?
4. I have a progressive diseases such as Multiple Sclerosis, Motor Neurone Disease or Parkinsons. How can do things I used to be able to do eg use a keyboard or mouse?
5. My sight is failing due to Muscular Dystrophy or RT which screen reader is right for me?
6. I'm a professional - such as an Occupational Therapist. I know a computer would open up new possibilities for my client but where can they get right advice and support?

For answers to these questions and many more call our helpline free on 0800 269 545



IT4Communities helps charities use IT

Young Minds supports families and young people affected by mental health illness. Their helpline takes 7,000 calls every year and over the last three years at least 127,000 children and young people have felt the impact of their ground breaking work.

An i4Communities volunteer installed new equipment to address problems with their server and enabled them to think strategically about what to do next.

Michael Horspole of Young Minds says “The new system has made us much more efficient so that staff and volunteers can spend more quality time helping people”

Thank You to Our Supporters

AbilityNet benefits from the support of an amazing range of people and organisations. This includes an international network of talented volunteers and a hugely committed group of Trustees with an incredible range of specialist knowledge and experience

We also work with some fantastic businesses, charities and professional and educational bodies of all shapes and sizes. All of them help us increase the impact we have on the lives of disabled people at home, at work and in education.

- Microsoft, IBM, The Information Technologists' Company and BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, offer links to professional networks in the IT industry and provide vital strategic input at Board level as well as providing office space. BT is a key partner in a range of employer-focused forums and has been central to the success of the Technology4Good Awards.
- Partners such as Go ON UK, UK online centres, CTT and LASA help us reach key networks in the not for profit sector.
- Our commercial clients include LOCOG/London 2012, Barclaycard, Charity Commission, Lloyds Banking Group, Samsung and many others, use our services and support to benefit their many employees and customers
- We have over a network of over 8,000 IT professionals and IT Can Help volunteers who provide specialist support to charities and disabled people.
- Partners such as the Clear Company and Microlink enable us to deliver high quality commercial services that help improve the lives of disabled people in the workplace.

We would like to say a huge thank you to all of these people for helping us to improve the lives of thousands of disabled people.

Board of Trustees

A huge thank you our dedicated and hugely capable Board of Trustees:

- Dr Michael R Taylor, Chairman
- Bill Brown
- David Barnett
- David Morriss
- David Clarke MBE (representing BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT)
- Mike Bernard (representing IBM UK Ltd)
- Nisha Sharma
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Adapting Technology Changing Lives

AbilityNet is the only charity that helps people of any age and with any disability to use computers, the internet and other digital technologies. We can transform the lives of disabled people by helping them achieve more at work, learn and share knowledge, communicate with family and friends and enjoy life to the full.

Free Services for Disabled People

We offer a free telephone helpline, factsheets to download and home visits by our IT Can Help volunteers.

Professional services

AbilityNet provides a number of high quality paid for services for businesses and others:

- Our Accessibility Services make sure that websites, Apps and other online services can be accessed by everyone.
- Our professional Assessors conduct one-to-one assessments in the workplace to identify the technology and adaptations that are right for each person and help employers meet the needs of their disabled staff.

IT Services for Charities

Our IT4Communities service has network of over 8,000 IT professionals who provide pro bono IT support to charities.

Research

We are partners in research projects that are developing the next generation of assistive technologies.

How to Donate

We rely on donations of money and time to provide free services to disabled people. Visit www.abilitynet.org.uk/donate for details.

Contact Us

Free Helpline:	0800 269 545
Sales enquiries:	01926 465 247
Website:	www.abilitynet.org.uk
Twitter:	@abilitynet
Facebook:	www.facebook.com/abilitynet