

1 Jackie Dough

➤ Profile

- Name: Jackie Dough
- Age: 17
- Location: Lincoln, UK
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Student
- Impairment: Developmental verbal dyspraxia

➤ Meet Jackie Dough

- Jackie (17) lives in Lincoln, UK and was born with developmental verbal dyspraxia (DVD). As a result of DVD, she has difficulty in voluntarily making speech sounds and stringing these sounds together in the correct order to make words. Many people who see her think she has an intellectual impairment, however DVD is a speech disorder. She is also somewhat clumsy, since DVD also affected her gross motor coordination, affecting her walking and running capabilities. This does result in a rather poor balance (sometimes even falling over in mid-step) and tripping over her own feet.

➤ Technology usage

- Jackie is an avid user of the computer, especially to browse the internet and visit her favourite music portals. She has been lucky to have a very ICT-dedicated teacher at school who saw that Jackie was smart, but needed support to allow her to facilitate her communication to her peers. Since 3 years, Jackie is using TextAloud at school and Free NaturalReader 9.0 at home, which allows her to facilitate her communication in the class environment, as well as at home. She also has a mobile on which she runs Mobile Speak for Windows Mobile Smartphones by CodeFactory. This allows her even when being without her PC, to improve her communication. She can type small messages at the moment itself, or she uses messages she has prepared beforehand which are then read out. She uses this regularly when going to the local supermarket or bakery.

2 Magda Paskimada

➤ Profile

- Name: Magda Paskimada
- Age: 29
- Location: Athens, Greece
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Employed
- Impairment: Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis

➤ Meet Magda Paskimada

- Magda (29) lives in Athens, Greece and developed systemic juvenile rheumatoid arthritis when she was 18 months old. She also has major speech delay secondary to moderate congenital deafness inherited from her mother. The arthritis affected Magda's whole body, resulting in stiffness in all limbs. With time, a greater number of joints were affected, causing Magda gradually to be confined to a wheelchair, and being severely hampered in using her lower and upper limbs.

➤ Technology usage

- Magda works for a small NGO where she is responsible for administrative tasks. Initially, her work proved to be very difficult for Magda since it required considerable typing, which is quite difficult and painful for Magda. The manager of the NGO however was very pleased with Magda's work and suggested to Magda that he would purchase speech recognition software. Instead of typing, Magda would then have to dictate her text. Nuance's Dragon NaturallySpeaking Speech Recognition Software was purchased. After a short training period, Magda is now completing all text in her editor using this software; This facilitates her daily work tremendously, as well as allows her to also use it in other applications, such as her iPhone.

3 Charles Lewis

➤ Profile

- Name: Charles Lewis
- Age: 37
- Location: Norfolk, UK
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Unemployed
- Impairment: Chronic motor and vocal tics

➤ Meet Charles Lewis

- Charles (37) lives in Norfolk, UK, and suffers from chronic motor and vocal tics, as a result of a diagnosed Tourette's Syndrome¹. This has affected his social life considerable. His motor tics consist of rapid, repetitive muscle movements, such as rapid eye blinking or head jerking, while his vocal tics, sometimes called phonic tics, are phrases or sounds such as grunting, sniffing, barking, and throat clearing.

➤ Technology usage

- Charles is interested in many things, but due to his disability rarely leaves the house where he lives with his parents. However, internet has brought him a way out. He uses a desktop PC with a larger keyboard, both fixed on his bureau so that he does not throw them off when he has non-controllable muscle movements, and also uses a large mouse. He also has a big screen, and uses screen embosser software to enlarge the size of the text considerably. He had a small screen in the past, but that does not allow him to focus enough due to his head movements, and also caused headaches. Using a mobile is difficult, but is possible, as long as it has large buttons and a big screen.

¹ For the disorder to be considered Tourette's Syndrome, the person needs to have at least two motor tics and a vocal tic that have been present for more than 12 months.

4 Maria Skoufakis

➤ Profile

- Name: Maria Skoufakis
- Age: 21
- Location: Thessaloniki, Greece
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Unemployed
- Impairment: Rett syndrome

➤ Meet Maria Skoufakis

- Maria (21) lives in Thessaloniki, Greece and was born with Rett syndrome. This resulted in a loss of speech, gross and fine motor skills and muscle weakness, seizures and breathing irregularities.

➤ Technology usage

- Maria started using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) at a very young age. Especially her eye gaze and voice output devices have helped her a lot in daily communication. She uses those both on her computer at home, as well as on her laptop at university. However, whenever she goes somewhere else (e.g. the library in Drama), she is unable to use supportive technologies, unless she installs all software again. She is eager for a plug and play solution that allows her to carry her AT with her on a USB stick wherever she goes.

5 John Howard Jones

➤ Profile

- Name: John Howard Jones
- Age: 67
- Location: Dublin, Ireland
- Marital status: Married
- Job: Pensioner
- Impairment: Parkinson disease

➤ Meet John Howard Jones

- John (67) was diagnosed 2 years ago with Parkinson disease. He lives with his wife in Dublin, Ireland. He has no signs of dementia but does have mild cognitive impairments (short term memory loss), and the disease has affected his motor skills (rigidity, visible in joint stiffness and increased muscle tone) as well as to some extent his speech (very soft, and labelled as hypophonia).

➤ Technology usage

- John has been an avid computer user from the early 80's and has done extensive research on his own to see what can help him in his daily life to make PC usage easier. Apart from large keypads for both his mobile phone and computer and a trackball, John also started using voice activated programmes for his PC, laptop and mobile. A friend of John with an early stage of Parkinson and who is in the same local health centre attending special support sessions also started using voice activated programmes after seeing how it helped John. However, having been unemployed for many years, his friend did complain about the price tag of the needed software and wondered if there is an OSS alternative.

6 Maurice Nalobaka

➤ Profile

- Name: Maurice Nalobaka
- Age: 47
- Location: Antwerp, Belgium
- Marital status: Married
- Job: Employed
- Impairment: Night blindness

➤ Meet Maurice Nalobaka

- Maurice (47) grew up in the poor suburbs of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire) before moving to Antwerp, Belgium when he was adopted, aged 6. Because of a chronic vitamin A deficiency he suffered as a child in Kinshasa, Maurice developed night blindness, a disease which remains a scourge among children in many poor countries. As a result of his condition, Maurice can not only see poorly at night, but also requires some time for his eyes to adjust from brightly lit areas to dim ones. Additionally, his contrast vision has also been greatly reduced.

➤ Technology usage

- Maurice uses both a PC and mobile, but both have their screens set in extreme colour contrasts. The latter is needed, especially when is visiting websites which mostly have a very poor contrast. Additionally, he only works with large flat-screen monitors to ensure that the colours are vivid and clear, thus avoiding eye strain at the computer. He also uses glasses with an anti-reflective coating. Lately, he is using a screen embossing software. It does annoy him however that many of the websites he visits are hardly considering the needs of low vision users. His conclusion is quickly made: if it is not accessible to his needs, he simply will not visit it again and “blacklists” it in his mind.

7 Kathleen de Munck

➤ Profile

- Name: Kathleen de Munck
- Age: 78
- Location: Yerseke, The Netherlands
- Marital status: Married
- Job: Pensioner
- Impairment: Cataract

➤ Meet Kathleen de Munck

- Kathleen (78) lives in Yerseke, The Netherlands. She developed a traumatic cataract some years ago. Apart from a compromised clear vision, and a loss of contrast sensitivity, also contours, shadows and colour vision are less vivid. Directly linked to her cataract, Kathleen also obtained an excessive sensitivity to light and developed an aversion to sunlight or well-lit places.

➤ Technology usage

- Kathleen uses both the mobile and the PC, but has increasingly problems using them. Recently, also her reading is affected. Kathleen therefore started using text to speech software on both devices, realising that at a point in time, these will be her only tools to ensure she can read what is published in websites, or what the smses she receives contain.

8 David Burt

➤ Profile

- Name: David Burt
- Age: 63
- Location: Worcester, UK
- Marital status: Divorced
- Job: Employed
- Impairment: Glaucoma

➤ Meet David Burt

- David (63) lives in Worcester, UK and has periphery vision loss as result of an open angle, chronic glaucoma. He suffers from a loss of vision on the periphery, so called tunnel vision, but retains a rather clear central vision. According to his eye specialist, his heavy computer usage, combined with being short-sighted is possibly linked to glaucoma.

➤ Technology usage

- David is still using his PC quite a lot, but limits the potential for glare. He therefore uses a monitor filter, and has his monitor face the wall instead of a window since light coming in a window interferes with the light on the monitor, especially a problem due to David's contrast problems. For this reason also, he replaced his old computer monitor with a less stressful to the eyes flat screen type.

9 Peter Brown

➤ Profile

- Name: Peter Brown
- Age: 23
- Location: Glasgow, UK
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Unemployed
- Impairment: Asperger's syndrome

➤ Meet Peter Brown

- Peter (23) lives in Glasgow, UK, and as a result of his Asperger's syndrome, shows significant difficulties in social interaction, along with restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviour and interests. His linguistic and cognitive development has however not been affected.

➤ Technology usage

- Peter is very keen on playing (educational) computer games. His parents and his teachers have noticed that this also resulted in Peter exhibiting positive social and cognitive skills that he would rarely demonstrate in a traditional classroom environment. Peter is often discussing the game with other classmates in and outside the classroom. At first Peter asked his parents how to spell words and utilize a calculator in order to achieve objectives within the games he plays. These games turned out to be problem solving, and also stimulated Peter in surfing the web for online discussion groups associated with the game. Peter also uses a picture communication symbol library software, which enables him to communicate online with other people, including his parents, who he sends emails formed by putting together these symbols.

10 Ellen Kell

➤ Profile

- Name: Ellen Kell
- Age: 67
- Location: Denton, UK
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Unemployed
- Impairment: Deaf and blind

➤ Meet Ellen Kell

- Ellen (67) lives in Denton, UK and contracted meningitis when she was 12 years old, and as a result became blind and partially deaf. At a later age she became totally deaf. However, with the help of an assistant, she was able to learn signatures that were put in the palm of her hand, as well as use initially her residual hearing, while she is also capable in using Braille.

➤ Technology usage

- At present Ellen uses the TeleBraille communication device. This device enables a deafblind person and a person using a TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf) to communicate by telephone. It can also be used for face-to-face communications between a deafblind person and a sighted person. Ellen also depends heavily on the usage of a Braille and uses a low cost Braille pad so as to read a text document from her PC or when she surfs the internet. A big barrier is however still the fact that many websites are not accessible or so badly arranged that Ellen gives up after some minutes as she cannot find the information.

11 Nikolaos Souflakos

➤ Profile

- Name: Nikolaos Souflakos
- Age: 31
- Location: Nicosia, Cyprus
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Unemployed
- Impairment: Traumatic brain injury

➤ Meet Nikolaos Souflakos

- Nikolaos (31) lives in Nicosia, Cyprus, and was involved in a severe car accident when he was 19 years old. He was in a coma for 5 months and suffered permanent neurobiological damage, but has been able to fully recover from his back injury he sustained during the same accident. Nikolaos has difficulty speaking and being understood (expressive aphasia), while also facing a blurred vision.

➤ Technology usage

- To communicate with his peers, Nikolaos uses software on his PC that allows him to communicate using symbols which are transferred to sound. In addition, he also uses text to speech software, albeit that his linguistic skills were severely affected by his brain injury. He therefore uses extensively word prediction software. On his mobile, he also uses such word predicting software, while he uses a simplified interface based on symbols. He mainly uses Nokia phones because the menu structure is similar across all newer models.

12 Andy Catteeuw

➤ Profile

- Name: Andy Catteeuw
- Age: 23
- Location: Houthalen, Belgium
- Marital status:
- Job: Student
- Impairment: ADHD

➤ Meet Andy Catteeuw

- Andy (23) lives in Houthalen, Belgium, and was diagnosed with ADHD at the age of 9. While Andy developed coping mechanisms to compensate for some of his impairments (inattentive type symptoms), many aspects of daily life are more difficult for Andy compared with other people. This is mainly visible in Andy having difficulty processing information as quickly and accurately as others.

➤ Technology usage

- Andy has learned throughout the years that he can focus better when using the computer to do his work. Condition is however that the interface is not too busy or there is not too much information. The same counts for his mobile. Simplicity is bliss for Andy.

13 Matthew Perkins

➤ Profile

- Name: Matthew Perkins
- Age: 28
- Location: Birmingham, UK
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Employed
- Impairment: Down syndrome

➤ Meet Matthew Perkins

- Matthew (28) lives with his parents in Birmingham, UK, and went to a mainstream school, following an adjusted curriculum. Matthew has problems with reading due to poor eyesight, but is currently working in an office where he is responsible for typesetting of catalogues and brochures.

➤ Technology usage

- Matthew's parents have been advocates of integrating Matthew in every part of daily life. This also includes working. While Matthew has problems with reading due to his poor eyesight, his employer provided a computer with TTS software. This he uses for the typesetting of catalogues and brochures. His mobile is also equipped with TTS software, and this he uses on a daily basis to inform his parents when he will be home since Matthew takes a bus to go to and from his work.