

# 1 Benoit Dupré

## ➤ Profile

- Name: Benoit Dupré
- Age: 44
- Location: Brussels, Belgium
- Marital status: Married
- Job: Expert at the Flemish Institute for Inequalities and Disabilities
- Impairment: None

## ➤ Meet Benoit Dupré

- Benoit (44) lives with his wife and two children in Brussels, Belgium. He has been working as a counsellor at the Flemish Institute for Inequalities and Disabilities. Benoit is mainly involved in drawing up governmental policies regarding people suffering from impairments. He is also involved in making adapted prints of schoolbooks for people with reading difficulties and creating audio books for people with cognitive difficulties. According to Benoit, a fundamental attitude change is needed for technological development related to assistive technologies. The focus should be on first allowing people to accept their disability and then introduce them to specific technologies that could help them in their day to day life.

## ➤ Technology usage

- Benoit works part-time for a local NGO that addresses the needs of young vision impaired students. In this respect, Benoit is involved in assessing mobile and desktop interfaces. He often get frustrated on the poor interfaces that are provided with software, especially then in terms of colour contrast. He uses aDesigner 2 as a quick way to assess accessibility of public websites he suspects to be poorly designed for people with vision impairments, and which he analyses for the NGO. The NGO makes accessibility reports on a 6-monthly basis and sends those to the respective public instances, responsible for the websites. However, Benoit is forced to remain focused on the WCAG 1.0 guidelines since he knows that if he were to apply WCAG 2.0, none of the website would even pass the very basic



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guidelines (or success criteria as they are called in WCAG 2.0). Increasingly, the NGO he works for also gets requests from public bodies if they can provide them with experts on accessibility, mainly in the field of internet accessibility, since these public organisations often lack the necessary in-house expertise. Benoit is therefore also involved in running training sessions for developers that design and develop public web services. Feedback he collects from the trainees indicates that they lack thorough knowledge of WCAG1.0, and in fact hardly have any notion of WCAG 2.0. Benoit did realise very soon that only hands-on experience really contributed to the trainees improving their skills. He introduces his trainees therefore to a set of tools that already can be of some assistance (e.g. Exclipse's aDesigner 2, online css validators, etc.). However, it would be very handy if there was a tool that combined all in one these validators. Additionally, he did notice that hardly any of the web interfaces are actually tested with end-users, nor would they be in the near future. Benoit wonders whether this could also be automated via an online tool, but so far has not found such application.



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## 2 Clyde Channing

### ➤ Profile

- Name: Clyde Channing
- Age: 36
- Location: Manchester, UK
- Marital status: Married
- Job: Senior software developer
- Impairment: None

### ➤ Meet Clyde Channing

- Clyde (36) lives with his wife Amy in the centre of Manchester, UK. He has been working as a senior developer at Quixcon Software Solutions for almost 5 years now. Clyde is a very pragmatic person who likes to get things done. However, lately he feels a bit disappointed that, due to the fast pace of ICT-innovation, he never really gets the chance to explore a topic in-depth and ensure developed interfaces are also fully accessible. The strict deadline policy of his company often forces him to follow a policy that as long as his code gets through the basic accessibility tests (often also supported by the fact that applied national standards of clients are often subsets of W3C standards), the company will release it. Bugs can always be fixed afterwards, they say. This leaves Clyde many times behind with the feeling that he can not really finish his ‘baby’.

### ➤ Technology usage

- In his daily work, Clyde wants to make his work easier, as well as introduce accessibility at the very beginning of every development stage, thus avoiding patchwork or incomplete work afterwards. For this he would like to have easy assessment tools built into the main design software, so that he can assess accessibility at a very early stage. Clyde has recently started with studying WCAG 2.0 guidelines. This has become now obligatory for all developers in the company where he works since all tenders the company he works for participates in now require minimum WCAG 2.0 level AA accessibility for the front-end interfaces of all online services that are being provided. Being aware of his



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competences in this area, his team manager has appointed Clyde to organise internal training on this. Clyde realises this is a perfect opportunity to also introduce some tools to his colleagues so that they can assess at an early stage accessibility aspects for their web, mobile and desktop applications. An aspect that is lacking however is the testing by (experienced) end-users. For this Clyde has suggested his company to get in touch with a small group of expert users of a local disability AT interest group. This suggestion has so far not been considered though and Benoit is seeking for a viable alternative, if possible software driven..



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### 3 Ramin El-Fassi

➤ Profile

- Name: Ramin El-Fassi
- Age: 24
- Location: Brussels, Belgium
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Employed
- Impairment: Dexterity problems

➤ Meet Ramin El-Fassi

- Ramin El-Fassi (24) has recently graduated from college where he obtained a Bachelor's degree in Communication and New Media. After enjoying his final summer holidays as a student, he immediately found a job as a junior account manager at a dynamic communication bureau in the centre of Brussels, Belgium.

➤ Technology usage:

- At work, Ramin works on his desktop PC every day, most of the day. His system has MacOS installed, Ramin works with design software, designing and adjusting graphics or drawing up workflows and wireframes. Due to his dexterity impairment -mainly limited strength in both arms and hands-, Ramin uses a trackball instead of a regular mouse. At home he uses the laptop he bought during college. Although the school offered public desktops during classes, Ramin needed a personal laptop to be able to use his trackball and other settings. Otherwise he would have been forced to install all necessary drivers every time he took place behind a different computer system. Ramin never uses the integrated touchpad; its behaviour is so hard to control or predict. He visits the internet daily and even has his own webpage, a blog he had to maintain to post all progress of his master thesis. He still uses it to repost interesting things he finds across the net. Ramin likes the word prediction that starts to emerge in several webpages and programs. Ramin has one of the latest smartphones; his new employer allowed him to pick his own phone which he mainly uses to keep in touch with his friends and family. He uses it daily, but not that much at work. Ramin was very happy



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that he learned all important functions of his phone in under 30 minutes. Ramin always uses his own phone, it offers him everything he needs.



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## 4 Nitesh Sarin

### ➤ Profile

- Name: Nitesh Sarin
- Age: 36
- Location: Pocklington, UK
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Unemployed
- Impairment: Dyslexic and colour blind

### ➤ Meet Nitesh Sarin

- Nitesh Sarin (36), lives in the quiet town of Pocklington (between York and Hull) in the UK. At the moment he is applying for a job at Phoenix Software in Pocklington, in the marketing and communications department. Nitesh studied at the York College where he obtained a Foundation Degree in Hospitality Management; a 2-year education. Nitesh has minor to medium sight problems: dyslexic, and problems with certain colours; but is able to read a newspaper.

### ➤ Technology usage

- At home Nitesh owns a PC with Windows Vista and a 21” screen (which makes it easier for him to read text on the screen). At the moment he is using his PC a lot to prepare for his job interview at Phoenix Software next week. He is surfing the web to get to know the company better, and to find out what they are exactly looking for. Nitesh occasionally makes use of speech output and screen magnification (Zoomtext). He spent 2 hours trying to install these assistive technologies; luckily, he now knows how these work. Nitesh knows he can be impatient sometimes, but everything considered he really believes that all this technology should work a lot better so he can get what he need faster. To entertain himself, he uses his PC to play DVD’s – he is a big fan of mafia movies – and to play music (Nick Cave). He would like to get more creative on his PC, such as designing his CV for next week, but the graphical programs he has tried are not compatible with his assistive technologies. Nitesh is quite happy with his mobile which he has been using for two years know. Lisa’s sister Julie (29) had about the



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same visual problems as Nitesh and she was really up to date on everything “mobile”. Nitesh’ mobile was recommended by Julie, and he never regretted making this choice. His mobile is very important to him since it is his main hub to his friends and family, so he uses it several times a day, wherever he is. The phone is compatible with his speech output software and contains some preset high contrast visual themes. It also has a camera which he mainly uses to take funny pictures when he goes out with his friends.



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## 5 Peter Vandezande

### ➤ Profile

- Name: Peter Vandezande
- Age: 43
- Location: Brugge, Belgium
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Unemployed
- Impairment: Multiple Sclerosis, memory loss - reduced dexterity

### ➤ Meet Peter Vandezande

- Peter (43) suffers from short term and long term memory loss and from muscle weakness and spasms in his arms and legs due to Multiple Sclerosis. He stopped working at the age of 34 because of his medical condition. Peter is single and lives in a sheltered house in Brugge, Belgium. Peter relatively enjoys his stay in the sheltered housing, which is located in a green and relaxing environment. He likes his little chats with the other inhabitants and when he is not in any of the social areas, he usually searches more information about one of his many interests. He reads a lot about his condition so he realizes that, as time passes, his mental health will deteriorate.

### ➤ Technology usage

- Peter owns a desktop PC which he has setup in his room in the sheltered housing. His desktop used to be his sister's, but she gave it to him as she bought herself a laptop. The PC is running Windows XP which Peter likes; he knows his way around and has all his favourite icons enlarged and close by. Peter likes general surfing and he especially enjoys helping people who want to obtain information on MS. From time to time he visits the website of his favourite football team, made in Flash. He finds it really disappointing that this website is hard to navigate because of the lack of keyboard support. Peter has difficulties with handling the mouse due to muscle weakness in his hands and occasional spasms in his arms. Peter has a regular cellphone that he mainly uses for calling friends and relatives. His sister programmed his buttons so he could use the speed dialling option. He



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has a list of all the names and corresponding speed dials taped to his coffee table. Texting takes too long due to his condition. From time to time he uses the calendar functionality, to remember appointments he makes with some of his co-habitants.



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## 6 Emma Karlsson

### ➤ Profile

- Name: Emma Karlsson
- Age: 38
- Location: Sollentuna, Sweden
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Employed
- Impairment: Dysarthria

### ➤ Meet Emma Karlsson

- Emma (38) is Swedish and grew up in Sollentuna, Stockholm. At birth she suffered neurological damage, causing her to have dysarthria. Emma whispers very softly and produces abnormal intonation when speaking, making it hard for other people to understand her. She also has hearing problems when people or devices speak to quickly. Emma works as an independent photographer and regularly gets contracted through her extended network she built throughout the years. Most of the assignments she takes on are weddings or communions. Emma is also an active helper at the local community centre.

### ➤ Technology usage

- Emma uses her laptop with a preinstalled version of Windows Vista every day at home. She e-mails a lot (avid Gmail user) and maintains her Flickr pro-account. She makes videocalls to some of her friends to communicate in sign language. Emma is also constantly on the lookout for new photo editing techniques and other related information on photography. Emma regularly plays casual puzzle games, sometimes online against friends or family members. She reads news on various newsites, blogs and online magazines. Emma uses her mobile phone for calling and texting her friends and family. She also enters notes or reminders and now and then she uses the built-in calendar. She bought one of the first available smartphones because they had many promising features. However, her smartphone does not offer what she had hoped for.



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## 7 Adam Ljung

### ➤ Profile

- Name: Adam Ljung
- Age: 21
- Location: Gothenburg, Sweden
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Unemployed
- Impairment: Learning disability

### ➤ Meet Adam Ljung

- Adam Ljung (21) lives with his parents and his sister Ida outside Gothenburg, Sweden. He went to a special education class and he graduated one year ago. Now, he attends a day care centre four days a week, where he helps out in a small café. He will probably be moving soon into an apartment in a building with service and common areas. Adam is very interested in sports. He always goes to the home games together with his dad. He also enjoys cooking and is able to follow simple recipes by himself. Adam was born with a learning disability. He needs longer time to understand or learn new things and to express himself. He has learned to read and write, but he can only handle easy texts and isn't always sure of how to spell words. The concept of time is difficult for him. This is a cause of uncertainty, making it hard for him to appreciate how much time he needs to get ready or get to different appointments. The day care centre has a computer that he can use together with the other staff. However his use is restricted and the personnel aren't always around to help if there's a problem.

### ➤ Technology usage

- Adam uses the family computer, a desktop with Windows XP, every night. He likes to surf the net, but he rather visits his favourite pages than looking for a lot of new information. He's a big fan of watching football clips on YouTube, and he frequently reads the sports section of an online easy to read newspaper. His sister has helped him set up a Hotmail account that he uses to send messages to friends or family. He sometimes uses Google to search, but he finds it difficult to find



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what he is looking for – partly because he doesn't always know how to spell the words and partly because there are so many hits that it's too overwhelming for him to filter. His sister has showed him chat functions in Skype, and he'd like to use it, but the few times he tried it, he found it hard to read and write as fast as the other person did. Adam hasn't equipped the computer with any assistive technology, but he has learned that he can use speech synthesis on those home pages that provides it. As of yet, he hasn't got access to a local Swedish speech synthesis on the computers that he uses. Adam owns a mobile phone, but he doesn't use it very often. His father helped him purchase it, and they tried to find a phone with an as easy interface they could find. The phone has a pretty large display and he uses it mostly when he needs to. The other day, he missed the bus going home from the town and he was glad that he quickly could reach his father to come pick him up. Sometimes people sends him a text message, and his sister has taught him how to store numbers in the contact list, but other than that, he rarely uses any of the functions.



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## 8 Jane Brown

### ➤ Profile

- Name: Jane Brown
- Age: 32
- Location: Devon, UK
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Unemployed
- Impairment: Cerebral palsy

### ➤ Meet Jane Brown

- Jane (32) lives in a sheltered housing in Devon, UK, where she is supported by a number of care assistants. She has been living here since the age of 24. Until then, she lived with her parents. She has not been able to progress further in education because of the limitations caused by her disability. Due to cerebral palsy, Jane has severe motor and speech impairments. She is a wheelchair user and non-speaking. She has almost daily epileptic seizures. Her severe athetosis limits her hand functionality as well and she is unlikely to gain employment. She enjoys music and is particularly interested in ballet.

### ➤ Technology usage

- Jane communicates by controlling VOCA software by means of two hand switches. This computer can also allow her limited access to the Internet and she communicates with friends by email. She uses on-screen scanning keyboards with symbols and auditory scanning support to communicate with others and control her computer. Jane doesn't use a mobile phone.



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## 9 Edward Hodgins

### ➤ Profile

- Name: Edward Hodgins
- Age: 60
- Location: Dartford, UK
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Employed
- Impairment: Hypoacusis

### ➤ Meet Edward Hodgins

- Edward (60) holds a Bachelor's degree in biotechnology, and has worked all his life in the pharmaceutical sector in Dartford, UK, as a laboratory technologist. For quite a number of years now, Edward suffers from moderate hearing loss (hypoacusis). Without his hearing aid, he can't understand other people talking in noisy environments, and he has to turn up his TV set very loud in order to make sense of what is being said. Fortunately, his hearing aid alleviates some of the problems he encounters. Edward leads a fairly regular life despite his hearing loss.

### ➤ Technology usage

- Edward's job doesn't require him to do a lot of work on computers. He works on a desktop PC (Windows XP) both at work and at home, adding up to about 20 h per week. At work, he sends e-mails to his superiors, and does some basic work in Excel and Word. Edward uses Internet Explorer, because it came with the computer, and Google every few days to search for general information and visit his favourite sites on artistic photography. He likes his old camera and develops his pictures in his self-made dark room. Although he is no expert at photo editing, he does use basic photo viewing software for storing the digital pictures sent by his children and grandchildren. Very sporadically, he also 'talks' to his grandchildren using instant messaging – if he remembers to start up the instant messaging application on his computer, that is. Edward uses a standard mobile phone. It is a rather cheap model, with keys that are somewhat larger than standard. Although he always keeps his phone with him, it is not his main means



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of communication. He mainly uses it in specific situations, for instance to call people when he will be a bit late for appointments, due to traffic. Edward tries to avoid noisy environments (such as public spaces), since he has trouble understanding voices through the phone. Edward uses no assistive technology on his phone: his main motivations for buying the model he owns were the price tag, and the fact that the phone is quite easy to use, without a lot of bells and whistles. He doesn't like the elaborate, intricate menus in more expensive phones: basic calling will do the trick for him. He doesn't send text messages very often, because he thinks texting is a bit tedious on a phone keyboard, and because he thinks texting is for kids.



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## 10 Tomasa Almaraz

### ➤ Profile

- Name: Tomasa Almaraz
- Age: 34
- Location: Barcelona, Spain
- Marital status: Married
- Job: Employed
- Impairment: Deaf

### ➤ Meet Tomasa Almaraz

- Tomasa (34) lives with her family in Barcelona, Spain, where she has renovated a small house some years ago, together with her husband. She holds a master's degree in Law, and she works in a consulting firm in Barcelona. Since her teenage years, Tomasa is completely deaf. At first, it was very difficult to communicate with other people, but she has learned to cope with her deafness: she mostly uses lip reading to communicate with other people. Sometimes, she also uses some sign language when she is in a company where people also understand it. But as many people don't understand sign language, she doesn't use it very often.

### ➤ Technology usage

- Tomasa is quite a heavy technology user. For work, she has a standard Windows Vista laptop, which she also uses at home and sometimes even in train stations and airports when she is waiting. She spends about 50 hours per week using her computer, it is an important tool for her. At work, Tomasa creates and edits word and excel documents, and searches for information on the internet. She is also a heavy e-mail user, as she has to keep a close contact with her clients without being able to make phonecalls. At home, she manages the pictures of her children growing up and occasionally plays a casual computer game like Tetris. She has already considered switching to Firefox, but still uses Internet Explorer to surf the internet on a daily basis. Tomasa uses Google, Gmail, updates her blog, uses instant messaging to talk to her friends, takes quizzes on Facebook, sometimes watching a video on Youtube, etc. The mobile phone is also very important for



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Tomasa: she couldn't miss it as a tool. But it is also part of her life style, and she carries it around all the time. She uses it to videocall her husband if she will be home late, and to keep up with her friends. Most important about her phone is the look and feel. It has a big screen displaying clear letters, and it feeds pretty good images when she uses the phone in video calls. Although her smartphone was quite expensive, the device, with all its functionalities, was worth the investment. She mostly uses the phone as any other user would, but as she can't make any regular calls, the video call functionality is very important to her. Besides video call, she uses texting, e-mail (she likes the Qwerty keypad!), and sometimes internet. As the phone has so many features, she thinks it is a pity she can't use all of them, such as the built-in radio receiver, MP3 player, etc. Tomasa uses no assistive technology with her phone.



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# 11 Gert Van Dijk

## ➤ Profile

- Name: Gert Van Dijk
- Age: 42
- Location: Merchtem, Belgium
- Marital status: Married
- Job: Employed
- Impairment: Partly blurred vision

## ➤ Meet Gert Van Dijk

- Gert (42) lives in Merchtem, Belgium with his wife and suffers from a partly blurred vision since his adolescence. Gert works in orchards during the busy seasons, at other times he stays at home and manages the household. Gert didn't have a lot of problems at school, but never felt a lot for studying. That's why he didn't seek any higher education. He immediately started working and over the years, he has collected a broad range of jobs such as helping out on a construction site or at the city's green service. As long as he can be outdoors and use his hands, Gert is happy to work all day.

## ➤ Technology usage

- Gert has bought himself a laptop, mainly because of its portability and the lack of assistive technologies on public computers. He cannot use the most recent software versions because of the poor compatibility with AT software. Also, his assistive software (RealSpeak and Supernova) is only reimbursed by government every 5 years which is too slow to keep up with technology. Chris is a member of the local dance club. Gert helps her out selecting songs and putting them together in a mix. For the rehearsals, Gert can generate mixes on half the tempo. Especially in the beginning of learning a new choreography, this really comes in handy. Gert did have to search hard for an accessible music player and editor. Popular media players such as Winamp don't work with his assistive technologies. His only option was open source, but these communities do not really excel in documentation and support. It took Gert 6 months to finally find



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what he needed, and another 2 months to fully learn the possibilities of those programs. Gert doesn't carry his regular cellular phone all the time, but does use it almost daily. Mostly to call and text his wife and friends. He has got a clamshell model which has large, clearly separated buttons. In the beginning he was overwhelmed by the many features that are available on his phone, features he doesn't use or need anyway. Learning the basic functions such as calling and texting didn't take that long. He has got a screen embosser and speech output for his phone, which help him a lot. Occasionally, he downloads an audio book from the Internet and uploads it to his mobile so he can listen to it on location or on the move (train). He likes this since the voices are real; exciting books are read by a human voice, with emotion. What a contrast with the computerized voices he gets when using his assistive technologies.



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## 12 Paulina Reyes

### ➤ Profile

- Name: Paulina Reyes
- Age: 25
- Location: Murcia, Spain
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Unemployed
- Impairment: Blind

### ➤ Meet Paulina Reyes

- Paulina (25) was born blind, and lives in Murcia, Spain. Due to her visual impairment, Paulina was unable to find a job after finishing high school. The only job opportunities she had required her to move, which Paulina and her family didn't like. She started taking guitar lessons and by now she can really play quite well. But it wasn't easy in the beginning. She can't read regular music scores, so she had to resort to music Braille.

### ➤ Technology usage

- Paulina uses her PC (Windows XP) on a daily basis for the text editor to write letters of job applications, and to visit Yahoo and check her emails using Internet Explorer. She tried Hotmail and later Gmail first, but there just was too much information on the page. So she ended up with Yahoo which works quite well with her Jaws screenreader. She also uses OCR software, a Braille embosser and Adobe reader speech output. The combination of all these technologies enables Paulina to use her PC to a satisfactory degree. However, the investments she and her family had to make to acquire all this put quite some pressure on the family budget. The Internet was also an enormous help in finding information, Braille music scores, and mp3 music. Paulina bought herself a smartphone she uses practically all the time. Her choice for a smartphone had a lot to do with the ease of use and the recommendation of a friend, who is also blind. The device has large enough keys that provide lots of tactile feedback when pressed. Paulina uses it to call friends & family, texting, maintain her calendar and listen to audiobooks



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she downloads from the internet. She uses a VOCA to read her sms messages, but unfortunately the Spanish output often has a faulty pronunciation.



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## 13 Carlos Portillo

### ➤ Profile

- Name: Carlos Portillo
- Age: 35
- Location: Gerona, Italy
- Marital status: Married
- Job: Employed
- Impairment: Moderate Aphasia - Paraphasia

### ➤ Meet Carlos Portillo

- Carlos (35) lives in Gerona, Italy with his wife Marisa and 2 children Juan and Angelica. He has a college degree in applied informatics. After being involved in a car accident, he currently suffers from a moderate form of aphasia. Ever since the accident, he avoids using the car so nowadays he works at a local government institution, managing the back office. Carlos fixes damaged computers and keeps the servers up and running. Due to his moderate aphasia he is still able to write mails, but it takes him longer than his fully abled colleagues. His colleagues describe him as a very devoted worker. Sometimes he experiences problems to speak fluently and also his writing skills are influenced by his paraphasia. Nonetheless, his boss is very satisfied with the work he delivers.

### ➤ Technology usage

- Carlos uses his PC every day at work and at home. At work he uses his laptop to e-mail, search information on specific computer issues and occasionally write some documentation for his co-workers. At home, he also uses his work laptop for sending e-mails to friends and family, to keep in touch (also through Facebook) and listen to his favourite songs. Carlos uses his personal desktop as a sandbox to experiment with new software and Ubuntu OS. Carlos owns a smartphone he bought earlier this year. The phone was offered by his wireless provider on a special sale; Carlos is very loyal to his wireless provider and rarely looks at other companies' offers. Carlos considers his smartphone as a practical tool that suits his lifestyle of technology adept. He enjoys the fact that he can



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customize the menu layout in such a way that his favourite functions are presented up front.



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## 14 Wayne Edwards

### ➤ Profile

- Name: Wayne Edwards
- Age: 52
- Location: Manchester, UK
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Unemployed
- Impairment: Global aphasia - short term memory loss

### ➤ Meet Wayne Edwards

- Wayne (52) lives with his older brother and his family in the suburbs of Manchester, UK. At the age of 48 he suffered a stroke, causing great brain damage. Since then he suffers from a severe form of aphasia, 'global aphasia'. Wayne is unable to produce recognizable words and understands little or no spoken language. His reading and writing skills were practically reduced to zero.

### ➤ Technology usage

- Wayne is unemployed since he suffered the stroke and as a consequence his computer use is very limited. He only uses his brother's desktop at home, basically just for playing card games, to pass the time. Wayne sometimes uses speech output (text to speech) or makes drawings on his computer to make things clear to other people. Wayne owns a 3 year old mobile, a sturdy model with large buttons and very few options besides calling and sending text messages. Wayne is not a fan of complex and modern smartphones with too many options that he believes he will probably not understand. However, he does have the feeling he is missing out on things that he sees his nephews actively using. He uses his mobile also as a VOCA, but texting takes a very long time. From time to time, he gets stuck in the interface because of the complexity of the navigation and terms used for labelling menu options. Due to his global aphasia, Wayne finds it difficult to find his way through the different layers of the hierarchical navigation.



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## 15 Mikel Vargas

### ➤ Profile

- Name: Mikel Vargas
- Age: 35
- Location: Albacete, Spain
- Marital status: Single
- Job: Unemployed
- Impairment: Spina bifida

### ➤ Meet Mikel Vargas

- Mikel (35) was born with spina bifida, a disease that causes a poor development of the spinal cord. He lives in Albacete, Spain. Mikel's lower limbs have been completely paralyzed, which forces him to sit in a wheelchair. He only has very little control left over his upper limbs and makes slight involuntary head movements. Due to his condition, he was never able to find a job. Mikel lives in communal living with shared leisure infrastructure. He enjoys the good atmosphere in group, but would like a more independent lifestyle.

### ➤ Technology usage

- Mikel does not own a computer, however, the communal infrastructure allows him to use a shared desktop PC that has been equipped with assistive technologies, including a head tracker, which follows a reflective dot on a cap he has to wear, and a blink switch. Buying and fully equipping a personal system would be unaffordable for Mikel. He considers himself to be an average user but is always willing to help out others who are just starting to use the computer. Mikel never chats on the computer because those applications are generally too cluttered to access and control, but internet access does help him to keep in touch via email and video calls. Mikel owns a PDA but he actually uses it seldom by himself. A lot of functions can be reached by shortcuts customized to his personal preferences, so he is able to use some basic functionalities like calling and accessing his calendar by himself. He spent a lot of money on that phone, just to be able to use functionalities also offered by very basic and cheap cellular mobile



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phones. Unfortunately those basic models are usually far less accessible or offer no shortcuts, which Mikel really needs. One of his favourite functions is the voice dialling feature that he easily uses after some training so as to correctly interpret his voice.



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## 16 Caroline Combs

### ➤ Profile

- Name: Caroline Combs
- Age: 45
- Location: London, UK
- Marital status: Married
- Job: Employed
- Impairment: Muscular dystrophy

### ➤ Meet Caroline Combs

- Caroline Combs (45) lives with her husband Marc (48) and two children Anthony (18) & Robert (16) near London, UK. She is a professor in Ancient History at the University College of London. Caroline suffers from muscular dystrophy, causing weakness and stiffness in her upper limb muscles. Caroline is always very busy, and when she does find some time to relax you will probably find her in her garden. If she is having a good day, she will trim some of the flowers that grow there.

### ➤ Technology usage

- Caroline has been using her desktop PC with Windows XP installed for several years now. She often surfs on the internet to search for academic publications. Caroline doesn't like to travel, it can become very inconvenient with her sore muscles. That's why internet is a very important tool for her to stay in touch with her friends and family that don't live close by. Caroline can use the keyboard and mouse, but only for a very short time before she becomes too tired. That's why she likes the use of speech input and output on the computer. Caroline also has a few switches that help her open her favourite applications. Caroline uses a basic mobile phone to call and send text messages. She bought a durable phone that supported assistive technologies. This was a very important argument to buy that particular phone. Besides the mere availability of assistive technologies, the phone also provided the possibility of changing and customizing many settings.



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## 17 Märta Hansson

### ➤ Profile

- Name: Märta Hansson
- Age: 57
- Location: Jakobsberg, Sweden
- Marital status: Married
- Job: Employed
- Impairment: Macular degeneration

### ➤ Meet Märta Hansson

- Märta Hansson (57) lives with her husband and 2 daughters in Jakobsberg, Sweden. About 6 years ago Märta started experiencing difficulties with her central visual field as a consequence of macular degeneration. Recently, she decided to follow evening classes in Web Development. After her studies, she started working at a NGO which supports people with disabilities by explaining in what ways the government provides (financial) options to help them. For this organization she teaches also courses on how visually impaired people can use computers and the internet, using also AT. Quite a lot of developers follow these courses to learn in what way internet applications can be made accessible technically.

### ➤ Technology usage

- Märta has had a PC at home for years. Nowadays she uses her (work) laptop more and more, especially because she has to go and teach courses. Märta uses Windows XP, and has Office installed, mainly for her work – preparing presentations for courses, creating documents for the organization, and Outlook Express to keep her agenda and contacts up to date. To help her work on her desktop (17”) and laptop (15”), she has speech output and uses screen magnification (Zoomtext). She does her finances online, and takes care of social security arrangements regarding support for assistive technologies for her severe visual impairment.



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