

DispATches - May 2018

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May 2018: **CHIRON** project robot pushes technology to the limit to address the UK's burgeoning social care crisis, Government invests £1.5 million in sports prosthetics for disabled children, app allows the creation of personalised prompts for people with learning difficulties

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Public policy, legislation and campaigns

Parliamentarians and industry experts explore links between assistive technology and Industrial Strategy

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Assistive Technology has held [a symposium on the government's Industrial Strategy](#). A panel of industry experts and parliamentarians discussed how the government might support the sector in emerging fields such as robotics and artificial intelligence, help new entrants establish themselves and improve public sector provision.

Government invests £1.5 million in sports prosthetics for disabled children

The government has announced an [investment of £1.5 million into sports prosthetics](#) for disabled children. The funding marks an extension of the programme launched in 2016 that aims to help children with limb loss to participate in sports and other physical activities. The fund also supports research and innovation to improve prosthetic technology.

MPs call on government to harness the potential of assistive technology to close the disability employment gap

The House of Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee has [published a report on the role assistive technology can play](#) in closing the disability employment gap. Its recommendations include proposals that the government creates a new assistive technology grand challenge as part of its industrial strategy, improve training for Jobcentre Plus staff and for government departments to take the lead by ensuring that civil service computer systems are compatible with assistive technology.

Survey finds nearly a third of wheelchair users think mobility technologies are outdated

A [global survey of wheelchair users](#) commissioned by the Toyota Mobility Foundation has found that nine out of ten experience pain as a result of their mobility device. The survey of disabled people living in the UK, United States, Japan, Brazil and India also found that 43% have been unable to find accessible toilets when they need one and almost a third feel frustrated because the design of their wheelchair is based on outdated technology.

The British Assistive Technology Association campaigns to scrap fees for Disabled Students' Allowance laptops

The British Assistive Technology Association has launched a campaign to persuade the government to [abolish £200 charge for students](#) who receive laptops under the Disabled Students Allowance. It has published a report that reveals evidence of a 30% decrease in the number of students taking up equipment recommended by professional assessors since the charge was introduced in 2015.

Technological developments and innovations

EyeMine makes Minecraft accessible to eye gaze users

The charity Special Effect has developed new software that allows people with severe physical disabilities to play Minecraft with the aid of their eye-tracking devices. [EyeMine](#) grafts an assistive keyboard and a number of custom modifications on to the standard Minecraft interface to make the game more accessible to eye gaze users.

Eye controlled, artificial artificially intelligent wheelchair wins development funding

A team of robotics engineers from Imperial College London has won a research prize of £35,000 to build an [eye-controlled, artificially intelligent wheelchair](#). The wheelchair will use self-driving car sensor technology to build a 360-degree map of the user's surroundings. An eye-tracker will enable users to navigate by gazing in their desired direction as a computer charts the best route.

Smart glove supports gesture-based communication

A technology entrepreneur is preparing to launch a smart glove that helps people with learning or communication impairments to interact with non-signers. [BrightSign's](#) embedded sensor technology interprets the user's hand movements before a synthesized voice broadcasts their message via an inbuilt speaker. The smart glove offers a range of pre-installed gesture libraries to facilitate different types of hand-based communication.

App allows the creation of personalised prompts for people with learning disabilities

A special educational needs tutor turned technology entrepreneur has built an individualised learning support app for people with autism spectrum disorder, Down Syndrome and other learning disabilities. Lisa Marie Clinton's [avail](#) allows parents and carers to create prompts for day-to-day activities using physio, picture, audio or text instructions to help users to be as independent as possible.



Training & events

[NAEP National Annual Conference](#)



Chesford Grange Hotel, Warwick

Tuesday 12th June –

Wednesday 13th June

A conference for professionals involved in providing community equipment to disabled and older people

[Computer vision for smart environments and assisted living](#)



British Computer Society, London

Wednesday 13th June

A symposium presenting the latest technology in computer vision and machine learning for smart environments and assisted living applications

[Digital Health and Social Care 2018](#)



15 Hatfield, London

Thursday 21st June

An event focusing on using data and digital technology to integrate health and social care services

