Our study about how technology can help people with disabilities to work

Easy-to-read version

Easy-to-read is information that is written in a simple way so that all people can understand it. You can find more information about easy-to-read at: www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read.
The difficult words in the text are marked in **bold**.

You can find their explanation at the end of this booklet.
Who we are

We are the European Disability Forum. We are an organisation of people with disabilities in Europe. In short, we are called ‘EDF’.

At EDF, we work to protect the rights of all people with disabilities in Europe. We think that people with disabilities should have the same chances in life and take part in the community like everyone else.

Why we made this study

We made this study to check:

- How technology can help people with disabilities to work,
- What the situation is for people with disabilities in Europe,
- What can be better.

To make this study, we asked for the views of people with disabilities and their organisations.
in all countries of the European Union and the United Kingdom.

We also asked for the views of employers in these countries.

In the next few pages, you will read what we learned from this study.

How technology can help people with disabilities to work

People with disabilities have the right to work like all other people. They should not be left out because they have a disability.

‘Assistive technology’ can help people with disabilities to work and do everyday activities that would be hard or impossible to do otherwise.

Here are some examples of assistive technology:

- **Wheelchairs**
  A wheelchair helps people who cannot walk to get about.
• **Hearing aids**
  Hearing aids help people who do not hear well to hear better.

• **Braille keyboards**
  A keyboard with Braille can be used by a blind person to type.

• **Screen readers**
  This is a system that reads texts aloud to people who have trouble reading for themselves.

• **Easy-to-read**
  Having information which is easy to read makes it possible for everyone to understand it without problems.

Having assistive technology is very important because it helps people with disabilities to work and to be independent.
What the situation is for people with disabilities in Europe

In practice, almost half of people with disabilities in Europe do not have a job.

But even those who have a job, they may only work part-time and get little money.

Amongst other reasons, our study showed that this can be because:

- **Many people with disabilities in Europe may not know how to use technology.** They may also not know that they have the right to get the technology they need to be able to work.

- **The information and process to apply for a job are often not accessible to people with disabilities.** For example, the website or application to fill in to apply for the job. This means that people with disabilities may not be able to apply for this job like other people.
Most employers do not understand how they can hire people with disabilities. Employers may be afraid it will cost them a lot to adjust the workplace to the needs of people with disabilities. This can be done by adding a ramp that people in wheelchairs can use to get in, having accessible toilets and getting the technology that people with disabilities need.

Also, employers may not know that they can get money from their country to make their workplace accessible. But even if they know, the process to get this money may be long and difficult.
What can be better

Our study made it clear that there are many things that can be better.

**We ask countries in Europe to:**

- Make sure schools teach children how to use technology. This way they will be able to use technology at their work later on.

- Give more support to employers to be able to make changes in the workplace to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

- Let employers know that they can get money and support to make their workplaces **accessible** to people with disabilities.

**We ask employers to:**

- Give training to people who work with them to learn how to use technology.

- Make information and process to apply for a job **accessible** so that persons with disabilities can apply like everyone else.
• Make changes in their workplace to fit the needs of people with disabilities and all people. That could be:
  
  - Making a ramp that people in wheelchairs can use to get in.
  
  - Having **accessible** toilets that people with disabilities can use.
  
  - Getting Braille keyboards that blind people can use to type.
  
  - Allowing people with disabilities to work from home if it is hard for them to get to the office every day.
  
  - Making information easy to read so that all people can understand it.
We ask companies that make assistive technology for people with disabilities to:

- Explain to employers what assistive technology is and how they can get it.
- Ask for the views of people with disabilities when they make new technology.
- Make technology cheaper so that more people can afford to buy it.
Explanation of difficult words

**Accessible**

Things are accessible when they are easy to use for people with disabilities and all people.
For example, when buildings have ramps that people in wheelchairs can use to get in. Or when information is easy to read and all people can understand it.

**Employer**

Employer is a person or a company who hires someone to do a job for them and pays them a salary for this job.

**European Union**

The European Union is a group of 27 countries in Europe. These countries work together to make things better for their people.