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.
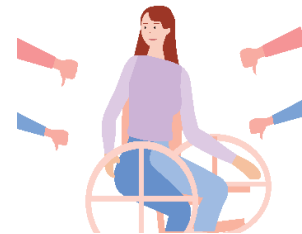
Here are some examples of assistive technology:

- **Wheelchairs**
  A wheelchair helps people
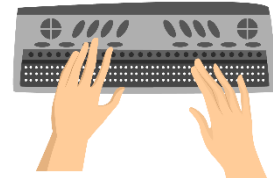 who cannot walk
  to get about.

- **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.

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.
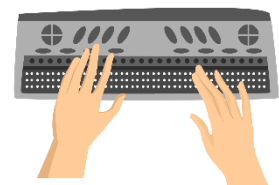

We ask employers to:

- 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.