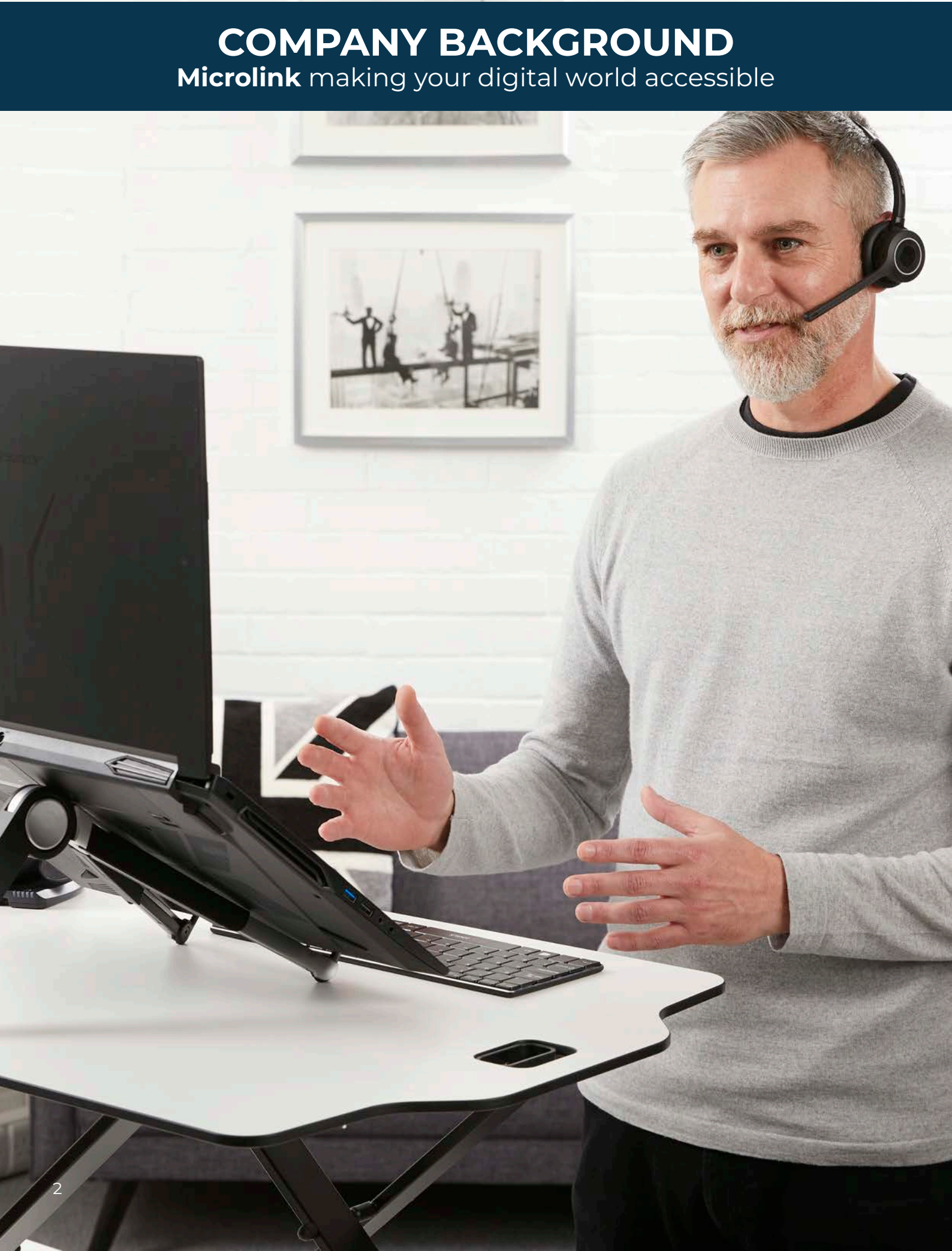




DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY INSIGHT PROPOSAL

Accessible solutions for the world we live and work in.

2021



COMPANY BACKGROUND

Microlink making your digital world accessible

MICROLINK & DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

One of the most significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the rapid acceleration of our global, society-wide dependence upon digital resources. With home-working and online communication becoming ubiquitous, the need for proper digital accessibility has become critical. Microlink has been the UK's leading provider of assistive digital technologies and accessibility solutions since 1992. As such, we have an unparalleled understanding of the barriers which disabled people face when trying to use digital assets. Lead by our highly experienced and innovative Digital Accessibility Consultant Dr Neil Rogers, Microlink's Digital Accessibility team will provide all the help you need to make your organisation's digital resources accessible and inclusive for everybody.

- 
ASSESSMENTS
- 
SERVICES
- 
COACHING
- 
E-LEARNING
- 
ASSISTIVE SOFTWARE
- 
TRAINING
- 
SIT-STAND DESKS
- 
HARDWARE
- 
ERGONOMIC FURNITURE
- 
ERGONOMIC CHAIRS
- 
CAPTIONING
- 
HOMEWORKING SOLUTIONS



DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

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WHAT IS DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY?

Digital accessibility is the process of ensuring digital technologies, services, and resources, such as websites, mobile apps, ebooks and documents are:

- Designed with the needs of disabled people and additional needs in mind.
- Flexible and can be customised and personalised to meet individual needs.
- Created so that they are compatible with Assistive Technology (AT), such as screen readers and compliant with recognised accessibility guidance and regulations (Lexdis, 2021).

WHO IS AFFECTED BY DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY?

The goal of Digital Accessibility is to guarantee that all digital assets are useable and approachable for people living with a large variety of different disabilities or health conditions. These may include:

Visual Impairment – B/blind people and partially-sighted people, people with colour vision deficiency (CVD)

Seizures – Epilepsy, Non-Epileptic Seizures (NES) and all other seizure disorders

Auditory Impairment – D/deaf and people with partial hearing loss

Dexterity Impairment – People affected by limited function of limbs or digits

Speech Difficulties – Commonly either Apraxia (Resulting from neurological symptoms) and Dysarthria (Result of muscular issues)

Cognitive and Neurological Disability – E.g. Autism, Aphasia, Dyslexia and Memory Loss

What is more, Digital Accessibility presents an opportunity to help everybody, not just disabled people. For example, speech-to-text and glare prevention technologies, while initially devised to help disabled people, have an immense capacity to improve the usability of digital assets for all of us.



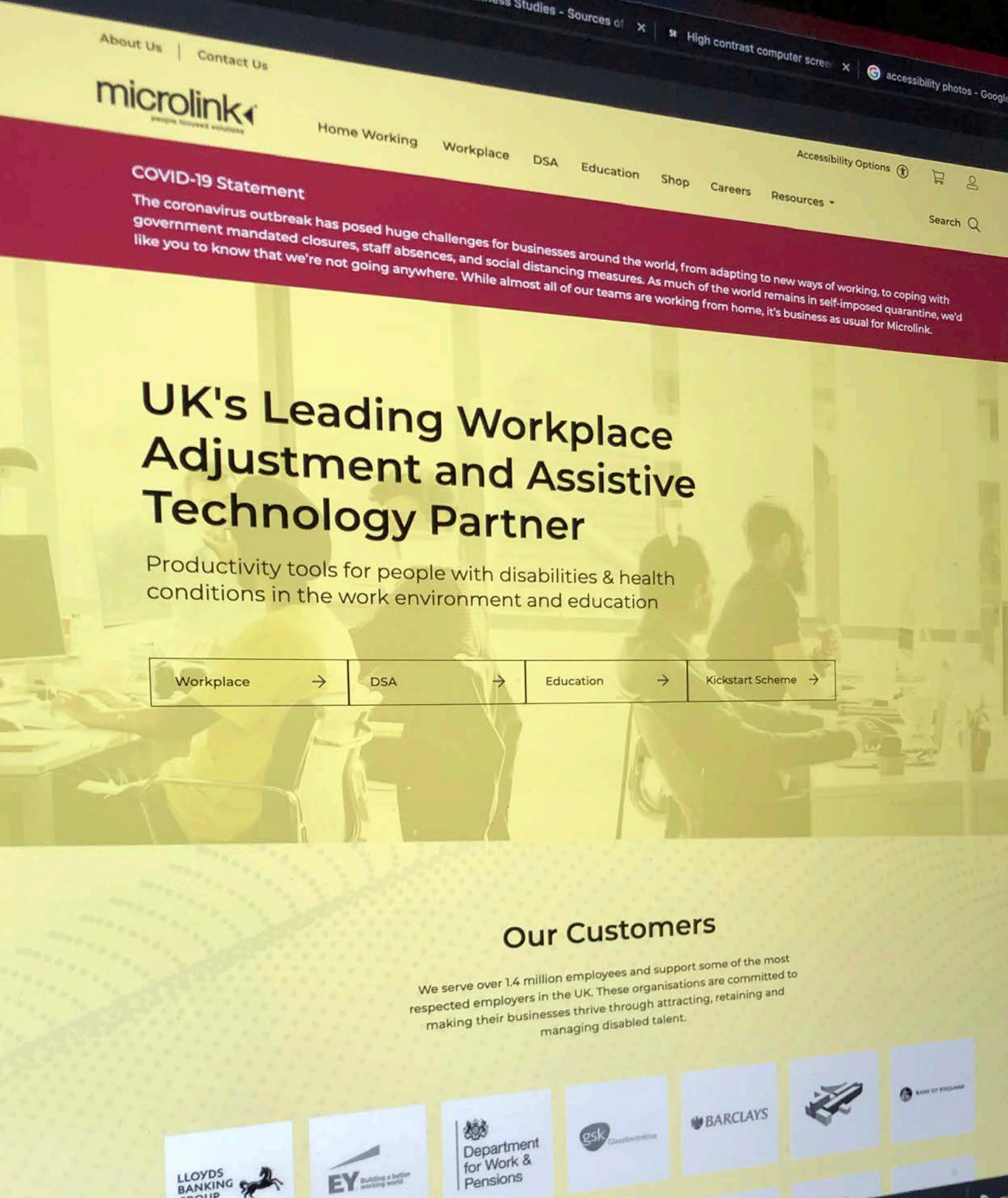
IMPROVING LIVES
Microlink making your digital world accessible

WHY IS DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY IMPORTANT FOR YOUR ORGANISATION?

With so much of our communication occurring through digital media, it has never been more important to ensure that your organisation's digital resources are accessible and inclusive to all. The reasons for this are numerous. For example, if you are a public sector organisation you have a legal duty to ensure your website, mobile applications and PDFs are accessible. That said, the positive benefits of implementing Digital Accessibility far outweigh any requirements to do so. Typically, a company's website or app is the gateway to their products and services. For your organisation to be as successful as possible, it is vitally important that you do not present obstacles to anyone trying to access these resources.

If, for example, a screen reader user is unable to navigate or read information on your website, this forms a barrier which will lead them to go elsewhere. This is important as there are 14.1 million disabled people in the UK. The demographic of families where at least one member is disabled has a total estimated spending power of £274 billion per year. By embedding digital accessibility from the outset ultimately everyone benefits. Not only will disabled and non-disabled people find your digital assets more user-friendly but your organisation or business will be able to reach a larger audience and customer-base.





WHAT MAKES MICROLINK'S DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY SOLUTIONS UNIQUE?

Microlink boasts thirty years' worth of experience in supplying assistive technology and accessibility solutions to disabled people in education and the workplace. From this we occupy a unique position to offer a wealth of expertise and understanding on the needs of disabled people, particularly with regards to the use of digital assets.

Our digital accessibility services do the heavy lifting for you, whether you need web, mobile or document formatting in isolation or in combination. From requesting a quote through to delivery we provide a tailor-made service to provide your operation with precisely what it needs. From identifying flaws in the accessibility of your digital materials in their current state through to consulting on and delivering the most appropriate solutions, we will guide you through the process.

We offer a rigorous auditing process, applying internationally recognised standards (WCAG-EM). During these, our highly trained professionals thoroughly test user journeys through your digital assets, from log in to form entry to product purchasing and beyond.

For web assets we test your resources in five mainstream browsers: Opera, Edge, Chrome, Firefox and Safari. For mobile operating systems and apps, we test in both Android and iOS. Throughout our testing we make use of Assistive Technology such as screen readers to ensure compatibility and ease of use for individuals requiring the use of such software.

INCLUDING EVERYONE

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ACCESSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Microlink making your digital world accessible



ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS OPEN UP A WHOLE NEW WORLD

We offer a unique service to test and convert pdf files on a large scale. PDF files are widespread and have significant value. However, they also regularly present challenges for individuals using screen readers and text-to-speech software. Microlink offers a remediation service, using a combination of cutting-edge technology and our singular expertise to convert very high volumes of PDFs to accessible formats.

All our findings are gathered and relayed in comprehensive and transparent reports, to ensure you see and understand precisely what is required in your organisation's individual case. From there we can offer a wealth of suggestions on how to improve the design and interactivity of your assets to ensure they are usable for everyone no matter their condition.

Best of all, we offer our personalised and highly supportive service at the most affordable prices you will find on the market.





TEAM

Microlink making your digital world accessible



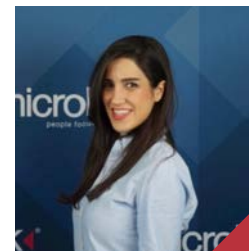
Dr Nasser Siabi - CEO Microlink

Nasser is the CEO of Microlink and one of the founding members of the Business Disability Forum (BDF) Technology Task Force since 2010, the British Assistive Technology Association (BATA) and part of the DWP Disability Employer Engagement steering group. He has 30 years' experience working in the assistive technology sector and in 2009 and 2020 Nasser won the IoD Director of the year award. Included in his accolades are the OBE for services to disabled people, the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) and the National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP) lifetime contribution awards. He has a Phd in Computer Science from the University of Southampton and will oversee the entire project from its start to delivery.



Dr Neil Rogers - Head of Digital Accessibility

Neil is the Head of Digital Accessibility at Microlink and helps clients to evaluate web, mobile and format accessibility with an expert understanding of standards including WCAG 2.1 AA and beyond, EN 301 549, PDF 1.7, PDF/UA and EPUB 3.2. He will lead the team and project manage the digital accessibility audit. Neil has a MSc by Research and a Doctorate in Computer Science from the University of Southampton. He is also a Visiting Fellow at the same institute and is familiar with a broad range of research methods including mixed method (quantitative and qualitative), user testing, semi-structured interviews, surveys, and ethics approval.



Azadeh Sotoudeh - Web Testing and Audit

Azadeh is Web testing and audit manager. She has got her Masters in Marketing Innovation from the University of Winchester and got her Digital Accessibility: Enabling participation in the information society certificate from University of Southampton and MOOCAP. She has got experience auditing websites and digital content with JAWS to help projects achieve Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 compliance. These include, but are not limited to, accessibility audits and testing with assistive technologies.



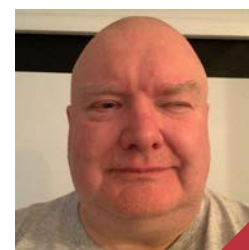
Barry Croniken - Scripting and Screen Readers

Barry is the head of R&D at Microlink. He has over 20 years' experience in the assistive technology industry. He is a trainer and able to provide scripting for JAWS and Dragon for blind people. He has experience with software accessibility testing, consultancy and development related to products and services. Alongside this, he is front line support for IT/AT integration and user experience on accessibility of equipment for Visually Impaired (VI) users. He proactively finds and introduces new products suitable for the education, corporate, medical, and independent living sectors.



Carl Norton - Web Developer

Carl is not only one of Microlink's Web Developers; he's also an experienced consultant able to audit websites for accessibility and WCAG 2.0, 2.1 and ADA compliance. Carl has been involved in many projects encompassing audits and testing, consultancy, and design review. The audit reports produced will give developers detailed solutions to the problems found.



Robbie Corbett - Web Developer and Assistive Technology Content Manager

Robert is a web developer with 25-years' experience in designing and the implementation of many projects for Microlink. This includes projects for Dundee, Sussex, and York universities. Bringing web accessibility to the forefront of any design has always been reflected in the work that he does.



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