

# Able to Include



## News digest

### Welcome to the second issue of the Able to Include Project Newsletter

**Able to Include** is an innovative new project run by [partners](#) from five European countries. Knowing that many technological tools suitable for mainstream use, and even some particularly designed for disabled people, are not accessible for persons with intellectual disabilities, **Able to Include** aims to create a technical solution that ensures people with intellectual disabilities can use applications to lead fulfilling, independent lives.

In this groundbreaking project, partners will integrate a set of existing technologies to create an open-source and context-aware accessibility layer which will integrate with current and future technological tools. The project will test the accessibility layer in three usage scenarios over a 14-month period.

In practice, partners will create three key tools:

- A text and content simplifier
- A pictogram-text, text-pictogram and pictogram-pictogram translation tool
- Text-to-speech functionalities

In the next newsletter we will already present you the Android and Apple apps!

**Able to Include** will also produce an open source Software Developer Kit that will promote the introduction of the accessibility layer for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in any software development environment.

We hope you will enjoy this newsletter, and look forward to your comments and suggestions.

Best regards,  
The **Able to Include** Consortium



### What we've been up to



#### A sneak peek at the results of the Thomas More focus groups

In order to gather insight on the current knowledge and expectations of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities regarding social media, researchers from [Thomas More](#) organized several focus groups with our target group, but also with their coaches. In addition to conducting interviews, the research team also set down with the people with intellectual disabilities to explore the existing social media applications by means of a game. This way, users were able to try out Facebook, Skype, Instagram, YouTube and WhatsApp together with the researchers, and share with them their critical opinions.

It was clear from the focus groups that persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities are interested in social media. Although they are not always up to date on what applications exist and what they are used for, they find it important to know how to use social media and be kept up-to-date with what is new, just like everyone else. The larger their social network, and the more frequently persons with intellectual disabilities are able to participate in their communities, the more they are prone to using social media. Researchers noticed even the participants who had never worked with social media were still enthusiastic about the possibilities it could offer them, and enjoyed trying it out, regardless of their age or level of ability. [Read more](#)



#### Facebook tops list of preferences for people with intellectual disabilities

One of the prerequisites of developing accessible software for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities is truly understanding how they use technology, and what their needs and requirements are. Therefore, to facilitate the creation of the accessibility layer, the final goal of the Able to Include Project, partner [Building Bridges Training \(BBT\)](#) from the United Kingdom has held six focus groups with people with intellectual disabilities, and has so far analysed 53 questionnaires.

The results are extremely telling. BBT has found that 74% of the people interviewed have access to the internet, and 58% of them can go online from home, either using their own or their parents' devices. Five respondents found the internet too complicated or a risk to their personal or financial wellbeing, which suggests they would have greatly benefited from training on using a computer or hand-held device and on data protection. The focus groups showed that Facebook, Google, YouTube and gaming sites are visited by the majority of the respondents, while shopping, general interest, hobbies and sport websites are popular as well. [Read more](#)



#### ATI partner develops automatic easy-to-read translation tool

One aim of the Able-to-Include European project is to make text simplification technology available for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

The TALN group at Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona is leading the development and adaptation of technology to simplify textual content in Spanish and English, and has already developed tools which will be presented at the IX Scientific Conference on Research on Disabilities in Salamanca, Spain on 19 March 2015. [Read more](#)

#### First text-to-speech prototype now ready

In December 2014, Able to Include partner Teamnet released the first prototype for the text-to-speech service that will act as a core component of the Accessibility Layer.

The prototype of the TTS Service uses ESPEAK as the Text To Speech engine, as it has been widely used in the open source community. The service will be accessible using a RESTful architecture based on JSON messages. This architecture will facilitate easy integration with a multitude of platforms and technologies, whether these are web-based, mobile, or desktop.

### Where we've been

Horacio Saggion, from the [Pompeu Fabra University](#), presented the simplifier and associated technology at ESCOLAB, an event for secondary school students, and at a [GLCom Seminar](#).

**Able to Include** was featured in the [EU Reporter](#). The [article](#) about the **Able to Include** Project is available in 56 languages.



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