

# Learn to Enable Digital for Everyone

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Helen Wilson

# Aims of this session

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- Introduce the research and context
- Introduce the aim of the Learn to Enable website and your contribution to it today
- Collate ideas to bring accessibility awareness into the mainstream

# Introduction

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- Who I am
  - Background in FE, Local Gov, CPACC
  - PHD Research student
- Research aims
  - **Prototype and pilot activities and resources for the teaching *of* digital accessibility basic principles and awareness**
  - Build a teaching resources toolkit
  - September school teaching placement



Teaching accessibly and the teaching *of* digital accessibility

# Background

- We now live in a ‘digital by default’ and ‘digital first’ world
- 1 in 5 people have some form of disability
- Legal backdrop for the creation of digitally accessible content
  - Web regulations (2018)
  - Equality Act (2010) reasonable adjustments

**“The march to make all services ‘digital by default’ using the government’s term, the ethical business case for knowing about and addressing digital accessibility will become more compelling as time goes on” (Hassell, 2019).**



# Rationale

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- As a society we are not just consumers but regular creators of digital content
- Content needs to be accessible for those with disabilities and work on assistive technologies

## However

- Inaccessible content is still a barrier
- Baseline awareness and skills for digital accessibility is still not mainstream knowledge and practice
- There is a skills and research gap in this area for the educational curriculum





# Position

## Experience of training model in the workplace

- Seen as the responsibility of IT profession (niche subject) – initial low engagement
- Seen as add-on or fix at the end
- Perceived as complex, but there are basic principles anyone can apply
- The challenges of ‘**unlearning**’ skills and practices later in life

## Learn it *right and from the start* at school

- It is not on the school curriculum
- No research within the school curriculum
- Research is only in the higher education or workplace sector
- The basics of awareness



**“As teachers we learn how to make content inclusive *for* our students...yet it’s *their* future world so why aren’t *they* learning about it too?”**  
(Wilson, 2023)

# Mainstream knowledge and scalable

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Currently accessibility is in the hands of web developers and specialists (WCAG) and not mainstream

***What we have are a few people who know a lot about Accessibility. What we need are a lot of people to know a little about it.***

*– Matt May (Adobe)*



**Great oaks  
from little  
acorns grow**

## **Accessible Acorns**

- The famous proverb **great oaks from little acorns grow** puts forward the idea that if you persist with small efforts they may build to grander ones in time.



# The Learn to Enable website

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- Long term aim is to build up research and resources (Teach Access)
- To gather evidence to get **basic principles and awareness** added into the curriculum
- Helpful guidance and resources hub
- Develop it with the community (design-based research - co-production)

[www.learntoenable.co.uk](http://www.learntoenable.co.uk)

Think digital,  
think **everyone**



# The Learn to Enable website basic principles

Did you know?

Colour and contrast

Images and alt text

Video captions

Hashtags and emojis

Basic models of disability

Headings and titles

Descriptive links

Fonts

Audio transcripts

Universal design principles

Clear language

Reading order

Tables

Accessibility checkers

# Activity

## Highlight digital accessibility in the mainstream

- Think about the everyday contexts where digital accessibility is or should be in place
- Contribute to posters as learning materials for the Learn to Enable website
- Flip charts
  - Online alternative
  - [www.learntoenable.co.uk/blc](http://www.learntoenable.co.uk/blc)

### Accessibility Tips

## Creating websites and apps that can be used by older people

### Older People

- May have multiple minor impairments – sight, hearing, touch, understanding, and memory
- May not want to use specialist assistive technologies – so screen readers aren't a help, but simple accessibility settings can be, if someone they know helps set them up



### They may have hearing loss

- Make sure your videos have captions
- Consider providing customer service via video calls with automated captions



### They may have impaired vision

- Minimum 12pt text size
- Adjustable text size & pinch zoom
- Good colour contrast



### They may have poor hand control

- Make your buttons big enough to tap with an unsteady hand

### They may need help with comprehension

[Hassell Inclusion older people poster \(PDF\)](#)

# Digital accessibility basic principles in real life?

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- Documents
- Presentations
- Spreadsheets
- Videos
- Podcasts
- Emails
- Calendars
- Websites
- Booking forms
- Application forms
- ATM/cash machine
- Parking meters/apps
- Shopping (Online/self service)
- Payments
- Reporting issues
- Banking
- Games
- Social media
- Packaging
- Posters
- Apps
- Phones
- Travel ticket machines
- TV

# In FE subjects

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Where might FE students see digital accessibility needs in content/products for:

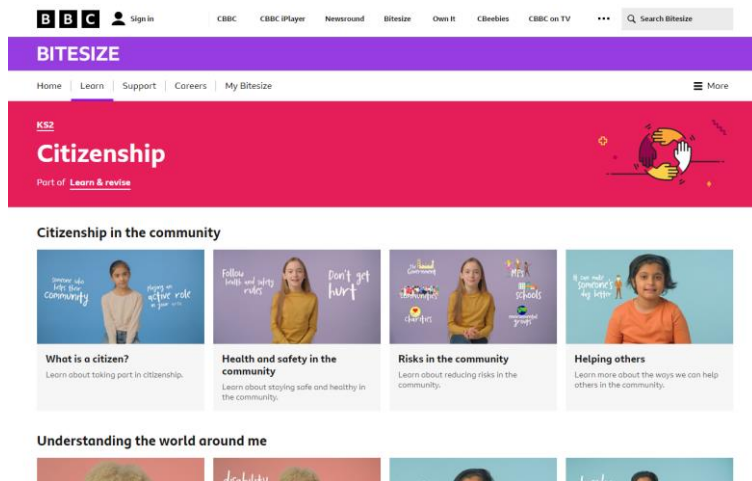
- Hospitality
- Art and design
- Business
- Sport
- Travel and tourism
- Hairdressing
- Media and TV
- Public services
- Medical
- Social care





# The computing and citizenship curriculum

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## Reframing digital accessibility:

- This is about **people** who live in a digital world
- We are all **citizens** in a digital world
- We need to **help each other** in the digital world in which we live
- Not framed by digital and IT but by helping others

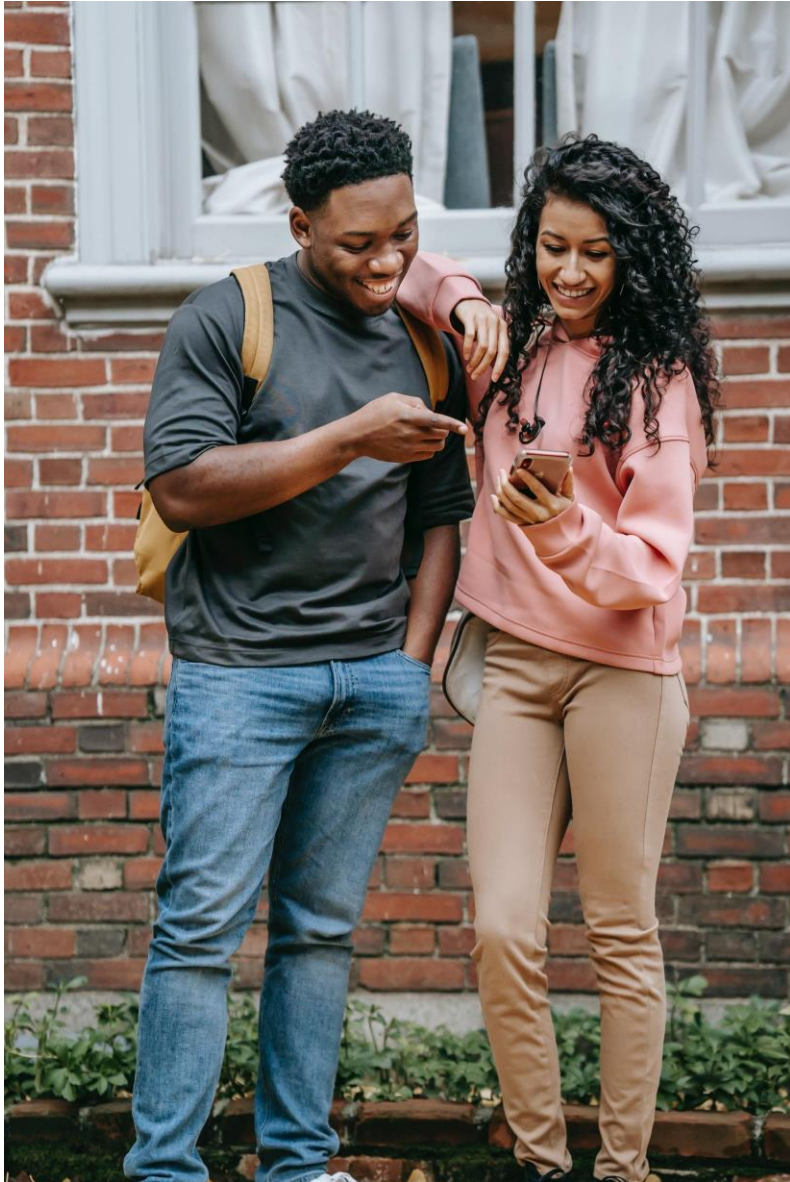


# The FE context

- Who is currently responsible for digital accessibility at your organisation?
- What knowledge about basic digital accessibility awareness is being *taught* to students that you know of?
- Where can we find opportunities in FE to raise awareness?
- What would be useful for you as a teacher to be able to include or reference this topic in your curriculum?

Online alternative

[www.learntoenable.co.uk/blc](http://www.learntoenable.co.uk/blc)



# Future

- Would anyone like to participate in case studies of teaching this subject with their students?
- Read more about my ideas:  
[AbilityNet blog - Time to sow new seeds for digital accessibility](#)

#LearnToEnable #AccessibileAcorns

[www.learntoenable.co.uk](http://www.learntoenable.co.uk)