# **Digital Technology and Professionals with Visual Impairments**

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# **Slide 1: Digital Technology and Professionals with Visual Impairments**

Digital Technology and Professional with Visual Impairments

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# **Slide 2: Why we embark on this research?**

All human beings should have the right to realise their potentials

In 2014, WHO reported that 350 million people are affected by hearing loss and 285 million people are estimated to be visually impaired worldwide

In New Zealand, 484,000 people or 11% of population are affected by sensory impairments

New developments in digital technology can compensate for functional limitations

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# **Slide 3: What we did in this research?**

Pilot study: August and September 2014

* Interviews with eight individuals with visual or hearing impairments and the line manager of two of them

In-depth case study: April – July 2015

* Interviews with two professionals with visual impairments, their colleagues and line managers
* Kitchen work: Peter Behr, Chef who lost his central vision
* Policy work: Martine Abel, Disability advisor who is blind

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# **Slide 4: Digital technology: Functional tool**

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# **Slide 5: Peter: Digital technology and work practices**

* iPad and iPhone with accessibility features, iPad and iPhone camera, Magnificent app, Dropbox
* “If I touch the screen with three fingers, I can make [the content] big and zoom in on anything.”
* “Obviously, [reading the labels] can be quite difficult … If I need, I can take a picture [using my iPad camera].”
* “I am constantly looking up websites with applications that can help me.”

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# **Slide 6: Martine: Digital technology and work practices**

* iPhone with accessibility features, refreshable braille display, screen reader software
* “I would not be able to think of a day that would go by whether I am at work or not that I do not use technology.”
* “I use email to collect information and be informed...Mostly, I have no difficulty with the information … unless it is unstructured PDF … I probably receive internal or external communications that are not accessible every second day.”
* “It is quicker for me to write every slide information on an MS Word document… Then, I ask them to format it for me into an MS PowerPoint presentation.”

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# **Slide 7: Workplace: Community and norms**

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# **Slide 8: Workplace: Rules, community, division of labour**

* Technology with accessibility features

“The organisation provides technology support reluctantly. The iPhone is accessible. We have to make a case to get it approved. I supported through the budget so they get the right training through the Blind Foundation.”

* Accessible and inclusive communication guidelines

“The organisation should be accessible and I don’t think they are.”

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# **Slide 8 Continued: Workplace: Rules, community, division of labour**

* Administrative support

“One particular staff has, as part of her task, to help me, if I need help with document formatting.”

* Accommodation, workaround, improvisation

“Every time I make a change in a paragraph, I put a bracket around it. I type in my initials and what I have changed and close the bracket.”

“It is about consideration. You don’t do a PowerPoint presentation. But if you do, they get the information beforehand.”

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# **Slide 9: Takeaway lessons**

* Digital technology opens up work opportunities for people with visual impairments
* There is a need to look at standard work practices
* Collaborative work practices should be built on the principles of the right to information and inclusive work practices

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# **Slide 10: Thank you**

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# **Slide 11: Digital technology and inclusive practices: Discussion**

* Can you share your perspective/experience on the role of digital technology and inclusive practices?
* What can we do to promote the use of digital technology and inclusive practices?
* Are there any areas that need further work from research, policy and practice points of view?
* Other comments and suggestions?

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