


Thank you, Ma'am!

[HelpKidzLearn](#) from Inclusive Technology is an award winning collection of software for people with the most severe disabilities. Not only is it a vital resource for learners in the UK, but also it is proving to be a firm favourite in the United States and 148 other countries. Now its success has been crowned by the Queen. To mark her 90th birthday she has given Inclusive Technology the most prestigious International Trade award in the UK – the Queen's Award for Enterprise 2016.


Martin Littler, Chairman and CEO of Inclusive Technology, has been a pioneer in the field of technology for children and adults with severe learning disabilities (SLD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) or those without speech who need alternative or augmentative communication (AAC) who perhaps can only make a single voluntary movement or sound.

Last month the HelpKidzLearn development team received the  2016 Education Resource Award for Special Educational Needs including ICT for their work on harnessing [Eye Gaze](#) technology to meet the needs of learners with complex needs. Eye-gaze technology is the closest equivalent we have to thought-operated hardware so far, and is already surprisingly affordable. Inclusive Technology's myGaze costs just £875 and is having an impact not just on children but on adults as well.

Just looking around a computer screen moves the mouse pointer and gazing at an area performs a click with no physical effort needed. Support workers can now use eye gaze to identify where the user is looking when different images, prompts or questions are asked, giving an insight into what users can see, what they are interested in looking at and some indication of their understanding skills.

Sean Carroll, IT/Assistive Technology Consultant at Sensation

Communication and Technology Solutions, describes its impact: 'James has sat in his chair since he was 19 with very little to occupy himself with, and even when at school I don't think his independent access skills were attended to very much at all.' Now with an Eye Gaze tracker James is able to access some online games and his parents are delighted to discover evidence of new skills.'

Yesterday Martin was on TV with his colleague Sandra Thistlethwaite who is a Specialist Speech and Language Therapist, and Dan Woodman, deputy head teacher at Richard Cloudsley School in London. They were talking to the presenter of London Live about the impact of the technology on children's lives. 

'Children need to play, have fun and communicate,' said Martin, 'but this technology also lets children who are non-verbal use on-screen symbols and words to build language, create messages and take part in conversations with families and friends. The award is a huge pat on the back for our team of developers, teachers and therapists.'


Martin and his managing director Sukhjit Gill will collect the award at a Buckingham Palace reception on July 14, 2016.

[**Read All About It with Symbol**](#)

Support

With the Olympics and the Queen's Jubilee coming up, there has never been a better time to get young people interested in the news. But what if your children are not good readers? They may end up confined to the TV news which is so transitory that children cannot grasp it, let alone recall it.

News-2-You (<http://www.news-2-you.co.uk/>) is an online newspaper aimed at pupils who need extra support for literacy. It has been created by special needs company Inclusive Technology, comes out fortnightly and costs just £99 for a single licence. It has speech and symbol support and brings over 200 pages of current affairs, features, activities and stories into the classroom.

Teachers can access News-2-You on an interactive whiteboard  for whole class work or print it out for individuals. It has four levels of difficulty. The Simplified version gives a basic overview of the week's key story topic with SymbolStix supported text. This is ideal for young people with learning disabilities who cannot access conventional print. There are three higher levels so pupils can progress.

In addition to the differentiated levels, there is also a text only version and all levels have a 'speaking edition'. This means that the students follow the text as it is read aloud. Each word is highlighted as it is spoken.

Each edition features the story of the week which is the focus for a host of activities too. Recent topics including the Frozen Planet, Sports Relief Week, Animal Record Breakers and Star Wars – The Phantom Menace. It also has a World new section which has 2 or 3 substantial articles per fortnight and uses Google Maps to show where each story is taking place.

It is packed full of activities including worksheets for comprehension and literacy activities. But News-2-You is not

all about the serious stuff. There is always a joke, a recipe for cookery lessons and some games.