Age:	42
Location:	Merchtem, Belgium
Marital status:	Married
Education:	High school
Job:	Part-time employed
Impairment:	**Partly blurred vision**

meet Gert Van Dijk...

Gert Van Dijk lives in Merchtem with his wife Chris (44) and suffers from a partly blurred vision since his adolescence. Gert works in orchards during the busy seasons, at other times he stays at home and manages the household. His wife Chris works full time at the city administration. Gert didn't have a lot of problems at school, but never felt a lot for studying. That's why he didn't seek any higher education. He immediately started working and over the years, he has collected a broad range of jobs such as helping out on a construction site or at the city's green service. As long as he can be outdoors and use his hands, Gert is happy to work all day.

technology use

Gert has bought himself a laptop, mainly because of its portability and the lack of assistive technologies on public computers. He can not use the most recent software versions because of the poor compatibility with AT software. Also, his assistive software (Realspeak and Supernova) is only reimbursed by government every 5 years which is too slow to keep up with technology.

Chris is a member of the local dance club. Gert helps her out selecting songs and putting them together in a mix. For the rehearsals, Gert can generate mixes on half the tempo. Especially in the beginning of learning a new choreography, this really comes in handy. Gert did have to search hard for an accessible music player and editor. Popular media players such as Winamp don't work with his assistive technologies. His only option was open source, but these communities do not really excel in documentation and support. It took Gert 6 months to finally find what he needed, and another 2 months to fully learn the possibilities of those programs.

Gert doesn't carry his regular cellular phone all the time, but does use it almost daily. Mostly to call and text his wife and friends. He has got a clamshell model which has large, clearly separated buttons. In the beginning he was overwhelmed by the many features that are available on his phone, features he doesn't use or need anyway. Learning the basic functions such as calling and texting didn't take that long. He has got a screen embosser and speech output for his phone which help him a lot. Occasionally, he downloads an audio book from the Internet and uploads it to his mobile so he can listen to it on location or on the move (train). He likes this since the voices are real; exciting books are read by a human voice, with emotion. What a contrast with the computerized voices he gets when using his assistive technologies.

To learn the assistive technologies he tried several courses; the problem was though that every person had a different visual impairment. There wasn't enough time for the instructor to focus on the different needs of his students. Therefore the course remained very general and went too fast for many students.

On his desktop, Gert finds it hard to understand the windows error messages. He also doesn't understand why he experiences so many file format compatibility issues, when he tries to open e-books or other documents in his speech output software.

Gert feels left behind (digital gap) by the slowness of governmental support and lack of native language support.

When using his mobile, he finds it hard to search his contacts throughout all the menus and to read the display when it is sunny.

😊 😞 needs & wants

- Gert would like to do internet banking via his browser, but for the moment his banking application is not accessible yet. Therefore Chris has to do all the banking.

- The absence of emotion in computerized voices sometimes irritates Gert; he would like to hear some more intonation in the speech output.

- Since he likes to work outdoors, Gert keeps a close watch on the weather forecasts. Unfortunately, the national climate institute only offers weather in a graphical format (charts).

- Gert and Chris are looking to buy a new car. The dealer's website offers an interactive car configurator (RIA) but this is barely accessible and those parts that are, constantly move around and change location. He needs these RIAs to offer their content separately from the visual presentation layer.

- He needs a better contrast on his mobile display, especially in outdoor environments.

- Gert prefers websites free of ads, captchas or popups. Or these windows should at least be easier to close.

- He often wonders why there is no textual indicator of the battery level and signal strength on his mobile (instead of the icon).

last month...

Gert is a great fan of cycling and uses his laptop to look up new cycle routes on the Internet. He then downloads them and prints them out. For his last birthday however, Chris bought him a gps device. At first, Gert was over the moon! It would make it a lot easier than printing the cards out; he wouldn't have to stop to consult his map and just keep on cycling. Unfortunately, the gps comes with 3th party software which doesn't work well with his speech output; this makes that Chris needs to help him export the tracks and routes to the gps device. They are both not really happy with this since it was quite expensive.