HMRC Accessibility Empathy Hub

Changing People’s Perceptions

# Using personas to test accessibility

Accessibility personas highlight common barriers faced by people with particular conditions and provide tips on how to design for them. These can be used by teams to create services that are accessible to all. We created login profiles for each persona. These login profiles simulate the user’s condition and the tools he or she may be using to help with that condition.

## ASHLEIGH

“I couldn’t buy my sister the present she really wanted for her birthday because none of the fields were labelled on the website.”

### Ashleigh: partially sighted screen reader user

* 24 year old arts graduate and administrative assistant
* Uses screen reader

### Frustrations

* Annoyed when she has to look for a phone number or ask for help web content doesn’t work with screen reader.
* Sometimes guesses what she needs to fill in because screenreader can’t read forms if they aren’t labelled properly.
* Can’t visualise the item she’s looking when at shopping online because there’s no description that her screen reader can understand.

## CLAUDIA

“My screen magnifier has made it possible for me to use the web again. I just wish more companies kept their websites simple.”

### Claudia: partially sighted screen magnifier user

* 54 year old social worker
* Uses screen magnifier

### Frustrations

* Tends to forget to scroll horizontally when she’s using ZoomText.
* Sometimes misses fields or help text when filling in forms that are next to each other.
* Hates it when she’s using ZoomText and a pop-up box appears off screen.
* Get’s confused if the layout of a form isn’t consistent

## RON

“I don’t like having to ring call centres - it’s too noisy and people don’t speak clearly enough.”

### Ron: older user with multiple conditions

* 82 years old, retired, arthritis, hearing loss, cataracts
* Doesn’t use any assistive technology

### Frustrations

* Hard for him to hear if there’s no hearing loop or it doesn’t work well when in a formal appointment with someone.
* Finds it stressful calling a contact centre - there’s often a lot of background noise, and he struggles when the person he’s talking to doesn’t speak clearly.
* Poor eyesight makes it hard for him to read large blocks of text.
* Doesn’t know how to adjust his browser settings and often he’ll just give up.

## SALEEM

“I’m fluent in British Sign Language, but people don’t realise it’s different from English and things can be difficult for me to understand.”

### Saleem: profoundly deaf user

* 22 years old, unemployed
* Uses BSL as his main language, English is his second language, always has video captions switched on

### Frustrations

* Annoyed when captions say things like ‘music playing’ and then don’t have the song words.
* Finds it difficult to read large blocks of text - if there are no captions, transcripts are OK.
* English isn’t great so if something isn’t easily understood needs it in BSL or a search engine to correct spelling.
* Usually has to enter his mobile number when filling in a form, but there’s nowhere to say he prefers to get text messages to calls.

## SIMONE

“My spelling’s bad and forms take me ages to fill in, but I have to get things right in my job and the software I use helps me a lot.”

### Simone: dyslexic user

* 41 year old office manager
* Uses software which highlights text as well as reads it out

### Frustrations

* Takes a while to fill in forms, and sometimes has to ask her husband or older son to check what she has written.
* Her spelling is bad, and so relies on things like search engines to offer her suggestions as to what she meant.
* Still asks a colleague to check important emails she’s sending, just in case
* Can’t concentrate when things like banners or tickers move on a page.
* Struggles with lot’s reading or when the language is complicated. Uses audiobooks.

## PAWEL

“Websites can be so distracting. It takes me ages to do anything sometimes, as I feel like I have to read every word and click on every link.”

### Pawel: user with Asperger’s

* 24 year old chemistry graduate
* Adjusts things like colours to reduce potential stress and distractions

### Frustrations

* Gets easily distracted and wants to read and click everything. Wishes there wasn’t as much text or links.
* Finds moving content like banners or video distracting, and gets stressed out by bright colours.
* Thinks websites often assume you know more than you do.
* Doesn’t like using the phone, but a lot of companies don’t let you contact them by email or live chat.

## CHRIS

“I’m training my software to understand my voice commands. In the meantime, I’ll carry on using a keyboard to get around websites as it’s less painful than a mouse.”

### Chris: user with rheumatoid arthritis

* 53 year old management accountant
* Only uses keyboard and just started using voice control

### Frustrations

* Gets annoyed when he can’t use parts of a website with a keyboard, like video players and navigation menus.
* Takes him a while to fill out forms and hates it when they time out without much warning.
* Wastes a lot of time trying to tab through things like navigation menus.
* Sometimes has problems with pop-up boxes.