



Accessible by Design

An International Symposium

15th and 16th October 2025

BITS-Pilani, Hyderabad Campus

Towards disability equity in tech futures

Assistive technology (AT) ensures access and dignity to people with and without disabilities. Specifically, assistive technology ensures full and equal participation of people with disabilities by fostering inclusion, removing physical and social barriers, facilitating social justice, and enabling the exercise of human rights. However, despite significant technological advancements, AT in India faces numerous barriers and challenges that hinder its widespread adoption. Lack of awareness, limited information, affordability issues, challenges in research, development, and manufacturing all contribute to significant hurdles. While India has a UNCRPD-compliant law, in the RPD Act 2016, which ensures justice and equitable participation for people with disabilities, poor implementation of access mandates prevents AT from being a tool of justice.

Accessible by Design, a two-day symposium at BITS-Pilani Hyderabad Campus, intends to highlight the development of assistive technology in India to foster a more inclusive, equitable and empowered society for people with disabilities. Knowledge and leadership of persons with disabilities will be centered as the shapers and co-creators of accessible and just design futures.

Events

- Thematic panel discussions.
- Action plan and recommendation workshops.
- Technology showcase - Display by AT companies and innovators

This symposium invites a diverse community of participants from across the assistive technology ecosystem, including:

Disability advocates | Designers | Tech developers | Accessibility professionals | Policymakers and Legal practitioners | Educators and Researchers | Industry leaders | DPOs and NGOs

Art Concept : The logo for AccessQuity draws on the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, represented in sign language with diverse anatomical variations to affirm equity through imperfection. The backdrop art extends this philosophy: its circular, unfinished form symbolizes the evolving collaborative practice of building equitable access with disabled individuals and communities.

This symposium is part of the AccessQuity initiative: “Equitable Access to Assistive Technologies in India,” supported by DSIT's International Science Partnerships Fund via the **Royal Academy of Engineering, UK** (Frontiers Champions scheme)

Themes

This symposium is critically structured thematically around the four canonical stages of design thinking: *Empathize*, *Define*, *Ideate*, and *Prototype*, with the objectives listed below.

Theme 1: Empathize – *Whose Empathy? Whose Experience?*

To foster interdisciplinary dialogue between different stakeholders of Assistive Technology and go beyond tokenism by recognising the potential of disabled people as user-designers.

Theme 2: Define – *Defining Problems or Defining People?*

To discuss the relevance of user-centric design in Assistive Technology, ensuring solutions that are accessible by going beyond body-centric solutions to environmental adaptations.

Theme 3: Ideate – *Whose Ideas Count?*

To identify emerging trends, challenges, and future directions in Assistive Technology in the form of design fictions and critiques that are disability centric.

Theme 4: Prototype — *Accessible to Whom? Legible to What?*

To examine the concepts of accessibility and legibility in the design of Assistive Technology by reflecting on inaccessible prototyping practices and disability-led prototyping processes.

Expression of Interest

Interested participants may send us a statement of **100-200 words** connecting your research/organization's work to one or more of the symposium's themes.

You may send your EoI to accessquity.bitshyd@gmail.com with the subject line, "Expression of Interest: Accessible by Design: Towards disability equity in tech futures" by 15th September, 2025. In the email, please include your name (or organization's name), affiliation, and why you would like to attend the symposium.

Important Dates

Last date for the submission of EoI **15th September, 2025**

Notification of Acceptance **20th September, 2025**

Last date for registration **30th September, 2025**

***Registration is mandatory for participation.**

Organizing Team

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