

ADAPTING TECHNOLOGY CHANGING LIVES



The digital revolution is now more pervasive than ever. Over 90% of UK jobs depend on computers, some 65% of homes have a broadband internet connection, there are more mobile phones than UK citizens and our leisure time is increasingly dominated by technology in some form or another.

Looking to the future, we remain committed to the 9.8 million disabled people across the UK who need our help, and to our mission that of ensuring that the technology they need is fully accessible.



ADAPTING TECHNOLOGY CHANGING LIVES

That everyone can access this fast moving digital age is paramount and AbilityNet has a key role to play in pushing inclusivity to the top of the agenda at school, work and home, regardless of age, health, disability, or socioeconomic situation.

In 2008, we directly supported 43,724 people, helping them overcome their accessibility issues. During the year, 7,482 disabled children and adults received assessments, equipment, training sessions and home support visits and we reached 36,242 through our project work. In addition, 229,902 copies of our on-line fact and skill sheets were downloaded and 204,535 end-users visited our 'My Computer, My Way' facility to learn how to adapt their computer independently. The number of registered users for our on-line e-learning provision has grown to 1,050 and there were 851,038 user sessions on our website.

During 2009 and beyond, our intent is to continue to deliver and grow our:

Free services to support more disabled people, delivering assessments, advice and information, free resources, training and equipment.

Partner relationships - working with over 300 community and voluntary organisations across the UK to deliver accessible ICT to local communities.

Unique and innovative methods of service delivery, giving flexibility and easy access to our beneficiaries whilst driving down costs.

Work on raising awareness across government, public and commercial sectors and to individuals on the benefits and availability of accessible ICT.

Our vision is a world where accessible IT is available to improve the quality of life for those with disabilities and accessibility needs.

Dr Michael R. Taylor
Chairman
(seated left)

Nigel Lewis
Chief Executive

AbilityNet's advice and information service is at the core of our direct assistance provision to digitally excluded people. Through a free telephone service and e-mail, together with modern and dynamic on-line systems, we are helping a record number of disabled people gain access to computer technology and the Internet.

A&I LINE

free advice and information

"We can provide a solution to help get people back on-line where many have virtually given up hope of ever being able to use a computer. They feel so relieved to find a sympathetic, impartial and non-judgemental expert who has the time and patience to both listen and help."

Henry Allcock
AbilityNet Advice & Information Service

With new, convenient and cost-effective resources, we aim to meet the ever increasing demand for our expertise from both individuals and organisations.

We believe in sharing our specialist information gathered over 20 years openly with those who most need it. This free service received over 3,000 enquiries last year from around the world, and over 300 times that number visited our website, where they downloaded nearly 230,000 fact sheets from our extensive on-line library.

We continue to lead the field in providing advice and support using the latest web 2.0 applications such as social networking software, YouTube and Twitter, to connect and help those in need across the globe. Our newly launched AbilityNet Wiki has already attracted 20,000 users worldwide – a clear indication of the increasing awareness of adaptive technology and its benefits.

"Our job's awesome imagine helping someone to get back their independence. For many clients, it's an emotional moment when they realise their computer and internet access can be restored there are often tears of relief."

Alex Barker
AbilityNet Advice & Information Service



AbilityNet completed over 1000 assessments in 2008, each of which enabled a disabled individual to identify the right adaptive solution to fit their technology needs. We have developed a flexible and comprehensive range of assessment service delivery methods, ranging from on-line, self completion and remote options using screen sharing and video conferencing, to the all important face-to-face experience.

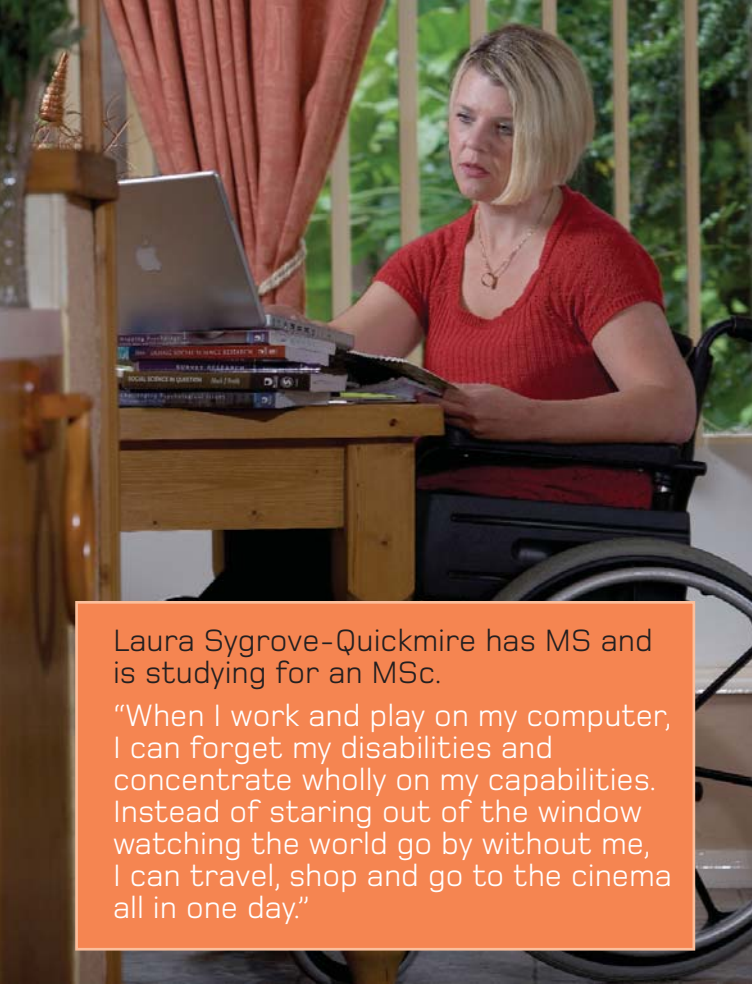
ASSESSMENT

how our services impact on the lives of people with disabilities

We continue to attract new clients to a growing list of household names in the public, private and voluntary sectors, including DEFRA and DWP; ITV, IBM, Microsoft, Age Concern, MNDA and Sue Ryder Care Homes. In addition, our relationship with Access to Work has continued to extend geographically enabling more people to enter or retain gainful employment.

Mike Miller has scotopic sensitivity (a form of visual dyslexia) and is a heating and ventilation service engineer.

"AbilityNet's advice has turned every aspect of my life around. Having the right equipment as a result of my assessment has enabled me to get a better job with better money. I've achieved more than I ever imagined in my wildest dreams and even drive a brand new BMW!"



Laura Sygrove-Quickmire has MS and is studying for an MSc.

"When I work and play on my computer, I can forget my disabilities and concentrate wholly on my capabilities. Instead of staring out of the window watching the world go by without me, I can travel, shop and go to the cinema all in one day."

Annemarie Theilade has 'rsi' and is a Diversity Manager for the National Probation Service.

"I was virtually unable to work, in a lot of pain and increasingly desperate. AbilityNet's help has made a phenomenal difference – without the right adaptive solution I would have been forced to take medical retirement."



A digitally inclusive future means embracing the latest devices and peripherals such as new mobile phone technology, netbooks, e-book readers and digital TVs, all of which can significantly enhance quality of life for disabled users. AbilityNet consultants constantly appraise these innovations and update their skills to ensure that their clients benefit quickly and fully from exciting developments as they evolve.



Barbara Howard has photosensitive epilepsy and is Director of Leicester-based disability charity, Mosaic.

"In an hour and a half, AbilityNet's remote assessment transformed my existence. I'm now on an equal level with other professionals at work and at home I can book travel and enjoy e-mailing again. There is absolutely no question – if you have computer problems as the result of impairment, AbilityNet can help you change your life for the better."

The internet is key to social inclusion and plays an increasingly significant role in people's lives at work, in education and at home. From shopping, to organising your social life, or running your own business – it's all done on-line.

ACCESSIBILITY

how we have helped the UK's leading organisations to improve their web accessibility for people with disabilities

In 2008 AbilityNet's web experts assisted over 100 organisations to ensure their websites and applications were as accessible as possible. As a result, we helped make the lives of millions of people that bit easier.

With customers as diverse as Microsoft, HSBC, Sky, BBC, DEFRA, the Home Office, the British Museum, Citizens Advice and the RNIB, the total number of websites and software applications reviewed increased by 93% on the previous year.

Accessibility benefits everyone – not just disabled users. Government research revealed that able-bodied testers were able to perform tasks 35% more quickly on accessible websites. Thus accessibility produces a tangible 35% 'usability bonus' for us all.

Whilst 9 out of 10 websites are still inaccessible to people using 'non-standard' computer equipment, the companies that effect the necessary changes can derive competitive advantage and immediate benefits in many ways: increased compatibility with

CASE STUDY THE BBC

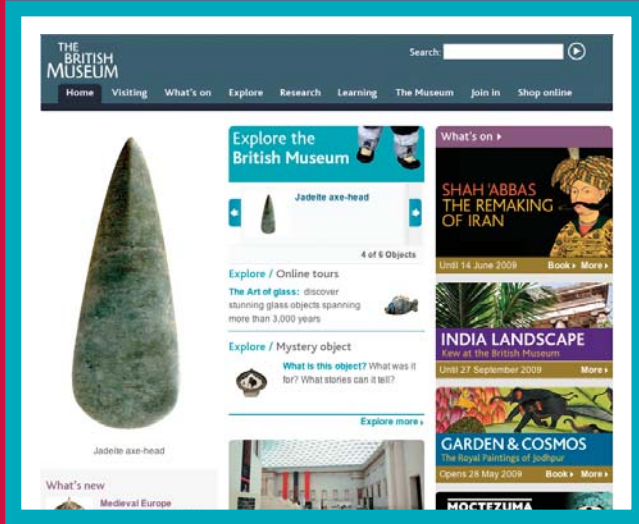
"As a public service website, our goal is to ensure that we serve all of our users. AbilityNet has helped us to appreciate first hand the difficulties encountered by those who use specialist technology to access the web – knowledge which will help us bear the needs of disabled people in mind both now and into the future.

mobile phones and other hand-held devices, quicker download times, significantly better search engine visibility, reduced maintenance costs, better 'future-proofing', and most significantly of all, a step-change in revenue for all e-commerce websites.

When you also consider that it has been a legal requirement for the last 10 years, (UK Disability Discrimination Act, 1999) and that there is now equivalent EU legislation in place, the case for accessibility is practically overwhelming.

CASE STUDY THE BRITISH MUSEUM

“Working closely with AbilityNet we were able to successfully implement a raft of changes that have greatly improved the accessibility and usability of the site, benefitting every visitor.



I was really impressed with the depth and quality of their reports, and their overall focus on solutions.

“I would definitely recommend AbilityNet to other organisations, as much for the quality of their recommendations, as the sensitivity they demonstrated to the constraints on our web offer.”

Matthew Cock, New Media Content Manager, British Museum



“This knowledge has already helped us make the new bbc.co.uk home page easier to navigate and more intuitive for users whatever their access route.”

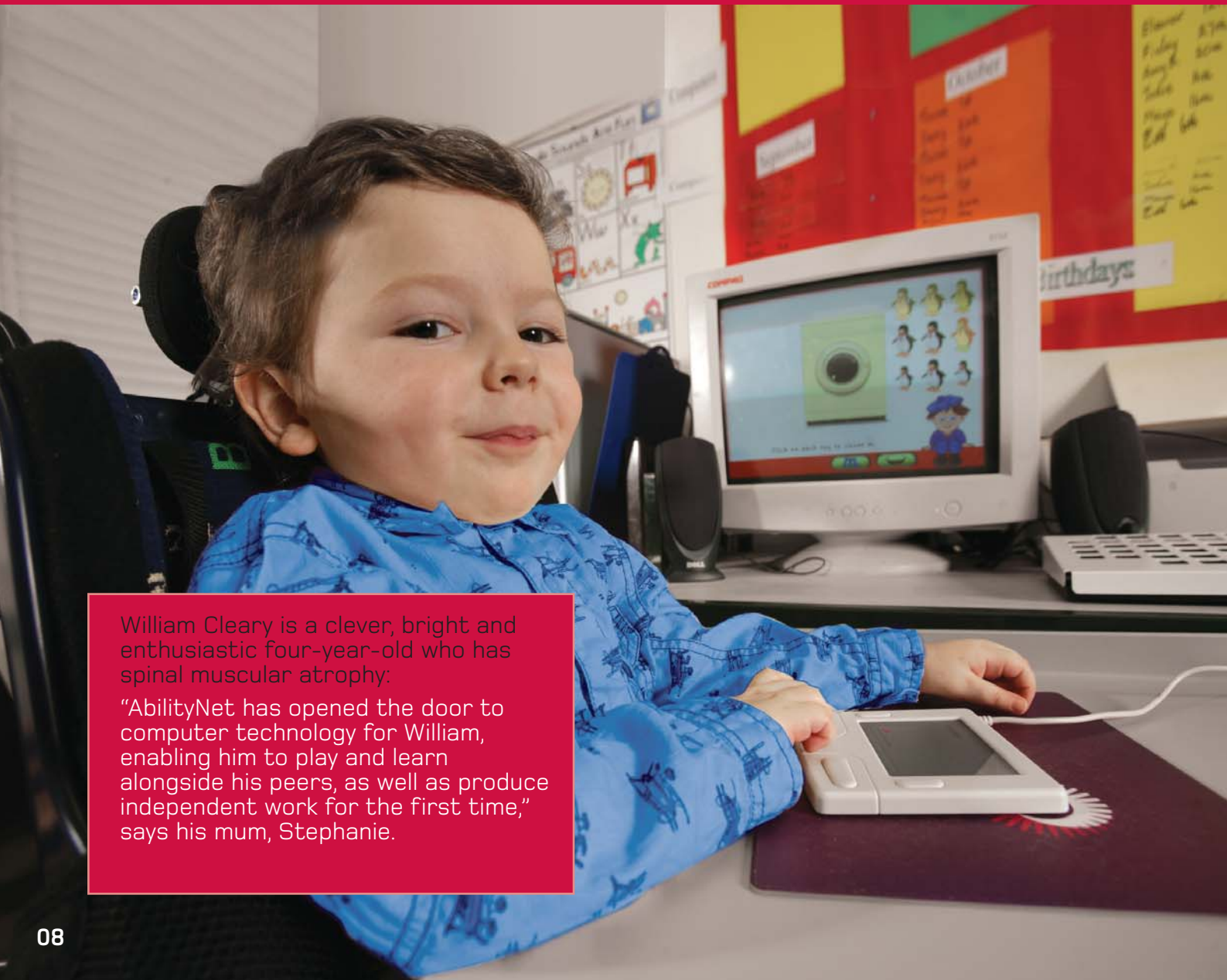
Jonathan Hassell, Accessibility Editor, Digital Curriculum, BBC



Over the past year, a variety of innovative grassroots projects have enabled thousands more disabled people across the country to benefit from the power of technology.

PROJECTS

enabling local communities to access technology



William Cleary is a clever, bright and enthusiastic four-year-old who has spinal muscular atrophy:

“AbilityNet has opened the door to computer technology for William, enabling him to play and learn alongside his peers, as well as produce independent work for the first time,” says his mum, Stephanie.

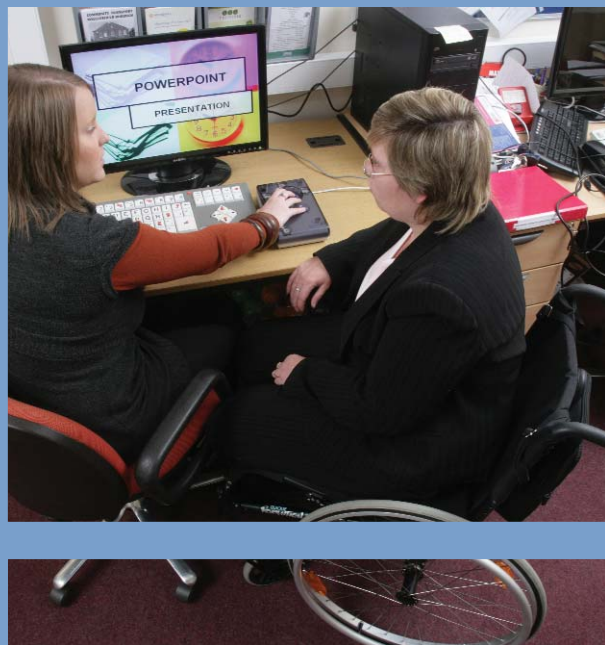
With funding from PC World and the Big Lottery, 'Switched on Communities' has provided computer and internet access for almost 30,000 individuals across the UK.

Becky Nixon works as a volunteer with 'Switched on Communities' in Macclesfield; disabled herself, she knows at first hand how empowering technology can be. Now Becky helps others to explore their potential by equipping them with the IT skills they need.

Working closely with voluntary sector organisations throughout the regions, AbilityNet has provided equipment and training at over 200 locations including cyber cafés, community centres and libraries, in addition to well known charities such as Scope, YMCA and Leonard Cheshire Disability.

2008 has seen the completion of a similar network across all 33 London boroughs with the generous support of the City Bridge House Trust. Meanwhile, in Wales, a further Big Lottery funded Remote Assessment Project has already supplied 42 communities with the specialist kit and expert support they need, reaching nearly 2,000 new AbilityNet clients as a result.

Our pioneering work with pre-schoolers in our Big Lottery backed 'Play AT IT' scheme, shows clearly how children with Special Educational Needs can benefit both developmentally and socially by developing computer skills through play at a crucially formative age.



"Getting on-line can be a life changing experience for my students some of whom have no other means of communication. The expertise and equipment we provide opens up new horizons for those who have never before had the opportunity, giving them renewed confidence and self esteem.

"It's so rewarding to think that I have played a key role in transforming the lives of more than twenty disabled people in the area already."

Nearly 1,200 children are now benefitting from this project countrywide, through participating children's centres, playgroups and nurseries, where we provide equipment and direct training, and work with professionals in the field. We now advise 36 Early Years teams across nine regions who can access the hardware and software they need through our loan bank supply service.

Generous voluntary donations from charitable bodies, businesses and individuals enable AbilityNet to raise over £1 million a year. We and the recipients of the services provided by AbilityNet are extremely grateful for every contribution no matter how large or small.

FUNDRAISING

a dedicated team determined to make a difference

Support comes in many forms, from organised staff fundraising events at PC World to gala balls hosted by the high profile industry body, Intellect. On an individual basis, people have run marathons, jumped in freezing water and walked through fire, to help raise funds for us. We truly appreciate the hard work and commitment of everyone who has made the effort to support AbilityNet.

Our innovative fundraising team works in partnership with funders to create projects

which fulfil their corporate objectives, whilst helping us meet our own strategic goals.

These uncertain times mean demand for our help increases significantly. To continue to meet that need, we are committed to both sustaining and finding new sources of income for our projects through trusts and foundations. We are also diversifying into other forms of fundraising which will yield 'unrestricted' income to directly help those most in need.

Maxwell McKnight – a beneficiary of our Big Lottery funded 'Play AT IT scheme'.

Says Mum, Michelle: "We had no idea how good Maxwell's letter recognition was. It was a real revelation. It's such a relief to know that your child is going to feel 'normal' and not miss out. Thank you AbilityNet!"



How we slice the cake – here's how your money can help:

- £10** Enables a disabled person to access help on-line
- £100** Provides expert, remote IT assistance, enabling a disabled individual to adapt their PC independently
- £750** Funds a one-to-one assessment of IT needs, installs equipment and provides training and support
- £3500** Provides free assessment, loan equipment, training and support
- £6000** Provides a new loan bank of "try before you buy" adaptive technology



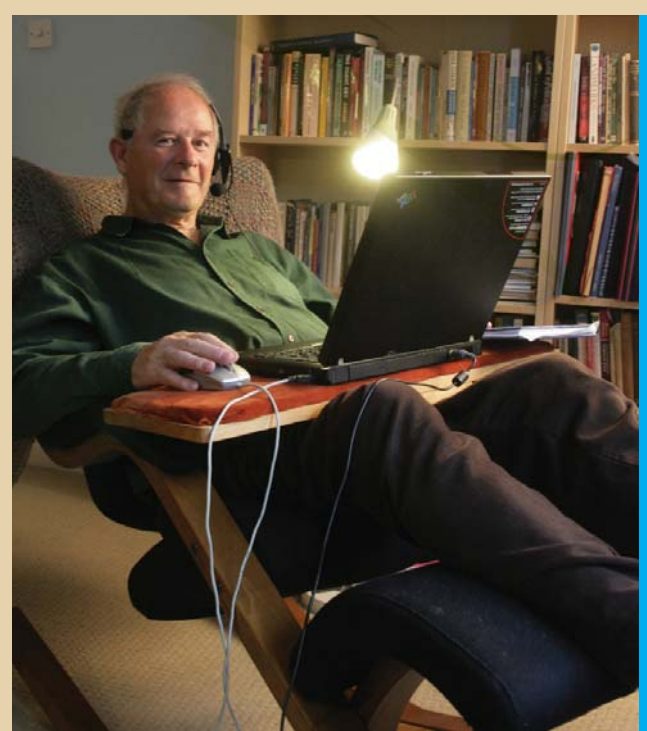
AbilityNet's technical team supply and loan adaptive equipment to clients countrywide, as well as supporting all the Charity's internal hardware and software requirements and its dedicated call management system.

TECHNICAL SERVICES

how our loan scheme helps people to find the right IT solutions

Once a client has been assessed and a suitable adaptive solution has been identified, the technical team can offer a 'one stop shop' for the supply of the recommended equipment, as well as on-going support by phone and e-mail.

In 2008, sales exceeded 700 orders involving 3052 items from specialist mice and keyboards, to bespoke computer systems, including screen-reading technology, voice recognition and magnification software.



Donald Eadie is a Methodist Minister and has degenerative disc disease. An established author, he became increasingly frustrated and defeated by the physical process of writing:

"I cannot sit for long without discomfort, and computer access was therefore very limited. My AbilityNet remote assessor grasped my situation immediately, which was immensely reassuring.

"Loan equipment was an unexpected bonus which has made a crucial difference. The items arrived within days and after testing the solution, I was able to purchase my own system and get working. Now I'm able to look forward to beginning my next book."

The team is also responsible for the Charity's loan bank of nearly 1000 items of adaptive technology. This invaluable service means that clients can directly try out a range of equipment to find out which combination works most successfully before committing to unnecessary expense.

2008 continued the strong performance experienced during fourth quarter 2007 with each month's performance being equal or greater than budget. This has enabled AbilityNet to bring forward its recruitment programme to place us in a stronger position to achieve the targets set in the 2009 Budget and Strategic Plan.

FINANCIAL DETAILS

utilising resources successfully to maximise our impact on people's lives

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

for the year to 31st December 2008

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2008 £	Total 2007 £
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary income	294,006	66,539	360,545	552,730
Bank interest	10,877	-	10,877	14,275
Income from charitable activities	1,712,567	816,204	2,528,771	1,760,628
Other income	4,121	-	4,121	2,339
Total incoming resources	2,021,571	882,743	2,904,314	2,329,972
Resources expended				
Fundraising publicity costs	137,269	-	137,269	129,582
IT solutions for disabled people	1,724,044	882,743	2,606,787	2,363,077
Governance costs	19,115	-	19,115	13,854
Total resources expended	1,880,428	882,743	2,763,171	2,506,513
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	141,143	-	141,143	(176,541)

“AbilityNet is a clear leader in its field, achieving high social impact and this is why we have chosen to support its activities. The improvement in performance under its current management has been excellent.”

Joe Ludlow,
Investment Manager,
CAF - Venturesome



BALANCE SHEET

as at the 31st December 2008

	2008 £	2007 £
Fixed assets	94,366	48,627
Current assets		
Stocks	26,040	30,655
Debtors	418,635	174,853
Cash at bank	402,858	412,560
	<u>847,533</u>	<u>618,068</u>
Total assets	941,899	666,695
Creditors falling due within one year		
Bank loan	24,832	23,276
Trade creditors	242,188	101,057
Taxes and social security	81,837	48,373
Accruals and deferred Income	324,538	341,796
	<u>673,395</u>	<u>514,502</u>
Total assets less current liabilities	268,504	152,193
Creditors falling due after one year	26,892	51,724
	<u>241,612</u>	<u>100,469</u>
Net assets and unrestricted funds	241,612	100,469

REPORT OF THE AUDITOR

to the Trustees of AbilityNet

We have examined the summarised accounts set out on pages 12 to 16.

You are responsible as Trustees for the preparation of the summarised accounts. We have agreed to report to you our opinion on the summarised accounts' consistency with the full accounts, on which we reported to you on 20 May 2009.

We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain whether the summarised accounts are consistent with the full accounts from which they have been prepared.

In our opinion, the summarised accounts are consistent with the full accounts for the year ended 31 December 2008.

H.W Fisher & Company
Registered Auditors
London

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

The summarised accounts on this page/ pages 12 to 16 have been extracted from the audited accounts of the charity which were approved by Trustees on 18 May 2009. These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. A copy of the full Annual Report and Accounts will be submitted to the Charity Commission. For further information the full Annual Report and Accounts, including the unqualified report of the Auditors, should be consulted. A copy can be obtained from the Charity's offices at

AbilityNet
Microsoft Campus
Thames Valley Park
Reading
RG6 1WG

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Dr Michael R. Taylor

RESTRICTED FUNDS

Grants received and expended in the year to 31st December 2008

	£
The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust	3,000
Three Oaks Trust	5,000
Arnold Burton 1998 Charitable Trust	1,000
Leeds Building Society Charitable Trust	1,079
Band Trust	10,000
Dulverton Trust	30,000
Burry Charitable Trust	2,500
Roald Dahl Foundation	5,460
Fowler Smith & Jones Charitable Trust	1,500
Sobell Foundation	5,000
Roger and Jean Jefcoate Trust	2,000
	66,539

Grants for specific purposes not fully expended in the year to 31st December 2008

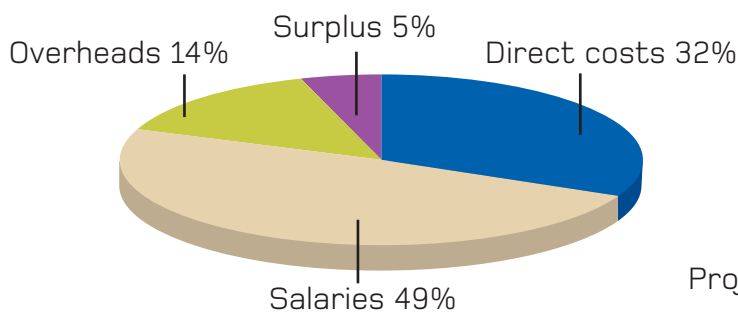
(Included in creditors)

	Deferred income bt./fwd. £	Funds received in the year £	Incoming resources expended in the year £	Deferred income cd./fwd. £
Assessments training and regional works		66,539	-66,539	-
Big Lottery Fund Childrens Play (PlayATIT)		144,305	-132,399	11,906
Big Lottery Fund - Wales	20,670	93,403	-103,703	10,370
Big Lottery Fund basis (SSOC)	88,775	285,605	-267,172	107,208
DSG International plc (SOC)	107,657	185,000	-245,416	47,241
City Bridge Trust	920	45,000	-45,920	-
Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation (DNS)	9,994		-9,994	-
Childwick Trust (DNS)	7,000		-7,000	-
ICT HUB		4,600	-4,600	-
	235,016	824,452	-882,743	176,725

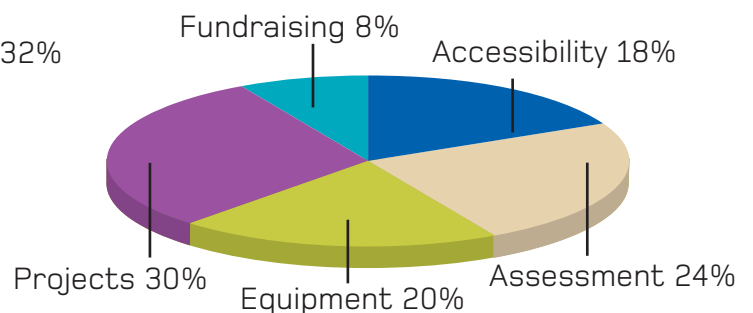
REVIEW OF FINANCIAL POSITION

During the year to 31st December 2008 AbilityNet made an overall surplus of £141,143. Reserves at the year end rose to £241,612.

RESOURCE EXPENDITURE



INCOMING RESOURCES



The second half of 2007 was a period of intense activity which encompassed a restructuring and refocusing of the whole organisation, and a more disciplined approach to forecasting, activity reporting and cash control. The second half responded to these actions and delivered a healthy surplus.

2008 continued the strong performance experienced during fourth quarter 2007 with each month's performance being equal or greater than budget. This has enabled AbilityNet to bring forward its recruitment programme to place us in a stronger position to achieve the targets set in the 2009 Budget and Strategic Plan.

Cash balances continue to be healthy but have been adversely impacted by the reduced lead times of cash paid to us by our project funders. Debtors grew in the fourth quarter of 2008 as the deteriorating economic situation began to take effect, intense efforts during the first quarter of 2009 have brought these back to our target levels.

Our strength has enabled the charity to take up just £75,000 of the loan facility negotiated with Venturesome of £150,000; this is being repaid on schedule. Additionally we have negotiated a further standby facility of £120,000 with Venturesome to support 2009, the first year of our Strategic Plan. Currently we do not have plans to utilise any of this facility.

First quarter 2009 has reaped the rewards for our endeavours in 2008, with our earned income exceeding our budget, but, we are conscious that our income can be impacted by the current economic situation particularly from donations and events; we are constantly vigilant to react to these situations.

President

Sir Mark Weinberg

Vice President

Roger Jefcoate CBE

Dr Michael R. Taylor

Chairman of the Board, Michael was, until recently, a senior civil servant in the Cabinet Office, leading transformational change across Whitehall and the law enforcement sector. Prior to his public service, Michael worked in the private sector.

TRUSTEES/ BOARD OF DIRECTORS

the people behind AbilityNet

David Barnett

A trustee of several eminent charities, David is also Chairman of the JPMorgan Cazenove Pension Scheme Trustees, he was Finance Partner of Cazenove & Co.

Bill Brown

A chartered accountant, Bill is currently a non-executive director on several private, public and voluntary sector organisations. In addition he is a consultant on financial accounting and corporate governance.

Chris Gant

An established management consultant with CapGemini in the financial services industry, Chris was previously a partner with KPMG Consulting specialising in business strategy, sales and marketing, finance and IT.

Matt Lambert

Matt leads both Microsoft's Corporate Affairs activity and its Citizenship programme. With extensive experience of the charity and NGO community, Matt is also a member of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety.

David Morriss

A past Master of the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists and past President of the British Computer Society, David is involved as director, trustee and consultant in the corporate, public and voluntary sectors.

Alan Pollard

After a career in the IT sector, Alan became President of the British Computer Society (BCS) in 2008 and Chairman of its Board of Trustees, believing that members should use their skills to the benefit of the wider society.

Nishita Sharma

An award-winning broadcast and print journalist. After a career in theatre, Nishita specialises in writing on the arts, health, disability and social interest.

Jane Tabor

Corporate Trustee representing IBM, where she has held a variety of leadership positions in sales and business development, Jane is also a Trustee of the IBM Charitable Trust.

THANK YOU

to our supporters

"I would like to take this opportunity to express with gratitude our heartfelt appreciation of the unstinting support of our corporate trustees – The British Computer Society, IBM and Microsoft.

"Their generous and on-going contributions of accommodation, administrative support, event management facilities and guidance have given us, and continue to give us, the sound foundation needed to develop into the leading ICT and disability charity."

Dr Michael R. Taylor
Chairman

To make a donation, please email fundraising@abilitynet.org.uk or go to our website www.abilitynet.org.uk

Grateful thanks to the following trusts for their donations

St Jude's Trust	Mr & Mrs J A Pye's Charitable Settlement
Hogg Robinson	Salters' Company
Clore Duffield Foundation	P F Charitable Trust
Ofenheim Charitable Trust	Cuthbert Horn Trust
Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust	Sir James Roll Charitable Trust
Sandra Charitable Trust	Patrick Frost Trust

Thank you to our corporate trustees whose on-going commitment enables us to continue to make a positive difference to people's lives every day.



Charity nos:
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Scotland SC039866

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