

 Community \ Technology



Photo: David Revivo

of the technology say that there's an improvement in their routine and how the technology makes it possible to work, to make calls, and to view pictures – and in one case, even to lead a public protest.” Google and Beit Issie Shapiro also cooperate on a program called Applicable, an initiative of Google Campus for the training of startups and app

design. In that way, we give people with disabilities access to those applications, and at the same time open a new market to the developer company.”

Another project is TOM (Tikun Olam Makers), an initiative of the Reut Institute and ROI Community of the Shusterman Foundation, whose purpose is to connect people with disabilities with people from the worlds of industry, engineering, design, technology, and rehabilitation in order to develop solutions and products to meet specific challenges and needs.

▶▶▶ without use of the hands,” Elstein says. “Google provided a \$1 million grant, with which we're able to distribute technology developed by Sesame Enable, an Israeli startup, to all those who need it. We're talking about something the size of an air-conditioner's remote, which uses Bluetooth technology to connect with a smartphone. So far we've distributed about 200 units, and the first users

developers as to how to make their apps accessible to people with disabilities “We teach app developers to make them accessible to people with disabilities. Ordinary applications like Gett (GetTaxi) or Waze seem obvious and we don't think about them very much,” says Elstein. “But the story's very different for people with disabilities. It's mostly about awareness and attention to small details, like the size of buttons or the universal

“Products such as a folding standing device, which parents of cerebral palsy children can take with them in the car, effectively allow the kids to go on outdoor trips. In that way, cooperation between the business and social welfare sectors is a win-win proposition – the way to bring about social change.”

WATCH ISRAEL'S MAIN NEWS IN ENGLISH

WWW.JERUSALEMONLINE.COM



The advertisement features a news anchor in a blue blazer sitting at a desk in a newsroom. In the foreground, a smartphone displays a QR code with the text "Scan & Watch" above it. On the right side of the image, there are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Apple, and Android. At the bottom right, the text "JerusalemONLINE Your link to Israel" is displayed.



Photo: Amos Ben Gershon

Making the Future Accessible

Beit Issie Shapiro has expertise in making technology available to people with disabilities. Cooperation with entities such as Google has allowed them to bring about social change, improve quality of life, and break down the barriers faced by individuals with disabilities / Ariel Krass

Accessibility isn't a trivial matter in a country where people with disabilities find many obstacles when it comes to social integration. To these individuals, accessibility is a crucial issue that determines if they are able to leave the house and access other spaces. For the past 35 years, Beit Issie Shapiro in Ra'anana has been specializing in technological accessibility for people with disabilities. "The organization works in a variety of ways," says Yael Elstein, head of Beit Issie Shapiro's Technology Consulting Center. "The center identifies unanswered needs and develops answers. We're in the midst of a technological revolution, which will have significant influence on the lives of people with disabilities and their integration into society. Technology is

bringing about change in their lives and giving them the possibility of greater independence, active participation in community life, employment, education and, more generally, to realize their basic right to achieve their potential and self-fulfillment."

There are many initiatives for developing technologies that aid people with disabilities, but too often projects are stalled by funding issues. "That's the reason why the model of cooperation between Beit Issie Shapiro and Google, which has given birth to several programs including Hakol Barosh (Project Go Ahead), is a successful example of the connection between the business sector, which has the knowledge and the economic strength, and voluntary organizations and NGOs

The Future Is Already Here

In recent years, technology has brought real change in the lives of the people with disabilities. Here are two more Beit Issie Shapiro initiatives.

A3i (Accelerating Inclusion in Israel): The world's first accelerator for projects concerning people with disabilities. Initiatives accepted into the accelerator receive professional training, personal accompaniment of a mentor, business advice, and the opportunity to take an active part in the Israeli business community. Run cooperatively by Presentense and Beit Issie Shapiro, in cooperation with the Ruderman Family Foundation and the Los Angeles Jewish Federation.

Virtual Keyboard: SAP Israel Labs and Beit Issie Shapiro have developed IssieBoard, a virtual keyboard for use with the iPad by children and adults with various levels of disability – learning, vision, developmental, and others.

familiar with the challenges and the needs on the ground," Elstein explains. "Google brings its economic muscle and technology; we bring the knowledge. It's a recipe for significant social change which can influence many people and improve the quality of life."

Full access to the mobile world

Project Go Ahead from Google and Beit Issie Shapiro gives people with limited motor function in their hands – like people with ALS, multiple sclerosis, or spinal cord injury – complete access to the mobile world. "The application allows the smartphone to be operated with just movement of the head, ►►►