

Digital Champion stories



11th January 2018



David Armstrong is a Nottinghamshire Digital Champion. He joined the [Nottinghamshire County Council's Digital Champions Network](#) as he was retired from work and wanted to use his digital skills to help others. He's now supporting an elderly relative with visual impairment using a voice control device to help her continue to enjoy books and perform other daily tasks.

How David became a Digital Champion

David said: "As a Parish Councillor I had developed a website for the village and found out about being a Digital Champion via a letter sent to the Parish Council seeking volunteers. I thought it was a great way to use the knowledge and experience I have to make a difference to others.

"The online training on the [Digital Champions Network](#) is very good. Although I am quite experienced it reminded me that it wasn't about being a geek but more about helping people with the things they wanted to know personally. I particularly liked the course on accessibility – *Helping someone with a visual*

impairment – which has been so relevant to the help I'm currently giving.



"My learner is 90 years old"

"My learner, Doreen, is 90 years old. Her eyesight has deteriorated due to Macular Degeneration and has reached the point where she can't read so I've been helping her to use Smart Speaker technology via Echo Dot, so she can listen instead.

"We started looking at Google Assist and other apps on a smartphone. This meant that instead of reading the text Doreen was able to listen to the messages, from texts and Whatsapp and reply to them using her voice.

"We had helped her source a USB stick reader for audiobooks from the Calibre audio library and RNIB, and extended her use of this via an Echo Dot so she can continue to listen to Audible and Kindle books as she can no longer see her iPad screen. She also uses this to listen to music and radio stations, the news and weather, and to make a shopping list or manage calendar appointments.

"She was already using technology, so the challenge was different to most Digital Champion objectives. Here it was helping her continue to use technology via voice control alone. She has also recommended the Echo Dot to a friend who recently lost sight in both eyes, and we have demonstrated the technology to her daughters to give them confidence in purchasing one for their mother.

"It's very rewarding using your skills to help others"

"I think the highlight for me as a Digital Champion has definitely been helping someone like Doreen. Someone whose eyesight has deteriorated and who is struggling with everyday things because she can't read. But now, with a little help and smart speaker technology she can speak and listen instead of using a keyboard or touchscreen!

"It's very rewarding using your skills and knowledge to help others who either don't have the digital skills or confidence or who just need a little help and guidance."

"It has changed my life"

Doreen said "I had completed a European Computer Driving Licence course in my 70s so do have an appreciation of technology. This Smart Speaker technology has changed my life. I'm now able to use it to listen to the radio and music, it tells me when my medical appointments are due, and I make up my shopping lists by speaking what I need to buy. It's a bit like having an assistant! For anyone who has an eyesight problem, I would definitely recommend it.

"My neighbour is so impressed that she has bought an Echo too. In fact, there are several people who have seen it and want it to help them. David is going to be very busy helping them set it up. I'm so grateful to have had his support with this - it has made a BIG difference in my life."

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