

New street works system that will boost confidence in independent travel for vision impaired people to be showcased at Digital Shoreditch

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"Sight Line" a new system of signalling street works to vision impaired people, designed by the Royal College of Art and **RLSB (The Royal London Society for Blind People)** has been chosen to feature at the Urban Prototyping Festival on **20 May**, as part of technology event Digital Shoreditch.

Street works can cause huge problems for vision impaired people who often can only navigate local areas through memory. Disruptions, pedestrian diversions, raised walked ways and temporary street surfaces can disorientate and even cause injury. Current street works signage is entirely visual and often inaccessible.

Sight Line, designed with input from 21 vision impaired people, gives three levels of information to vision impaired pedestrians:

1. High contrast visual information clearly showing pedestrians which way to go.
2. Tactile information allowing blind people to follow the barriers until they pass the obstruction.
3. An app with details of street works can be downloaded, which alerts GPS navigation users to upcoming obstructions. Users can also scan a QR code on street works barriers for details of the obstruction and how to navigate around it.

Urban Prototyping Festival

Sight Line was selected from a number of proposals for installations at the Urban Prototyping Festival, hosted by Imperial College – the follow-up to the event first held in San Francisco in 2012. The festival aims to explore how digital technology can have a role in shaping our cities and this year's theme is 'digital innovation to create resilient environments, economies and communities'.

The Sightline demonstration on 20th May in Hoxton Square is funded by a grant from Imperial College and will involve two mazes built from roadworks barriers; one using the Sight Line design and the other using regular equipment. Visitors will be invited to put on glasses simulating different eye conditions and navigate the two set-ups. They will also have a chance to don a yellow vest and play builder, generating a description of the site with the smartphone app.

John Harris, Head of Research and Public Affairs at RLSB, said: "Getting around London on foot is a huge challenge for blind and partially sighted people. This design shows that when we make the effort to get things right for people who can't see, we actually make things better for everyone. We're now asking all London councils to adopt this new design."

Sight Line designer Ross Atkin said: "Research shadowing people with vision impairment on real streets showed us that roadworks were a major barrier to getting around independently. We wanted to create a system that worked better for everyone with low-tech tactile and visual information as well as more detailed digital descriptions.

"I'm really excited to be able to exhibit Sight Line as part of the Urban Prototyping Festival. We always aimed to design a system which reduces the disruption caused by roadworks to everyone and it is fantastic that the judges recognised this. Hoxton Square is an amazing space to be exhibiting in and I'm confident we should be able to put on a really fun display."

People interested in the scheme can listen to an interview with Sight Line designer Ross Atkin at <http://www.rlsb.org.uk/sightline>

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For further information please call the RLSB Press Office. Emma Thompson 0207 808 6172/ 07884 493476/

Editor notes

Sight Line

The system is based on extensive research with people with vision impairment at real street works sites.

Related Sectors:

Consumer Technology ::
Transport & Logistics ::

Related Keywords:

Accessible Travel :: Accessibility
:: Accessible Street Works ::
Blind Travel :: Blind Transport ::
Visually I ::

Scan Me:



The system could also benefit sighted pedestrians and motorists, who can also download the app. After the strong endorsement of the system from its target users, the RLSB and Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design at the Royal College of Art are seeking a partner in the street works industry to run a pilot of the system with street works operatives. More information about the Sight Line project can be found at: <http://www.hhc.rca.ac.uk/4617-4621/all/1/Sight-Line.aspx>

RLSB

RLSB (Royal London Society for Blind People) exists to empower blind and partially sighted young people to live life without limits. Through an expert blend of education, sport, creative and developmental services, we help the people we work with live and learn for the life they want.

Digital Shoreditch

Digital Shoreditch is a technology festival running in East London between 20-31 May. For more see: <http://digitalshoreditch.com/>

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