

India's First Two Day Accessibility Event Techshare India 2008 Concludes Successfully

Techshare India 2008 highlighted the role of technology in enriching the lives of People with Disabilities and how technology can be used by them to access education, information and employment.

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Techshare India 2008 concluded on a high note. The two day accessibility conference cum exhibition, organised by BarrierBreak Technologies in partnership with Royal National Institute of the Blind (UK) to highlight the role of Technology in the lives of People with Disabilities. Techshare India 2008 highlighted the role of technology in enriching the lives of People with Disabilities and how technology can be used by them to access education, information and employment.

Techshare India 2008, a pan disability event, received an extremely positive response both from the visitors as well as the participants. The need for an event such as this in India was highlighted repeatedly. The platform was effectively used to discuss the availability and use of technologies to enable People with Disabilities. The exhibition area showcased the best of accessibility products from around the world along with an experience zone where any one could experience first hand the challenges that were faced by People with Disabilities and how technology could improve the quality of their life.

An array of products were on display: an electronic screen reader that enabled people with visual disabilities to read information on a computer screen; Braille display keyboards that could read what was on the screen as well as allow people with disabilities to work on a regular computer; digital talking pen, electronic wheelchair and, many more.

Dr. (Smt.) Veena Chhotray, Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, was the Chief Guest at the inaugural session and shared her perspective on the pertinence of an event like Techshare India 2008. She said, 'I appreciate the attempt being made by the organisers of the conference - events such as these allow people from different fields to come together to create awareness of the possibilities and the ground realities.' She also requested the corporates to share information and data in order to address the real issues.

Ms. Shilpi Kedia, Managing Director, BarrierBreak Technologies in her presentation highlighted that it required very little investment to make the environment inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities. She also pointed out that, 'Though the products available currently to promote accessibility are very expensive, there are Indian companies that are making efforts to bring the cost down without compromising on quality. Considering that almost 10% of the world population of people with disabilities is in India - there is a big gap between the actual requirement and availability of accessible solutions.'

Ms. Kedia also expressed her intension to organize the conference annually in order to keep Indians abreast of the latest in products and technologies as well as to promote initiatives that would ease path of bringing these solutions to India.

Mr. Javed Abidi, Executive Director, National Centre for Promotion of Employment for

Disabled People (NCPEDP) said, 'India is a privileged country to have the best of the technology, top corporate houses as well as the best brains that we export around the world. In such a scenario, it is very unfortunate to see that the people with disabilities are losing out.' 'The situation is such that the corporate sector is not even aware that we have fantastic assistive technologies available and how they can be incorporated to give better opportunities to people with disabilities. That according to me is discrimination,' he added.

Some of the other eminent speakers at the conference were - Shadi Abou-Zahra from the World Wide Web Consortium, David Baquis, Accessibility Specialist, US Access Board; Omprakash Subbarao, Director Consulting Practices, Yahoo! India; Kenny Johar, Research, Architecture and Solutions Lead - Vision Australia; Lisa D. Friendly, Director, BookShare.org among others.

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Techshare India 2008

4th and 5th February, 2008

Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003.

What is Techshare India?

600 million people with disability in the world. India alone has 60 million disabled people. In addition, India has ratified the UN Convention for Persons with Disabilities. Would you like to tap this market?

India has the Persons with Disabilities Act that focuses on equal opportunities, protection of rights and full participation for people with disabilities. But we have not succeeded in mainstreaming people with disabilities into society. The answer lies in building and creating awareness about the needs and potential of the people with disabilities and not in the legal framework alone.

BarrierBreak Technologies is organizing a conference and exhibition that will bring together the entire ecosystem - the government, the corporates, the NGOs, the disabled, the product companies and the education providers for the first time under one roof. The conference will be a platform to share insights and learning's.

Since 2000, Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB), UK, has been organizing Techshare. RNIB, UK and BarrierBreak Technologies now bring Techshare to India.

Techshare offers workshops and presentations. In addition, it provides an opportunity to meet with eminent professionals working in this area from all over the world as well as browse the exhibition space.

On display will be state-of-the-art experience lab showcasing assistive technology Exhibition with 25 plus stalls displaying assistive aids pan disability

The intent of Techshare India 2008 is to break these barriers and include people with disabilities into main stream society by:

About Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB), UK:

RNIB is UK's leading charity offering information, support and advice to over two million people with sight loss. Their pioneering work helps anyone with a sight problem - not just with braille and Talking Books, but with imaginative and practical solutions to everyday challenges. Their projects such as Talk and Support and Parent's Place make a difference to people's lives. They campaign extensively to eliminate avoidable sight loss and support research into the causes and latest treatments of eye disease.

About BarrierBreak Technologies:

BarrierBreak Technologies is an innovative firm that provides solutions in the field of Accessibility for People with Disabilities. BarrierBreak works with corporates, institutions and individuals to provide accessibility training, accessibility testing and accessibility consulting services that would empower people with disabilities to avoid discrimination and enjoy equal rights and opportunities.

To know more about Techshare India 2008 - visit: www.barrierbreak.com

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You can also visit www.barrierbreak.com for more information.