



Summary

Rate it! Consumer product reviews by disabled people

About the DRILL Programme

DRILL (Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning) was an innovative 5 year, UK wide programme led by disabled people, for disabled people and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

Launched in 2015, the programme was managed by a partnership of Disability Action Northern Ireland, Disability Rights UK, Disability Wales and Inclusion Scotland.

The aim of the programme was to build better evidence about approaches which enable disabled people to achieve independent living. The findings from the projects it funded can be used to inform future provision across a wide range of policy areas, and give a greater voice to disabled people in decisions which affect them.

This is one of a series of summaries of the project supported by DRILL. Final reports, toolkits and summaries of all the projects are available from the DRILL website at www.drilluk.org.uk.

Overview of the project

This project aimed to create a product review website to assist disabled consumers to make informed choices about products that support independent living.

Approach

The project produced a survey for disabled people to look at browsing behaviours and preferences when visiting review websites. This data was supported by 47 interviews with younger people with cognitive impairments.

Two workshops were held with disabled people to explore the interactive design options, screen layout and to test the usability of the prototype.

Prize draws for a piece of technology or a £100 shopping voucher were used to motivate users to leave reviews.

A British Sign Language (BSL) explanatory video was produced for Deaf participants.

Findings

The credibility and trustworthiness of an individual review was considered important for survey respondents.

Reviewers had to register with the website before being able to write a review. This helped support reviewer authenticity. The website gained 250 registered users, with a range of impairments.

Issues related to a mistrust of reviews came from suggestions that some were manipulated by manufacturers, verification of reviewers and the quantity of reviews.

Some review websites had poor accessibility, such as not being compatible with assistive technologies and not performing equally on different devices.

Respondents noted that providing prompts during the review process so users know what information to write would be helpful.

Home and kitchen appliances were the products respondents had most commonly read about on other review websites.

There was a need for a 'contact us' and 'feedback' page on the website for users to help identify any necessary improvements to the accessibility or content.

Findings (continued)

Easy read versions of key information, such as terms and conditions, are important.

It is also important to have an option to register and leave a review over the phone for visually impaired users.

Recommendations

The project outlined many recommendations, some of which are listed here.

- Ensure websites are accessible, directly addressing the needs of every impairment group
- Consider the value and fragility of trust, ensuring administrative systems and processes are put in place so users trust the reviews
- Content should be informative, accurate and representative of people's product experiences
- User engagement must be supported and encouraged by, for example, using virtual medals and thanking reviewers
- Ensure the website is compatible with assistive technologies, and rectify issues as they arise
- A considered and well-planned promotional strategy is essential
- The website must be maintained, monitored and kept current
- Review sites will require investment over a number of years to increase the number of reviewers posting reviews, readers reading reviews and reviews per product.

Rate it website

[Rate it! Consumer product reviews by disabled people](#)

Please click on the link to view the website.

Project partners

**Research Institute for
Disabled Consumers (RIDC)**



**Leicestershire Centre for
Integrated Living (LCiL)**



Enabled by Design



Which?

