

Press Release – Embargo 11.59pm 2nd December 2018
Present Pal receives AI for Accessibility grant from Microsoft

- Glasgow based startup Present Pal is amongst the first round of grantees awarded with the Microsoft AI for Accessibility Programme
- AI for Accessibility is a \$25 million, 5-year programme aimed at harnessing the power of AI to amplify human capability for the more than one billion people around the world with disabilities.

Present Pal has been awarded an AI for Accessibility grant from Microsoft to help further their efforts in ensuring that everyone, despite their individual abilities, has the equal opportunity to communicate effectively in education and the workplace.

This grant will provide Present Pal with the AI tools and Azure services to accelerate their work on a new data-driven feature which instinctively prompts presenters in times of distress. Microsoft's Speech APIs will allow Present Pal to compare practice recordings of presentations against real-time speech, enabling the software to recognise when a presenter is struggling to recall information. By enabling AI-powered audio prompts and visual pop ups, Present Pal will enhance the communication skills of people with learning differences and also those with visual impairments.

Present Pal is a presentation support software which helps presenters to deliver a more confident and prepared presentation. Created out of the Founder Chris Hughes' experience of being a student with dyslexia, Present Pal guides users through their presentation with interactive flashcards on their smartphone or tablet, integrating fully with Microsoft PowerPoint.

Present Pal's unique, dyslexia-friendly features empower presenters to communicate accurately with their audience, levelling the playing field. The software has various expert-advised features such as pop up bubbles and colour overlays.

Founder and CEO Chris Hughes said:

"Technology has such an important role to play in ensuring that people with disabilities are empowered to communicate effortlessly. The usage of AI/machine learning within Present Pal will allow us to really understand the needs and behaviour of presenters, providing the data to assist and enhance communication skills in the terrifying moments of presenting to your peers.

We are already supporting students with learning differences in universities across the UK through our existing version of the App, but funded access to Microsoft's AI tools will really boost the software's intelligence and sophistication. We are delighted to receive this grant and begin a partnership with Microsoft and are looking forward to sharing our journey of enhancing the lives of people with disabilities."

AI for Accessibility is Microsoft's \$25 million 5-year programme aimed at harnessing the power of AI to amplify human capability for the more than one billion people around the world with disabilities. It's a call to action for developers, NGO's, academics, researchers and inventors to accelerate their work for people with disabilities, focusing on three challenges: Employment, Daily Life and Communication and Connection. Through grants, technology, and AI expertise, the program aims to accelerate the development of accessible and intelligent AI solutions and build on recent advancements in Microsoft Cognitive Services to help developers create intelligent apps that can see, hear, speak, understand and interpret people's needs.

Please visit the [AI for Accessibility website](#) and [Present Pal's website](#) for more information.

Notes to Editor

Media Enquiries should be directed to Leah Panton - Marketing Coordinator leah@presentpal.co.uk

Press Kit (including high-res logos, gifs and videos) : <https://www.presentpal.co.uk/press>

[Present Pal animation video](#)

About Present Pal

Present Pal is a presentation support software which was created by Estendio – a tech startup based in Glasgow, Scotland, founded by Chris Hughes. Present Pal has received over £200k in funding since 2014 and has earned various prestigious awards such as *Young Edge*, *Wildcard Edge*, *Runner-up at Converge Challenge* and *The Herald's Digital Student Business of the Year*.

Present Pal's mission is to allow everyone, regardless of their abilities, to access equal opportunities and thrive in their academic or professional lives.

Website: <https://www.presentpal.co.uk>

Twitter: @presentpal_

Instagram: @presentpal_

Facebook: @presentpalapp

About Microsoft AI for Accessibility

What is the AI for Accessibility program?

- AI for Accessibility is a new program aimed at harnessing the power of AI to amplify human capability for the more than one billion people around the world with disabilities. We'll do this with grants, investments of technology and expertise. Also, these applications are incorporated into platform level services, working with our partners to bring the innovations to market.

What is the investment accompanying the AI for Accessibility program?

- AI for Accessibility is a new \$25 million 5-year program aimed at harnessing the power of AI to amplify human capability for the more than one billion people around the world with disabilities.

How do you apply for an AI for Accessibility grants?

- The application form for the grants will be made available in June. You can leave your address on the website www.microsoft.com/aiforaccessibility to receive a notification when the application form opens.