Simply Readable, an AI easy-read solution

By Swindon Borough Council

Swindon Borough Council has introduced **an AI-driven tool, Simply Readable, to create accessible "Easy Read" documents**. This solution significantly simplifies complex information, making it understandable for individuals with learning disabilities, while also benefiting people with low literacy levels, cognitive impairments, or English as a second language. Leveraging the power of AI, Simply Readable is transforming the way councils provide equitable access to critical information.

Creating Easy Read documents traditionally required significant time and financial resources, making the process unsustainable. For example, converting a 5-10 page document into an Easy Read format could cost upwards of £600. Social workers spent hours or even weeks on this process, diverting valuable time away from direct community support. Recognising the need for an efficient and cost-effective solution, Swindon Borough Council developed Simply Readable to address these challenges.

Simply Readable was co-created with input from local residents with learning disabilities, including the 'Experts by Experience of a Learning Disability' focus group. This collaborative approach ensured the tool met the specific needs and preferences of its target audience.

The platform uses:

- **Anthropic's 'Claude 2'**: Analyses and summarises complex documents into short, jargon-free sentences.
- **Stability AI's 'Stable Diffusion'**: Generates clear and relevant images to accompany the simplified text.

This combination allows Simply Readable to create Easy Read documents quickly, at an average cost of just 7-10 pence per page—a fraction of the previous costs.

Key features and benefits include:

Rapid document creation: Easy Read documents can now be produced in under 30 minutes, freeing up social workers to focus on providing direct support.

Cost-effective: Reduces the cost of creating Easy Read documents from £120 per page to less than 10 pence per page, delivering significant financial savings.

Global accessibility: The platform supports translation into 75 languages, extending its reach to millions worldwide.

Cloud-based and user-friendly: Requires minimal technical expertise and no per-user licensing fees, making it accessible and scalable.

Empowering communities: Provides individuals with learning disabilities greater independence by making critical information clear and comprehensible.

The deployment of Simply Readable has delivered measurable outcomes:

- Staff now take an average of 15 minutes to create Easy Read documents, compared to hours or weeks previously.
- Individuals with learning disabilities or language barriers now have improved access to essential information.
- Savings achieved through reduced document creation costs can be reinvested into other vital social services.

Building on the success of Simply Readable, Swindon Borough Council is exploring additional AI solutions to further enhance adult social care services. This includes using AI to record, transcribe, and document conversations, such as Care Act and Mental Capacity Assessments, ensuring accurate and efficient communication.

See more: 'Council using AI to help people with learning disabilities'

"The [Innovation Leadership] course was extremely well delivered and gives tangible resources to use but also openly supports a culture of innovation which is very positive and purposeful."