WP1 / Deliverable 1.1

Office Work Dataset (NewWorkTech Project)

What is this report about?
This report describes the work done in the first part (WP1) of the NewWorkTech project. During this first stage, research was done to find out how people with disabilities work in the office and are office or professional jobs that focus on thinking and information rather than physical work (white-collar jobs), and how technology, support, and workplace practices help or hinder them.

The report explains:
- How the research was done
- Who took part
- What data were collected
- What works well in workplaces
- What challenges people face

Who took part in the study?
So far, 22 participants took part in WP1.
They live and work in four countries:
- Denmark: 11 participants
- Italy: 5 participants
- Germany: 4 participants
- Finland: 2 participants

Participants include people who:
- Are blind or have low vision
- Are wheelchair users
- Are neurodivergent (for example ADHD or autism)
- Have developmental disabilities (for example Down syndrome)

They work in office and professional jobs such as:
- Software developer
- Engineer
- Consultant
- Academic or researcher
- Administrator
- Marketing or community worker
- Shop assistant

What kind of work was studied?
The study focuses on white-collar and office work, including:
- Working at a desk
- Online meetings
- Remote or hybrid work
- Using computers, phones, and digital tools
- Working with colleagues, assistants, or helpers

Some participants worked mostly from home, others from the office, and many used a mix of both.

How was the research done? (Methodology)
The researchers used qualitative and participatory methods.
This means they focused on real work situations and people's everyday experiences.

The main methods were:

- Video recordings of real work situations
- Workplace observations
- Field notes written by researchers
- Semi-structured interviews with participants
- Repeated visits to build trust and understanding

The researchers followed:

- Ethical approval rules in each country
- Clear and accessible consent procedures

All information sheets and consent forms were:

- Written in simple language
- Adapted for different access needs
- Made in digital formats for blind or low-vision participants
- Created together with disability organisations

What kinds of technologies were observed?
Participants used many different tools, for example:

- Screen readers and braille displays
- Speech-to-text and dictation tools
- Accessible keyboards and pointing devices
- Power wheelchairs and adapted desks
- Digital calendars and planning tools
- Assistive apps and AI tools (including LLM-based tools)
- Human support (assistants, guides, mentors)

Technology was often essential for doing the job.

What works well? (Good practices)
The study identified several **good practices**:

Remote and hybrid work

- Working from home helps many participants
- It saves energy and reduces stress
- It reduces problems with commuting

Accessible workplaces

- Accessible software and hardware are crucial
- Adapted desks, lighting, and layouts help
- Digital accessibility makes a big difference

Flexibility

- Flexible working hours support well-being
- Flexibility helps people manage energy and health

Human support

- Assistants, mentors, and supportive colleagues are important
- Collaboration improves access and inclusion

Organisational knowledge

- When organisations understand disability and accessibility, work is easier
- Inclusion works best when it is supported at management level

What are the main challenges?

The report also shows clear **challenges**:

Technology problems

- Software updates can break accessibility
- Tools may not work well together
- New systems are often not designed accessibly

Pressure to be "productive"

- Participants feel pressure to work like non-disabled colleagues
- There is a tension between inclusion and efficiency expectations

Bias and discrimination

- Some participants experience negative attitudes
- Disabilities and diagnoses can be misunderstood

Commuting

- Travelling to work is often tiring and difficult
- Commuting takes time and energy
- This makes remote work especially important

Dependence on support

- Human assistance is essential but not always reliable
- Support systems can be fragile or poorly organised

What does this mean overall?

The WP1 dataset shows that:

- People with disabilities are highly skilled workers
- Technology can enable work, but can also create barriers
- Accessibility must be built into:
    - Technology
    - Workplaces
    - Organisational culture

Good access is not just about tools.
It is also about knowledge, attitudes, flexibility, and support.

The data collected will be analysed further to:

- Compare different workplaces
- Identify patterns across countries
- Support better design, policy, and practice in future work