



# Action for blind people

Action for Blind People is a dynamic national charity founded in 1857. Its mission is to inspire change and create opportunities to enable blind and partially sighted people to have equal voice and equal choice. Nearly 2 million people in the UK are blind or partially sighted and 75% of these at a working age are unemployed. Action for Blind People, along with the RNIB, are running the Work for Change campaign in which they aim to make employers aware of their responsibilities towards employing visually impaired people.



## Equality for database users

Fisk Brett was pleased to play a part in illustrating how visually impaired people can still undertake the same work as those with full sight by making their Progress contact management database the first database to be fully useable by blind and partially sighted users.

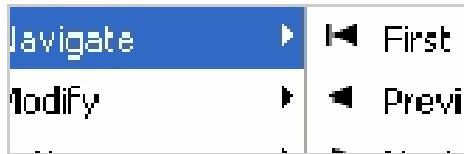
## progress

Action for Blind People chose to use Progress back in 2003. As well as the functionality and reliability that Progress offered them they welcomed the commitment Fisk Brett had made to enhance Progress to be compatible with screen reading technology. After the initial project to implement the current version of Progress had been completed, Action for Blind People began discussions with Fisk Brett on how the subsequent release of Progress 4 could be used by those with visual impairment.

## Integrating CRM database with Screen Reading Technology

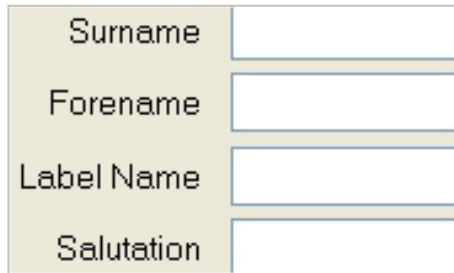
In order for Progress to be used by blind and partially sighted users it needed to be integrated with screen reading software. This software would not only enable the reading out of the labels and fields on the database but also

magnify the screens within Progress. Action for Blind People already used the Supernova screen reading software, supplied by Dolphin, and so discussions began on the developments required to integrate this software with Progress. Initial discussions between Fisk Brett and Action for Blind People revealed that Progress required two major enhancements - intuitive navigation and more keyboard shortcuts.



For navigation it was necessary to make the tab key flow between the fields intuitively, thereby allowing the reading of the field labels to be productive for data entry. Due to the difficulty in tracking the mouse cursor when the screen is magnified, all actions were made accessible from the keyboard without the need for a mouse.

A large number of popup menus were added to enable the shortcuts. While often accessed from the right click of a mouse, there is also a dedicated button on the keyboard to popup the menu.



The keyboard shortcuts were also enabled for accessing the fields labels and the Progress tabs so that moving between tabs and fields could also be done without the use of a mouse.

All the changes made to Progress were tested by visually impaired computer users at Action for Blind People. When asked to assess the success of the project, Ian Hunt, Database Marketing Manager at Action for Blind People, says "The project involved various stages - planning, development, and testing, all of which ran smoothly.

"Fisk Brett took on board all the suggestions we made and were extremely helpful and willing to enhance Progress to be able to be used by visually impaired users."

## Fisk Brett - a customer focused supplier

The changes made to Progress, which will be applied to all subsequent versions of Progress, have proved a good example of how visually impaired computer users can undertake the same work as those with full sight.

Stephen Remington, Chief Executive of Action for Blind People, says "Action for Blind People will always strive to incorporate developments that widen opportunities for visually impaired people to enter the workplace. The advancements made at Fisk Brett complement the work we do informing employers of the great contribution that blind and partially sighted people already make to the success of businesses throughout the country.

"Yet it remains a fact that three out of four blind and partially sighted people of working age are still unemployed. The growth of systems such as Progress to include usership by visually impaired people will help us redress this statistic and in doing so substantially improve their quality of life."

Robin Fisk, Managing Director at Fisk Brett, says "This is a project that we are enormously proud of. It cements our commitment to the sector and our position as an innovative and customer-focused supplier. We fully support Action for Blind People in their objective of reducing discrimination in the workplace and are pleased that we have been able to help."

For more information on Action for Blind People, visit [www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk)

Morris Evans was the Fisk Brett developer working on the project.

Morris explains "To enable Progress to be integrated with Supernova we had to rewrite many codes. With over 350 screens in Progress this work was time consuming but with the end result meaning that Progress is more accessible it has been extremely rewarding."

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