



Helping those with sight problems across Hampshire.

"Windows 7 is important due to its access technology." – Chris Hedges.



A regional charity, covering the populous county of Hampshire, Open Sight aims to help anyone whose 'eyesight has become a cause for concern.'

If that seems a careful phrase then it's quite deliberate – the charity changed its name from the 'Hampshire Association for

the Care of the Blind' to reflect the reality of its users' situations. In fact, there is no requirement for users to be registered as partially sighted.

"This means that we can do preventative work," says Chris Hedges, the charity's Chief Executive, citing a computer program developed to identify potential sight problems at a very early stage. "We've just piloted this for the RNIB – we saw over 600 people and reached many communities that we wouldn't otherwise."

Information Technology is a massive area of interest for the charity, much of this surrounding the areas of accessibility. "We give people practical support and understanding," says Chris. "One of the first things we might say to people if they are losing their sight is: 'don't give up your job!' Likewise, we can display and demonstrate just how user-friendly IT can be for them."

Who are they?
Opensight.

Where are they?
Head office in Eastleigh.

What do they do?
Help people whose eyesight has become a cause for concern.

How big are they?
A number of regional clubs (branches) covering the county of Hampshire.

What did they receive?
Microsoft Windows 7 Enterprise Upgrades, Office Professional Plus, Technet Plus, Expression Web 3.

The outcome?
New software to aid accessibility and communication throughout the organisation.

www.opensight.org.uk

Chris points out how painful reading can be for those with limited sight. "Letter by letter ... people cannot scan like you or me." But he emphasises that there are "terrific programs" available to aid accessibility.

"A few years ago, we were teaching our users how to use computers. Now, the demographic has changed. Many people are now very comfortable with IT, and what we're doing is to help them continue with this as their sight deteriorates."

An introduction to the CTX scheme came as a welcome revelation to the charity. "A colleague sent me the link and I was in there like a rat up a drainpipe!" laughs Chris, who found himself able to source new Microsoft software for the charity, including upgrades to Windows 7.

"Windows 7 is important due to its access technology," he explains. "We also ordered a subscription to Technet Plus. We have an excellent IT support person here, and this will give them more tools to do the job. Expression Web will allow us to develop our website – we are looking to build an area on the site for professionals to help them communicate with us."

"As a charity, we look for anything that can help us provide better communications and to make it easier for people to use us. We have lots of people off-site, and IT enables us to work seamlessly."

"I'm very satisfied with what we got from CTX," he concludes. "Especially considering what we've paid in the past. CTX gave us the opportunity, as a charity with hugely limited resources, to invest in our organisation and our staff."