Working in a Data Center: 
Conversation on Perspectives in Accessibility

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ABSTRACT

Within this paper we have illustrated the difficulties of working in a datacentre while having a disability. Enlightening the other students, faculty members or co-workers of the obstacles faced on a daily basis, should be addressed by the college on the start of each academic year and the employer annually. Simple steps or awareness can make the difference to the disabled individuals assimilation into an established group.

CCS CONCEPTS

KEYWORDS
ACM proceedings, Muscular Dystrophy, heavy servers, isolation

Introduction

My name is Tania Quill and I am currently studying my Masters of Science in Private Cloud Technologies at LYIT. I have congenital Muscular Dystrophy which is a disability which weakens the muscle. This can lead to a person having mobility issues or limited strength. My disability effects my arms and legs has my strength would be quite poor in my arms. I would also fall and trip easily.

Mary- As a mature student and a female I am very much a minority in the college. There are a lot of male mature students similar in age, but most of the female mature students close to my age have left after the second year and after the third year none continued. I am the only female in my class and the male students are much younger and we are on two different levels. They are big into gaming and I have no interest in it.

Difficulties faced

Tania - As I am now a student in cloud computing I now find myself being in the datacentre. In datacentre’s the walkways can be very narrow. I have noticed how narrow the walkways are. Have noticed that if a person was in a wheelchair they would not be able to enter datacentre’s because of this that student would feel isolated and left out. There is also cases in datacentre’s where cables maybe on the floor or loosely hangs for anyone these are trip hazards but for me with bad balance it is extra dangers. Also, if I fall I need help getting up with the tight space in datacentre’s it would be difficult for someone to help me.

We had a class where we had to move the servers and open them and add memory to them. As I am not able I was not able to lift and move the servers. Although my class mates where very nice and did give assistance this leaves me feeling at times that maybe think I am taking advantage or they may think I am just being lazy if they are not fully aware of my disability as it is not visible. I do at times say why I am not able to move or lift that due to my disability but through doing this I then worry have I made the person feel uncomfortable. So even though I do know it is ok to ask...
for help do worry about how the other person will respond and feel. Then

there is the issue of when people do become aware sometimes they become to helpful and start to think that I am completely incapable.

Also, the height of the table in datacenter’s are quite so people would find it difficult to work with the servers if they have to take

Difference and Similarities

As females in computing we also fall into different minority group, both facing different channels. However something we both face is that for the mature student and a student with disabilities there are little to no set activities. Although other students try to included us it would be nice to meet with people facing the same challenges, who we can relate to.

Changes

Tania – Datacenter’s could be made more accessible for people with disabilities by making them wider so that a wheelchair can enter. In datacenter’s if the tables and console heights could be adjust this would make it easier for people in wheelchairs and with disabilities that effect a person’s height. There also are not many people in computing with disabilities so it is important that people are made aware. Also if there away the servers could be moved more easily this would be very helpful for people. Also if the stacks in datacentre’s were not as high it would be easier

Mary – I agree with Tania, the obstacles faced by both physically and visually impaired students should be addressed in the student development module. Students with these disabilities should be given the opportunity to explain to the other students what their needs are going to be, moving forward in the course of study. I would also like to see more social activities and gatherings geared towards both the mature students and the students with disabilities. It is very important for this group of students to have a social outlet. Someplace where they can meet and do things together as a group.

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