GERARD ELLIS
Feel The BenefIT



Gerard Ellis is blind and is an Accessibility and Usability consultant under the name Feel The BenefIT. He has worked for over 35 years as a Software Engineer and Mainframe Technical Specialist at the Bank of Ireland and is a Fellow of the Irish Computer Society. He holds a BA Degree in Economics from University College Dublin and a distinction in a diploma on Management in the Voluntary Sector from NCIR (The National College of Ireland). He is a former Chairperson of the Irish Council of People with Disabilities, the largest organisation in Ireland representing persons with disabilities, their families and organisations of persons with disabilities.

Mr. Ellis was a founder member and first Chairperson of the Visually Impaired Computer Society (VICS), and a founder member of the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD). Represented the interests of persons with disabilities on Commission for Communication Regulation (COMREG) and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland’s disabled users’ groups, the RTÉ Audience Council, and was a Director of the Southside Partnership. He is the Vice Chairman of the International Telecommunication Union’s Joint Co-ordinating Activity on Accessibility and Human Factors. He was a guest lecturer for the MA course in Accessibility to media, arts and culture in the University of Macerata, Italy; and a guest author of a chapter for a book on accessibility of Audio Description co-ordinated by Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona.

### Mr. Ellis is a member of the European Disability Forum’s (EDF) ICT Expert Group. He has spoken at conferences in c. 35 countries on 5 continents on various accessibility-related issues. These include Australia, Egypt, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, widely throughout the EU and the USA including meeting the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In addition, he was part of the group that produced a European Committe for Standarization (CEN) Agreement on a curriculum for training ICT Professionals in Universal Design. Mr. Ellis was part of the International Standards Organization JTAG group that reviewed and updated the ISO/IEC Guide 71 and CEN/CENELEC Guide 6. This was also adopted by ITU as its H.Supplement 17. He is a member of G3ICT’s Financial Services Accessibility Task Force. Also, presented at and chaired several workshops at G3ict’s annual M-Enabling Summit in Washington, D.C. plus was its Master of Ceremonies on one occasion. He was one of only c. 35 persons with disabilities who were chosen to speak at the 4th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities. All accessibility-related actions mentioned in this profile were carried out on a voluntary basis.