

## UK: Asda tests indoor map service for the blind and visually impaired

The retail company has paired up with the GoodMaps app to make it easier for customers who suffer that type of disabilities to navigate their way around the store.



In coincide with the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities, last 3rd of December, Asda's flagship technology store in Stevenage was integrated into the GoodMaps smartphone app, specifically built for use amongst the blind and partially sighted. Although the app has an obvious benefit to disabled shoppers, the usability of the software is not limited to those whom are blind or partially sighted only.

"We strive to be an inclusive business and that includes making it easier for all of our customers to carry out a shop in one of our stores. We hope that by working with GoodMaps we can understand how we can make the in-store experience better for our blind and partially sighted customers," said Kane Stephenson, Inclusion Manager at Asda.

The app can pinpoint the user's location to within a meter of accuracy and then communicate

directions to an object or area via audio, enlarged visual, and touch commands. Shoppers using the app will be able to search for key landmarks within the store such as the pharmacy, bathrooms, and tills, but the app can also be used to search for specific goods on the shelves with the aim being to guide the customer as close as possible to the item they are looking for.

"Our Stevenage store is the ideal testing ground for this tool with it already being home to a number of tech trials including electronic shelf labels and holograms, and this trial will teach us how we can make shopping in Asda easier for customers with additional needs," added Stephenson.

"It has been a real delight to work with Asda on this project. Recognising not only the commercial value in providing an enhanced retail experience to shoppers, but, equally the ethical stance taken by Asda in this regard has been both humbling and demonstrative of a corporate culture determined to make their offering not only inclusive but truly outstanding for all," commented Neil Barnfather, VP Europe at GoodMaps.

GoodMaps is a US based company which aims to make a leap in the quality and scale of accessible navigation. The GoodMaps mission is to improve the accessibility, safety, and inclusivity of indoor spaces. This is achieved by creating and maintaining accurate digital maps, providing indoor positioning technology, and delivering a simple and intuitive wayfinding experience to all users.