

Computer gaming station

Summary

Computer games whizz kid Brendon lost the ability to play when his muscular dystrophy progressed and he didn't have the finger strength to use a standard computer keyboard. Remap volunteer Martin Harman from Southampton developed a special keypad and mouse mat to get him back online.

When it was done Brendon was overjoyed, as he would once again be able to compete on equal terms with others. In the world of online gaming, nobody knows if you have an impairment like muscular dystrophy which has such an impact in daily life offline. Brendon commented: "Now I can get back to thrashing those able-bodied kids!"

The challenge

Brendon was an avid and competent computer games player, but his muscular dystrophy had progressed to the stage where he did not have the strength in his right hand fingers to operate a standard computer keyboard to control the games. Could Remap Southampton provide a new gaming station that would enable him to play again?

The solution



Martin, a volunteer with Remap Southampton realised that any solution would need to incorporate special switches that needed only the minimum of force to operate them. A suitable variety were sourced on the internet – ones that switch on and off very fast, making them ideal for this application. Martin developed a type of mouse mat that included the existing wireless mouse and the new switches buttons mounted in a way to suit the fingers on Brendon's right hand.

A second keyboard was adapted by masking all the keys not needed for games operation, so that Brendon could operate those keys and rest his hand on the mask surround.

The benefits

Brendon was immediately able to play all his favourite computer games and compete on equal terms with able bodies players online. In a letter of thanks, mum and dad commented: "It's the small things in life that can make the biggest difference. It was an honour to meet such a warm caring person as yourself".