TIME Magazine:
The Best Invention of the Year

What is WeWALK Smart Cane?

There are approximately 253 million visually impaired people in the world and at least 50 million of them rely on the white cane, a simple tool primarily designed to provide ground-level obstacle detection. WeWALK is more than a product – it is the first step in a societal transformation. By empowering visually impaired people with the technology to fully participate in daily life, WeWALK fosters inclusion and equal participation in society.

WeWALK Smart Cane can detect above chest-level obstacles by using a front-mounted ultrasonic sensor, warning the user with haptic feedback. The smart handle pairs with the fully accessible WeWALK smartphone app using Bluetooth to access connected mobility services, including navigation, exploration, and public transport. These features can be controlled from the smart cane's inbuilt touchpad, allowing the user to place their phone in their pocket and for single-handed navigation and added safety. In addition, the smart handle has a speaker and microphone for providing audio feedback. New app integrations and services are constantly being added via software updates, making WeWALK an ideal personal hub for the visually impaired community.

WeWALK accessible technology solutions have reached tens of thousands of users spread across 59 countries. WeWALK was selected as Startup of the Year by Amazon in 2021, named a TIME Magazine Best Invention of the Year, and was an Edison Awards gold winner, appearing in more than 750 media outlets, including CNN, BBC, Forbes, Bloomberg and El Pais. WeWALK has also received an honourable mention in World-Changing Ideas, a major annual award by Fast Company that honours products, companies and designs that are pursuing innovation for the good of society.

WeWALK is Evolving with R&D

WeWALK is partnering with Imperial College London and RNIB to develop a new computer vision-aided solution to help people facing mobility challenges.

Professor Washington Ochieng, Head of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Imperial College London, said: "The Design for Ageing Project will enable us to turn the dream of a seamless fully automated navigation system into a reality and transform the quality of life for visually impaired and elderly people. Throughout this ground-breaking project, we will be using some of the most sophisticated sensing and analytics technology including AI and machine learning to deliver on our ambitions."

Robin Spinks, Principal Manager of Digital Accessibility at RNIB, said: "We're delighted to be working with WeWALK and Imperial College London on this exciting project which gives us an immense opportunity to enhance navigation for people with sight loss.

We will be heavily involved in user testing working with a large group of blind and partially sighted people to harness their day-to-day lived experience. We will also be working with our user experience team to develop a game-changing product that will improve the lives of visually impaired individuals worldwide."

With the support of its investors and the life-long relationships that WeWALK has built with organizations such as Microsoft and Imperial College London, WeWALK is set to deliver on an exciting software and hardware roadmap, including the enhancement of WeWALK's navigation system for safety-critical applications, and the deployment of new urban exploration features.

Imperial College London

Innovate UK

WeWALK in the Press

WeWALK Smart Cane has been featured in over 750 prominent media outlets across the globe including CNN, BBC, Forbes and Bloomberg.