**Open Source and the gold that lies within:  *The philosophy and movements that the AT sector should embrace.***

***Abstract Summary (250 words)***

Open Source is the publication of information, designs or software source to be freely available for all to view and ideally, permitted to modify and improve upon.

Open Source philosophy and practice holds many benefits for Assistive Technology users, developers, suppliers, funding bodies and practitioners including:

* Greater flexibility for truly customisable solutions to meet the unique needs of AT users;
* Greater choice and freedom for both AT users and suppliers;
* Protection during occasions when suppliers or supports are lost;
* Potentially quicker provision of products and custom solutions &
* Reduced total cost of supply.

These benefits can be even more apparent in markets typical of AT, where highly customised products are needed in relatively low volumes. In these cases, alternative market/service models may be better suited.

Open Source works hand in hand with entities such as Maker movements to help turn ideas into usable products.

This presentation aims to:

* Explore some of the practical variants of Open Source Licences, their restrictions and legal ramifications in relation to AT;
* Look at some of the myths, misconceptions and blockages that restrict the true benefits of Open Source from being realised;
* Highlight some of the global initiatives and efforts of the Open Source community and Maker movements in relation to AT;
* Demonstrate examples of Open Source AT solutions (hardware and software) that owe their success to Open Source;
* Help you to find Open Source AT solutions (for yourself or your clients) &
* Show how you can help contribute to improving AT for everyone, globally.