

# UNIQUE APP FOR DISABLED PEOPLE LAUNCHED IN BERLIN



For many people who depend totally on wheelchairs to get around, wheelchair accessible places are imperative for shopping, dining, and any other business. If there is a choice of two hardware stores, for example, and one can only be entered by going up a few steps and into a door that must be hand opened, while the other offers a ramp and automatic opening door, then the decision of which one to patronize is obvious for those in a wheelchair. In some areas of the world, such as Germany, where those who are mobility impaired had little offered to them other than delivery services or access to special taxis, a little APP known as Wheelmap.org has given them more freedom of choice.

Wheelmap.org is a god send for people who are wheelchair bound. Rather than living on the fringe of society, people with limited mobility can now check their cell phones or computers to see several places such as restaurants, cafes, and other stores that welcome wheelchair, walker, crutches, or cane users.

With the iphone APP, anyone can contribute and rate a location. Locations are tagged either red, yellow, or green. Green is totally accessible, red is not. Yellow is for those with some, or limited, accessibility for those with impaired mobility. A grey tag means the place has not yet been rated.

For some, this Wheelmap.org APP has opened up a whole new world, and allowed them to explore other areas in the country now that they can see which places can accommodate them. They can join in with others in their society trying out new places to eat or shop.

It's one thing to be physically disabled and quite another to have an additional society handicap, which is often what it feels like for many. In addition to viewing the tagged locations and adding new tags to a newly rated place, a logged in user can also leave comments for others to read.

Use of this APP may provide even more benefits than those already in place. Business owners who find themselves competing with handicapped friendly businesses may soon find by adding ramps and automatic doors, the additional cost will be more than recovered by the additional business.

Although many places have guidebooks for handicapped and wheelchair accessible places, guidebooks can be out of date, and it's difficult to constantly update them. The advantage of the APP is that it can allow users to constantly update and record changes, keeping everything current for those who use it. The APP has already started to spread in use beyond Germany, and the hope is it will be in place worldwide soon, to allow wheelchair users everywhere a chance to be part of society. Wheelmap.org APP is definitely a unique way to keep those in wheelchairs and who have mobility issues in touch with places accessible to them.

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