

Microsoft Soundscape — A 3D Audio Navigation App's Rise, Retirement and Open-Source Afterlife

Digital Inclusion · Good practice · United Kingdom

Quality score: 36/100

Evidence strength: Cautionary / limited

Summary

Developed from 2014 by Microsoft's Reading, UK team with Guide Dogs UK, Soundscape used 3D audio cues to help blind users build spatial awareness; despite valued mobility impact, Microsoft retired it in 2023 and open-sourced the code amid user objections.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Sustainability (ongoing)	0/1
Innovation level	4/5
Evaluation evidence	0/1
Demonstrated reach	0/1
Documented learning	1/1

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

C-NAPSE web research — accessed 2026-09-25

Microsoft Research & Guide Dogs UK — accessed 2026-09-25

Microsoft Accessibility Blog — Soundscape — accessed 2026-09-25

TechSpot — Microsoft retiring Soundscape, open-sourcing the code — accessed 2026-09-25

Vision Ireland — Microsoft Soundscape update: discontinued — accessed 2026-09-25

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