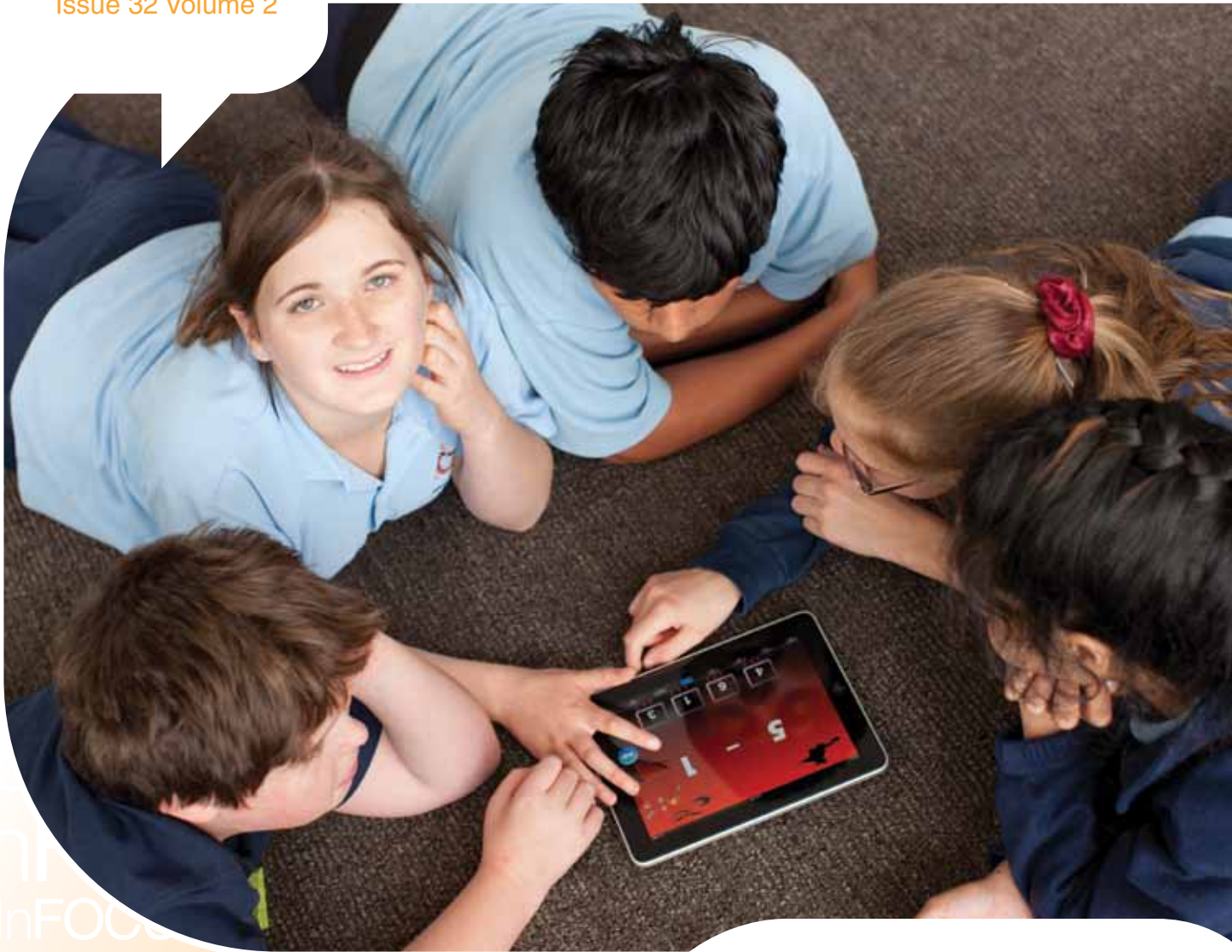


InFOCUS

November 2012

Issue 32 Volume 2



The expanding
world of AAC.

ago sci
inc.

Zyteq 2012 plans and perspectives

Happy New year AGOSCI members and AIF readers!

I would like to use our space to tell you about what we've been up to at Zyteq and what's in store for 2012.

In 2011 Zyteq moved to larger premises, Megan Bloom returned from maternity leave and Karyn Muscat joined our team. More space and 'people power' has enabled Zyteq to improve and develop our endeavours to expand the knowledge about our Assistive Technologies. With the support, training and information from our team of Speech Pathologists we aim to be more available to assist you and your team in trialling Speech Generating Devices and learning how to use the technology as effectively as possible.

Electronic communication devices are generating steam as well as speech, with a plethora of devices currently on the market. In addition to the 'dedicated' devices, the mainstream computer tablets and the Apple iPads offer many options. As we know there are so many individual situations, physical differences, personal needs and interests so that 'one-size-fits-all' is not relevant to our work in AAC. In our recent presentations and contacts



we have been encouraging a "back to basic principles" approach to device selection. One of our key aims is to assist in the process of ensuring that the 'user' acquires the most suitable system. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in this process by chatting with you over the phone or attending meetings with our Speech Generating Devices. We bring with us our expertise on the equipment so we can help match this to the user's needs, preferences, and requirements in conjunction with understanding their support networks and environments, to find the most suitable Speech Generating system.

In 2012 we will be exhibiting at a number of conferences, providing our equipment demonstrations around Australia, including several product launches! New products in 2012 will be The GridPlayer App for iPad, PODD for The Grid 2, LightWRITER Swift, LightWRITER SL40 CONNECT to name a few. We will be exhibiting at The Inclusive Technologies Conference in May on the Gold Coast, at the Speech Pathology Australia conference in June in Hobart and at ARATA in Sydney. So please come by the stand to have a chat. We have great plans for our loan equipment program, so that the trial period is used as effectively as possible and provides useful information about the suitability of the system trialled.

To keep up to date with all our activities in 2012 I invite you to please join our e-mailing list to receive our emailed newsletters. To join please subscribe on the home page at our website www.zyteq.com.au, or email us at info@zyteq.com.au Thank you for your time!

Tracey Bode, Managing Director.

Images:

Left - Karyn Muscat & Tracey Bode, AGOSCI conference 2011.
Top - Megan Bloom and LightWRITER Swift! Stay tuned!



Equipment demonstrations

Sessions are planned in major centres Australia wide, to provide detailed information about our products. To attend these sessions please sign up to the e-news. Email ZYTEQ or keep a watch on the website calendar for sessions near you. Feel free to express interest in holding a session at your facility.

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Cover Photos



Students at Warringa Park Special School using an iPad as part of their school day.

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Chairperson's Report



Sally Hunter

It is my pleasure to prepare my first chairperson report for this edition of AGOSCI in Focus, and take the opportunity to reflect on the success of the Adelaide conference as well as to alert you all to the events coming.

Congratulations to the Adelaide committee and membership generally for another enlightening and enjoyable conference. Highlights for me personally were the presentations that focused on community participation and innovation in service delivery methods. AGOSCI has always had the benefit of some amazing expertise in AAC implementation practise. The logical extension of this are the challenges and strategies to support participation as highlighted in the work of Barbara Collier. The revolutionary changes discussed by Dr Rhonda Galbally in the funding of disability services with the implementation of a National Disability Insurance scheme, raised our collective awareness for AGOSCI members to continue represent the needs of people with CCN. Darryl Sellwood so expertly challenged my notions around innovation and social capital and the impact of well designed technology for consumers. These presentations are now viewable on AGOSCI's YouTube channel via the website. We also now have a Facebook page to compliment our already fantastic listserv. Socially the event was also a success. The museum

exhibition truly took AAC to the streets and the dinner was wonderful. The function centre coordinator on the night was in awe and said to us that he had never seen such spirit in the room. The staff of the Wine Centre were so grateful for the thoughtful orientation provided to support them to serve the attendees.

So onward and upward. The next thing you will all be hearing about is the Literacy Intensive, this time to be held in Queensland. This hotly sought after professional development presented by David Koppenhaver, Sally Clendon and Jane Farrall will be held in June and applications close in early December. The National tour is booked for July and August of 2012 in a venue near you (or the webinar). Caroline Musselwhite aacintervention.com will be our travelling presenter for this event. Planning for the Sydney 2013 conference is well underway and venues and keynotes will be announced in due course.

Finally and most importantly I want to pass on my personal thanks and the gratitude of the AGOSCI membership to Sue Owen our past chairperson. Sue's calm and knowledgeable contribution is very much appreciated and I know she will remain connected to AGOSCI and we will continue to benefit from her experience and skill.

Notations

Melissa Bakes

Well Hi again to everyone,
Another busy year has come to pass for AGOSCI. We've had a good year for memberships this year with around 288 members and some from overseas. This is a little down from last year. Just on the membership front- I would urge again all members who use EFT as their payment to also send or post a copy of your membership form to me. Especially if your organisation is paying- I would just remind them to also post/ fax the membership form as this will make it easier to process your membership. It gets a little tricky sometimes trying to match a name with no other identifying information. Things will slow down now until early next year. I look forward to a rush of memberships ready for the National Tour.

Many thanks again to all the members who have joined this year. We value your membership and strive to provide an Organisation that you wish to belong to. I look forward to hearing from you all again next year.

Thanks also to everyone who has contributed to the listserv. I have enjoyed the discussions and the information everyone has contributed and shared. Keep up the good work.

Money Matters

Jane Farrall

As I write this, I have just been working with the bookkeeper to prepare our quarterly BAS statement for the 3rd quarter of 2011.

I don't have a lot of financial news to report as we are still only half way through our financial year.

The only item of note, financially, is that the conference this year unfortunately made a loss. More details will be forthcoming in the financial report presented to the AGM.

If any member has questions about our financial status please feel free to contact me directly.

If you are paying memberships by EFT please send or post to:

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State Reports



VICTORIA

Katie Lyon and Naomi Rezzani

Well it has been another busy time for AGOSCI Victoria members and we can't believe it is getting to the pointy end of another year!

Recently we held a well attended AGOSCI Conference feedback session in August which was a good opportunity for some members to attend and hear repeats of a selection of the papers presented at the Conference in Adelaide. A big thanks to Jane Farrall for her fabulous session "AAC Apps for iPhones, iPads & other devices" – this really gave us a great overview of the ever changing world of apps! Also, big thanks to Charlene Cullen for her very interesting "Accessing Social Networking Tools" session.

We are always looking for feedback from our members as to what sort of events we can hold locally, so if you have any ideas and are willing to help out, please contact Katie on katie@spectronicsinoz.com

Victoria will also be hosting the National Executive Meeting in November and we look forward to a very productive few days.



NEW SOUTH WALES

Sheila Salunke and Shannon Cain

Hello to all NSW members!

The last quarter of the year has been predominately busy with organising the Sydney Conference 2013. We have appointed our Sydney conference co-convenors; Harriet Korner and Sheila Salunke and have established our sub-committee groups. We are currently confirming conference dates and venue. For further conference updates click on our website <http://www.agosci.org.au/conf2013.htm>

Following on from our previous report the AAC Voice Group has been successful in conveying their message to the wider community in the last few months. They have been invited to present to various organisations and in doing so have inspired other consumers to actively participate. For more information about the group click on to their Facebook page "AAC Voice".

As October is International AAC Awareness Month the Independent Living Centre (ILC) will be celebrating this on the 31st October with the 'AAC at the ILC Morning Tea'. For further information and to RSVP, please contact Gayani De Silva on (e) info6@ilcnsw.asn.au or (t) 9890 0996.

Sadly Johanna Korkalainen has stepped down from the co-NSW representative role however we would like to extend a warm welcome to Shannon Cain who joined us in September. Shannon works as a Speech Pathologist for Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) as part of the Bowral Community Support Team in the Southern Highlands.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Kelly Moore

Here in WA we are gearing up for a busy end of year with all things AAC. The recent "More Than Gadgets" conference provided a forum for WA educators, therapists, suppliers and families to review and share information about current assistive learning technologies, including AAC. If you are interested, some of the papers presented can be accessed here <http://morethangadgets.com/presentations>. We would like to thank the suppliers who travelled all the way to WA as well as local, interstate and international presenters who provided a great program to inspire us to implement technology with our students- not focus on the technology alone!

Local AAC interest groups continue to run each term. I would like to thank Sue Ash and Danielle Lampropoulos from The Centre for Cerebral Palsy who continue to coordinate and organise the "AAC Device Interest Group" and "ABC in AAC Interest Group" respectively. Without their ongoing commitment, these groups would not continue to run. I would like to encourage all WA members to support these interest groups as they are a great forum for sharing local information on current best practice. Be sure to spread the word and encourage your colleagues to attend.

Upcoming professional development events include: PODD workshops by Gayle Porter and Stacy Cohen and a visit from 2 Australian suppliers, Zyteq & Link AT to showcase their latest products. Please feel free to contact me for more information about these workshops.

The listserv has been quiet of late, but continues to run well with new members joining the list most days. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have difficulties using the list. The website has also been updated with our new logo and colours. Feedback is most welcome.

Lastly, this is my first report as state rep for WA. I would love to hear from any WA members who are interested in getting more involved with AGOSCI and also discussing how we can promote AGOSCI membership in WA. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to chat about anything to do with AGOSCI. My contact details are kelly.moore@ilc.com.au and phone 08 9381 0600.



ACT

Cathy Hurman

Things have been quiet on the AGOSCI front here in the ACT but we are starting to get excited about the National Tour next year. If anyone has any membership enquiries or ideas for events they can contact Cathy at cathyhurman@hotmail.com



QUEENSLAND

Paula Hartwig & Melanie Waalder

The Queensland report this time is short and sweet! Since the Adelaide conference, the Queensland AGOSCI representatives have put together a newsletter for Queensland members, discussing previous professional development and initiatives and advertising upcoming professional development opportunities. The newsletter has been well received by our members. Please ensure we have your current email address so you can receive January's edition.

AGOSCI will again be hosting Gayle Porter for the Introductory Pragmatic Organizational Dynamic Display workshops in Brisbane later in 2011. PODD workshops continue to be very popular in Queensland. This time Gayle will also present a 1 day advanced Alternate Access workshop, for people who have previously attended the Introductory Workshop.

2012 is gearing up to be another busy year, with plans underway for a Key Word Sign workshop early in the year, as well as the National Tour with Caroline Musselwhite. Stay tuned for event flyers! In addition, we are thrilled to host the Literacy Intensive in July, presented by David Koppenhaver, Sally Clendon and Jane Farrell. Please go to www.agosci.org.au for more information.

Once again, we welcome your input, so if you have any ideas or suggestions for upcoming events, please contact Melanie or Paula at agosciqldrep@hotmail.com



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Amy Furze & Janelle Sampson

In Adelaide we are building from the momentum of the conference with a number of upcoming events and activities. An Introduction to PODD workshop will be held on December 1&2, 2011 this year. Novita have kindly agreed to organise the event but to share any profits with AGOSCI. This is the first PODD workshop in SA since 2008 so we look forward to having Gayle Porter back in SA and have so far had a good response to registration.

Planning is also underway for the 2012 National Tour. We are very excited to be hosting Dr Caroline Musselwhite in Adelaide on 27th August. Please put this date in your diary and keep an eye out for the flyer with information on how to book.

In South Australia, Kelly Vincent, MLC, Member for political party Dignity for Disability, has been actively involved in lobbying, public awareness and changes to legislation in relation to victims of crime who have a intellectual disabilities and/or complex communication needs. Kelly contacted the state AGOSCI reps earlier this year and organised a meeting to seek input and information about existing programs, information and considerations that are important for people with complex communication needs and who use AAC. Many of you will remember Kelly from the panel discussion at the 2011 AGOSCI conference and will be pleased to hear of her ongoing engagement with AGOSCI SA since then. Kelly is an amazing young person with insight beyond her years, and we are confident with her understanding of the issues, and representation for people with CCN (and all people with disabilities) in the South Australian parliament and media. Kelly and her party have already achieved significant publicity and respect within South Australia and we look forward to further involvement with her as she continues to progress these important changes and for other issues as they arise.

There has also been renewed interest in SA for an AAC/CCN special interest group (SIG). AGOSCI SA have agreed to organise these meetings and the first is scheduled for March 14th, 2012 from 4pm-6pm at Novita Children's Services, Regency Park Centre, 171 Days Rd, Regency Park. We hope to have 2-3 meetings a year with topics and venue to be decided by the group at the meetings. Details of agenda items for this meeting will be circulated via the AGOSCI SA e-mail distribution list closer to the date. If you are not on this list and would like to be added please contact Amy Furze: amy.furze@novita.org.au or phone 8172 9200. We will also post dates and details on the AGOSCI website.



TASMANIA

Diane Symons

I don't have a lot to report with things being fairly quiet on the AGOSCI front in Tasmania. Like most other places, Tasmania has significant cut-backs to many allied health and education services which is sure to have a flow on effect for services for people with complex communication needs.

Later this week I will be attending a meeting with a researcher regarding the Aids and Equipment Reform Priority of the National Disability Agreement. Unfortunately I received less than one week's notice of the meeting so did not have the opportunity to share the information widely. I hope to use this opportunity to ensure that the specialised equipment needs of people with complex communication needs are represented at this forum.

Editorial

Kirsty Holcombe

Welcome to this edition of AGOSCI in Focus – The expanding world of AAC.

With our new logo has come a new look AGOSCI in Focus. Thanks to Graphic Designer Duane Currow who has created a look for the magazine that embraces the diversity and dynamic nature of the AGOSCI community.

I could wax lyrical about the articles in this edition, however I will let them speak for themselves - as they will loud and clear. These articles, reviews and photos have come from members (and contacts of members) who are passionate

about what they do. The response for this edition has been overwhelming, and it is exciting to see the fantastic work that is happening all around Australia, and the diverse experiences of people who are embracing the rapidly expanding mainstream technologies and the AAC opportunities that come with. them. It is proof that AGOSCI members are leading the way in the practice of AAC.

I would like to thank all of you who have contributed, those who have sent suggestions of people to contact for contributions and the active community on the listserv who have made this edition possible. ENJOY.

Department of Families and Communities (DFC) Equipment Programme (South Australia)

Cheryl Slade, Clinical Support Officer / Senior Occupational Therapist, DFC Equipment Programme

The DFC equipment programme in South Australia recently approved a limited trial of mainstream tablet/touch screen devices for use as speech generating devices (SGDs). The trial has been open to a limited number (10) of children and adults with disabilities and has included provision of iOS, Android or Windows devices. Factors that will be evaluated include the durability and reliability of the device, how well the apps / software provided are able to meet the communication goals for the client, cost effectiveness of these devices, issues arising and solutions identified and implemented in regard to management of the device and the support for and effectiveness of an implementation plan.

Preliminary data gathered (on 7 of the 10 devices that have currently been issued, 6 iPad and 1 iPod) has found:

A high level of immediate satisfaction and acceptance of these devices: Especially amongst younger users device seen as mainstream, not disability specific)

Cost effective: In some cases where dedicated speech generating devices would otherwise have been provided, it has been possible to provide iPads for considerably less. Cost of 4 dedicated SGDs that would have been prescribed if mainstream device was not available was \$27 685.00. The cost of providing iPads, apps, accessories and protective cases for the same 4 clients was \$4161.96, a combined cost saving of over \$20 000.

Servicing an unmet need: In some cases, dedicated SGDs

would not have been prescribed as these items did not meet client need, however the mainstream device has met the need.

Apps currently being used: Predominantly Proloquo2Go and TouchChat (HD) with word power. Apps have generally been “gifted” to the client’s iTunes account.

Accessories supplied as standard: Otter Box Defender Cases and screen protectors are being used to protect the devices in most instances. Jabra SP700 bluetooth speakers have also been issued to be used in noisy environments such as classrooms or shops.

It is hoped that after preliminary evaluations have been completed it will be possible to gain approval to increase the trial numbers.

A further evaluation will be conducted after 3 months of use to gauge ongoing satisfaction, the degree to which the device meets clinical goals, client satisfaction and utilisation of the device, durability of the device and any technical or hardware problems encountered.

It should be noted that clients have undergone an extensive assessment process of feature mapping to client need prior to being issued a mainstream touch screen device. It is acknowledged that for many people who can benefit from AAC one of the range of these devices will not suit many clients who do require deAAAAA dedicated SGDs available will better support them to achieve their communication goals.



Congratulations

To Marlena Katene who won the Queensland Disability Action Week Outstanding Young Achiever Award.

An Introduction to Android

David Harraway, Occupational Therapist, *comTEC* , (David.Harraway@yooralla.com.au), Dennis Lo, Speech Pathologist, Lifetec, (DennisLo@lifetec.org.au)

Introduction

While Apple iOS devices have gained much of the attention for reasons detailed in other articles in this journal, Android tablets and phones are often a viable alternative and may offer useful features that differentiate them from iPods/Phones/and Pads.

What is Android?

The Android operating system was developed by Google and members of the Open Handset Alliance and can be found on a wide range of tablets and phones from various manufacturers. Like other operating systems such as those found on Apple, Windows, and Blackberry devices, Android provides the user with ability to run applications in order to perform required tasks. Apps may be downloaded from several places online, the main one being the official Market.

Android comes in several different versions, many of which co-exist in the market place. Android versions are named, perhaps a little too cutely, after sweet treats. The latest version optimized for touchscreen tablets is Honeycomb (aka Android 3.x) while the handset variant is known as Gingerbread (aka Android 2.3). A new version of Android known as Ice Cream Sandwich is reported to be due by the end of the year and is designed to replace both Gingerbread and Honeycomb in the market.

How is it different from Apple iOS?

The primary difference Android has to iOS is that it is Open Source. In practical terms this means that it can be easier to develop for and that developers may have more control over the actual operating system features – potentially allowing for a wider variety of apps. This also enables community development of the operating system, allowing additional features to be integrated into the system.

Why would I choose an Android Device?

There are several ways to answer this. Cost may be one consideration as basic smaller Android tablets with older style resistive touchscreens can be sourced online for as little as \$150, while those with capacitive touchscreen can be found at around \$200-300. Access to Android may also be a comparative strength when contrasted to Apple devices. As with iOS gestures such as swipe and pinch can be used to aid in navigation. Resistive touchscreen technology can be interacted with by fingers as well as another hard object such as a stylus. Unlike iOS and other Android tablets and phones, this does not have to be made

from a special conductive material – meaning a standard headpointer can work.

Also under the heading of Access, certain Android devices offer additional functionality not present in iOS devices. For example, touchscreen sensitivity and gesture feedback may be altered in the Settings menu. Reducing sensitivity can allow people with difficulties with their movement more effective access to the screen. Haptic feedback is another Android feature where the tablet or phone vibrates to confirm a selection has been made.

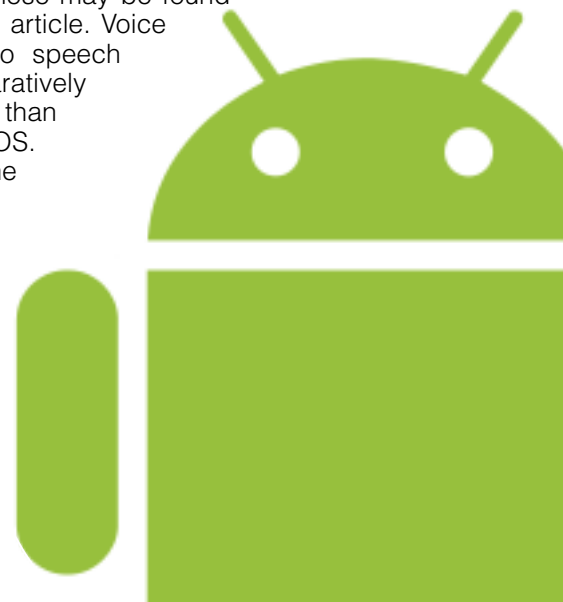
Using Android devices for AAC

As Android devices come in all shapes and forms, some devices may not be suitable for AAC purposes due to hardware limitations. Most Android AAC applications were able to run smoothly on devices that meet the following criteria.

- The device is running Android 2.2 or newer versions.
- The device has a 800MHz or faster processor
- The device has 512MB or more RAM
- The device has a screen resolution of 480x360 or higher
- The device allows the installation of third party applications
- The device can be connected to a speaker (via cable or Bluetooth)

What sort of Software is available?

Several AAC apps for both text to speech and symbol users. Links to lists of these may be found at the end of this article. Voice output for text to speech choice is comparatively more extensive than on Apple iOS. Also due to the system design, synthesized voices can be purchased independently from the applications, which means the user only have to purchase the voice once for



it to be used in different applications. Android also has a wide choice of system keyboards with features such as word completion and prediction. Android OS incorporate Google Voice functionality, meaning speech recognition can be used for tasks such as searching, navigating and text production.

Just like any Speech Generating Devices, the best practice approach is to trial a range of different devices to find out what is the best fit for the user before committing to a particular device. This is to make sure that the device is the best fit of the user's abilities, communication needs while allowing sufficient room to accommodate future growth in communication and language skills.

A unique Android project and one of the most exciting applications for Android is the Tecla Keyboard. This arose out of a venture funded by Google in 2009; and development continues via a partnership based in Canada and contributed to by several organisations in Canada, The US, and the EU. Tecla Access is a free application for most recent versions of Android that provides the user with an onscreen keyboard that allows switch access to all phone functions and also the ability to control many applications via switch and scan.

In effect this means people with very limited movement can have full control of their Android device (unlike Apple iOS where alternative access is limited to specific applications and even then only when developers have made this functionality available). Also in development is a commercial switch interface known as Tekla Shield. As the project is open source, plans for the Shield can be downloaded from the site. People wishing to contribute to the project (such as to suggest useful features) can do so via the project development site.

Symbol based applications



(Lt) iAugcomm on an Android Tablet (not compatible) (Above) Alexicomm on an Android Tablet (compatible)

Symbol based applications on the Android platform are still in their infancy stage and some of them are ported from the equivalent on the iOS platform, e.g. Taptotalk, Alexicom AAC, AAC Speech Buddy, etc. However, there are also applications that are designed specifically for the Android platform which are not available on other operating systems, e.g. FreeAAC, etc.

Most of these applications are, however, designed to be used with mobile phones running on Android platform, which means that some of them may not be able to take the advantage of the larger screens available on some of the Android tablets in the market.

Text to Speech / Spelling input applications

In terms of text to speech / spelling input applications, there are a large number of them in the Android market and most of them utilizes the word prediction system built into Android to provide context-sensitive word prediction. User can also utilize 3rd party voices in these applications,



TapTalker app



which allows the user to access a wide range of free as well as paid voices when using these applications. Some of the examples in this category include Taptalker and Text to Speech Toy.



Tap to Speech Toy with different keyboards



For more information on Android applications, there are a number of app lists available online, including:

<http://www.iautism.info/en/2011/03/25/list-of-apps-for-android/>

<http://www.snapps4kids.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/AAC-Apps-for-Android-Symbol-based-DL-March.pdf>

<http://www.snapps4kids.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/AAC-Apps-for-Android-Text-to-speech-DL-March.pdf>

Accessories for Android devices

Like Apple devices, their Android counterparts have a range of accessories. Apart from cases, holders, and stands, there are several keyboard options.

Most of the Android devices allow the user to use an external Bluetooth keyboard for text entry, which can be useful for those who prefer the tactile feedback of a physical keyboard (as compared to the on screen keyboard).

Specialist keyboards such as the BigKeys LX USB can also be connected to some Android devices which have USB host capability such as Acer Iconia Tablet and etc.

Some Android tablets also provide mouse access. The Asus Transformer (when used in conjunction with the keyboard dock) or the Motorola Xoom (when used with a USB host cable) are some of the examples. This means that users who prefer to use alternative mouse options, from track balls to joystick mouse integrated in wheelchair controllers to head trackers, can retain their preferred method of access when accessing some of the Android devices. With the aforementioned Tecla Access application, a switch adapted mouse attached onto the device can also function as a switch interface, allowing the user to utilize a wide range of switches to operate the device. Conclusion All in all, the Android ecology is characterized by comparatively greater diversity (different versions of OS, more than one manufacturer) than the Apple equivalent. Whether this a strength or weakness for Android will be determined over time. While it is currently true that there are fewer apps for functions such as communication, this situation looks likely to change in time.

My Experiences Using Facebook

Tracey Gibb (csigibb@gmail.com)

Hi my name is Tracey Lynette Gibb. I am a 38yr old woman with Locked in Syndrome, which is a fancy way of saying "trapped in one's body".

The program I use to allow me to use the computer independently is called "TOBII communicator". My computer has been built for me because we found computers from the store were expensive - especially since I needed quite a powerful computer.

The computer itself sits at the other end of my room and the monitor is secured to an over way that can either go over my bed or my electric chair.

To operate my computer I use a headset that has a chin switch on the end. It is a sensor switch that with just a slight touch from my chin will make the cursor activate.

When I first started using the computer I didn't know much about "social media" in fact I had never used a computer before, but I was interested in email and Google. Of course I've heard about Facebook etc. but I didn't think that I would be able to access it. When a friend introduced me to Facebook I was excited by what I was able to do but I still needed somebody to operate my computer for me, plus I didn't really know what to do.

Eventually my OT (occupational therapist) came across TOBII communicator.....YES finally!!!! It had everything I needed and more. It had an on screen keyboard with everything a regular keyboard has, also it had a



mouse (like a radar and the keyboard scans). So cool!!! It has really opened my room. The walls disappear as soon as my computer goes on and the world's an oyster.

Now that I am able to use the computer independently, I am able to keep in contact with family in Adelaide and Perth - plus I have been able keep in touch with friends and the real world. Oh yeh! I have also reunited with my old school friends and more importantly my other siblings. Plus the people I have met online, some don't even know that I am disabled, lol lol

So if you are bored, don't get out much and have access to a computer and can use it.....do it!!! But be warned it is addictive!!!! Trust me....I am addicted.....lol lol lol lol - enjoy!

AGOSCI National Tour 2012

Dr Caroline Musselwhite

Caroline is a Speech Language Pathologist and assistive technology specialist with more than 25 years experience working with children and adolescents with severe disabilities. She is an inspirational speaker and a leading expert on AAC. She is also a founding member of the board of Directors for the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC). She has a strong emphasis on fun and on building social networks for ACC users. You can learn more about Caroline at her website

www.aacintervention.com



Dates

Sydney August 20th, 2012
Brisbane August 22nd, 2012
Perth August 24th, 2012
Adelaide August 27th, 2012
Melbourne August 29th, 2012
Half day Webinar August 30th, 2012

WA2Proloquo2Go

Kelly Moore, Senior Speech Pathologist, Coordinator ILC Tech ,
Independent Living Centre of WA (Kelly.Moore@ilc.com.au)

At the Independent Living Centre WA, our service is expected to be as up to date as possible with new AAC technologies. We are a statewide service that provides information and advice about AAC options to clients, their families, schools, therapists and a range of organizations. With the emergence of more mainstream AAC options on iPod and iPad, we have experienced a dramatic increase in enquiries and requests for appointments. In particular, we receive a large number of enquiries about the Proloquo2Go App. We have responded to requests from a wide range of clients, interestingly for clients with little or no previous AAC use and from families who had not wanted to pursue AAC for their family member before. As a team, we experience the ongoing challenge of staying up to date with this technology. There

is an expectation that as Speech Pathologists in this sector that we will know about every AAC App. However this technology is so new and it takes us time to learn it too. As a service, we are keen to stay as up to date as possible and ensure we are encouraging evidence-based practice in AAC for our broad range of clients. We were fielding enquiries from local, interstate and even international sources about the Proloquo2go App and its use in WA. So I decided to conduct a simple questionnaire to gain some information about WA Proloquo2Go users and their perceived benefits and challenges of using this mainstream technology for AAC. In late 2010, I distributed a questionnaire and received responses from eleven parents/ carers of Proloquo2Go users and individuals themselves, as well as six therapists.

Data from Families

Age	Diagnosis	Prior AAC?	Do you continue to use your previous AAC aids now that you are using Proloquo2Go?
8	Autism	PECS "I want" phrase Key Word Signing	Occasionally still using PECS file
16	Intellectual Disability	No	-
14	Autism	No	-
8	Autism	No	-
12	Down Syndrome	PECS at school only	Still using PECS at school
3	Severe Verbal Dyspraxia	PECS	No
18	Down Syndrome	Dynamo PODD	Yes, continues to use PODD book
11	Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum	PODD, PECS, chat books, other low tech visual supports	PODD and low tech boards around the house
13	Down Syndrome	No	-
38	Intellectual Disability	No	-
12	Cerebral Palsy	Go Talk, Dynavox V, low tech at school	Low tech still used at school

Data from Therapists

Clients Age	Diagnosis
19-59 (4 clients)	CVA, Head and Neck Cancer, MND, ABI
14	Down Syndrome
12	Cerebral Palsy
6-12 years (8 clients)	Autism, PDD (NOS), Down Syndrome
7-18 years (7 clients)	Intellectual Disability, Autism, Down Syndrome
8-13 years (3 clients)	Down Syndrome, Intellectual Disability, Klinefelter Syndrome

Families Perspective

I was interested in the benefits and challenges encountered by families who were using Proloquo2Go. The main benefits included that this method of communication was highly motivating for the user, had a range of vocabulary in comparison to their previous system or no system at all, and with its mainstream appearance peers were keen to engage with the user. Many families also mentioned that Proloquo2Go was easy to use. Other benefits reported were that the users were experiencing more independence, less frustration and were becoming more verbal.

“He would be trendy like his peers”

“Other children gravitate towards this technology and want to help him use it; its more interactive; other children understand this technology because they are familiar with it”

“Helps me order food” (Proloquo2Go User)

Any piece of AAC technology can bring challenges. The main challenges identified by these families using Proloquo2Go included having the time and knowledge to program the App to meet the users needs, implementing the technology into the environment and actually teaching the user how to use it. Some families reported that the vocabulary within the App was difficult to navigate. Other challenges included training staff to use the device and learning the associated technology (iTunes) if the family was not previously familiar with this program.

“Just to get him to use it in the right way.”

“Learning to sync it up with the computer and back it up.”

“I am not confident in programming; really need to do a course.”

“I believe that living in a country town and being a device which is not familiar to most is a challenge.”

We also specifically asked families about their previous AAC experience. Results varied from no AAC experience, through to families participating in a thorough AAC prescription process. Comments included :

“Communication aids were mentioned to us, but nothing appealed to me for my son. We found out about Proloquo2Go at the right time, right information, and right phase for our son.”

“Yes, we trialed various hi tech AAC devices before the iPad.”

“Yes, years go at [hospital], large laptop sized devices.”

Choosing Proloquo2Go

We were interested in why Proloquo2Go was so popular and why people chose this particular combination of hardware (iPod Touch, iPad, iPhone) and software (Proloquo2Go App).

Family/User

Motivating
Small and Portable
Looks cool
Cost
Technology is appealing to user, family and others
Easy to use
Used by other students in their class

Therapists

Motivating
Portable
Families preference
We considered the full range of AAC options
Family already familiar with the technology
Cost
Used by other students in their class

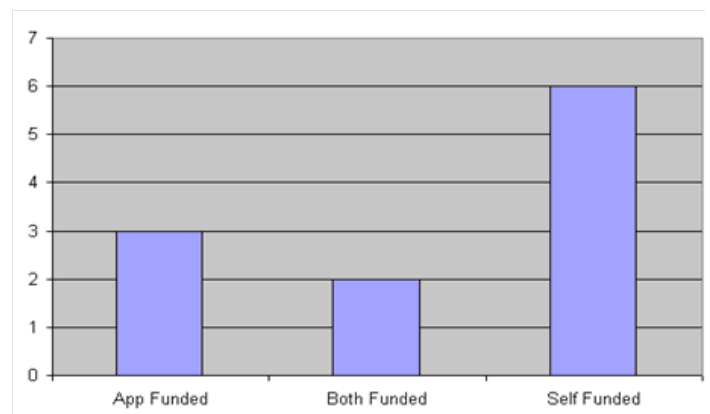
There is no doubt that this technology is highly motivating and its mainstream look is appealing to the user and a range of communication partners. In our role, we work to ensure that families and therapists are aware of the full range of AAC options so they can make an informed choice, which in some cases had already been done. Interestingly cost was a factor mentioned by both therapists and families ; however, all of the clients who were included in this study were eligible for funding for a communication device through our local state funding scheme. When we asked families (11) about how their child’s system was funded, the majority (6) of families self-funded both the App and the iDevice. Only two clients used the available state funding for their AAC system, and three families received funding for the App only.

Features of Proloquo2Go

A portion of our questionnaire also focused on various features of the Proloquo2Go App and how families and therapists used these.

Wise Words from Families and Therapists

We asked both our families and therapists if they had any



advice for others considering trying Proloquo2Go. Much of their advice can apply to AAC practice in general.

Here is what they said:

“Like any other device, unless the whole community is involved, it becomes more difficult to use. The awareness in the community is necessary. Can we have TV ads or something?”

Feature	Comments from Families & Therapists
General Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Varied from very easy to challenging -Siblings learnt to program the device very quickly -Programming this device was less threatening for support staff, they were more willing to give it a go because the technology was familiar -Lack of flexibility. I can't create just one page and share it with all the students in the class -Using photos was excellent -Cut, Copy & Paste feature was useful -Creating a new home page was a useful starting point -Programming any page navigation system takes time
Voice/Volume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Many respondents reported that they wished this device was louder. Specific examples include that the device could not be heard in a noisy classroom or the local food court. Additional speakers are essential! -Wanted wider range of voices and ability to add recorded speech
Symbol Set	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Respondents reported it was "easy" through to "difficult to find the symbols they needed, many wanted more symbols"
Views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The List View was helpful for one student with fine motor difficulties -The Recent view was a good idea, but was rarely used
Durability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I wish it was more durable" "I have concerns" -Many respondents were using covers to protect their device, various durable cases are available (Otterbox, Griffin Survivor, iMainGoX)
Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Some respondents commented on wanting to adjust touch screen settings. This was later included in a Proloquo2Go update and is now available. -Small operational buttons cannot be made larger (clear, back) -Some students had difficulty with scrolling "Would be good if category cells didn't speak"
Restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Many respondents reported that it was challenging as the user could easily get out of Proloquo2Go and into the rest of the Apps on the device.
Working with iTunes	<p>To ensure using this App for AAC is successful; families need to be able to manage iTunes for backing up and downloading updates. Many respondents reported using iTunes to be difficult and a new learning curve for them. Other issues reported by the therapists included that many schools and organizations have restrictions on using iTunes and this has made this technology difficult to manage. Teams also need to consider the "hidden costs" of internet connection for ongoing management of this technology as AAC.</p>
Backing Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many respondents reported difficulty with backing up and that this role was not clearly defined in their team in terms of who was responsible for backing up the programming.

"If I suddenly arrived in a foreign land...and it was where I was to live, love, laugh, die and there was a skinny little silver thing that could break down so many walls and put aside so much isolation and frustration I would want one, who wouldn't"

"I think that with all the discussion and interest that they [apple products as AAC] have generated there will be a positive effect on AAC"

"Find a communication system that fits the child, not the other way around."

"I think it's important to keep up with what our kids are interested in."

"I'm glad that people with complex communication needs now have more choices about how they want to communicate."

"The success of any symbol based communication device lies in how well the programming/ language meets the client's needs and personal situation and their willingness to use alternative communication."

Lastly we asked families and therapists if they had any suggestions for improvements. These included a need for more core vocabulary pages designed to efficiently build sentences and wanting different page sets for different ages or stages of language development. Other ideas were wanting some computer based editing software so that all programming doesn't have to be done on the device,

and access to a lite version of the App for potential users to try before they buy. Switch access was also mentioned as a possible improvement.

Inspiring Comments from Inspiring WA Families using Proloquo2Go

"To watch you child succeed and achieve is always rewarding, and this has been one of those very exciting moments where we've had a lot of success and achievements in a very short time."

"Just one year ago I thought this was impossible. She loves it!"

"It opens up the world just a little bit more than before, that is a good thing."

"I am amazed that this form of communication is so under utilized by health care professionals working with non verbal children. I cannot overstate the importance of this device for our child's well being, feeling of self control and development of their social and communication skills."

"I think as a parent I need to be committed and available even when perhaps this may all get too overwhelming and too much."

"In x's case she would benefit from constant tuition in her home town to keep her interested and enthusiastic. Probably if this technology was available when x was young it would have been a lot more beneficial for her."

"Technology changes every day and we can try to keep up."

"A wise speech therapist convinced me that technology is not a replacement for hard work and intelligence, so I gave it and my son a chance and I saw results."

"Anything that helps a person communicate directly, no matter how large or small is a huge plus."

"x is not using the Proloquo2Go program very much at this stage. Carries her iPhone everywhere with her and seems to enjoy taking photos and communicating this way. We have a new coordinator at x Association who seems enthusiastic re new ideas so must work on educating the staff to encourage x to use her device."

Some suggestions?

Stay Up to Date: If you are using the Proloquo2Go App I would strongly advise you to sign up for updates from the official website : <http://www.proloquo2go.com/Support/article/stay-informed> . We found that many of the challenges and improvements that families and therapists mentioned had actually been fixed or already created by the App developer- they just didn't know about them. Updating Proloquo2Go as they become available will ensure access to new features and improvements when they are released.

Back Up Your Programming: Many of our families

reported frustration at losing their programming. We have found that many teams are not backing up the user's pages and are losing all their hard work. It can take many hours to program a page navigation system so don't forget to back up! Instructions are available here :<http://www.proloquo2go.com/Manual/article/downloadable-tutorials>

Lock your device so Apps can't be deleted: Did you know you can lock your iPhone so they Apps cannot be deleted? Just head into Settings> General> Restrictions> Enable Restrictions... you then set a password and turn off the ability for Apps to be deleted.

Charles Stuart University Celebrates International AAC Awareness Month

Libby Clarke, Lecturer, Charles Sturt University (lclark@csu.edu.au)

"It is interesting to see the complexity of choice with the number of options to match individual needs. I wonder how future technology will change communication for all of us in another 10 years."

Student feedback.

Students and staff at CSU decided to take a different 'tack' to the idea of 'expanding the world of AAC'. While we recognise that new devices and applications are making us all think differently about AAC, we decided to

work on expanding the range of people who might get involved in producing low-tech AAC.

The first step was to get allied health students and staff involved in the production of AAC resources for their clients. Speech pathology students worked with physios, occupational therapy, nursing and podiatry students on campus, as well as with blood bank and radiography staff at local health services, to produce a range of visual scripts that represented basic assessment procedures. The idea was that, by engaging allied health peers in the process of developing scripts that were relevant for different allied health processes, we would begin to focus their attention to the communication needs of people who might find assessments confronting if they were not able to adequately understand the spoken instructions.

The results of this process was a series of excellent visual scripts which were displayed as part of our 'International AAC Awareness Month' morning tea, held in the beautiful Gums Cafe on our Thurgoona Campus. The morning tea was the second stage of our plan to encourage a broader engagement with AAC resources and technology. The speech pathology students prepared interactional activities, information sheets and displayed the range of AAC resources they had developed over the semester. More importantly, they encouraged all visitors to the morning tea to use AAC resources [request cards; signing; mobile phones; writing; single switch devices; communication

Students show their communication request cards



boards] to request what they wanted from the sumptuous morning tea options.

We had over 60 visitors to the morning tea, and managed to get some coverage on the local television, local ABC Radio and in The Australian newspaper. We also have loads of ideas of how to take the process of educating our allied health peers its new heights in 2012.

You can check out the article printed on the 7th October, 2011 in The Australian Higher Education Supplement at <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/opinion/speaking-in-itongues/story-fn87wauf-1226160923405>



Students look at a visual script

iPad Project at Modbury Special School

Melissa Campbell and Jodie Whitford (melc3@dodo.com.au)



Modbury Special School caters for students from five to eighteen, diagnosed with an intellectual disability. The school currently has 165 students enrolled across three campuses. Communication and Technology are whole school focus areas.

Melissa Campbell teaches Middle to Upper Primary and Jodie Whitford teaches Junior Primary. We both have an interest in Technology and Augmentative Communication. "We" is used throughout this paper to identify the research of Melissa and Jodie.

In Term 1 2010 Modbury Special School Communication Group applied for a SERU Technology Grant. We were successful in acquiring one iPad, three iPod Touches and the application Proloquo2go. We set out to investigate the impact of this technology for students with special needs and it developed into an action research project.

Why an iDevice?

We selected iDevices because we were interested in trialling their use with our students and to evaluate their effectiveness for learning. Communication was our initial focus area. Our previous experience with AAC devszsxices has been that they are usually quite expensive and they have a high abandonment rate. We researched the benefits of using an iPad. We found that they were portable, cost effective (a third the cost of a computer), they required minimal technical support, there are thousands of apps available and that the iTunes store is open 24/7. The iPad's battery life is impressive; it supports a full day of learning in the classroom.

In Reflection...

When the iDevices arrived we realised that in order to effectively use them with our students we needed additional accessories. We required finance for iTunes cards, protective cases, screen covers, stylus and stands. We were aware that we also needed training and guidance to successfully use the iDevices as teaching tools.

We spent many months familiarising ourselves with this new technology. Jodie and a colleague attended a Proloquo2go workshop at SERU. Melissa started studying at Flinders University: Technology and Disability. In one of the

assignments she explored the effectiveness of the iPad in Education and at Modbury Special School and in particular the classroom environment.

With a belief that the iPad combined with the right educational apps would assist students to achieve success in learning, we privately purchased our own. This enabled us to purchase our own apps and to progress at our own pace, work collaboratively to



Camera connection kit



Bubcaps

share ideas and classroom practice. We also purchased VGA cable, camera connection kit, stylus, various stands and Bubcaps.

We extended our knowledge base by exploring the web, purchasing magazines from the local newsagent, iTunesU – Podcasts, trial and error and social networks. Through these avenues we gained many tips and tricks. It is essential to place a screen protector on your iPad prior to use. After considering the research in relation to students with Autism and Vision Impairment, we selected an anti-glare protector. As they have a matte finish, minimize fingerprints, incorporate an anti scratch coating and require minimal cleaning. This is consistent with our whole school policy on laminating visual system for our students. We are aware that others may prefer the gloss as it provides brighter, sharper colour.

We were very concerned that the user could easily damage the iPad. This led us to research protective cases/covers, which would be suitable for our student group. We found viewing YouTube videos



Otterbox Defender

an effective strategy for selection and reading reviews on the Internet. Our case of choice is the Otterbox Defender; however there are other options available now. Some of these include the Trident Kraken and the Gumdrop. The Otterbox Defender offers triple layer protection and the cover can also be used as a stand.

After trialling many stylus with our students and the iPad we liked the AluPen by Just Mobile. This stylus is shaped like a learner pencil, it is hexagonal in design, made from aluminium, and is quite thick. Its rubber tip glides across the screen smoothly. It is a good weight and comes in many colours. It was one of the more expensive options; however we found you get what you pay for.



AluPen by Just Mobile



Our students quickly found the home button and were constantly exiting apps during learning tasks. The Bubcap adheres over the home button of your iDevice, they are semi-rigid and deter children from repeatedly pressing the home button and exiting apps, but adults can still do this. Bubcaps can be purchased online from <http://bubcap.com/index.html>

As we initially were working with an iPad1 we were unable to connect the device to an external display. This is something we felt would benefit student learning and would be useful for presentation purposes. We overcame this by Jailbreaking our own devices. Apple has since integrated this feature into the iPad2. To this you will need to purchase a VGA cable or a HDMI cable, depending on your output device.

Purchasing apps can be overwhelming. Apps, like software need to be chosen carefully; therefore we use a variety of strategies for selecting educational apps. At this time it is crucial to implement the SETT Framework and consider the student, the skill you are teaching, the cost of the app, the ability to customize and the visual quality of the application. It is imperative to assess and match the app to the student's Negotiated Education Plan goals. To do this effectively you need to have a solid knowledge of quality applications across all curriculum areas. We found it useful to group apps that teach specific skills and create folders on the iPad so that they can be located quickly. We applied this concept in the development of our app list.

There are many free app lists available on the Internet, we found them to be a good starting point but they were limited. Since our collection of apps was rapidly growing, we decided to develop our own app list. The selection process took a considerable amount of time and we appraised each app on its educational potential. We have shared this document with colleagues, parents and other interested professionals. This is an ongoing process, which requires updating regularly.

Parents at Modbury Special School are proactive in supporting their child's learning. Parents requested more information regarding our iPad Project and via our Time4Us parent group we shared our knowledge and ideas. Through this group we have provided ongoing support to families implementing this technology.

Through the grant we purchased Proloquo2go unfortunately this app did not meet our student's communication skills and abilities. In hindsight we should have considered the SETT framework before purchasing this app. At the time Proloquo2go was one of the only reputable communication apps available. We have created a progressive communication continuum by evaluating, implementing and assessing communication apps. This has allowed all students to access a developmentally appropriate communication app, which is inclusive.

How has the iPad changed our practice and enhanced student learning?

The iPad has its place in education. It provides personalized learning and has the capacity to extend that learning beyond the classroom. It also increases independence and self initiated learning in students. The students quickly learnt how to operate this device. They slide, poke and manipulate the screen with ease. They find it motivating and it has increased their time on task. Due to the versatility of the device the iPad can be used with whole groups, small groups and 1:1 learning. It promotes inclusive practice as the user can participate instantaneously in the classroom activity. We have found that personalizing the iDevice specifically for the class group is highly beneficial. We have imported photographs and picture symbols that can be utilized to create personal schedules, social stories, choice making boards and learning aids. This supports our belief that these strategies are still best practice for students with disabilities.

Conclusion

We believe the iPad combined with the right apps has the potential to develop skills, extend learning, engage and motivate learners, enhance communication and reinforce key concepts. The iPad should compliment traditional teaching methods; it is an additional teaching tool that we can utilize.

To improve student outcomes and prepare our students for future education teachers need to be up to date with new technologies. Teachers need to be comfortable, supported to take risks and to be given opportunities to further their learning. It is essential that teachers have access to the latest technology to allow them to explore and experiment.

Modbury Special School is committed to expanding this iPad Project. We have placed an order for additional iPads and accessorise so that more students and teachers will have access to this technology. As a result of our project we have formed an ICT Committee, which makes decisions in relation to purchasing and distributing technology across the school. This committee is proactive in encouraging change and making a difference for the students at Modbury Special School. In the last twelve months there have been many changes in technology it is a very exciting time to be a teacher.

Access Options and Accessories for iPads Gathering Strength as they Grow

Jane Farrall, Speech Pathologist, Spectronics (janef@spectronicsinoz.com)

Many of us have seen the amazing potential for the iPad (and the iPod touch) in Special Education and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). It is a very welcome addition to our toolkit of options, although we must always keep in mind that it is only one of the tools we can use with our students. That said – iPads offer us thousands of Apps to use across all key learning areas, incredible interactivity and that amazing cool factor. Students are motivated to use them and we are motivated to teach with them. More recently, the advent of the iPad2 with video mirroring (and its potential to work as a mini Interactive Whiteboard) has made this platform even more exciting for those of us working in education.

Unfortunately, some of the students that we work with have difficulty accessing the iPad and its Apps. While the iPad has great features built in for people with visual impairment, options for people with physical disabilities are limited. At other times, we limit our students' access to iPads because of concerns about fragility or other issues. Hopefully this article will explain some of the range of options out there to help address these, and give you a starting point for looking at others.

Not long after the release of the iPad we began to see 3rd party developers starting to provide some of the touchscreen adjustments that our students need. Apps like Proloquo2Go (www.proloquo2go.com) began including some settings to assist with physical access. Options within Apps include disabling scrolling or ignoring accidental double taps. Unfortunately, for those students who need this, many of these settings don't exist outside of the specific Apps that have implemented them – but please be aware that these options do exist in many special education and AAC apps and make use of them where appropriate. In addition, with the recent release of iOS5 we have seen Accessibility settings for users with physical disabilities for the first time – it is worth checking these out if you haven't seen these yet.



Accessibility Settings

More recently, switch interfaces have begun to be available for the iPad and iPod touch. Air Turn (www.airturn.com) began by developing a Page Turner which works with some music software – allowing musicians

to change pages in a musical score while their hands are busy with the instrument. RJ Cooper (www.rjcooper.com) and TherapyBox (www.therapybox.com) quickly adapted this to work with some special education apps – offering 1 and 2 switch scanning, and at the same time AbleNet (www.ablenetinc.com) developed their own switch interface, the Blue 2. Unfortunately, this switch access only occurs inside



the Apps which use it – as soon as you leave the App the iPad is no longer accessible to students requiring switch access. And we have heard recently that more switch interfaces are being developed and will be released shortly.

Currently, the majority of Apps with switch access are AAC Apps – for a full list of the AAC Apps that I am aware of and their access options (as well as which switch interface they work with) go to <http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/article/iphoneipad-apps-for-aac>. There are only a small number of non-AAC Apps with switch access. Developers tell me that this is because they need to re-write the App to incorporate the code needed for the switch access – so until this is easier (or developers include it from the ground up) we will remain with a relatively small number of Apps with this option.

Other access options are also starting to spring up around the iPad space, as well as switch options. For example, there is a growing range of Styluses available. My favourite styluses at this point are only available on Etsy (www.etsy.com) from a shop called "ShapeDad" (www.etsy.com/



Stylus from Shape Dad

shop/shapedad). They offer a T-bar stylus for students who are unable to grip a standard pencil shape, a mouthstick stylus and other options. They are also the most responsive

and reliable styluses that I have used.

It's also good to know that there are a range of keyboard options for the iPad. I have actually had amazing success with some emergent writers with the onscreen iPad keyboard – the immediacy of pressing a letter and then seeing it appear on the same screen has been a real breakthrough in text production for some students. However, we all know that some students need larger keys, or benefit from a keyboard where the keys actually move. For these students there are a range of external keyboard options – including the Apple bluetooth keyboard, cases with inbuilt keyboards such as the Bluetooth Keyboard Case from ThinkGeek (www.thinkgeek.com). There is also the Apple iPad keyboard dock (www.apple.com/au) which allows you to charge your iPad while typing – but I'm not a great fan of this myself as I prefer to use my iPad in landscape mode in both the Mail App and in Pages which is where I do a lot of my typing. It is very important to try Apps in both landscape and portrait mode as different options can be made available – which can make the app much more (or less) functional for some students.

In addition to the keyboard options above, the iPad Camera Connection Kit (www.apple.com/au) also offers some great possibilities – strange but true! This adapter provides a USB port to plug a camera into, – which also works with many USB keyboards. This means that if a student needs a high contrast keyboard, like the VisionBoard2, that they can use this to enter text into their iPad as well.

Yooralla Glenroy (www.yooralla.com.au) and Lasered Pics (www.laseredpic.biz) are now both making Perspex keyguards for the iPad. Lasered Pics also makes coloured acrylic options which can be very helpful for students with a visual impairment. Unfortunately, these keyguards can be limited in their use as many Apps change their visual



Keyguards

appearance in different sections, as you use them. For example, many AAC Apps have a grid arrangement with symbols, but also offer a pop up keyboard for typing. Apps designed like this are hard to use with a keyguard. And finally, there are a lot more options appearing within the mainstream market which are extremely useful for our students. OtterBox (www.otterbox.com) make a very heavy duty case, called the Defender, which has saved many an iPad from a serious injury when dropped – and there are other impact resistant cases coming onto the market now too. Zagg (www.zagg.com.au) make a full body clear protector called InvisibleSHIELD that is a really great option

not only for protecting the device from scratches, but also for students who have poor saliva control. Tunewear (www.tunewear.com) make a Waterwear case designed for sailors who want to take their iPad out and not worry about it taking a swim – this is a great option for an iPad on a wheelchair tray and providing protection from the elements. And Paperclip Robot (www.bubcap.com) make an awesome home button cover called the BubCap, designed to make the home button much more difficult to press. This is great for some students who try to leave an App as soon as it is open – but it also really reduces the click factor of the home button, which is a great break for some students with sensory needs as it allows them stop clicking the home button and start using the touchscreen. And iMainGo (www.imaingo.com), who make an amazing speaker case options for the iPod touch, are working on an iPad version.



iMainGo Speaker Case

I am really looking forward to seeing that one out!

And last, but definitely not least, I want to mention the iAdapter.



iAdapter

This is a specially designed case for the iPad from Amdi. It offers a heavy duty protective case, a handle, an inbuilt stand, amplification and a sliding home button cover. It is perfect for people using AAC Apps as it is nice and loud!

I hope that this list has been of use to you for at least one student or client – and would

love to hear from people about their favourite accessibility accessories on jane@spectronics.com.au

Wheelchair Mounting Systems and AAC Support Options



iAdapter for iPad 1 and iPad 2

Add REAL volume to your AAC apps whilst protecting your iPad from damage. It's dual speaker system delivers clean crisp sound that can be heard in the noisiest of settings.

Now you AND your iPad can be really heard!



Mini Mounts from DAESSY - M is for Mini

Three new DAESSY options, the M-Series. These compact mount kits are the perfect companion to position and support light-weight AAC devices on wheelchairs. Choose from the Mini Bent-Tube Mount, Mini Folding Mount or Mini Adjustable Mount.

Light weight mounting for light devices



Voice Symbol AAC for paper, PC and iPad

Soon to be released, Voice Symbol AAC for PC is one software package that can be used in three AAC strategies. Create communication page sets that have intelligence for both PC and iPad and have one software package across all platforms.

Find this iPad App free at the App Store



Voice Ink for iPad

Voicelink software provides a quick and easy way to turn your Microsoft Word documents or text files to sound-enabled pages on your iPad. Touch a word, it is spoken back. Voice Ink even makes the document "searchable" in Safari using Google!

Find this iPad App free at the App Store



iAdapter Mounting Bundle

Need to use your iAdapter on your DAESSY Mount? Ask us about our iAdapter Mounting Bundle which includes an iAdapter and a DAESSY Mount Plate. We offer this Bundle at a small saving too.



... then add V-Pen

V-Pen technology and Voice Symbol AAC turns your low-tech PAPER system into a speech generating device.

V-Pen and Voice Ink allows creation of your own talking documents! Import any document from MS Word, it's that simple.

A Future In Which We Can All Participate?

Felicity Lovatt, Speech Pathologist, Tasmania, (felicity.lovatt@education.tas.gov.au)

We are all aware of the growing uptake of new mobile technologies across multiple sectors and demographics. As an AAC Speech Pathologist in mainstream and special schools in Tasmania, the last 12 months has shown a significant increase in the penetration of this technology into schools and families of students with complex communication needs. Presently, there are numerous funding schemes available to schools enabling funding of mobile devices e.g. More Money for Students with Disabilities, Digital Revolution funding. Many families are also self-funding devices and claiming 50% of the expense through the Education Tax Refund. Suddenly, the talk and consideration of the possibilities these devices may hold as augmentative communication devices and/or learning tools has translated into action and these devices are populating more and more desks and kitchen benches.

Our usual experience as AAC advisers of contributing throughout all the decision-making stages, from presenting options, consideration, application, funding, purchase, programming, support and monitoring of new technology has been replaced by a new scenario of family and consumer-led decisions sometimes without consultation. We find ourselves in a less familiar role of post-purchase support without the continuous involvement we are used to with traditional AAC technology. While we advocate self-determination and consumer decision making, it needs to be in tandem with information, understanding and a focus on meeting individual needs.

As well as schools and families buying devices independently, applications to our Information and Communication Technology grants scheme within the Education Department are appearing from students who are not using traditional AAC but are now making requests for access to mobile technology for communication. This presents an opportunity to engage or re-engage with students with CCN who are not on the current caseload; but also the dilemma of limited resources and sustainability of our services. How we respond to this initial wave of applications for mobile technology for AAC could set precedents or expectations for many others.

For me, these challenges to existing practice demanded a process of reflection, gathering perspectives, synthesising new information with existing knowledge and developing a position to guide policy and practice in the face of the new circumstances. The AGOSCI Conference in Adelaide in May of this year was a valuable source of perspectives and experiences of other AAC practitioners' responses and experiences with mainstream mobile technologies as AAC. The conclusions I reached were:



- the infiltration of iPads, iPods and iPhones was going to occur with or without the AAC sector.
- while emerging apps designed for AAC were rudimentary in many cases, they would evolve over time and we could either join consumers and producers in this process of evolution (and perhaps speed up the process or help guide more effective and functional apps) or let it happen without us.
- Tasmania is in the ignoble position of having a fragmented and outdated equipment and technology funding framework. Despite a Parliamentary Review prompting an excellent set of recommendations for improvement, we remain with a funding system capped at \$2000, that does not separate communication devices from all other equipment needs! So affordability of mobile devices is a major advantage in our context.

Armed with Jane Farrall's invaluable review of AAC apps and various insightful presentations from AGOSCI Adelaide, I made some decisions that best fit with the population of students with CCN with whom I work.

- I would focus on direct access communicators' access to mobile technology first.
- I wrote a Position Paper and Decision-Making Aid on Mobile Technologies for AAC to guide our response to technology applications for the newer technologies. The main principles being that any high technology AAC should be in addition to light technology AAC; identifying and responding to

communication needs; informing consumers about AAC and mobile technology.

- The app features I needed for my caseload of predominantly light technology paper PODD users were:
 1. use of Picture Communication Symbols (PCS) so students would not have to relearn their visual language
 2. dynamic display multiple-level linked page sets
 3. message window
 4. text-to-speech
 5. ability to export page sets
 6. (word morphology, pop-up pages, pronunciation exceptions and Australian voices would remain on my wish list but were not realistic from the current array of apps)

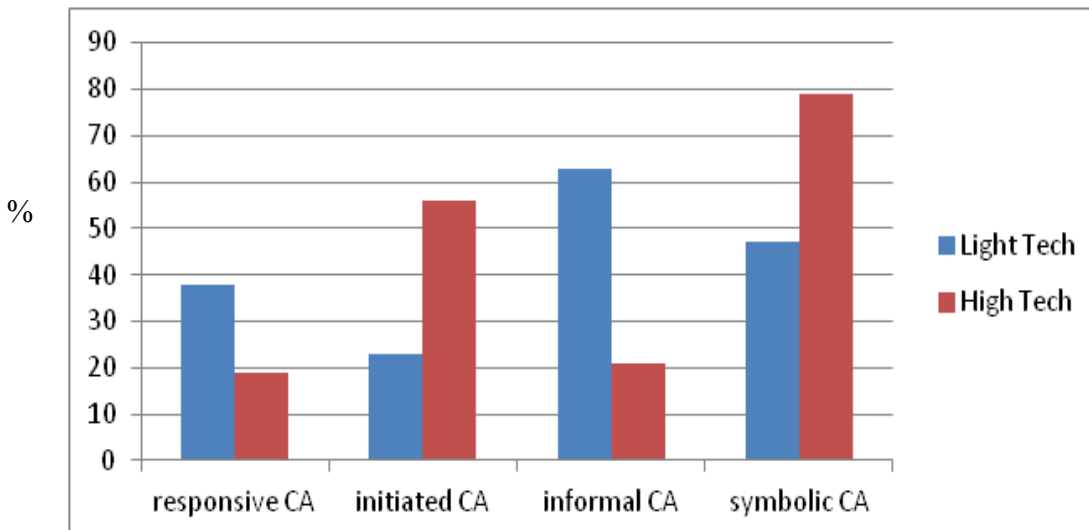
Our Journey

The non-negotiable feature for my caseload's needs was PCS, therefore the only feasible option was to purchase Tap Speak Choice, developed by Ted Conley and see if we could make it functional for our users. This app initially only allowed single, non-linked page construction but the upgrade in July 2011 introduced the capacity to link pages. We initially constructed single page activity displays for direct access users in 9, 12 and 16 symbols per page. The main limitation with the app through this process was pre-set page layouts. The app would not allow users to configure their own button layout and number of buttons on a page, so frequently we had to have blank black buttons on the page that were not being used in order to achieve the page layout we wanted. Comparative trials were conducted with students using light tech single page activity displays and comparing this to the iPad/Tap Speak Choice activity displays. Data was collected on communication opportunities taken in light tech activity display conditions versus high tech activity display conditions. Below is a typical example of the results of one of these single case studies:

COMPARING COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES AND INITIATION IN PLAY AUGMENTED BY LIGHT TECHNOLOGY VERSUS HIGH TECHNOLOGY ACTIVITY

CONDITION	COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES IN 5 MIN INTERVAL	COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES TAKEN			COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES NOT TAKEN
		responsive	initiated	total	
TOTAL LIGHT TECH	86	38%	23%	61%	39%
TOTAL HIGH TECH	121	19%	56%	75%	25%

CONDITION	NATURE OF STUDENT'S COMMUNICATION ACTS	
	Informal (vocal, gesture, eye gaze, facial expression)	Symbolic (pictographs, verbal)
TOTAL LIGHT TECH	63%	47%
TOTAL HIGH TECH	21%	79%



While this is a limited and narrow data set under specific conditions, it captured the students' enthusiasm for communicating with the iPad activity display. There may have been a novelty effect as these students have not had

Some other observations and differences when programming page sets on Tap Speak Choice versus more traditional AAC software became apparent. For each page you create, Tap Speak Choice requires the programmer to select a working set of symbols you will need on your page and add these to the 'Picker' function. From the picker, you then drag the symbols onto the page in linear order. This added an extra step and it would seem more efficient to select symbols directly from the full library.

Although it is frustrating trying to replicate the speech generating features using an app that is not as comprehensive or sophisticated in terms of its programming capacity as traditional AAC software, the developer of Tap Speak Choice has been willing to correspond via Skype from



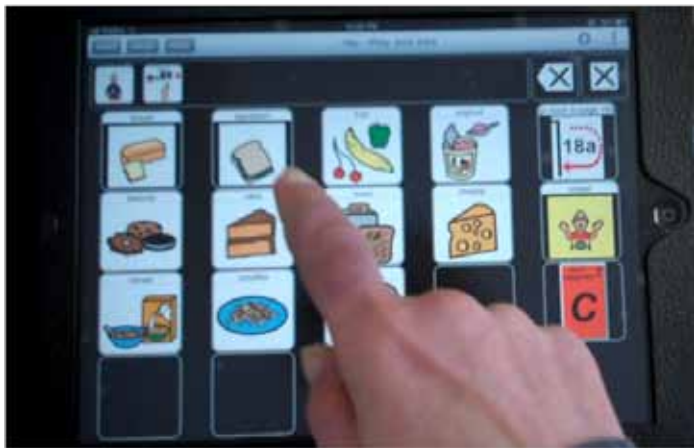
the US to help advance some solutions. Some technical issues like free page configuration rather than pre-set templates and saving pages within nested folders he has been able to work on immediately. Other things he takes

on notice to investigate such as Australian accents, pronunciation exceptions, pop-up pages and text to speech. Other things on our wish-list like word morphology are probably further away. Ted Conley is a computer programmer



who has essentially designed and built Tap Speak Choice to cater for the needs of his young son who has Autism Spectrum Disorder and Cortical Vision Impairment. His son is in the early AAC acquisition and learning period and therefore Ted's current priorities are to further develop his app for users at the earlier language levels. He acknowledges that ProLoquo2Go targets users with higher language skills, but the lack of PCS in P2Go remains a barrier for users who are beyond key word communication but need a high tech option that is compatible with their low tech PODDs. For our AAC community who has not had easy access to high tech AAC devices, the challenges and frustrations of trying to push emerging technology to do what traditional AAC does so expertly is worthwhile because this is the only realistic speech generating technology they can access.

We are at the early stages of implementing comprehensive page sets as an AAC tool for everyday communication. Already we have seen some responses from students which have been significant for them. For some of our students on the Autism spectrum who had been using paper PODDs for a number of years – attending to receptive input but with limited or no expressive use – the iPad platform has elicited initiation and spontaneous use of words. Perhaps any touch screen SGD would have had this effect, but the



regular, ongoing access to speech generating technology.

After the initial experiences with single page activity displays, we decided to try programming a full page set of core and fringe vocabulary with pragmatic organisation, linked pages, category index i.e. using as many features of the direct access PODDs the students were using every day as was appropriate on the iPad platform. So began a 60 hour process of building the pages and importing some PCS that were not included in the Tap Speak Choice PCS library. We created a 12 symbol per page book as a proforma that we would be able to trial with the largest proportion of our light tech PODD users. The process highlighted

more limitations of the app. We could not save a folder within a folder so could effectively only have one 'project' saved on each device. For



three months after constructing the full page sets we could not export it off the original device to share with other users. After the third upgrade of



Tap Speak Choice in October 2011 and by downloading iexplorer we were finally able to export our page set onto other mobile devices. Now we are in a position to share our proforma page set with a range of AAC users and can finally explore the opportunities and limitations of speech generating AAC on a mobile platform in everyday contexts.

prohibitive cost of other SGDs has not afforded them this opportunity until now.

Questions for the future

Our students are using mobile technologies as learning and leisure tools as well as beginning to communicate with them. The effect of combining high tech AAC into a device that has multiple purposes requires further monitoring. Will users be able to intersect easily between a learning or recreational activity to their vocabulary set to be able to communicate about their task? We advocate that all our students have light tech AAC first and in conjunction with their adoption of high tech AAC, therefore light tech AAC will always be available if/when they are using other applications on the iPad.

Will the use of mainstream technology as AAC broaden the circle of communication partners willing and able to communicate with students? Will multi-function devices expand the nature of multi-modal communication even

further? We are accustomed to communicators switching between sign, speech, synthesised speech, pictographs and written word. Perhaps this list will expand to digital images, video and file sharing. From a pragmatic perspective, one can imagine this adding an extra dimension and realism for functions such as 'showing', 'telling anecdotes', 'relating information', 'telling stories', 'telling jokes' and 'expressing abstract ideas'.

From the perspective of a remote AAC practitioner working with many economically disadvantaged communities, the increasing access to mainstream mobile technologies has provided a means for my students to participate in these imaginings and possibilities. The process of working with app authors to further develop their apps and programming multiple level page sets on to new platforms, while slow and laborious, is worth pursuing for our particular AAC community as it is our only realistic chance to converge with the wider worlds of digital communication and high tech AAC.

The iPad: Not a cure all, Just a really useful tool in the right hands!

Joanne Filmer

Let me introduce myself – My name is Joanne Filmer and I am Mum of three boys who have a diagnosis on the ASD spectrum (one with CCN) and a special needs teacher within the state school system in QLD. I use the iPads at home with my children and in my work for a variety of purposes. These include speech generation, curriculum enhancement, learning engagement, speech language therapy, social skill instructions and FUN! The following article is not based on any formal research, but rather my observations as a mother and a teacher.

I am a firm believer that the iPad is one tool among many that can assist people with complex communication needs. I do not believe that it should be used as a cure-all for



any person with CCN. My own child who has complex communication needs uses a PODD book, signing, some sounds, an iPad and an iPod as his tool box for communication. I think most of us would agree that the same logic would apply no matter what speech

generation device a person uses; it would not be their only communication tool.

The advantage that I have seen with the iPad is that not only

can it be used as a speech generation device, but that it can also be used to assist student with complex



communication needs and other disabilities to enhance their learning engagement, learning experiences and learning outcomes. For these learning outcomes to occur the learning partner (teacher, teacher assistant, or parent) must think about what learning they want to occur, how they want this to happen and the end goal they want the student to achieve. Like any piece of technology the iPad is only useful as a learning tool when these questions are asked, otherwise it might just become a gimmick, game centre or baby sitter.

I have seen how when the iPad is used effectively how it engages students in subjects or on topics that they had no previous interest in. I have seen students with a fear of speaking in front of a class; use a text to speech app to present their talk, rather than giving up or having a meltdown. How students who won't put pen to paper, can create their written tasks using comic strip apps.

I think we have to be prepared to see the iPad for what it is one tool in our tool box, but in the right hands a very useful and effective one, for speech generation and beyond.

Warringa Park School's iPad Journey - A Case Study

Dawn Hallett, iPad Coach, Warringa Park Special School, (dhallett@warringapark.vic.edu.au)



Warringa Park School is based out in the Western Metropolitan Region of Melbourne. The school has 304 students on roll, from 5-18 years of age, all with an intellectual disability. In June 2010, the school purchased ten iPads to explore with students. Feedback from teachers and students was overwhelming and as such, the school invested in additional iPads.

In October 2011, Warringa Park was one of 11 educational establishments chosen to partake in the Victorian iPad Trial. The purpose of this trial was to explore the impact of technology on students' learning outcomes. To support the implementation of iPads into teaching programs, an iPad Coach was appointed in January 2011. The Coach's primary role was to integrate the iPad as a teaching tool in the classroom, along with conducting professional development for teachers and identifying applications to meet the learning needs of all students.

From the day Warringa Park purchased the first set

of iPads, it was immediately apparent that this device had great potential for their students. The iPad's touch screen interface allows students to interact directly with the screen, removing the need for a keyboard and mouse. The iPad's intuitiveness enables efficient navigation around the device. In addition to this, the iPad has its own built in accessibility features, which enable students to zoom in anywhere on the screen or have an email read to them. The iPad's size and weight has created an extremely portable device and students are able to continue their learning while walking around the school or sitting on a beanbag.

Soon after the iPad was released, applications became available to support student learning across the curriculum. When it was realised just how effective the iPad was becoming in the area of special education, more specialised applications were developed. This has enabled teachers to find applications to meet the needs of all students in their class, regardless of age or ability. Now, not only are iPads being used to support differentiated lessons, these devices are also highly effective in providing a personalised curriculum for each student. Applications downloaded onto each device reflect the child's needs and focus areas.

Some examples of how the iPad has been used are as follows: Through engaging cause and effect applications such as Pocket Pond, Bloom HD and Draw Stars, students have progressed from focusing on



Pocket Pond (free)

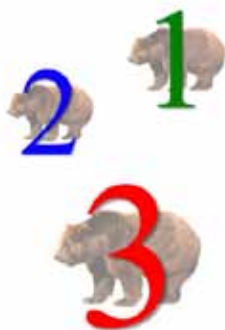
an object to reaching out and making contact with the screen. Others have even begun exploring the screen with their hands.

Other students, experiencing difficulties with counting accurately without omitting or repeating an object, have improved their skills through applications such

as Whizzit 123 and Toddler Counting. As students touch each individual object, the numbers are read aloud and displayed visually. Only when students have counted all objects, are



above: Whizzit123 (\$0.99) Rt: Toddler Counting (\$0.99)



they allowed to continue onto the next challenge. After using these applications for a short time, students were observed noticing objects missed and beginning to count more systematically.

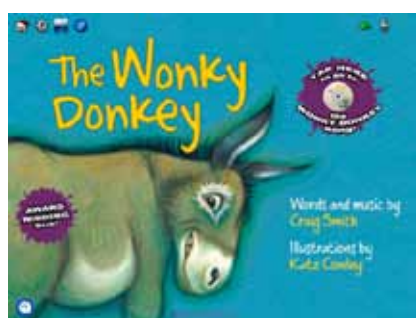
There are many applications focused around letter identification. Prior to the iPad, a teacher had been working for some time with a student with severe autistic spectrum disorder. He was making small steps of progress when the teacher introduced him to the application First Words. Using this application, students are required to identify letters and to construct words.



First Words (\$1.99)

used this application to spell ten basic words without any direction. What particularly impressed the teacher was the length of time he was absorbed in the activity, which lasted for about ten minutes compared with the average one minute.

Speaking to many students around the school, it has become apparent that through the iPad, books



Wonky Donkey (\$5.49)

have become much more accessible to many students who, until now, were unable to 'read' a book independently. When being asked the reason why, they have replied quite simply 'It reads to me!'

For many students at Warringa Park School, it has been extremely difficult to engage them in age-appropriate books. Wonky Donkey is one of many fantastic interactive storybooks that

Story Buddy



offer additional features, such as the option to record the story themselves, touch to hear words spoken or have the whole story read to them. Applications such as Story

Buddy enable students to create their own content, which can then be transferred onto the iBookshelf. These applications have captured the engagement of so many students. Noticeable gains in learning include an increased knowledge of key words and greater expression used when reading aloud, as these students try to imitate what they are hearing. Reading levels have risen dramatically for some students.

A student with developmental delay and limited movement in his joints had been extremely difficult to engage in any aspect of the curriculum. However he took a particular interest in the application Red Fish 4 Kids, an application that until now, was only available on the web



Red Fish 4 kids (\$10.49)

and therefore proved difficult to access. After using the application just three times, the student was able to swipe across the screens on the iPad to locate his favourite application. He then persevered to press on the correct icon. Inside the application, the spelling tasks are extremely structured as the word is shown faintly and when the letters are dragged near to the correct place, the application drags them into place. Using this application, the student was able to spell the word 'jump'. His teacher was thrilled by this achievement and the student is now working on spelling other words.

There are many non-verbal students at Warringa Park School. Before the iPad trial, pod books and

other electronic communicative devices were commonly used as communication tools for students. After acquiring the iPads, a decision was made to begin exploring the application Proloquo2Go, a communicative application that can be completely personalised with pictures and choices of words. When starting out with one student, a limited number of basic words and phrases were chosen for this student to use. These included 'I want', 'iPad', 'textas' and 'help'. This repertoire has since developed into groups of words to use at different times of the day. Just a few weeks after starting this, the student approached his class teacher and used Proloquo2Go to say 'I want help please'. He is now frequently using the iPad to make requests and give responses to questions asked.

As part of their focus on communication, each student now has their own school email address. Many low support needs students are emailing work to their parents, teachers and even the principal! One non-verbal student emails his teacher daily to ask questions and share his thoughts from the day. Another student, upon discovering his favourite Lego kit had a piece missing, emailed the producers of the kit in Norway to request this piece, which arrived in the post just days later. Other students are using applications such as Heytell and Edmodo to connect with students from other classrooms.

Outcomes such as those described above have



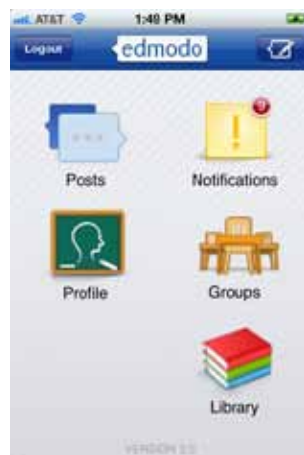
use as teaching tools during the school day. Teachers can take still pictures and videos of student progress, which can then be fed back directly to the student or parents.

With the iPads provided by the department, along with iPads purchased by the school, Warringa Park has now realised its dream of providing an iPad to every student in the school. As part of the next stage of the iPad journey, the school is sending iPads home to encourage the continuation of learning. This has already proved beneficial. For the first time, parents are able to work with their child to reinforce learning that has taken place during the school day. Many older students have chosen to complete projects of their own, something they wouldn't have been motivated to do prior to the iPad.

Although iPads have been integrated into classrooms for over a year now, the teachers at Warringa Park are only just beginning to discover the iPad's potential. The iPad has supported the creation of an environment for all students to engage, learn and achieve outcomes far better than was ever thought possible. Every day brings new excitement and wonder. As students become more accustomed to the use of the iPad, it is believed the iPad will move from being a learning device for school to becoming a full-time lifestyle companion that will support students in the next stage of their learning journey.



Heytell (free)



Edmodo (free)

been extremely exciting to observe and have really demonstrated to teachers the potential of this device as an invaluable teaching and learning tool at Warringa Park School. It isn't just students that have been provided with iPads. As part of the schools' journey, teachers and assistants also have iPads to

AGOSCI Winter Literacy Intensive 2012

Presented by Dr David Koppenhaver, Dr Sally Clendon and Jane Farrall

What: A fabulous 5-day instructional course which covers theoretical and practice aspects of literacy instruction for children and adults with disabilities, including complex communication needs.

Who: The course is aimed at teachers and therapists who work with students with disabilities. Parents of children with complex communication needs are also welcome to apply. Numbers are strictly limited to 30 lucky people.

When: 2nd – 6th July 2012

Where: QCCC Brookfield (A campsite in Brisbane)

Cost: \$1700 per registrant, inclusive of course instructional fee, course materials, accommodation (all registrants **must** stay on-site) and all meals for the duration of the course.



Please go to the AGOSCI website and click on the link for the Literacy Intensive 2012 to download the application forms.

For further information please contact Jane Farrall on jane@goughughes.net



David Koppenhaver is a professor of Reading Education and Special Education at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina where he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in beginning reading, technology-supported literacy, and literacy research. He is the co-founder and former director of the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (USA). He and colleagues at the Center offered the first literacy intensive in 1991 in Chapel Hill. In 1998, he was named the Distinguished Lecturer of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication Biennial Conference in Dublin, Ireland, and, in 2002, a Fulbright Scholar at the former Schonell Center of the University of Queensland in Australia. He has spent the past 29 years teaching and studying struggling readers and writers of all ages with and without disabilities.



Sally Clendon is a speech-language therapist and a consultant in the area of literacy for children with significant disabilities particularly those with complex communication needs. She is a Research Affiliate of the Centre for Literacy and Disability Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA. Sally has presented nationally and internationally. She has also consulted with various groups including working with companies to develop literacy programmes for children with severe disabilities, working with AAC device manufacturers to develop the language systems within their AAC devices, and working with schools to implement a comprehensive approach to literacy instruction with their students.



Jane Farrall is a speech pathologist and a special educator who has been working in the disability and assistive technology field for over 20 years. She has extensive practical experience in both Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and in teaching children and adults with disabilities to acquire literacy. Jane has worked for Yooralla Society of Victoria School and Adult services as both therapist and literacy teacher. She has also worked at the Microcomputer Applications Centre (now called ComTEC) in Victoria, Australia, as an assistive technology professional. She has completed a Masters in Special Education focusing on literacy acquisition in children and adults without speech. Jane is a former Chairperson of AGOSCI and is the founder and organiser of the Big Mouth Camp, a camp for school aged students using speech generating devices and their families.

AGOSCI Week Long Literacy Intensive

Notes from an attendee of the 2008 course

Janelle Urbanavicius, (janelle.urbanavicius@det.nsw.edu.au)



The first word that caught my interest in the headline, and piqued my passion, was “severe”.

“This is it!” I thought – finally, potentially something of value, something of relevance for those kids in my class who faced the most severe, and often multiple, disabilities. These were the kids who had always been a bit tricky – they were usually non-verbal, may be non-mobile, came with a tag of severe intellectual impairment, and often a few other challenges thrown in (autism, sensory disorders etc).

I teach in a regional special school in NSW. My Special Education teaching experience now spans almost 30 years. In that time I have seen many a “holy grail” when it comes to our kids, but to me it always seemed a big part of that population just did not fit the mould – again! So when I saw that headline “severe disabilities”, I was committed. Then I thought it through a bit more and worried in case it was not again relevant for those kids with a severe intellectual disability. Maybe it was talking about only physical disability again, for example. Wrong! Wrong! Wrong!

That first AGOSCI Literacy Intensive was the hardest



week I'd had professionally for a long time. Every minute was intellectually draining, professionally challenging and completely exhilarating all at once. I was drawing on

my original training in Primary Education, thinking of the processes of reading and writing that I had not thought about for many years. At the same time I was seeing every one of my students in the videos which were presented as examples of progress. I knew that my more able kids would fit easily into the parameters of a balanced literacy program, but for the other kids it was suddenly looking like that there was just as much potential for success and Literacy development.

The overriding foundations of the Four Blocks literacy program are built on the unyielding tenets of access for all students and active engagement. This can only be achieved through lots of repetition with variety, modelling and purposeful practice.

My peers for that week were a mix of roles, a mix of



experience but in the end we were all strongly united in the belief that all students are learners. That week I saw how these kids would become Literacy learners. Many, many practical examples were provided to reinforce how it could be achieved – how it already it was being achieved. I have always programmed and developed lessons from the student who needed the most support, and worked out from there. So, throughout that week I stayed true to that philosophy, and had specific students in mind as I mentally differentiated lessons that were presented. As daunting as it was to start – and that's the only tough bit – it quickly became easier.

Fast forward to my classroom two and half years later. Most of my current K-2 kids are still that group that require me to think in different ways and provide higher levels of support and scaffolding. But now they are kids who have a pivotal role to play in every lesson. They are kids who are constantly intellectually challenged all day. They have very specific roles within our Literacy program. No, they won't be the adults who write, or read, the next great Australian novel. They are though, the kids who have the opportunities to be peer leaders, and role models for their more able peers.



They are rising to the expectation of having something to say, and a “voice” to express it – simply because it is expected, almost demanded. They no longer have any excuse to excuse them from the Literacy learning that happens in my room. They have parents and carers around them who are also seeing them as Literacy learners, and talking the language of Literacy. These students have become students who receive respect and acknowledgement for all their efforts – no matter how long it takes.



So, will the Four Blocks Literacy program turn into another elusive Holy Grail? Not as long as I continue to observe daily achievement for every student, every day in my room. Not as long as I see an often neglected group of students shine with pride, and slowly, slowly move along in their very normal lifelong journey of learning.

Review of TouchChat App

Jo Roche, Leading teacher, Warrnambool Special Developmental School,
(roche joanne.g@edumail.vic.gov.au)

THE BASICS

Cost: \$159.99

What it Does: AAC software with the ability to create customisable page sets and link between pages. Has text to speech and word prediction options.

Switch Access: No

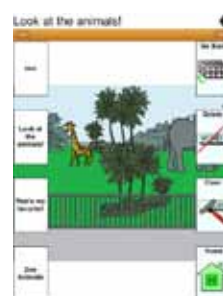
Symbols: Symbolstix symbols with ability to add images or photos.

Voice Outputs: 5 synthesised voices or recorded voice option available.

The TouchChat application is an augmentative and alternative communication app. It allows individuals who cannot speak or those who have difficulties with speech, to communicate by spelling or selecting icons from a visual display. Touchchat is more than a simple touch and chat app. It offers the ability to import your own photos and record personalized messages.

In the classroom, it is used for a variety of purposes for students with varying levels of need. It can be used as a simple one cell device for students to learn cause and effect, right up to multi page communication. It is the app of choice in my classroom as it is so easy to use. I can use pre-existing pages, save and modify to the needs of my students. I can make a simple page within 5 minutes while working with a student. We use the TouchChat application

in every teaching session throughout the day. It is used as a simple communication device for requesting, commenting and asking questions and to help differentiate learning in mathematics and literacy. We are able to quickly make up pages for our guided reading texts so all students are involved and are learning during reading activities. The ease at which you can make pages makes it the ideal teaching tool. You can select how many cells you want, type in a message (you can have a different button message if you want), insert images, photos or in built pictures, record your own messages, hyperlink and the list goes on! The touch chat application is so easy to use some of the students are beginning to make pages. This amazing application (HD version) also has the ability to do Text to Speech, word prediction and customize your vocabulary set. With the HD version you can save and share pages with others. This application is so simple



to use and that is why it is the app of choice in our junior school.

If you are looking for a serious AAC app for iPhone or iPad TouchChat is for you.

Review of Predictable App

Nathan de Kok, (rainde@tadaust.org.au)

THE BASICS

Cost: \$169.99

What it Does: Text to speech output with same word and next word prediction and phrase bank. Multiple keyboard layouts, QWERTY, ABCDEF, High Frequency layout

Switch Access: Switch access via a switch interface or touch anywhere with an auto scan function.

Voice Outputs: 9 Voices including Australian voices.

My Name is Nathan. I am 22 years old. I have a disability called Cerebral Palsy. I am totally immobile due to my disability and I am also limited with my communication ability. I have been using Predictable for the past 2 months after obtaining an iPad and finding I can use this app via Bluetooth using a 'switch box' interface and a jelly bean switch.

Before I began using Predictable and my iPad with its accessories, I would communicate with assistance from my parents and support workers by using an alphabet board. I would select a letter or two of the alphabet with my support person giving me auditory cues for row/column scanning and then my parents/ carers would figure out what I wanted to say.

I am so excited to be using Predictable on my iPad which is mounted onto my wheelchair with a Modhouse mounting system, along with the switch box, my jelly bean switch and a Japra speaker, which also uses Bluetooth technology. This makes my messages audible, even in noisy places like cafes. I am able to express my needs each day and tell people exactly what it is that I want. I like to order my own coffee when I go out and I can communicate to my parents and carers how I want my day to run. I use my Predictable on my iPad at home and when I am out and about in places



like cafes, restaurants, when out shopping, to meet and greet people and during sporting activities such as ten pin bowling.

Together with my Speech Pathologist, we programmed the vocabulary in the phrases section of Predictable to reflect my life and my needs. We did this by organising the phrases into categories which reflected my daily schedule. Therefore the categories were renamed as the Monday, Tuesday Wednesday and so on, with appropriate phrases being added which corresponded to the activities of each day of the week. This has made it easier for me to remember where different phrases are located. This makes communication quicker and also prompts both me and the carers to what is going on for the day.

Predictable has really empowered my life. It is great for me to be able to say what I want and to be heard. The difference I have found over using my other systems of communication has been that it has really increased the amount of engagement I have with other people. There is lots of interest in my iPad, with its big green clips on my Modhouse mount making it attract lots of attention! The interactions happen after the iPad has got people's attention and I really like using it to show people that I really can communicate with them. I have had such wonderful feedback from others that has really motivated me to learn how to use this powerful app to its potential!

On the Web

Independent Living Centre of Western Australia



Apps for the iPad, iTouch and iPhone Where do I start?

There are thousands of apps out there!
This is a list of websites that provide reviews and information on range of apps.



- **Moms with Apps**

<http://momswithapps.com/>

This website is developed by families and has a range of apps covered including learning, reading and special needs.

- **Educational Apps**

<http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/blog/web-links/2010/09/educational-apps-and-resources-for-the-ipad-and-iphone/>

This site gives a description of apps relating to education.

- **iPads for Education**

<http://www.ipadsforeducation.vic.edu.au/>

- **Special Education Apps**

<http://a4cwsn.com/>

This site gives information on a range of apps for special needs.

- **iPhone/iPad apps for AAC**

<http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/article/iphoneipad-apps-for-aac>

This site is updated regularly and provides comparisons of apps available for AAC.

- **Spectronics Apple Blog**

<http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/blog/apple/>

- **iTunes store**

Our Australian iTunes store now has a Special Education section:

<http://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewMultiRoom?fclid=422394159> -

iPad

<http://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewMultiRoom?fclid=422391687> -

iPhone and iPod touch



The Potential of Mainstream Mobile Technologies as Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Devices for People with Complex Communication Needs (CCN)

Denise Wood, University of South Australia, Parimala Raghavendra, Disability & Community Inclusion, Flinders University, Janelle Sampson, University of South Australia

Mainstream mobile technologies, such as smart phones and tablet devices, have the potential to help solve many accessibility problems affecting users with disabilities, including individuals with complex communication needs (CCN) (Mobile Devices and Communication Apps, 2011; Schulz and Fuglerud, 2010). Not surprisingly, there are now many companies building on these features to develop assistive software applications (for example TherapyBox Apps and AssistiveWare). These devices cost much less than dedicated AAC technologies, have a perceived 'coolness' factor, and incorporate a broad range of communications options (Mobile Devices and Communication Apps, 2011) such as integration with email, browsing the web, instant messaging and social networking. However, several authors caution about the dangers in assuming that such devices will be culturally appropriate and suit the varying needs of people with disabilities (Emiliani, Stephanidis & Vanderheiden, 2011; Harris, 2011; Ripat & Woodgate, 2011).

The above authors are undertaking a pilot project supported through a Telstra grant and TherapyBox Apps, which responds to the need to understand the benefits and challenges in the use of these mobile technologies as AAC devices with adults who have CCN. The study involves two stages: The first stage involving a participatory approach in which two individuals with CCN have been recruited as co-researchers to assist in the initial trials of the iPad devices to identify potential challenges and issues to be addressed; and the second stage involving trial of the iPad devices with 10 adult users who have varying physical disabilities and communication needs, in addition to complex health care needs, and who are living in a medically supported institution. The methodology employed involves a mixed-methods approach incorporating: 1) pre and post intervention measurements using the Canadian Occupational Performance Measurement (COPM) instrument designed to detect changes in self-perceived occupational performance over time (Law et al, 2000); and goal attainment scaling (Kiresuk, Smith & Cardillo, 1994) in which each participant determines their own goals for the use of the iPads; and 2) analysis of social networks facilitated through the use of the iPads as AAC devices using the Circle of Communication Partners Paradigm (Blackstone & Hunt Berg, 2003) and the UCLA Loneliness Scale 2.0 (Russell et al., 1980). 3) evaluation of the participants' use of the devices over a 12 month period (such as frequency of use, their choice of software applications and their interactions with others using the devices).

The study aims to contribute to the growing evidence-base

exploring the potential of mainstream mobile technologies as AAC devices and will help to identify both the benefits and challenges in adapting these technologies for use by people with CCN. The study also highlights areas for further research amid growing interest from policy makers and service providers about the potential of mainstream mobile devices as low-cost assistive technologies.

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