iCommunication:
AAC on iTech Devices

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- Information and Advice
- Up to date information
- Newest technologies
- Trial/ Hire
- Training

Background

- Emergence of more mainstream AAC options
- Large number of enquiries about Proloquo2Go
- Range of previous AAC exposure and experiences
- Staying up to date
- Best Practice
- Enquiries from local, interstate and international sources about this technology and its use in WA

So I asked... Why?

- Parents
- Carers
- Proloquo2Go users
- Therapists
- Teachers

- Informal
- Questionnaire –for families / users (11), for professionals (6)

Age	Diagnosis	Prior AAC?	Continued use of previous AAC system?
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 Calloseum	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

** when target word is not in Proloquo2Go

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

Family Perspective

Benefits

- Motivating+++ "Fun!"
- Range of vocabulary
- Less frustration
- Becoming more verbal
- Independence, Easy to use

Quotes

- "He would be trendy like his peers"
- "Other children gravitate towards this technology and want to help him use it, more interactive, other children understand this technology because they are familiar with it"
- "helps me order food"
- "My son no longer faces a frustrating game of charades trying to communicate and is starting to realise that NO he is not an alien species isolated by strange sounds, like all of us he has a voice"
- "His peers are interested"

Challenges

- Programming
- Implementing- teaching the user
- Training staff to use it
- Hard to navigate
- Learning the associated technology

Quotes

- "just to get him to use it in the right way"
- "needs help with typing, to add his own new words to the device"
- "learning to sync it up with the computer and back it up"
- "I am not confident in programming, really need to do a course."
- "A learning curve for everybody involved- like any new tech thing"
- "I believe that living in a country town and being a device which is not familiar to most is a challenge"
- "getting x to use it, consistency of use"

Had you considered high tech AAC before?

- Mentioned to us, but nothing appealed to me for my son. We found out about Prolouquo2Go at the right time, right information, and right phase for our son.
- Yes, we trialled various hi tech AAC devices before the iPad
- We looked at everything on the market
- Yes, years go at PMH, large laptop sized device

Other comments from families

- "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 utilised 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"

Why did you choose Proloquo2Go?

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 the class

THERAPIST

- Motivating
- Portability
- Families Preference
- We considered the full range of AAC options
- Family already familiar with technology
- Cost effective
- Used by other students in the class

Features

PROGRAMMING

- Varied from very easy to challenging
- Siblings can quickly learn the technology
- Less threatening to support team, more willing to have a go
- Lack of flexibility e.g. creating same page for multiple students
- Pages with different layouts
- Visual scenes
- Master copy
- Using photos – excellent!
- Cut, copy and paste
- New home page
- Programming any page navigation system takes time

VOLUME/ VOICES

- Needs to be louder ++++
- Noisy classroom, busy food hall
- More voices wanted ++++
- Recorded speech wanted ++++
- Voice Quality varied

SYMBOLS/ VIEWS

- "Easy" through to "difficult" – to find what I need
- More symbols wanted
- List view for students with poor fine motor skills
- Recents view- great idea, never use it!
- Core words

RELIABILITY

- Freezing when programming
- No worries at all!

DURABILITY

- "I wish it was more durable"
- Covers might help
- I have concerns

APPEARANCE/ INTERACTION

- Other fun stuff
- Touch screen settings
- Small operational buttons – clear, back
- Scrolling
- User friendly
- "Would be good if the category cells didn't speak"

RESTRICTIONS

- Getting out of Proloquo2Go
- Settings everywhere!
- Upgrade so Apps can't be deleted. Thank you!
- Not available on other platforms

WORKING WITH ITUNES

- Initial set up
- Familiarity
- Internet connection, Hidden costs
- Photos
- Government internet policies
- Updates are easy

BACKING UP

- "It is too difficult to back up."
- "Now I/school had to restart programming the app. I am disheartened and don't think we will continue to use Proloquo2Go."
- Whose role?

SUPPORT

- ILC
- Spectronics
- Manufacturer via email/ website
- Speech Pathologist
- Website
- Within App

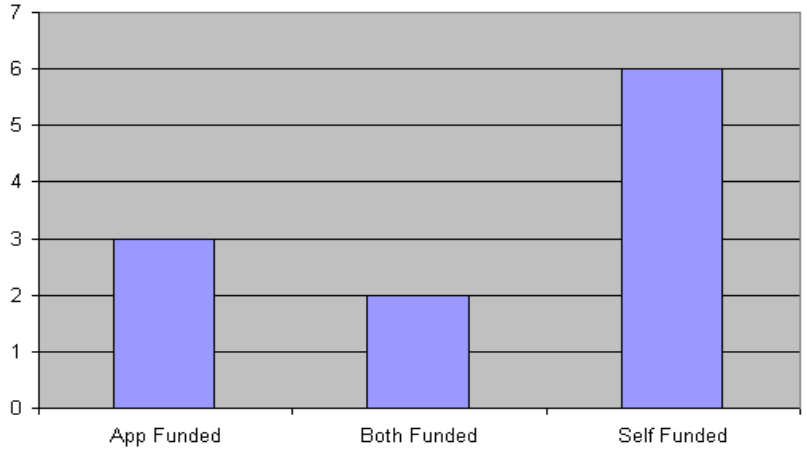
Quotes

- "I wish there was someone I could ask face to face or someone to teach me"
- "The speech therapist is learning as we go"
- "The therapist didn't even tell me this actually existed until I found it on the internet. Pushed us more towards using the [device]. Do they get some sort of incentive for it??"
- "Our support team embraced it! Only took some of them 20 mins to learn to program it."
- "Living 5 hours away from support has been a struggle, No local support in our town. People would like to support but know very little about the device. Some are not interested"

Improvements

- Minspeak for iPad or iPod Touch
- More vocabulary to suit language development
- More robust vocabulary
- Page sets for different users/ ages/ levels
- Computer based editing software
- Trial version "LITE"
- Switch Access

Funding



Accessories

- Speakers
- Various cases
- Otterbox
- Home made options- waterproof bag and waist strap
- Stylus

Key Messages

Conclusions

Things to Consider

- "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 of something?"
- "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 communication 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 co-ordinator at x Asscn who seems enthusiastic re new ideas so must work on educating the staff to encourage x to use her device."
- "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"

Thank you

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I would love to hear your thoughts and comments.