

CDP Update

Feature Devices · Tech Tips · Clinical Practice

Assistive Technology
PRODUCTS AND SERVICES
COMMUNICATION DEVICES PROGRAM



March 2013

Hello from the CDP!

Welcome to the CDP's inaugural newsletter. Every two months, the CDP will use this newsletter to share valuable information about devices, mounts, and switches. You also can expect programming tips and ideas for successful implementation.

The CDP is here to support Manitobans who need a communication device and the professionals who serve them. Have an idea for the next newsletter? [Just let us know!](#)

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Device of the Month



The Lightwriter SL40 Connect Calls It In

The new SL40 Connect is a speech-generating device that is also a cell phone! It's available from the CDP.



Using a prepaid SIM card, the SL40 can connect to a cell network and work like a cell phone. Clients will be able to make a call and send the SL40's voice directly over the phone. The SL40 Connect can also send text messages. These features could benefit clients who want to be more independent or who want to stay connected with loved ones who live out of town. There are also safety benefits for clients who go into the community alone.

The Lightwriter is a tried and true speech-generating device. Relatively compact and lightweight, it is a keyboard-based device with good quality voices and excellent word prediction. Keyguards and key sensitivity settings can assist clients with some fine motor difficulties. An SL40 Connect can be mounted to a wheelchair.

Consider the SL40 Connect for clients who:

- Have reasonable literacy skills
- May prefer a physical keyboard to a touchscreen
- Want a device that is very easy to use and requires no programming.
- Have reasonable hand function and vision

Did you know?

The CDP website features training videos and programming guides for many of the most popular communication devices. Find it all at the Education link. www.wrha.mb.ca/prog/cdp

Access Method of the Month

Headmouse Extreme: Hands-Free Cursor Control

The Headmouse Extreme is a hands-free mouse that works with just about any computer or speech-generating device. It's an option for clients who have some voluntary head movement but little or no functional hand control and who wish to independently control a computer.

The Headmouse uses a light sensor to track a special light-reflecting sticker worn by the client (usually on glasses, forehead, or nose). By tracking the sticker, the camera translates the client's head movement into cursor movement with remarkable accuracy.

To make a selection, either hold the cursor in one spot (dwell select) or use an external switch.

The Headmouse Extreme is generally less fatiguing than an eyegaze system. It's often faster to learn and use than scanning.

The Headmouse Extreme will not work with an iPad.

The Headmouse Extreme is a "plug and play" USB device: no need to install drivers or other special software to make it work.



Consider the Headmouse Extreme for clients who:

- Have some volitional head control.
- Will require a computer or touch-screen device.
- Want an access method that is as direct as possible.
- Want full control over their computers.

Model Success with Aided Language Stimulation

Children first learning to speak typically benefit from vast amounts of spoken input. The input and target output modality- speech- is the same. Regardless of age, people who use AAC have a very different experience. There are rarely other, proficient AAC users available to model successful AAC use.

Aided Language Stimulation (ALgS) is a naturalistic technique for filling that gap. ALgS is very simple: the communication partner uses the AAC system in the same way that the client does. For example, if the communication goal is for the client to independently ask for water using a touch screen device, the SLP could navigate to the “drinks” page and then press “want” “water”. The SLP would speak the words “I want some water” while ensuring the client is attending to the buttons being pressed.

ALgS was developed over many years by Carole Goosens and colleagues for teaching young children (for a summary, see Beukelman & Mirenda 2012, pp. 273-4). It has also been shown to be effective for increasing turn taking and number of interactions among adult AAC users with developmental disabilities (Beck, Stoner and Dennis, 2009).

Take Home Message on Aided Language Stimulation

- Teach by doing: the therapist or other communication partner uses the communication device to communicate. The client benefits from seeing an example of successful use.
- Take your time: make sure your movements are slow enough that the client can observe and learn.
- Use in naturalistic contexts. Plan ahead by making sure the right vocabulary is available to you and your client.
- Designed to teach young children AAC; has been found successful with adults with developmental disabilities.

TouchChat: How to Adjust Button Sensitivity

Do you have a client who is a good candidate for the TouchChat app but has a tendency to accidentally select a button more than once? Or maybe your client drags his finger across the screen? Did you know you can adjust button sensitivity to reduce accidental button hits? Here's how:

1. Open the TouchChat app and select your user (called a 'vocab').



2. Select the *Menu* button from the top right side of the toolbar (just below the message window).

3. A pull down menu will appear. Select *Settings*. Scroll down to the section titled '*Buttons.*'

The Button Settings are:

- **Activate on release.** If ON, a button will be activated when released instead of when first pressed.
- **Dwell time.** Must hold down a button for a set amount of time before it activates. Good for clients who drag their fingers on the screen.
- **Release time.** Determines how much time must pass after one button is pressed before the next press is recognized. The higher the release time, the longer you have to wait before pressing another button. Can help for clients prone to 'stimming' on their devices.
- **Highlight touch.** If ON, a button will be highlighted when selected. Good for clients who benefit from visual feedback.

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