CDP Update

Feature Devices · Tech Tips · Clinical Practice

Winter 2021
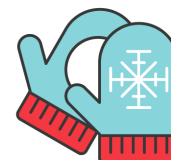
Communication Device Spotlight

Low Cost Text-to-Speech AAC Apps for iOS

Following our symbol based apps list in the last newsletter, we thought we would provide a list of Text-to-Speech options as well! This list is definitely not exhaustive and is frequently changing, so please connect with your Speech-Language Pathologist for the most up to date information. As always, we only know what we know, so if you have any apps/ options that you use and are not on the list, let us know. We love to learn!

App with Link to App Store	Features	Cost
Google Translate	Type in English (or any native language) and translate to a number of languages with voice output. Google Translate Help	**Free**
ClaroCom Lite	Offers text to speech, word prediction, phrase prediction and some basic programming. You are able to add preprogrammed messages easily to categories; however, with lite version you are unable to add your own categories – you must upgrade for this. App Webpage & User Guide	**Lite - Free** **Pro - $16.99**
urVoice Lite	Simple layout, easy to add phrases, pair phrases with a picture, and there are a handful of languages supported. With the upgrade you are able to add unlimited quick phrases, and it will remove the adds. App Webpage & Manual	**Free** **Upgrade - $6.99**
YoDoc	Written text in native language, but will speak in English. Good for communication in hospital setting for those where English is not their primary language. Option for voice output in native language in small message window. Current languages available: Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, English, Farsi, Hindi, Korean, Russian and Spanish App Webpage	**$13.99**
Speech Assistant	Offers ++ customizable features such as; change, or add your own categories/phrases, accessibility features (e.g. full screen button to show message with large font), ability to change font/button size/ colour. This app can be used while making phone/facetime/skype calls with iOS13. There are 90 voices and 27 different languages that can be accessed through the apple keyboard. The prestored phrases can be changed to 4 different languages (German, French, Spanish, & Dutch) by creating different profiles. APP webpage & Manual	**$20.99**

Consider these text-to-speech apps for clients who:

- are literate and prefer to use a personal device, rather than renting through CDP, or as a back-up!

Access and Selection Method Spotlight - Bluetooth Switches

Ablenet Blue2 Switch

The Blue2 is a widely used Bluetooth switch interface for tablets, mobile phones, and computers. Blue2 allows you to quickly and easily connect one or two accessibility switches to your device via a Bluetooth connection.

Blue2 is compatible with many CDP devices, including:

- iPad, iPad mini running iOS 7 or newer
- Dedicated tablets running Windows 10

Blue2 Bluetooth Switch features:
- Activation force: light to medium pressure
- Activation areas: 7 cm or 2.5"
- Feedback: Auditory & Tactile (no visual)
- Switch Type: momentary
- Long lasting rechargeable battery
- Two external switch jacks for use with alternative access switches
- Pre-programmed for use with almost any switch scanning software
- Programmable with one to four custom keystrokes

Each Blue2 is serialized making it easy to pair when multiple Blue2 are present in the same room!

iSwitch Bluetooth Switch

The iSwitch is compatible with CDP iOS devices such as the iPad, & iPad Mini
It maintains a small footprint with a built in low profile 3" switch. There are also two programmable switch ports, for additional wired switches, to provide a full range of multi-switch options.

iSwitch Bluetooth Switch features:
- Activation force: 120 g (light to medium pressure)
- Activation areas: 7.5 cm or 3"
- Feedback: Auditory & Tactile (no visual)
- Switch Type: momentary
- Li-ion long life battery
- Two external switch jacks for use with alternative access switches
- Activation range: 10 m
- Pre-programmed keyboard commands

Consider a Bluetooth switch for those clients that:

- Are at risk of injury from traditional switch cables

- Have repeated damage to devices/ switches because of manipulation of switch cables

- Have a team willing to set-up an trouble shoot a Bluetooth switch, as appropriate

Clinician's Corner - Accessible Canada Act

An Act to Ensure a Barrier-Free Canada (Accessible Canada Act)

Information below gathered directly from: https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-canada.html

"This legislation will benefit everyone in Canada, especially persons with disabilities, by helping to create a barrier-free Canada through the proactive identification, removal and prevention of barriers to accessibility wherever Canadians interact with areas under federal jurisdiction. The *Accessible Canada Act* provides for the development of accessibility standards and gives the Government of Canada the authority to work with stakeholders and persons with disabilities to create new accessibility regulations that will apply to sectors within the federal jurisdiction, such as banking, telecommunications, transportation industries and the Government of Canada itself. These new regulations will set out requirements for organizations to follow in order to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. The *Accessible Canada Act* will also put in place compliance and enforcement measures, as well as an accessibility complaints mechanism.

To support the development of the *Accessible Canada Act*, the Government of Canada consulted with Canadians, from July 2016 to February 2017, to find out what an accessible Canada means to them. The report, "Creating new national accessibility legislation: What we learned from Canadians," released in May 2017, shares the key findings of these consultations.

During the consultations, Canadians identified the following key areas where the Government of Canada should focus its efforts under the legislation: programs and service delivery, employment, the built environment, information and communications technology, procurement and transportation. During the parliamentary process, the disability community identified communications as another key priority area and it was added to the list.

The *Accessible Canada Act* will help to change the way that the Government of Canada and organizations within federal jurisdiction address disability and accessibility and interact with Canadians.

View the accessible summary of the *Accessible Canada Act*, which received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019 and came into force on July 11, 2019".

Of note, **Communication [Barrier-free services and spaces for persons with communication disabilities]** is it's very OWN vision bubble for the Accessible Canada Act. A huge THANK-YOU must go out to the CDAC for all the hard work during the consultation to ensure Communication received the attention it deserved.

ISAAC Canada - IMPORTANT Updates: We need you!

ISAAC Canada is looking for a **new rep from Manitoba**! As Stacey has taken a position on the Executive Council, she vacates her spot as the Manitoba Rep. If you, or anyone you know may be interested in being an ISAAC Canada rep for Manitoba, or just want more information, please feel free to contact Stacey directly at smcruer@deerlodge.mb.ca. The Manitoba Rep can be an SLP, OT, a Person who uses AAC, etc!

ISAAC Canada is always looking for members as well. Please check out the Member Benefits section of the ISAAC Canada website to see why you should consider becoming a member!

Did you know that Shirley McNaughton turned 90 on 3 January 2021?!? Please go an check out the "Honouring Canadians in the AAC Field" on the ISAAC Canada webpage to learn more about this pioneer of AAC. If you know of anyone that should be honoured, you can send your submission to admin@isaac-canada.org.

Education and Resources

SRAVI, offers real-time automated lip-reading. Liopa, a company that developed Artificial Intelligence (AI) based lip-reading technology, created an app called Sravi that's designed to recognize specific phrases by analyzing lip movements. That can be helpful for people with speech difficulties, or patients in critical care with ailments that render them incapable of speaking. The app has been going through trials in the UK's National Health Service starting in 2019 and continuing through the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular the app has been used with individuals who have tracheostomies and are unable to use their natural voice. The app can be downloaded onto a phone or tablet, & held up to the individual wishing to speak. SRAVI then captures a video of the individual, and with a deep neural network, it maps lip movement to determine what that individual is attempting to say. The SRAVI website boasts 90% accuracy which they state is constantly improving. As SRAVI is based on AI, the app will read the patients' lips better the more often/ longer the patient uses the app. For instance, a phrase that is considered in the top three most frequently spoken, the app was able to correctly identify the phrase with 100% accuracy. Currently, SRAVI recognizes 20 phrases, but the list can be expanded to up to 50 and may be customized for different needs. The team developing the SRAVI app are already looking to the future which will include features like: 1. Adding new phrases, 2. Customizing the voice, and 3. Integrating text & video calls.
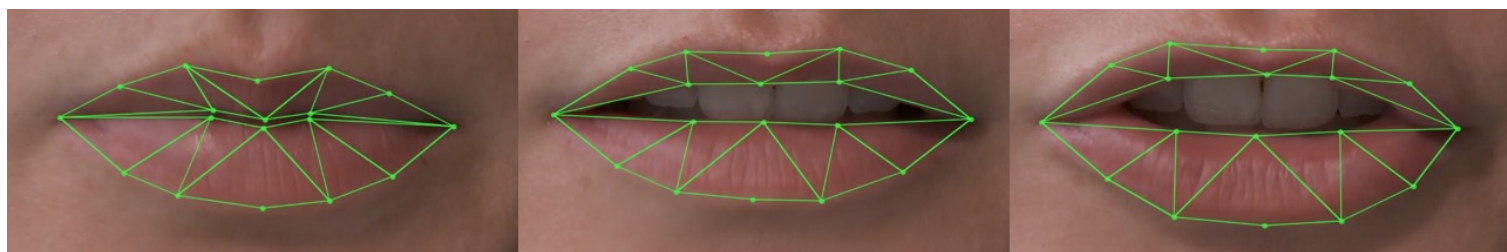
Manitoba Possible. Tech Connect

If you haven't heard, Society for Manitobans with Disabilities is now **Manitoba Possible**. New name, and exciting new opportunities! **Tech Connect** is brought to you via Manitoba Possible, United Way Winnipeg, United Way Brandon & District, and with the support of the Government of Canada. It's mission is to remove barriers to accessing technology and support for persons seeking care.

Tech Connect will deliver tablets to those who need them most, and provide support/ training on digital platforms such as video calling, and **Envoyy.** Envoyy allows individuals, and/or their families to self-manage care services easily.

Visit the **Tech Connect** and **Envoyy** websites to learn more about these services. Funding is limited, and currently Manitoba Possible is seeking applications from individuals from rural Manitoba. Spread the news if you think you have know someone who would qualify! Let's get everyone connected!

What's NEW?

Look to Speak

[Experiments with Google](#) has partnered with Sarah Ezekiel (also known as the 'eyegazeartist' on social media) and SLP Richard Cave. Together they have developed an exciting new app called [Look to Speak](#). This app allows users to access pre-programmed phrases via eye gaze on Android devices. Check out this quick video on [Youtube](#), or for more details you can read through the [User Guide](#).
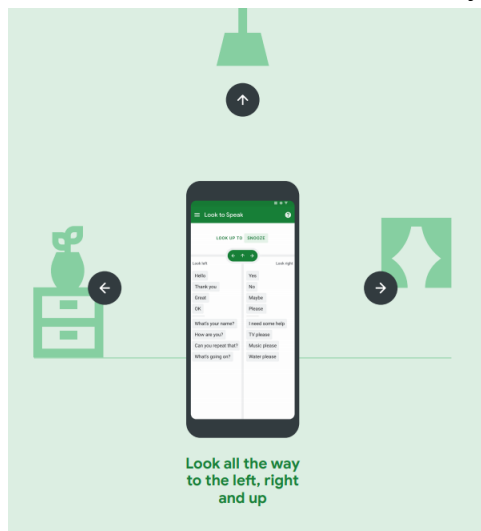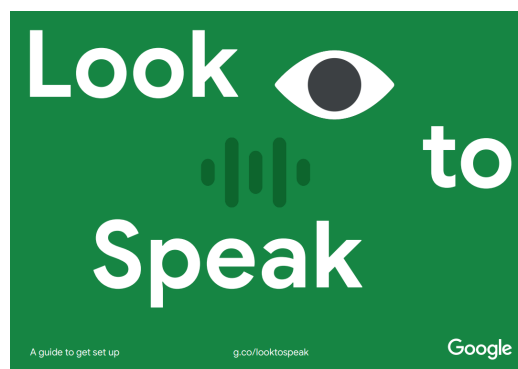
This app takes advantage of the front facing camera and 3 distinct eye gaze movements (left, up, & right). One difference that may take users a while to get used to is having to look completely off the screen, rather than just to the edges. It does sound like there are options to set the time that gaze has to be held before a selection is made, as well as how far off screen you need to look. Additionally, users are able to customize the phrases they would like to have pre-programmed, and they have the ability to independently snooze **AND** wake-up the Look to Speak app. While CDP doesn't currently have any Android based devices, with advances like Look to Speak, we are certainly paying attention and looking forward to what the future holds for our clients!

Assistive Technology in the News

[Disability advocates call for easier access to 'life-changing' technology](#). CBC Nova Scotia: 10 January 2021

[How the new normal of remote work evens the playing field for workers with disabilities](#). Forbes 28 December 2020.

[Do you fear talking to a person with disabilities?](#) The Guardian 22 December 2020

[Thinking in three dimensions: 3D printing making assistive technology more accessible](#). Winnipeg Free Press: 20 December 2020

[KEVtalks #IDPD Episode with Minister Carla Qualtrough - Canada's Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion](#). 3 December 2020

[Building a more resilient and inclusive future through assistive technology.](#) Microsoft News Centre Canada: 2 December 2020

[Pandemic highlights existing barriers for those with communication disabilities](#). Winnipeg Free Press: 7 May 2020. Originally published by the Canadian Press 7 May 2020

And just for fun: [Woman teaches her Sheepadoodle how to communicate using buttons](#). The Toronto Star 19 October 2020, originally published in The Seattle Times
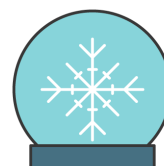
"PRO"VID - the Positive Side of Covid

Safe at home MB is a new online resource from the MB Government. While we know that everyone is struggling with the Covid pandemic, this is a place where we can go for a little free entertainment/ enjoyment while we are stuck at home! https://www.safeathomemb.ca/stay-home/

The 'All is Bright' RMTC Variety Show

Up to 30 Manitoba artists featuring song, performances and more. All pre-filmed on the RMTC mainstage. Will be available for download or streaming!

... and MORE!

The Country of the Week

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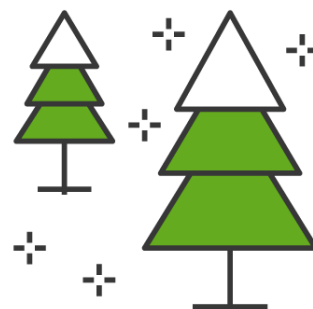
What's New in CDP

You may have noticed out of office messages from some of your favourite CDP crew. It's true we've occasionally been redeployed to help provide service to patients/ residents here at Deer Lodge Centre. While we understand that it can be frustrating if you are having difficulty getting ahold of us, please know that we are working hard to ensure we keep staff, patients and residents here safe AS WELL AS trying to keep up with our current duties at the CDP.

Please be patient and understand that we may take slightly longer to respond to your voice mail and email. We would love to be back to business as normal too! But, we need to be available to help in the fight against Covid. Friendly reminders, use virtual visits, stay home if you're sick, wash your hands, and wear that mask! Looking forward to a better 2021. Be kind, and take care of each other.