



# KEYCOMM NEWS

The Keycomm Newsletter

December 2013

## Welcome to the **festive** edition of the Keycomm newsletter!

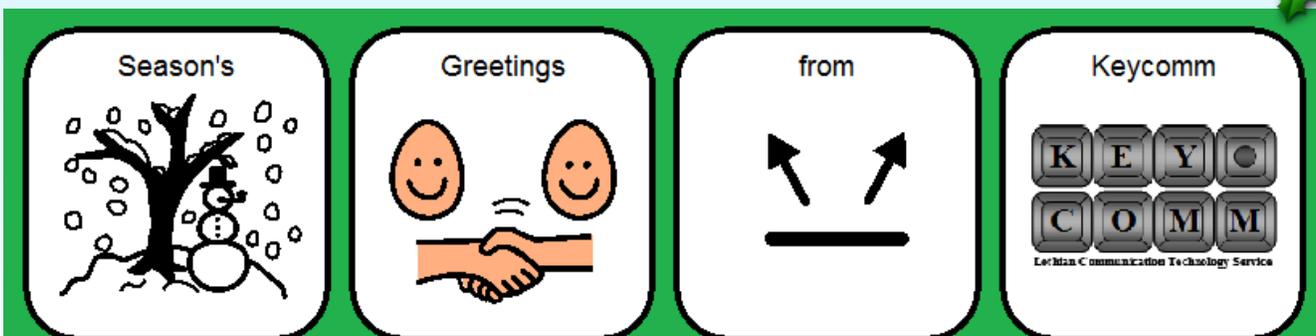
As always, we have packed in lots of things for you to read and (hopefully) enjoy.

As well as our usual features on new devices and apps, look out for feedback from the Communication Matters conference, a great book giveaway and details of our upcoming courses - remember to book your place early, as they've been proving very popular!

We wish all our readers a very happy festive season and all the best for 2014.

### In This Issue

- The Communication Matters conference
- New devices, including the Allora 2 and the Dynavox T10
- New communication apps for iPad
- Look2Learn workbooks
- Upcoming courses at Keycomm
- Book giveaway
- Communication Matters'



Season's Greetings from Keycomm!

# New Devices

The best bit about working in the AAC field is that it's never dull - for one thing, new devices are coming out all the time. Here's our round-up of the newer devices we've seen at Keycomm.

## New Allora

The Allora is a keyboard and switch accessible, text to speech, communication device. It is designed to meet the needs of people that are literate, who have reduced or little ability to speak and whose motor skills require a device that can adapt to change but maintain access for the user. We recently trialled the device at Keycomm, and thought it had some nice features, most notably the detachable partner display and the easy-to-attach keyguard. It is similar to a Lightwriter, although a bit cheaper, and it looks like mounting would be less costly in most cases, too. For more information, see <http://www.techcess.co.uk/allora/index.html>

## DynaVox T10

DynaVox have launched a new tablet-based communication device called the T10 in the USA. It is not yet available in the UK, but will be shortly. The T10 is based on an android tablet, and was designed following feedback from existing DynaVox users. It's light and slim, and has good sound output. The software is powerful and flexible, and there is the option to use a companion app on your iPad, iPad mini or Windows tablet. Prices have not yet been released for the UK market. For more information on the device, see the US website: <https://mydynavox.com/Solutions/T10#MeetTheT10>

For UK specific info, keep an eye on the UK website: <http://uk.dynavotech.com/default.aspx>



**The Allora and its partner display.**

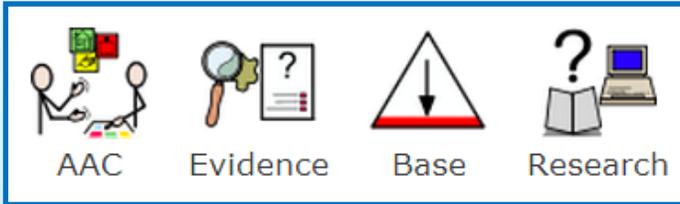
If you've tried any of the devices we feature, let us know how you got on - we'd love to hear from you!



**The Dynavox T10's handle doubles as a stand.**

# The AACKnowledge Evidence Base

Communication Matters have created a website, <http://www.aacknowledge.org.uk/>, following the AAC Evidence Base's recent report called *Shining a Light on Augmentative and Alternative Communication* (see <http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk/shining-a-light-on-aac>). It is full of useful



information, and is of interest to both those brand new to AAC and to professionals who are looking for research papers and scholarly articles. It is a brilliant resource that we will certainly be using and recommending to others.

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## Look To Learn Workbooks

Many of our readers will be familiar with the Look To Learn software published by Smartbox, which supports users new to eye gaze technology, and provides a structured set of fun activities that help to develop skills ranging from early cause and effect through to accurate eye gaze control.



Now they have published a helpful workbook, full of worksheets that allow parents, teachers or therapists to track progress over time. The workbook is completely free and can be downloaded here: <http://www.smartboxat.com/software/look-to-learn-workbook/>

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## PCEye Go Price Drop!

Exciting news for people interested in the Tobii PCEye Go, which lets you control a PC laptop or desktop with your eyes. Previously, the cost of this was nearly £3,000, and this has now dropped to about £1,700. Bargain!





# CM Conference 2013



The 2013 Communication Matters conference took place at Leeds University on 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> September. Four staff from Keycomm were in attendance - Fil, Nicky, Phillipa and Susan. This meant that we were able to attend a good range of seminars, and now we can share what we learned with you! We all really enjoyed the conference and would like to thank Communication Matters and Meet in Leeds, who both did a fantastic job respectively organising and hosting the event. Here is a taster of what we learned - please get in touch if you'd like to know more.

## **Use of low-tech eye gaze for children with cerebral palsy - Nicky**

**Katie Price, Jenefer Sargent, Tom Griffiths, John Swettenham and Michael Clarke – GOSH & UCL (funded by SPARKS)**

The team are developing an effective procedure for evaluating eye-pointing skills. They also discussed how for a long time we thought that problems with developing eye-pointing were due to lower cognitive skills; it is actually looking more complex than this. They will present their final findings at the next ISAAC conference in Portugal (July 2014) but hinted that social cognition may be a very important factor. The children need to understand the listener's needs. Social cognition may have developed differently for some children with cerebral palsy.

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/psychlangsci/news-events/latest-news/sparks>

## **Are tablets the future of AAC? - Fil**

Much heated discussion at this seminar. Many therapists and parents are seeing the benefits of using tablets rather than conventional communication aids. The primary benefits noted were lower cost (£500-£1000 for a tablet and software) and cool-factor ("loads of people have iPads"; "she doesn't look any different from her peers"). The advantages remarked on for conventional systems were more features e.g. built-in environmental control, greater robustness and greater experience and knowledge from the manufacturers.



# CM Conference 2013



## **Using a shared eye gaze device in a special school - Nicky**

Charlotte Irvine and Alli Gaskin - SLTs from Lancastarian Special School – gave a talk about a Tobii C-Series that they have for shared use across the whole school. They talked through some case studies, positive outcomes and challenges encountered, and shared a range of practical ideas for different ways to use the device. Three top ideas were... using a choosing screen to choose a HelpKidzLearn interactive story book, and then using eye gaze to interact with the story; using software like Clicker or Boardmaker Studio (teaching staff were already familiar with these) with the C-Series to access with eye gaze; using the 'videos' activity in Look2Learn with silly videos of staff dancing around!

## **A Critical Appraisal of Measuring Outcomes in Relation to AAC - Phillipa**

Sally Boa & Joan Murphy of Talking Mats Ltd

Sally spoke about the NES funded project aiming to critically appraise outcome measures in AAC and examine how outcome measures for AAC are used in Scotland and across the UK. The project was divided into two main parts: a literature review examining the types, purposes and applications of outcome measures currently available; and an online survey of AAC practitioners investigating knowledge and clinical use of outcome measures. The results of the literature review identified that a wide range of outcome measures exist, but that the purposes and applications vary, and that distinguishing between an 'assessment' and an 'outcome measure' can be difficult. A report on this part of the project ('Outcome Measurement Project' Communication Matters, 2012) can be downloaded from the Communication Matters website ([www.communicationmatters.org.uk](http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk)). The results of the online survey highlighted the variable use of outcome measures across the UK. Plans are currently underway to help improve use of outcome measures for AAC through the development of Pam Enderby's Therapy Outcome Measures (TOMs) for AAC and Keycomm's CODES framework. A copy of the full project report ('A critical appraisal of existing methods of measuring outcomes in relation to Augmentative and Alternative Communication') can be downloaded from [www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com).

More over the page...



# CM Conference 2013



## **AssistiveWare: Proloquo2Go and Proloquo4Text - Susan**

This was a packed-out seminar, where two representatives from AssistiveWare gave us a whistle-stop tour of these two iPad apps. First, we looked at the update to Proloquo2Go, which has quite a few nice new features. They have improved the accessibility of the app, with more scanning modes and flexibility to change settings like hold duration and select on release. There are also more voices to choose from (although, sadly, there are no current plans for a Scottish voice) and a range of expressions and sounds have been added. You can also now choose a voice on a per-button basis. Proloquo4Text is a text-to-speech app with 85 voices in 15 languages, and also has good flexibility in its accessibility settings. Both apps have the ability to share with social media sites like Twitter and Facebook.

## **Technology Update - Fil**

Therapy Box announced updates for their Predictable App – both for iOS (iPad) and Android. [www.therapy-box.co.uk](http://www.therapy-box.co.uk)

Toby Churchill officially launched the switch-scanning version of the Lightwriter. Current SL40 Lightwriters can be adapted if required. [www.toby-churchill.com](http://www.toby-churchill.com)  
Another keyboard based aid, the Allora from Techcess has been updated. This device has a removable, second display so that the communication partner need not be face-to-face with the user. [www.techcess.co.uk](http://www.techcess.co.uk)

Inclusive Technology has increased their range of AAC support devices, including the Bamboo mounts for iPad and iPad mini. [www.inclusive.co.uk](http://www.inclusive.co.uk)

Announced just after the conference had finished but very relevant – Tobii EyeGaze for tablet devices. The EyeMobile can be used with Windows 8 tablets and provides a frame holding the tablet and PCEye. The frame can then be mounted on a wheelchair or floor mount. [www.tobii.com](http://www.tobii.com)



# CM Conference 2013



## **Educating Undergraduate Medical Students in AAC - Phillipa**

Paul McKenzie, Kathleen Cummins, Annalu Waller & Susan Law of the University of Dundee

This session introduced the University of Dundee's project investigating ways in which AAC can be introduced into the undergraduate medical programme. Following interviews and focus groups with adults who use AAC, it was reported that many doctors do not know how to appropriately interact and communicate with AAC users, citing a lack of time, confidence and knowledge as some of the reasons. After discussion with AAC users and health professionals, it was felt that medical students need practical contact with AAC users to break these communication barriers. A pilot communication skills workshop was delivered to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year medical students, involving people who use AAC as 'health trainers' and to act as simulated patients, allowing students to build confidence in a relaxed environment. Both the students and the AAC users felt the workshops were very valuable. Current plans are underway to include training in AAC in the University of Dundee undergraduate medical curriculum and extend this training to other health professionals such as dentistry and nursing.

## **Talking Mats Apps - Susan**

Many of us are aware of the Talking Mats resource, and in this session they introduced their apps, available for iOS and Android. The apps were produced by an Edinburgh development company in collaboration with a comic artist, and come in 3 levels - taster (10 symbols), lite (35 symbols) and pro (all symbols). Take a look at [www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com) for more details and pricing.



## **Pandas on Parade!**

Keycomm attended the CM Ball as the Edinburgh pandas and their zookeeper!  
Did you spot us?



# iPad and Android News

## Predictable 3 is Out



TherapyBox, the people behind the popular Apple and Android communication app, Predictable, have released an update - Predictable 3. Currently this is for iOS (Apple) devices only. New features include the ability to record voices, better connectivity to social media and a larger range of synthetic voices. For more details, see: <http://therapy-box.co.uk/predictable.aspx>



## ChatAble

Another TherapyBox offering, ChatAble is a new communication app which just came out at the end of November. It has a grid layout, but uses scene-based communication. We'd love to hear from anyone who has used the app about what they thought of it. For more details, see: <http://therapy-box.co.uk/chatable.aspx>

## JABtalk



JABtalk is a communication app for Android devices. It is free, easy to use, and has some good features, for example the ability to record voices or use synthetic speech. You can take photographs from within the app, or use pictures from the internet. No symbols come with the app. For more details, see: <http://www.jabstone.com/>

## Staff News

Laura Smith, who has been working with Keycomm as a paediatric Speech and Language Therapist, has started her maternity leave. We wish her all the best and can't wait to meet her new addition.

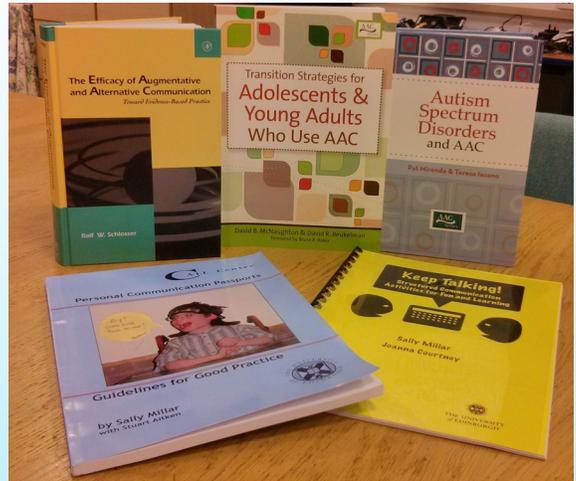
Phillipa Rewaj, an adult Speech and Language Therapist here at Keycomm, has recently been awarded her PhD following submitting a dissertation entitled *The Nature of Language Impairment in Motor Neurone Disease*. We are all very proud of Dr Rewaj and congratulate her on her achievement.

Nicky Ford, our paediatric Speech and Language Therapist, has bought her first home with her partner. We wish her loads of happiness in her new place.

Ruth Wise, previously the teacher at Keycomm has given birth to a beautiful baby girl. Congratulations, Ruth!

# Book Giveaway

Keycomm have some books to give away that we received from NES through the *Right to Speak* project. If you would like any of them, please get in touch! The books are: *Autism Spectrum Disorders and AAC*, *The Efficacy of Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, *Transition Strategies for Adolescents and Young Adults Who Use AAC*, *Personal Communication Passports - Guidelines for Good Practice* and *Keep Talking! - Structured Communication Activities for Fun and Learning*. *First come, first served!*



## Courses at Keycomm

Don't miss out on the courses we're running at Keycomm! Give us a call on 0131 311 7130 or email Janet at [Janet.1.ramsay@ea.edin.sch.uk](mailto:Janet.1.ramsay@ea.edin.sch.uk) to book your place.

<b>Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January</b>	<b>10am-midday</b>	<b>Boardmaker 6 for PC Training</b>
<b>Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>2.30pm-4.30pm</b>	<b>CODES Framework Training</b>
<b>Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>10am-midday</b>	<b>Boardmaker 6 for PC Training</b>
<b>Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>10am-midday</b>	<b>Boardmaker 6 for PC Training</b>

Have you enjoyed this issue of the Keycomm newsletter? Is there anything you'd like to see more of?

We'd love to have your feedback - give us a call or email Susan on [susan.henderson@ea.edin.sch.uk](mailto:susan.henderson@ea.edin.sch.uk)



## Contacting the Keycomm team

Why not tear this page off and pin it to your noticeboard, or put it in your diary?

Office Hours: 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday

Address: Keycomm Resource Centre, 1c Pennywell Road, Edinburgh, EH4 4PH

Tel: 0131 311 7130

Fax: 0131 332 6871

Website: Our new website is being worked on and will be launched soon! In the meantime, our old site can be found at: <http://keycomm.weebly.com/>

## The Team

### Deborah Jans

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### Melanie Ross

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### Janet Ramsay

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