

Android Applications for Communication – Symbol-based Communication

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What is Android?

Android is an open-source software stack for mobile devices that includes an operating system, middleware and key applications that is developed by Google and other members of the Open Handset Alliance, similar to what iOS is to Apple. As Android is a software package that can run on a range of different devices instead of a device itself, a wide range of devices are available in the market with different features to suit individual users' needs. Android devices cannot run Apps designed for iOS devices, however, Apps designed specifically for Android devices can be downloaded or purchased from the Android Market operated by Google.



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 2.1 or newer versions.
- The device has a 700MHz or faster processor
- The device has 256MB 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)

Just like any Speech Generating Devices, the best practice approach is to trial a range of different devices to determine what is the most appropriate communication system 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. With the wide range of speech generating devices/software/systems available, it is often difficult to select which one/s may best suit the needs of the specific individual. It is recommended that a Speech Pathologist with experience in AAC be consulted and that a trial of the technology take place. LifeTec offers consultations for individuals to trial a wide range of assistive technology.

For more information on different options on Speech Generating Devices, telephone, fax or e-mail your enquiry to obtain further information from one of the therapists about products. Alternatively, you can make an appointment to trial the equipment at our display centre or through our outreach service. Please phone LifeTec for further details.

Text-to-speech Apps for Android

As an alternative to iOS devices, there are a wide range of AAC apps available via Google's Android Market (although not as much as what you would see on the iTunes AppStore). For those who may have an Android device already or are looking for alternative options, following is a list of symbol based AAC apps available on the Android platform outlining their features.

BRISBANE
Level One, Reading Newmarket
Cnr Newmarket & Enoggera Roads
(PO Box 3241), Newmarket Qld 4051
Phone: 07 3552 9000 or 1300 885 886
Facsimile: 07 3552 9088

LifeTec Queensland
Email: mail@lifetec.org.au
www.lifetec.org.au
Independent Living Centre
Association of Queensland
Incorporated trading as LifeTec
Queensland ABN 25 773 960 273

TOWNSVILLE
Shop G-3A, Domain Central
103 Duckworth Street
(PO Box 8280), Garbutt, Townsville Qld 4814
Phone: 07 4759 5600
Facsimile: 07 4759 5688



App							
App	AAC Speech Buddy	Alexicom AAC for Android	iAugComm	TapToTalk	Voice4u	JABtalk	Discover My Voice
Price	\$27.99	Free app download, subscription for page editor access at \$40 per month or \$408 per year	\$4.99	Free app download, subscription for page editor access at \$99.95 per year	\$29.99	\$9.44	\$47.23
Symbol Library	2000+ Mulberry Symbols and photos	2000+ custom symbols and photos.	Sclera Pictograms symbols	2500 custom symbols	130 custom symbols	Nil	Nil
Images can be imported	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y, can also be imported from camera directly on supported devices	Y, can also be imported from camera directly on supported devices
Symbols can be displayed with text descriptions	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Cells can be added and customized	Y	Y	?	Y	Y	Y	Y
Vocabulary can be organized using a multi level system	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cell sizes customizable (NI = Not individually)	NI	NI	NI	NI	N	NI	N
Background color of cells can be customized individually	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Ability to sequence messages in message window	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Ability to alter messages in message window using text / symbols	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Pre-programmed pagesets available	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Additional pre-built pagesets available commercially	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Synthesized voice output	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
Digitized / Recorded voice output	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ability to use both synthesized and digitized voice output on the same pageset	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y
Adjustable direct access options	Direct access touch enter only	Direct access touch enter only	Direct access touch enter only	Direct access touch enter only	Direct access touch enter only	Direct access touch enter only	Direct access touch enter only
Alternative access options (see foot notes for details)	Mouse alternatives	Mouse alternatives	Mouse alternatives	Mouse alternatives	Mouse alternatives	Mouse alternatives	Mouse alternatives
Can be used in both portrait and landscape mode	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Remarks	6 AT&T voices. Does not use up the whole screen when used with some tablets.	20 AT&T voices (US / UK English, Spanish, German, Italian, Prisian French and Canadian French)	Compatibility issues with some tablets. Very limited amount of preloaded symbols.	Pre-recorded speech in starter album.	Vocabulary displayed in a list view, which can be organized by alphabetical order, access frequency or last accessed.	To enter edit mode, the user have to enter the passkey displayed on the screen, which may be useful for some clients.	Available as a 30 day trial from developer's website.