

# KEYCOMM NEWS

The Keycomm Newsletter

May 2014

## Welcome to the Keycomm Newsletter!

It's hard to believe that it's the middle of May already - where has the year gone? At Keycomm, we took a moment to stand back and reflect on what we've achieved in the last twelve months.

- Identified a **vision** for our service (*All people who use AAC have the skills and tools to live independently and be included in society*) and considered our **Service Delivery Model**.
- Encouraged **user engagement** by creating personal information communication cards, developing a new website, identifying a "parent champion" and having open days
- **Supported teachers** to implement AAC intervention through supporting schools directly, reviewing the CODES Framework through multi-disciplinary feedback sessions and begun to develop a Toolkit for Teachers to accompany CODES.
- Oversaw the **Symbol and Visual Supports Project**, a joint project between City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian.
- Collaborated with Speech and Language Therapy to collate results and identify future action points from the **Sign Support Survey**.

If all that wasn't enough, we also found time to attend the Communication Matters conference, take part in the Family Fun Technology Day at CALL Scotland, and celebrate our 21st birthday!

To see **what's next** for Keycomm, look over the page.

## In This Issue

- A review of the past year, and what to expect next year
- Rolling out IPAACKS
- New apps - Proloquo4Text and ChatAble
- Book giveaway!
- And much more!



## Staff News

Laura Smith, who has been working with Keycomm as a paediatric Speech and Language Therapist, has given birth to a beautiful baby girl - we loved having her visit us and getting a cuddle. Congratulations, Laura!

# What's next for Keycomm

2013/14 was a jam-packed year, and 2014/15 looks to be the same. Here are a few things we are looking forward to in the months to come:

- Launching our new **website**, with an area specifically for AAC users, and an accompanying **facebook** page.
- Piloting the **CODES Toolkit for Teachers** and developing resources for **parents**.
- **AAC awareness campaign** - we have lots of goodies, e.g. posters, available if you are interested.
- **Communicating4Life** - On-site training to services providing post-16 support to our users.

If you'd like additional information on anything mentioned above, please contact us and we'd be happy to tell you more!

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## Launch of IPAACKS



NHS Education for Scotland have launched IPAACKS, a resource to support the learning and development of people working with those who use AAC.

At Keycomm, we think this is an incredibly valuable resource that identifies staff competencies and training needs, and we will be rolling out a programme of training to support the use of IPAACKS. Each session will be at least 90 minutes, and participants will come away with something practical they can use to support their professional development. Contact Deborah Jans at Keycomm to register your interest.

You can download the IPAACKS resource pack here: <http://bit.ly/1eWpQej>



Switch Play Learning And Technology

## SPLAT news

- by **Melanie Ross**

This term, I've published an article discussing the merits and pitfalls of using touch screen devices (like iPads, iPods, tablets, etc) based on my experience with the children who use the switch toy library. The transcript and the updated list of best apps are available on the Keycomm website. My experience is that almost all parents and carers have access to a touch screen device and that there are lots of apps that can encourage and enhance play for those at the very earliest stages of development. We hope to stimulate more discussion on the best apps and the best ways to use them.



# Proloquo2Go warning

Proloquo2Go is a powerful communication app for iOS devices that is widely used by Keycomm clients, many on our paediatric caseload.

The latest version of the app includes "expressions", which allow certain phrases to be said with the appropriate intonation, for example "Go away!" or "Muuuuuum!", rather than using the synthetic speech engine. However, with some voices, expressions such as "F\*\*\* off!" are also included.

The "rude" expressions are not included with every voice, but they are there for "Harry", the British English child's voice, "Josh" and "Ella", the American English children's voices and "Liam" and "Olivia" the Australian English children's voices. For some reason, "Rosie", the British English female child's voice is not affected.

Whilst we at Keycomm feel that, in general, it should be possible for our clients to have access to this vocabulary and express themselves in the same way as those with a voice, such language is clearly not appropriate for very young children to use in any context, and I'm sure we all know some older children that would have a field day if they located this vocabulary. Therefore we wanted to highlight its existence so you can make an informed choice about whether or not to allow its use.

It should be noted that these "expressions" are hidden away and **do not appear as standard** anywhere. You have to know where to find them and add them manually.

For further advice about this feature, please either contact Keycomm or AssistiveWare, the developer, at [www.assistiveware.com/support](http://www.assistiveware.com/support)



You wouldn't believe some of the things that come out of his mouth....

## New AAC Modules Available

If you haven't yet visited the fantastic new website [www.aacscotland.org.uk](http://www.aacscotland.org.uk) you really should! It is full of great resources developed by CALL Scotland and funded by the NES A Right to Speak project, including posters, videos and much more. Now they have launched an online learning module on AAC. Currently, just the first module (an introduction to AAC) is available, but more modules will be released soon.



# Proloquo4text Review



The new app Proloquo4text has been developed by AssistiveWare who developed Proloquo2go. It has been developed as a text to speech app for literate AAC Users. First impressions are that the screen is very busy, being divided into thirds. The middle section is the message window where you type your message. The left side of the screen is for saved phrases and the right third of the screen has other rate enhancement features. The app relies heavily on navigating around these screens and at times it can be difficult to find your way back. However, all of this is configurable in the settings where you can switch things around or hide some of the features. While typing in it, the app has both word and sentence prediction and you can have up to 10 prediction words/phrases. The app also comes with some saved phrases with suggested categories as a default i.e. social, meals, shopping, phone calls. There are sample vocabulary phrases to get people started. You can also access the list of the most recent sentences that have been predicted while in your saved phrases. There is also access to quick talk and a history log to ease communication. However, as was pointed out before it makes for a very busy screen and lots of navigating around the screen. While trying to personalise the phrases and edit the existing ones, it was a bit difficult as you get a similar screen to editing on Proloquo2go which can be very daunting. Especially if all you want to do is change one sentence. Once you start editing the app it is clear to see the influences of Proloquo2go on its development. At times it appears that it is more complicated than it needed to be. I have tried this with a few clients and the response has been mixed. I think you would have to be an experienced iPad user and with a little perseverance this could be a good app to have in our arsenal for text to speech communicators. At the time of writing, the app costs £89.99 and is available through the App Store.

- Review by Deborah Jans

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## ChatAble



TherapyBox, makers of the apps Predictable and Scene & Heard, have a new app out called ChatAble.

The app allows you to use either a symbol-based grid, to turn an image into a visual scene display, or to create a hybrid of both.

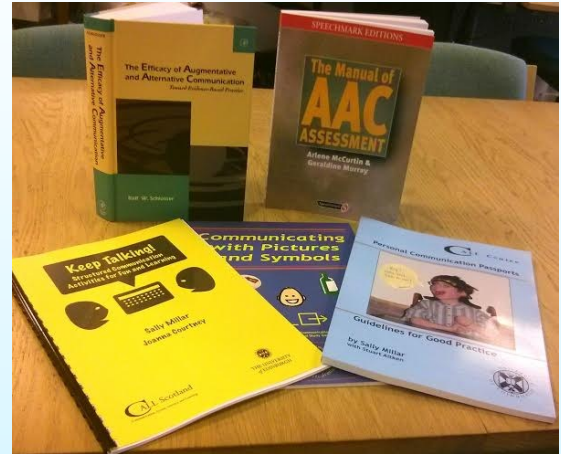
Here at Keycomm we have got a copy of the app to trial, and we will let you know our full thoughts in the next issue.

Currently, ChatAble is only available for iOS and costs £109.99 in the App Store.

- Susan Henderson

# 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: *The Efficacy of Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, *The Manual of AAC Assessment*, *Personal Communication Passports - Guidelines for Good Practice*, *Communicating with Pictures and Symbols* and *Keep Talking! - Structured Communication Activities for Fun and Learning*. *First come, first served!*



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## AAC Study Group

Phillipa and Nicky have started a study group for those interested in keeping abreast of academic and professional literature in the field of AAC. If you are interested in joining this friendly group, please contact Keycomm.

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## 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>Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May</b>	<b>9.30am, 11.30am, 2pm (2hrs)</b>	<b>iPad workshop</b>
<b>Thursday 18th September</b>	<b>10am - 12 noon</b>	<b>Boardmaker 6</b>
<b>Thursday 30th October</b>	<b>3.30pm - 5.30pm</b>	<b>Introduction to AAC</b>

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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!

## The Team

### Deborah Jans

Keycomm Coordinator, Speech and Language Therapist

Available Mon-Fri

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### Susan Henderson

Communication Technology Development Officer

Available Tue-Thurs

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### Fil McIntyre

AAC Technologist

Available Mon & Wed

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### Nicky Ford

Paediatric Speech and Language Therapist

Available Tue & Thurs

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### Phillipa Rewaj

Adult Speech and Language Therapist

Mon & Tue every week, Wed every other week

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### Lindsay Lambert

Paediatric Speech and Language Therapist

Available Thursdays

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### Barbara Mathieson

Speech Therapy Assistant

Available Wed, Thurs & Fri 9.30am-2.30pm

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### Melanie Ross

Occupational Therapist - SPLAT

Available Mon & Tues 8.30am-2.30pm, Fri 9am-12

melanie.ross@kaimes.edin.sch.uk

### Janet Ramsay

Clerical Assistant

Available Mon - Thurs 8.30am-1.30pm, Fri 8.30am-1pm

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