

ComTEC Email Network Newsletter
Autumn Edition 2010

ComTEC

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Product evaluations

- Proloquo2go** is an application that enables an iPhone or iPod Touch to be used as a speech generating device. The application uses synthesised speech. Messages are produced by entering text via an onscreen keyboard or pre-programmed using symbols. Messages are spoken by pressing the screen.

<http://www.ilcaustralia.org.au/home/search4.asp?State=VIC&MC=62&MinC=54&Item=8215&page=2>



- Monty Mounting Systems** The Monty range of device and control mounts are designed to position speech generating devices, portable computers, environmental control units and switches. The range includes various models of wheelchair mounts, table clamps, floor stands and controller mounts with a range of switch and device adapters.

<http://www.ilcaustralia.org.au/home/search4.asp?State=VIC&MC=62&MinC=26&Item=8246&page=16>



- SpeakOut Scan** is a speech generating device which converts text to speech. It has a user and a listener screen. Messages are produced by using 1 or 2 switches to scan through the letter keys of a standard QWERTY keyboard. The device has a black/grey visual display allowing 3 (large font) or 8 (small font) lines of text to be shown at a time. Messages can be spoken, printed and saved to USB memory stick.

<http://www.ilcaustralia.org.au/home/search4.asp?State=VIC&MC=61&MinC=4&Item=8383&page=41>



For more product evaluations, visit www.ilcaustralia.org, click on product search then VIC for product categories.

Changes to ComTEC services

In a recent email network contact we told you briefly about a change to our service delivery. In this edition, we want to tell you a little more about this change in the way we provide information and advice about assistive technology and try to answer some of the questions you have.

Background

The changes in our processes aim to improve outcomes for clients coming to ComTEC to investigate assistive technology. We want to increase the amount and range of support we provide to the clients' own therapy team (SP, OT, physiotherapy, teacher etc), so that they, in turn, can best support their clients.

Like the Independent Living Centre, ComTEC is a statewide service working in a consultancy model to provide information and advice on assistive technology. We have our main base in Brooklyn. We also have an Eastern and Southern base where we hold advisory sessions but do not have a display. For people who are unable to travel for health or medical reasons, we can provide off site visits.

Much of the communication, literacy and language support and accessing technology that ComTEC specialises in, is complex to implement and maintain. The ability of the person with a disability and their team to implement the technology is an important consideration when deciding which equipment best meets goals and needs. This is especially so, when the person themselves is not able to set up, program and maintain/ troubleshoot the equipment.

We are finding, when routinely following up clients who have attended advisory sessions, that one of the most important factors in achieving competence and success with complex technology is access to ongoing, local support. Many clients have a range of assistive technology, often interacting with mainstream technologies and need to be able to use this everyday. They require support that is timely, local and responsive to their particular environment and circumstances and this only possible through their local team.

Changes to Advisory Sessions and Referrals

As part of this process, when investigating complex technology, the client will require their own speech pathologist and/or occupational therapist to be present at the Advisory Session. Ideally this therapist would also complete the referral form. We will continue to accept referrals using the old form for a while, but may need to call to clarify information/goals etc. In some cases we may ask for the new referral form to be completed.

We are always happy to discuss any possible alternatives for clients who may not have a SP or OT. Depending on client's circumstances and the equipment being investigated we may be able to provide an Advisory Session without a therapist present.

As in the past, ComTEC can provide support in a variety of ways to people with a disability and their local team; information and advice via telephone/ email support, loans of equipment through the Electronic Equipment Library – so that you could hire items and trial them; professional development sessions to get teams skilled up on using a specific piece of technology with your client. We are also trying out remote support using webcams and remote computer access.

We hope to be flexible so that we can provide the most appropriate service to all people wanting to investigate technology for computer access, communication and environmental control. Please feel free to call us and discuss any questions you may have about these changes or ComTEC services in general (phone (03) 9362 6111 or 1300 885 886 – VIC only).

For more information – visit our website: www.yooralla.com.au/comtec.php



New mounting systems on ComTEC display

We have recently acquired the Monty range of device and control mounts to allow us to broaden the range of options that we can apply to people's accessing and seating system needs.

We will be announcing another mounting workshop later in the year.

Hopefully you can join us and have a chance to learn about these systems.

Unfortunately we do not have any of these systems for loan as yet, but we do have a range of Daessy systems in our library.

<http://www.ilcaustralia.org.au/home/search4.asp?State=VIC&MC=62&MinC=26&Item=8246&page=16>

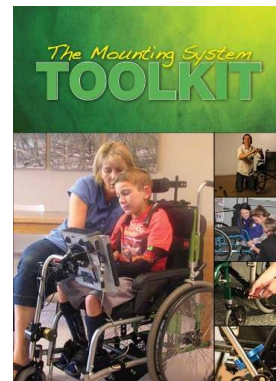
Mounting Advisory Sessions

As we now have such a large range of mounting equipment, it has become impossible both for space and OH&S reasons to transport it all off site. We are currently only able to provide mounting advisory sessions at the Brooklyn base, but we are working on processes that will enable us to provide this service in a more flexible way.

The Mounting System Toolkit

Sales of this DVD have been going well – thanks for all your support.

If you would like to see a video clip or download the order form visit our website: www.yooralla.com.au/comtec/php



The ComTEC team uses **Delicious** to bookmark web based resources such as free software downloads, accessible online games, literacy supports, computer accessibility etc. To access the website bookmarks that have been collected by the ComTEC team, go to:

http://www.delicious.com/Comtec_Yooralla

We have recently added links such as:

18 APR 10 [Speech Pathology Guru](#) SAVE

Website of a SP based in Florida. Site includes Augmentative/Alternative Communication (AAC) section that has resources such as: Tips to Help Your Child Use AAC; video footage of using AAC with switch access; Partner-assisted visual scanning and AAC case studies.

US_service_provider AAC Resources Free Communication

14 MAR 10 [Use Visual Strategies for Autism](#) SAVE 29

This site is designed for speech pathologists, educators, parents, therapists and others who work to support the learning of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and related learning needs. Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and lots of other students with behavior or communication challenges tend to be visual learners and may understand what they see better than what they hear. Therefore, they benefit significantly from the use of Visual Strategies. Deciding when and how to use pictures and other visual supports is the key . . . learn lots of ideas here. Links to articles, research and resources are provided.

Autism Resources Education

[Sounding keyboard and mouse](#) SAVE 5

Sounding Keyboard and Mouse - is software that lets you hear a different sound when you press keys or click mouse.

With this tool, you can specify a wave file and midi note to every key on keyboard or mouse button. When these keys are being pressed or released, the wave/ MIDI will be played. Different keys can be specified different sound making it possible to turn the keyboard into a musical instrument. With a TTS Engine installed, the program can vocalise the text you are typing at the completion of each character or each word or each sentence.

Software Free_demo Music Text-to-speech Keyboard Mouse

[Disability accessibility information resource](#) SAVE 25

NSW-based site with easy access to a wide range of information, resources, services and products of interest to people with a disability, their families and carers, health professionals and service providers in the disability sector. Website includes Access Travel section; Classifieds for secondhand equipment and many more links and resources.

Assistive_technology Resources

Other resources and interesting things

My Study Bar – free download

MyStudyBar for Windows XP, Vista or 7 is a toolbar which helps computer users with studying, seeing the screen, reading and writing. The tool consists of a set of portable open source and freeware applications, assembled into one package.

Download from <http://www.rsc-ne-scotland.ac.uk/eduapps/mystudybar.php>



Lists of ipod/iphone apps

Sally Millar at CALL Scotland has assembled a list of ipod apps for communication:

<http://www.callscotland.org.uk/Common-Assets/spaw2/uploads/files/Using-Mainstream-handheld-devices-as-communication-aids.pdf>

Eric Sailors has created another list: iPhone and iPod Touch Apps for (Special) Education.

This list contains over 150 apps categorised under the headings Communication; Organization; Reading; Writing; Math; Music; Songs; Art; Games; Assistive Technology.

<http://www.scribd.com/mobile/documents/24470331>



Commonwealth Job Access - The Employment Assistance Fund

<http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/>

This may be of interest for some of your clients!

From the website:

The Employment Assistance Fund helps people with disability and mental health condition by providing financial assistance to purchase a range of work related modifications and services. Assistance is available for people who are about to start a job or who are currently working, as well as those who require assistance to find and prepare for work.

The Fund may reimburse the cost of work related modifications and services including, but not limited to:

- the cost of modifications to the physical work environment
- modifications to work vehicles
- adaptive equipment for the workplace
- information and communication devices
- Auslan interpreting
- specialist services for employees with specific learning disorders and mental health conditions
- disability awareness training
- Deafness awareness training, and
- mental health first aid training.

Upcoming events



Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa
158 Ferny Avenue Surfers Paradise, Queensland 4217

Spectronics has announced the Inclusive Learning Technologies® Conference 2010. The conference focuses specifically on “inclusive learning technologies” – technologies designed to advance independent achievement for people with disabilities and/or students with learning difficulties. It includes sessions looking at these technologies in the following three interest streams.

- Struggling Students experiencing difficulties with literacy or organisational tasks.
- People with Complex Communication Needs
- People with Disabilities

<http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/conference/>

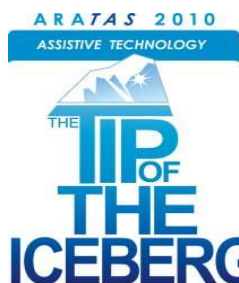
SPEECH PATHOLOGY AUSTRALIA
2010 National Conference
Sunday 16 – Wednesday 19 May 2010
Crown Promenade Conference Centre, Melbourne



Participation 2010 will showcase the innovative contributions of speech pathologists in advancing choices, knowledge and access.

This is the opportunity to display the many and varied ways you contribute to our professional knowledge base. Consider how you support and enhance independence, undertake research or education, lobby, advocate or promote participation in our modern, changing society. Participation 2010 will allow you to share the breadth of your experience.

<http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/news-and-events/2010-national-conference>



ARATA National conference 10 -13 August 2010
Hobart, Tasmania

The emphasis of the ARATA National Conference will be on thinking beyond the prescription of equipment to look more deeply at the issues of funding, training and support for users and their support personnel, and helping consumers to have the endurance to persevere with their equipment, despite the obstacles. <http://www.ebility.com/arata/conf.php>

For further information about ComTEC's services and referring clients, visit
www.yooralla.com.au/comtec.php

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