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WELCOME TO THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER DE-SIGNED TO PROVIDE EDUCATORS WITH TIPS AND TRICKS WHEN INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

High End AAC for Under $999

Ironically, technology has gotten cheaper, smaller, and easier to use, but high end Voice Output Devices (VOD) are still large, expensive and difficult. We finally have alternatives to the $10,000 devices! N-Trig (http://www.n-trig.com) has developed an LCD with amazing multi-touch capabilities. We now have a selection of mobile laptops/notebooks and tablets with full features and a screen that will respond with a light touch of the finger. If you have mobility difficulties there are plenty of other free options available.

CTL 2Go Convertible Classmate
http://www.2gopc.com/
$499
- Windows XP
- 60 GB HDD
- 1GB Ram
- screen swivels
- built in camera
- removable carrying handle
- durable, sturdy, water-resistant keyboard

This edition of ATN E-News will lead you in the right direction to provide a low cost, high-tech augcom device for under $999. Now there is a low cost solution and with the familiar Windows interface, it should be easier to set up and use.

Lenova ThinkPad X61 Tablet
http://shop.lenovo.com/us/notebooks/thinkpad/x-series-tablet
$799
- Vista
- 160 GB hard drive
- 1 GB Ram
- Wireless

Eo UMPC v7111
http://www.tabletkiosk.com
$799
- Windows XP
- 40 GB hard drive
- 512 MB Ram
- Wireless

HP TouchSmart tz2z
http://www.shopping.hp.com
$949
- Vista
- 160 GB hard drive
- 2 GB Ram

AugCom Software for FREE

Voice4Me
http://www.schoolfreeware.com/Voice4Me.html

Voice4Me is designed as a quick and simple way to bring speech to users who have difficulty speaking. When the user clicks on a picture, the computer responds by reading the text assigned to the picture. Voice4Me is designed as a quick and simple way to bring speech to users who have difficulty speaking. There are 154 Text-To-Speech (TTS) areas that can be customized to meet the users needs. Also, there is a text area for the user to type whatever he/she wants the computer to say.

AugCom Software for FREE

Speak for Yourself
http://www.latkids.org/

Speak for Yourself is an innovative augmentative communications system. 54 buttons can be assigned any icon in our library, and any phrase you would like. Speak for Yourself uses Microsoft's synthetic speech, and works in direct-select or scan mode. Scanning speed is customizable. The program has configurable prompts for button rows and phrases, making it usable by sight-impaired users. Speak for Yourself allows users to record their favorite hobbies, music, food, and TV shows, date of birth and other bits of information, which can be integrated into any phrases by use of simple "tags."

E-triloquist
http://www.etriloquist.com/

E-triloquist is a PC-based communication aid for a speech impaired person. It serves as an electronic voice for those who can't speak on their own.

Symvoc
http://symvoc.googlepages.com/

SymVoc is aimed to help less able people to communicate with others using symbols and speech synthesis

- SymVoc contents are directory and filename driven.
- In each panel there can be multiple categories and these can be sorted in arbitrary order.
- Each category will have an image (or "tile") associated to it.
- Tiles within each category can be sorted also.
- Speech synthesiser is utilised to read out the symbols to the user

MyFTC (Freedom to Communicate)
http://sourceforge.net/project/showfiles.php?group_id=149707

My Freedom To Communicate (MyFTC) is Assistive Technology (AT) software that uses text-to-speech technology to enable nonverbal individuals to communicate easily in real life situations.

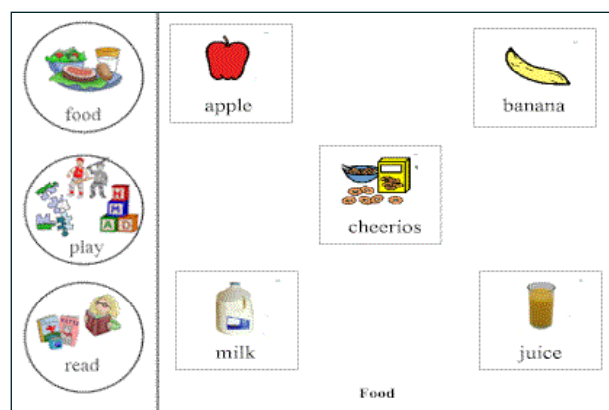# AugCom Mockups for Microsoft PowerPoint

The excessive prices on AAC devices call for action. It is time to look at assessment strategies and alternatives with software and hardware that we have available. With a little skill and ingenuity, there are many alternatives. For example, using Microsoft PowerPoint, Microsoft Word, Adobe Pro, or Dreamweaver you can use hyperlinks to jump from page to page and also add voice.

PowerTalk

http://www.oatsoft.org/Software/PowerTalk

- Aids if the presenter has difficulty speaking
- Helps with access to stand alone presentations when there is no speaker and if the participant is partially sighted;
- Creates engaging school activities such as reading stories created by students;
- Simple to use as you just select a presentation and it runs in PowerPoint as usual;
- Speaks the text on any presentation and uses standard Windows speech;
- Waits for text to appear and animation effects to play before speaking;
- Will speak hidden 'alternative text' for pictures, graphics shapes and text

Screenshots from MS PowerPoint

Core Vocabulary

Core Vocabulary

After deciding on an adequate device and the software to symbolize language, the next step is to choose the words/symbols the child will need. If the child is nonverbal and has limited communication, it will be difficult to determine what the child would prefer on his/her device. Many adults who set up a communication system will include only items the child favors. This can cause problems as it is usually limited to nouns and excludes verbs, adjectives, pronouns, and QUESTIONS.
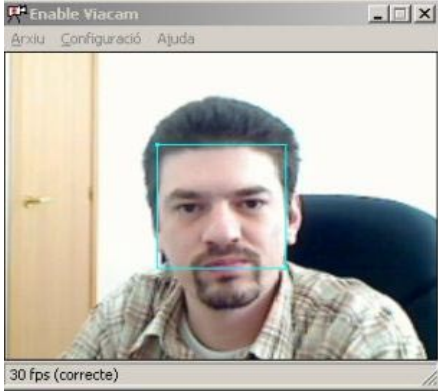
If you need help when developing a communication system, there is plenty of research on core vocabulary. For more information and resources on the topic of core and fringe vocabulary, visit Barbara Cannon's Wikispace (http://at4kids.wikispaces.com/).

Access Anyone?

eViacam
http://eviacam.sourceforge.net/eviacam.html

Enable Viacam can be used as a full alternative or as a complement to a conventional computer mouse. It is especially useful for people with motor impairments in their hands or their arms.

Hands-Free: Control your computer with intuitive head movements. No need to use your hands.
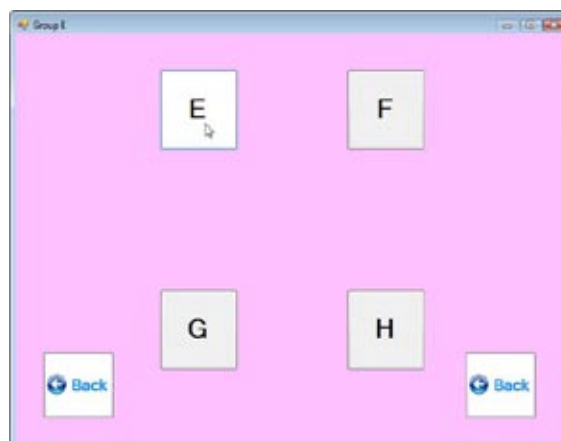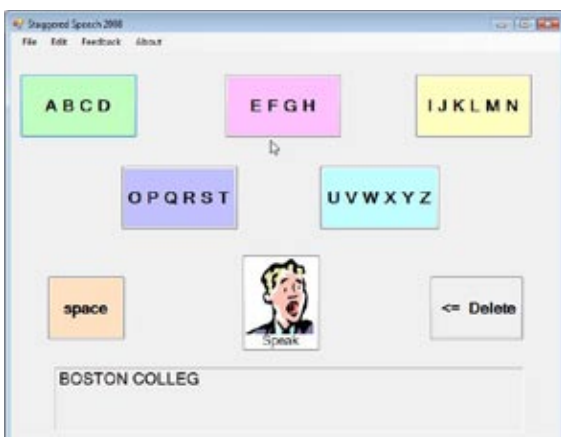
Camera Mouse
http://www.cameramouse.org/index.html

Camera Mouse is a free program that enables you to control the mouse pointer on your computer screen just by moving your head. What equipment is required? Right now, a Windows Vista or Windows XP system and a standard USB webcam.

Staggered Speech
http://www.staggeredspeech.org/

Staggered Speech 2009 is a free onscreen keyboard program for Windows that is designed to be used with head-controlled or eye-controlled access technology.
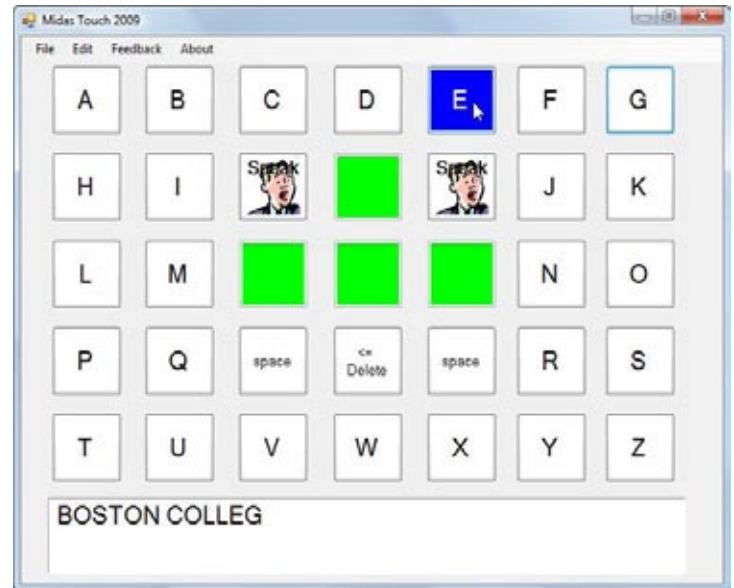
Access Anyone?

Midas Touch
http://www.midastouch.org/

Midas Touch 2009 is a free onscreen keyboard program for Windows. Although designed for use with webcam for access, it can also be used effectively with a touchscreen.

Eagle Eyes
http://www.bc.edu/schools/csom/eagleeyes/downloads.html

EagleEyes is a technology that allows the user to move the cursor on the screen of a Windows computer by moving his or her eyes or head. Basically, the cursor follows the location that the user is looking at on the screen. The eyes replace the mouse. Selection is made by looking at a small area of the screen for a short period of time, which causes a mouse click.

Future Access

Emotiv EPOC
http://www.emotiv.com

The scientists at Emotiv have done the impossible: created a brain-wave-reading headset that lets you conjure entire worlds using nothing but your mind.

Read more about this technology....
http://www.inc.com/magazine/20081201/reality-bites.html

Future Access

Rewalk by Argo
http://www.argomedtec.com/

The ReWalk™ is currently being tested in Israel. Further clinical trials are planned within the next year in several rehabilitation centers in Europe and in the USA.

Near Field Communication (NFC)
already in Asia and Europe

For a list of short videos showing use of this technology:
http://www.nfc-forum.org/resources/multimedia/

Visually Impaired
http://win83il.audiovideoweb.com/il83win10145/sep_bnc04.wmv

Be sure and watch the video!

For more information:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near_Field_Communication