

# Minutes of the Access Group Meeting

## Meeting details

- Date - 7th November 2014
- Venue - The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability, Putney, London.
- Time - 10am-4pm

## People present

- Will Wade (Chair) (OT, ACE Centre, Manchester)
- Jane Bache (Host) (Joint head of Service, Compass, RHN)
- Gary Derwent (Joint head of Service, Compass, RHN)
- Gerard Cullen (Engineer, Compass, RHN)
- Dante (Tech support, Compass, RHN)
- Catherine Slaughter (OT, Beaumont College, Scope)
- Emilia Leech (Clinical Engineer, Chailey Heritage Clin Services)
- Marta Dabek (OT, Special Effect!)
- Rob Lievesley (Clin Engineer, OCE)
- Vicky (OT, OCE)
- Helen Paterson (SLT, RHN)
- Vicky Johnston (Clin Sci, Barnsley)
- Lynne Allsopp (OT, ACT, Birmingham)
- Nana Odem (Clin Eng, Kent CAT, Ashford)
- Matt Oppenheim (Computing researcher, Lancaster University)
- Jodie Rogers (OT, East Kent Adult CAT Service)

## Apologies

- Julie King

## Minutes

### 1. Case Study Presentation by Vicky Johnston: Journey Through a Complex AAC Assessment

Vicky and her team have recently worked with a client with CP whom had not used AAC for many years and shared their experience of this complex assessment process:

- Through assessment it was established that the client had previously used Bliss symbols and was able to accurately recognise these. A low-tech AAC communication book was created for her using Bliss symbols. This was mounted onto her wheelchair for easier access.
- A range of access methods were trialled e.g. direct access with keyguard (keyguard was divided into quarters and allowed client access to 16 cells through a 2 step process), mechanical switches (head and hand) and headmouse. Outcomes were variable due to the client's uncontrolled movements and difficulty in achieving consistent positioning/range of movements. The overall outcome was that the client was provided with a customised proximity switch that re-calibrates even if your position changes. This was mounted within a pillow upon which the client placed her hand. She was then able to activate the switch with a small movement of her Lumbricals.

## **2. Case Study Presentation by Marta Dabek: How 3 men with SCI got back in the Game**

Marta works for the charity 'Special Effect'. 'Special Effect' is a charity based in Oxfordshire, which enables alternative access to Games Consoles. Marta presented three case studies based upon her work with three gentlemen whom had suffered Spinal Cord Injury and were subsequently unable to access their Games consoles. Through the case studies Marta showed examples of alternative access:

- Use of a switch interface box (e.g. EVIL switch box) that works with Playstation3.
- Mounting of Standard controllers for easier access e.g. client using single hand only.
- Adaptations to standard Xbox or PS3 controllers e.g. extended joystick to be used as a chin joystick, and extensions to buttons to enable easier access (like a paddle switch).

In terms of referring to 'Special Effect' Marta confirmed that they will accept referrals from any location. They can carry out home visits but understandably clinic appointments are preferred. There is currently no charge for assessment. 'Special effect' does not provide equipment; following an assessment the recommended equipment is loaned to the client for a short period for them to trial. If successful, then the client is provided with a detailed list of what equipment was used, where it can be purchased from and how to setup. If customisation is required then this work is carried out by Special Effect.

Website: <http://www.specialeffect.org.uk>

### 3. Proposed Access SIG conference/training event

There was some discussion regarding the recently cancelled 2 day training event that was due to take place this November. Unlike the previous event, that took place in 2012, this event had been sponsored by Communication Matters and each of the two days was targeted at different audiences. Will reported that this event was unfortunately cancelled due to limited interest from outside parties. The group agreed that the two day event in 2012 had been beneficial and it was agreed that a similar event would be useful, with the aim of sharing knowledge and best-practice. Practicalities such as possible venues, dates, provision of lunch and demonstrations by suppliers were discussed.

**Outcome:** It was agreed that a 2 day event will be organised for November 2015 (date TBC). This event will primarily be aimed at those working within the field of EAT/specialist access. The proposed venue is currently The Royal Hospital for neuro-disability, Putney, unless other suitable venues are offered (expected attendance approx. 50 people). It was agreed that those suppliers who are less widely known, such as ‘Dad in the Shed’ will be invited to demonstrate/present case studies re. how their products have been used. A committee was formed to help organise the event; Jane, Will, Lynne, Marta and Jodie.

#### **Actions:**

- Forward any suggestions for possible venues ASAP
- Offers and ideas for presentations to be forwarded to the committee
- Committee to organise venue, dates, programme, advertising/registration and lunch.

### 4. Affiliation and committee structure

It should be affiliated with a professional organisation and the overall organisation of the meeting.

The group will continue to meet bi-annually with the venue rotating between the North, Mid and South of the UK. Three roles were identified as necessary to facilitate the ongoing organisation of the SIG;

- Chair – Will
- Lead for training – Jane
- Secretary/minute-taker – Jodie

it was agreed by all that these roles should rotate around the group, possibly on a meeting or annual basis?

The membership of the SIG is currently based upon the membership of the online group (ATaccessgroup.org.uk). It was agreed that the SIG meeting attendance will continue to be on a first-come first-served basis and will be dictated by the number of places available for each venue. It was agreed that the group is unlikely to fit within the standards set out for professional affiliation by the College of OT or similar, as this requires a standard number of meetings and is only open to OT's – therefore it was agreed that the group should remain as it is; a self-organised multi-disciplinary SIG.

**Actions:**

- Draft Terms of Reference to be written and forwarded to the chair
- Draft description of roles and responsibilities to be written and agreed with the group

## **5. Proposed article for OT news**

Will proposed that the group should write an article for the COT news to raise awareness of specialist access to technology, using case studies, and the new proposed service model for AAC and Computer Access.

Will, Vicky (Oxford) and Katherine will work on the article to be submitted for publication in 2015.

**Actions:**

- Will asked for any possible case studies/ideas etc that could be used to promote Access/EAT to be sent to him.
- Draft article to be written and shared with group before submission (before March 2015)

## **6. Demonstration of equipment**

Matt Oppenheim demonstrated his work on using virtual controls for specialist access:

- Face Track NOIR (no infra-red) – this is a web-cam based gesture recognition control system. Head movements e.g. head nod, can be used as a switch press.
- Leap Motion – Hand tracking system that works via IR diode which reflects off the hand. This can be used as a 3D mouse or for gesture recognition as a switch press.

- Other projects were also discussed by the group: Claro face-mouse (uses facial gestures for joystick control) and the Drake project (music development through use of gesture software).

Will Wade demonstrated/discussed using the TECLA:

TECLA is a Bluetooth switch interface box that can be used across a range of platforms e.g. IOS, Android (depending upon the device and Android OS) and some smart TV's. It can be used with 2 switches or up to 6 switches with an additional adaptor and comes with 7 different pre-set modes e.g. IOS or mouse keys via switches. <http://gettecla.com/pages/tecla>

Will reported that in his experience this has been a reliable switch interface box in terms of maintaining Bluetooth connection.

## 7. Any other Business

There was general discussion regarding group member's use of, experience of devices and other issues:

- EZ keys – For those clients who still wish to use EZ keys, Vicky and Rob reported that EZ keys can be upgraded so that it is compatible with Windows8 (presumably using USB connection?). However, there was a lack of clarity from Wordsplus as to how this can currently be done.

### **Actions: Vicky to circulate the contact details for Wordsplus**

- Voice Banking – Currently the two main known avenues for voice banking are Cereproc (there is a cost) and Model-talker (free research project). Model Talker requires the client to complete recordings (done within their own home) of 1600 phrases. Helen has a client who has successfully completed the process. Model-talker voices can be used in Therapy-box Apps 'Predictable' and 'Chatable'. There was some discussion regarding the demands of this process and the possible misconception that the recording is done through the Apps. It was agreed that Specialist services should ensure that local SLT services are aware of voice banking so that this can be discussed with clients. However, the process should be clearly explained so that clients have realistic expectations of what is involved. There was also some discussion regarding the use of message-banking, Helen advised the group of work carried out by John Costello, an advocate of message-banking, where a list of key phrases has been developed to guide this process.
- Gary and Gerard are currently working on manufacturing a bespoke joystick mouse, controlled by small mouth movements and using sip/puff for left/right click. This is to replace a client's similar system previously

manufactured by an independent engineer. They will present the system to the group once works are complete

- Toby Churchill can now provide a hardware support package; they will source the hardware for you e.g. your choice of tablet and access technology, and will then provide this along with a service/maintenance package. This is to facilitate the procurement process for specialist services.
- E-books – There is currently no alternative access method that can be used with a Kindle-reader. Most group members are using Kindle for PC alongside switch input. Will reported that i-books can be used with switch scanning as an alternative.
- Jodie reported experiencing a recent issue with Smartnav cursor not displaying within Windows 8 on a touch-screen tablet – the cursor works but just doesn't display. This can be overcome by turning on mousekeys. Naturalpoint have been contacted to enquire re. a software update to resolve this issue.

## Date and time of next meeting:

Date and Time: TBC Location: TBC

*Minutes authored by Jodie Rogers. Edited by Will Wade. Agreed 30 November 2014.*