

Mentors* needed to explore alternative AAC futures

*: in his vision of 'AAC: a user's perspective', <http://aac-rerc.psu.edu/index-8121.php.html>

Colin Portnuff recommended that all researchers adopt a person or community with impaired speech as a **mentor**.

We have adopted his term and the relationship that it implies.



Challenging predictions

In April, AAC made the front page of *The Guardian*: 'Decoder turns brain waves into speech' with the promise of conversing "naturally, without extra effort". So is the future of AAC now set? Is there nothing to debate?

Yet the research symposium at ISAAC 2016 ended up challenging high tech solutions always being valued over low tech, and calling for users of AAC to be involved as collaborators rather than as subjects.

Pullin, Treviranus, Patel & Higginbotham. 2017. Designing interaction, voice, and inclusion in AAC research. AAC 33(3).

Questions to explore

- when sharing a paper word sheet can be a rich interaction, how might we bring these qualities to future AAC?
- when the failings of AAC are often blamed on the person, should the technology be (more) visible rather than invisible?
- when the politics of disability identity are also changing, could AAC be *not* hidden: in other words unapologetic?
- could future AAC be more 'everyday', using new technologies nonetheless familiar from other uses?

Please join us

In 2020 we begin a Wellcome Trust project 'Imagining Technologies for Disability Futures'. Its role is to explore the relationships between disability, technology, society and culture.

Collaborating with users of AAC, we will build partial prototypes of alternative AAC that could be experienced and reflected on. And in this way provoke new discussions about the different futures that we want.

Please join us as mentors by filling in and returning a form. Or contact us to send another. Thank you!

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