

AAC and Artificial Intelligence

Post Conference Research Study Day

10th September 2025, University of Leeds



Communication
Matters

Summary

The AAC and AI Study Day involves two 2.5 hour workshops that complement each other with a focus on both technology and its use in practical applications. The full day event encourages deep reflection and strategic planning in relation to design, adoption and use of AI in the field of AAC.

Each workshop is designed to foster active learning and pragmatic thinking, helping attendees shape a more inclusive and innovative future for AAC. All delegates will attend both half day workshops, swapping rooms to their new workshop after the shared lunchtime.

Workshop 1 is led by Professor Bronwyn Hemsley, Jamie Preece, Emma Sullivan, and Dr Katherine Broomfield. The focus of this workshop is on real-world strategies and user experiences in relation to AI-enhanced or assisted AAC. Through small and large group discussion, online polls, and active learning, this workshop will involve looking at the now, the immediate future, and the distant future in relation to how we are using and want to use AI in the field of AAC. This workshop will focus on the practical use of Generative AI (GenAI) to support AAC users, emphasizing real-world strategies, co-design, social issues, and user experiences over technical or theoretical discussions.

Workshop 2 is led by Professor Annalu Waller, Dr Tom Griffiths, and Rohan Slaughter. More information to come shortly.

Agenda

- 09.30 – 10.00 Registration and tea/coffee
- 10.00 – 12.30 Session 1 including a short break
- 12.30 – 13.30 Lunch
- 13.30 – 16.00 Session 2 including tea/coffee
- 16.00 – 16.15 Tea/coffee and farewell



Dr. Tom Griffiths

Department of Computing, School of Science & Engineering at the University of Dundee

Tom is a Lecturer in Assistive Technology at the University of Dundee and a Clinical Scientist, with around 20 years of experience as a clinician and researcher in AAC and assistive technology. Tom's research interests include the use of eye-gaze technology by children with cerebral palsy and the intersection of disability and human-computer interaction, in particular the impact of AI on AAC and the identity of AAC users. Current research work looks at how large language models can be incorporated into AAC interface design, allowing users to leverage the potential advantages of these, without compromising their unique "voice". Tom has worked in both clinical and academic roles, with experience at two AAC specialist hub services. He currently teaches on the MSc in Educational Assistive Technology (MSc EduAT) at Dundee, with an active research programme and publication history.



Professor Bronwyn Hemsley

University of Technology Sydney

Professor Bronwyn Hemsley, Ph.D. B.App.Sc (Speech Pathology) is a Certified Practising Speech Pathologist in Australia, Fellow of Speech Pathology Australia and Fellow of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication. A past co-Editor in Chief of the ISAAC AAC Journal, past President Elect of ISAAC, and past President of ISAAC-Australia, she has more than 30 years of experience in working in the field of AAC with children and adults across multiple service settings, and in advocacy and medicolegal work relating to communication and swallowing disability. She is currently the Head of Speech Pathology at the University of Technology Sydney, Director of the UTS Speech Pathology clinic, and co-lead of the University's Disability Research Network. Her clinical and research interest is in supporting people with communication disability who need or use AAC to have access to their full communication rights and choice and control in relation to their safe and enjoyable meals. Major themes in her work have been in relation to social media inclusion and participation, mealtime management and safety for people with dysphagia, pseudoscientific techniques used in the field of AAC, and more recently the use of Generative AI and how it might weave in with all of these areas to improve care quality and safety of people who use AAC.



Rohan Slaughter

Department of Computing, School of Science & Engineering at the University of Dundee

Rohan has an Assistive Technology, IT and education management background. Rohan joined the University of Dundee as a senior lecturer in Assistive Technology in late 2020 to support the development of the MSc in Educational Assistive Technology (EduAT). Rohan worked for the first part of his career at Beaumont College, a Specialist College where he was employed as Assistant Principal and Head of Technology. Rohan worked in a consulting role at Jisc, the national EdTech charity, prior to joining the University. The MSc EduAT is a globally unique course that aims to train people from a range of backgrounds to undertake the assistive technologist role. The course includes material, knowledge and skills drawn from education and teaching, computing and technology as well as health and therapy.



Professor Annalu Waller

Department of Computing, School of Science & Engineering at the University of Dundee

Annalu Waller PhD is Professor of Human Communication Technologies at the University of Dundee. She directs the Dundee Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Research Group and has worked in the field of AAC since 1985, designing communication systems for and with nonspeaking individuals. Her primary research areas are human centred computing, natural language processing, personal narrative and assistive technology. In particular, she champions the active involvement of disabled adults and children in all aspects of research and development of technology. Annalu was awarded an OBE in the Queen's New Years Honours List in 2016 for services to people with Complex Communication Needs and is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists.

AAC and Artificial Intelligence

Post Conference Research Study Day

10th September 2025, University of Leeds

