

# B HOW TO FIND EVIDENCE FOR DIGITAL PRODUCTS FOR AUTISTIC USERS: A COLLABORATIVELY DEVELOPED FRAMEWORK

The checklist below is to be used to evaluate the evidence associated with technologies for autistic users. The framework proposes lists of actions associated with three questions deemed relevant when choosing a digital product to support autistic users. We advise that you perform these actions in the order in which they are presented until you collect enough evidence to answer the associated question.

## IS IT RELIABLE?

The efficacy of a product at the level of engineering. Is it technically sound / functional? How well does it work? e.g. Does their face recognition functionality actually work? Does the app crash often?

1

**Try it out.** You might request a trial version from the developer, or borrow a copy / device from a friend. Take your time to explore all the functionalities. Ask how the trial version differs from the full version.

2

**Get an expert opinion.** Talk to relevant professionals (for example a specialist teacher, speech and language therapist, specialist psychologist, etc.). Ask (autistic) people, organisations or agencies you know who have specialist skills and relevant experience with technology.

3

**Read online reviews.** Look on app review websites and social media. Include reviews from autistic users and their families and pay attention to people that have been using the product for a (relatively) long time. Read and compare as many reviews as possible to improve objectivity. Keep in mind that reviewers' circumstances (e.g. their needs, age, goals or budget) may not be the same as yours and individual experiences may not be generalisable.

4

**Seek academic opinions.** Read an academic article evaluating the product, or find an article/online talk in the mainstream media by a qualified scientist. Check the academic's relevant qualifications, affiliations and potential conflicts of interest when you decide how much trust to put in them.

## IS IT ENGAGING?

The user perception of the technology. How usable, agreeable, pleasant and accessible a product is for the specific users? Its ease of use / look & feel.

1

**Try it out.** You might request a trial version from the developer, or borrow a copy / device from a friend. Explore all the functionalities and see if it might be motivating to keep using it in the medium and long term, as well as the short term. Ask how the trial version differs from the full version.

2

**Read online reviews.** Include reviews from autistic users and their families and pay attention to people that have been using the product for a (relatively) long time. Keep in mind that reviewers' circumstances (e.g. their needs, age, goals or budget) may not be the same as yours and individual experiences may not be generalisable.

3

**Get an expert opinion.** Ask people you know who have skills and experience with this technology and/or autistic users. Talk to relevant professionals such as a teacher, therapist or support worker. Ideally look for someone who also knows you as your personality has a key role in how engaging you will find it.

## IS IT EFFECTIVE?

The outcome of using the product. How much impact does it have to the people using it? Does it make an observable difference in the user's life/behaviour?

1

**Read an academic paper.** Ideally look for a review that systematically combines the results from multiple independent studies. It may be worth checking the quality and potential affiliations/bias of the original studies too and the journals where they were published.

2

**Get an expert opinion.** Talk to relevant professionals (for example a specialist teacher, speech and language therapist, specialist psychologist, etc.). Ask (autistic) people, organisations or agencies you know who have specialist skills and relevant experience with technology.

3

**Read online reviews.** Include reviews from autistic users and their families and pay attention to people that have been using the product for a (relatively) long time. Keep in mind that reviewers' circumstances (e.g. their needs, age, goals or budget) may not be the same as yours and individual experiences may not be generalisable.

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