3 VIDEO SCRIPT 1

Today there are thousands of digital technologies, such as apps, available that claim to support autistic people. But which technologies would actually work for you?

The Building Evidence for Technology and Autism project, or BETA project for short, has co-developed with the autistic community a framework for better understanding the evidence that supports digital technologies designed for autistic people.

Using the available evidence to inform what we do is called 'Evidence-Based Practice', and the BETA project enables the autism community to engage with Evidence-Based Practice when deciding what digital technologies to use with autistic people.

The BETA project brought together autistic people, their families, researchers and developers to get a common understanding of what constitutes evidence. There was agreement that people should seek evidence for three key aspects of technology: reliability, engagement and effectiveness.

Reliability is defined as 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?

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

Effectiveness is defined as 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?

So how do you find support for these three key aspects of evidence? Again autistic people, their families, researchers and developers all agreed there were four sources of information that should be identified:

Number 1 Try it out: This means a trial version is available. Its functions can be explored. Whether it is motivating to use in the short/medium/long term can be evaluated. It is clear how the trial version differs from the full version.

Number 2 Expert/ Professional opinions: This means Opinions about the product have been made by experts (for example, autistic people or other people with specialist skills and relevant experience with technology), relevant professionals (for example a specialist teacher, speech and language therapist, specialist psychologist, etc.), or relevant organisations / agencies (for example an autism society).

Number 3 Online reviews: This means Review websites and social media groups contain information about the product. Reviews from autistic users and their families have been included. People having used the product for a (relatively) long time have expressed their views. Many reviews are available for comparison to improve objectivity.

Number 4 Academic/ scientific research: This means Academic/ scientific outputs (journal articles, online information, talks) evaluating the product are available and the quality of the research can be established (e.g. journal articles have been peer-reviewed, or analysed in a way that systematically combines the results from multiple independent studies). The academic's or scientist's relevant qualifications, affiliations and potential conflicts of interest can be reviewed.

The BETA project identified that these four sources of information can best inform an understanding of reliability, engagement and effectiveness. This will provide you with the relevant available evidence so that you can make an informed decision as to what digital technologies to use with autistic people.

The BETA project enables the broader autism community to engage in evidence-based practice and it is important to remember that as well as identifying what does work, there might be a lot of evidence that a piece of technology does not work.

Our online tool is available for you to rate any piece of technology for its level of evidence and it is simple and free to use. There is a video highlighting how to use it. The online tool can be found at this web address:

beta-project.org

Thank you for watching.