

Access methods for high-tech AAC

People with disabilities often need to interact with technology in non-standard ways. Those with limited or no use of their hands often struggle to use computers, mobile phones, browse the internet, and communicate. Access methods is a term that describes the alternative options to access and control such tools. This is also sometimes referred to as selection methods.

Most commonly-used access methods

Touch



Touch access refers to the activation of an object, such as a picture communication symbol, keyboard letter, word or picture by touching a finger or other hand/body part to a screen. Many people also use keyguards—plastic plates secured to the top of a device screen—to help guide their finger in making a precise selection. The touch access method is ideal for those who are able to touch the screen fairly quickly and accurately, such as autistic people.

Eye Gaze



Eye gaze access, also known as eye tracking or gaze interaction, enables a person to control a computer with their eyes instead of using a traditional keyboard, mouse or touch screen. Many people using eye gaze devices also use mounts to attach them to wheelchairs, tabletops and other surfaces for more successful access. The eye gaze access method is ideal for people with conditions such as cerebral palsy or ALS, that make it difficult to use their hands to control a device.

Mouse dwell



Mouse dwell access enables standard mouse actions (click, drag, scroll) with alternative tools such as a track ball, stylus, joystick, and head-controlled mouse. It is ideal for people with the physical ability to move a standard mouse but have difficulty pressing down on a mouse button. They can instead use their chosen tool to hold the cursor on a screen object for a specific amount of time (also known as dwelling).

Scanning



Scanning access enables a person to select a screen object in two steps. First, a cursor moves across a screen, highlighting options. Next, a person selects their desired option using a switch (known as switch scanning), a keyboard or a mouse. The scanning access method is a good option for people whose motor skills may prevent them from using other selection methods.



Learn more about access methods:
<https://ca.tobiidynavox.com/pages/access-methods-for-aac>