

App launches to support the creative writing of people with aphasia

March 21 2019, by Shamim Quadir



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City, University of London researchers and people with aphasia have created the MakeWrite app to support users in producing creative writing, including poetry, which can be shared via their social media channels such as WhatsApp and Twitter.

Launched to mark World Poetry Day the app is currently available for [free download](#) at the Apple Store.

MakeWrite was co-designed by and for people with [aphasia](#)—a language disorder resulting from damage to portions of the brain responsible for speech and language, most often following a [stroke](#).

Although the term aphasia covers a range of language problems experienced after a stroke, a common challenge is being unable to find the words the person would like to use to communicate.

Drawing on the themes of constrained creativity and 'Blackout Poetry', MakeWrite enables users to choose a piece of text, redact or erase some of the text, arrange the remaining words, and then share the text with friends or via social media. MakeWrite can be used by anyone with a love for words and language.

MakeWrite forms part of the Inclusive Digital Content for People with Aphasia (INCA) project, led by City's Professor of Human-Computer Interaction, Stephanie Wilson and involving a team of researchers from City's School of Mathematics, Computer Science & Engineering and the School of Health Sciences, and people with aphasia. The INCA project is undertaken in association with the Stroke Association and Dyscover and funded by the EPSRC.

Given the dearth of online resources and creativity apps available to people with challenges such as aphasia, MakeWrite opens up possibilities for greater digital inclusion and access.

Professor Stephanie Wilson said: "Many people with aphasia experience social isolation, reduced wellbeing and poor quality of life. We believe the MakeWrite app will help people with aphasia overcome the challenges they face in creating digital content. We are very grateful to

have had the valuable input of people with aphasia who consulted with our research team in co-designing MakeWrite and making it a reality."

Anita Foster, a person with aphasia and co-designer of the app, said: "I've really enjoyed making this app and I feel that it's really helped me a lot in terms of my aphasia."

Ian Davey, another MakeWrite co-designer with aphasia, said: "I feel that the app we have produced is an important tool for speech therapists. The app enables the patient to put the words into verse to widen their vocabulary as they recover from a stroke or brain damage."

Provided by City University London

Citation: App launches to support the creative writing of people with aphasia (2019, March 21) retrieved 19 November 2023 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-03-app-creative-people-aphasia.html>

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