## Editor's Desk

No matter how hard the past, you can always begin again.

-Gautam Buddha

Happy Reading,

Regards,

Bhavna Botta

http://www.connectspecial.in/

# Inclusive Ideas

## Parrotron -AI tool for people with speech impairment

For millions of folks around the world, speech impairment is a fact of life. That means it gives limited access to speech interfaces, such as digital assistants that depend on directly understanding one's speech.

This poses a challenge for accessibility engineers developing AI-driven speech recognition and text-to-speech synthesis products, who have to accommodate a range of impairments for which limited data sets are available.

Fortunately, scientists at Google are investigating ways to minimize word substitution, deletion, and insertion errors in speech models as a part of Parrotron, an ongoing research initiative that aims to help those with atypical speech become better understood.

"Parrotron makes it easier for users with atypical speech to talk to and be understood by other people and by speech interfaces, with its end-to-end speech conversion approach more likely to reproduce the user's intended speech."

Thus, opening up the speech interface technology to all.

https://venturebeat.com/ai/googles-parratron-is-an-ai-tool-for-people-with-speech-impediments/

## SEEING AI --The app that narrates the world for you

Seeing AI is an app that uses artificial intelligence to lend a hand when it's hard to see things around you. Microsoft recently expanded the app from only iOS to Android. It's now available on the Google Play Store and works across 18 languages, with plans to expand to 36 languages next year.Seeing AI lets you hear a description of what the camera sees or what the photo shows.

https://youtu.be/bqeQByqf_f8

# Innovative Ideas

## TippyTalk

TippyTalk is a unique AAC app: TWO-WAY communication tool for nonverbal and speech-impaired users. TippyTalkers create a simple sentence by selecting illustrations.

This becomes a written message read aloud OR SENT to a member of the TippyTalker's private community, who can RESPOND with video or audio.

The TippyTalk Manager, often a family member, can set up the app in less than 30 minutes from an iPad, tablet, or smartphone. The manager creates communication "cards" for the TippyTalker using the included SymbolStix library and/or personal images.The private TippyTalk community becomes a social network for the TippyTalker. Two-way communication through a private social network sets TippyTalk apart from other AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) solutions.
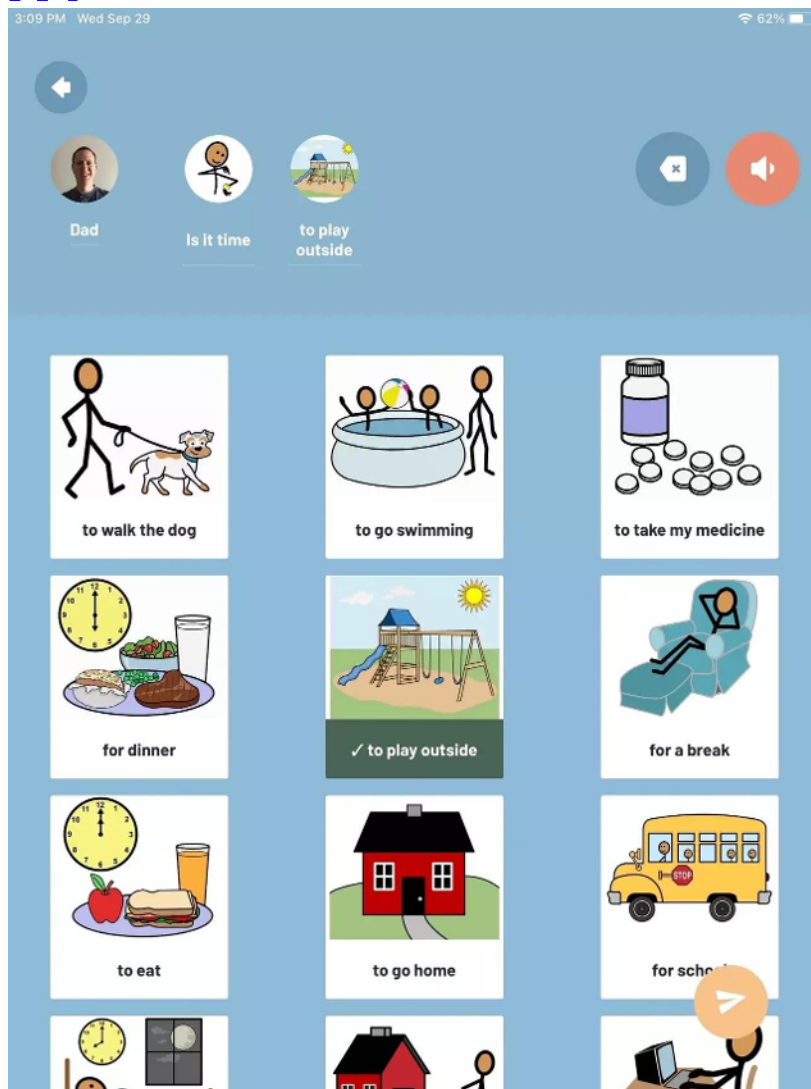
https://tippytalk.com/



Image shows sentence being built with pictorial options

# New app interprets the emotions of nonverbal people

*Empathic* **app** helps carers interpret the emotions expressed by nonverbal (nonspeaking) people as they vocalise. Artificial intelligence analyses voice recordings of between 3 and 10 seconds before interpreting up to 10 emotions.*Empathic* is designed for individuals who are not able to use existing communication aids. There are very few assistive technologies to support those who live with severe or profound brain injury, autism, learning disability, stroke, dementia and numerous other conditions. Years of testing indicates that *Empathic* could enhance the lives of people who use fewer than 20 reliable, functional words.Typically, there are one or two people who understand each nonverbal individual, but there can be many others in their circle of support.*Empathic* can help carers, teachers, family members, and friends to understand when a nonverbal child or adult is enjoying an activity and when they are bored or confused.

https://youtu.be/aTGMXWVzfwA

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