# Chats About Apps: Apps for Independent Living Transcript

Voice-over: This podcast is brought to you by the RNIB Older People and Complex Needs team and the RNIB Technology for Life team. It is part of our Chats About Apps series. The information in this podcast will be helpful for people living with sight loss, sight loss and complex needs and for people who are supporting someone living with sight loss and complex needs.

Linzi: Hello and welcome to our third podcast in this series, Chats About Apps. It’s Linzi here again from the RNIB’s Older People and Complex Needs team and Hannah from the RNIB’s Technology for Life team. Hi, Hannah.

Hannah: Hi there!

Linzi: Hi, so we hope you’ve all enjoyed our chats so far about apps and some of the super examples Hannah’s been giving us. We’ve been delving a bit deeper into the key features we mentioned in our very first podcast and in this podcast, we’re going to be chatting about apps for communication and ones that would help us keep in touch with friends and family which is so important as we don’t want to feel isolated at all. So, Hannah, if we’re thinking about apps for communication and what apps are there? What we can do? What would be the key features of apps for communication?

Hannah: So, it sounds really obvious but just basic messaging in sending text messages, or media messages to our friends and family just to keep in touch with them. Sometimes, you don’t want to phone somebody – it can be quite intrusive, if you’re busy and you’re out and about and sending a quick message several times a day can really just connect with others. So, most smartphones and tablets come with a Messages app already where you can send text messages but also there’s a great app called WhatsApp which lots of people use these days where you can send not only text messages but also photos and videos and share messages with your friends and family. You can also set up groups chat – so this is particularly helpful with family who maybe you don’t see very often or maybe you have an older relative, where you can send updates to all the family and have a chat between everybody, share photos and everybody can feel really involved n knowing what’s going on with each other.

Linzi: Yes and I think there’s so many advances like you’re saying, now, so many people are now using WhatsApp and it’s not just a text message, it can be used for video calls as well, I know a lot of people use that, as you say if you’ve not seen family or friends for a while it’s sometimes nice to use the video call as an option.

Hannah: Absolutely, so yeah, so video calling is probably the next feature that’s so important. So, WhatsApp has a feature in it where you can video call or voice call if you don’t want anybody to see your face see your beautiful face, Linzi, you can just voice call on WhatsApp and also, depending on the kind of technology that you use. So, if you use an Apple product there’s FaceTime, which is video calling between Apple products and also Google has their own version of that called Google Duo, which is again, video calling between Android products, and this again is just fantastic to be able to see someone if you live far away from your friends and family, it’s again, making you feel like you’re close to them instead of far away. And also, there’s the power of connecting, like you yourself might not be able to see the person that you’re video calling but the person that you’re calling will be able to see you and that’s you know, the impact of that is also really important – especially maybe if you’re communicating with grandchildren and things who you don’t get to see as often as you would like.

Linzi: Yes, it can have a huge impact, like you say, Hannah, just to feel included, in those group messages or group chats it’s always nice to feel included that everyone in that group is getting to see the photo or hear what news you’ve got, so that’s always a good example to give people.

Hannah: Yeah.

Linzi: So, we’ve spoken about messaging, text messages, group messages, sending photos and the video calls. Are there apps in relation to sending emails? I know some people will be doing hat a lot.

Hannah: Absolutely, so we’ve just mentioned messaging, which is really for those short, little messages – but there are those amongst us who like to write a letter, a good, old-fashioned letter about what you’ve been up to and what it is you want to do. So, again, that can be really difficult if you’re losing your sight and being able to handwrite a letter whereas an email is a great format for writing longer bits of text than just: “How are you? What are you doing today?” It’s a great way of communicating more information than just a short bit of text but also great for communicating with organisations and most phones come with an email app already on them but you can also get from your App Store all manner of different apps for sending emails.

Linzi: So, we’ve got messaging, emails, video calls, lots of ways to keep in touch. Would you have any suggestions in relation to social media and the apps that could be used, Hannah?

Hannah: Yeah, absolutely. So, social media is the – these days, everybody’s on social media and there are loads of different platforms or apps that you can use to join in different conversations. So, we’ve got Facebook, we’ve got Twitter, we’ve got Instagram – loads of different ways – so Facebook and Twitter and Instagram are just examples of different sorts of social media and sharing of information. So, on all of these platforms, you can choose who you follow, who you’re friends with and who can see what you post. So, lots of people get a bit scared by social media because they think that everybody’s going to be able to see what you’re doing but really, you are the one who’s in control of your privacy settings and who can see what you post. And also, whose information that you see. So, if you don’t want to be friends or you don’t want to see what somebody else is doing then you don’t need to follow them which is the jargon that’s used in the social media world and you can unfollow them – you don’t have to see those things. So, for example, I supported a lady who was housebound and didn’t get out very often, and she had a Facebook account and she was friends with her granddaughter. So, she was only friends with two people – her daughter and her granddaughter – and her granddaughter went travelling around the world. So, she would post up pictures of her travelling and about what she was doing and it meant that her Granny could go on and have a look and know that she was safe and that she was enjoying herself and there was a great picture of her skydiving which I think it’s a little bit scary and something I wouldn’t want to do! But her grandmother kind of, felt really connected to her and involved in her journey around the world even though she was in her living room looking at the photos.

Linzi: Oh, that’s a lovely story – I love hearing things like that. I think, like you’ve highlighted there, as well, Hannah, you know, the importance of knowing the privacy settings or the security settings and just some people just aren’t too sure about that and find all that a bit, sort of, scary – what to do, who could give information – is that something your team could help with and give advice on?

Hannah: Absolutely, so yeah, if anybody has any questions about that then they can contact the Technology for Life team here at RNIB. So, it’s, the main thing to remember is that you’re the one in control of the technology and you don’t – you can set the privacy settings to whatever you want them to be.

Linzi: That’s really good to know. Great, thank you, Hannah, for all those great examples and we hope you’ve enjoyed listening to the examples Hannah’s given and the way she’s explained communication and keeping in touch and our next podcast, Hannah, we're going to be chatting about apps which we use for entertainment. So, we’ll look forward to chatting about that – thank you!

Hannah: Thanks, I look forward to it!

Voice-over: If you found this helpful, listen to our other podcasts in our Chats About Apps series. We also have further information and support online relating to technology and apps from our Technology for Life team. Type ‘technology resource hub’ into the search bar at the top right-hand side of the RNIB webpage. For more information about working with people with sight loss and complex needs, go on to the RNIB website at rnib.org.uk. Type ‘complex needs’ into the search bar at the right-hand side. You can also call the RNIB Helpline on 0303 123 9999. We are the Older People and Complex Needs team and the Technology for Life team. For more information about what we do, search for us on the RNIB website. Thank you for listening.

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