# Chats About Apps: Apps for Entertainment Transcript

Voiceover: This podcast is brought to you by the RNIB Older People and Complex Needs team and the RNIB Technology for Life team. It's 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 supporting someone living with sight loss.

Linzi: Hello, and welcome to our fourth podcast in Chats about Apps. We hope you've enjoyed listening to them so far, I know Hannah and I have enjoyed chatting about them. I'm Linzi from the RNIB Older People and Complex Needs team and I'm chatting to Hannah again today from the RNIB Technology for Life team. Hi Hannah!

Hannah: Hi!

Linzi: So today we look forward to chatting about the next feature of apps in relation to entertainment. So this is quite an exciting one, Hannah. I like to hear of some ideas of entertainment and what apps there are, what they can do and any examples that you may have.

So if we start off by thinking about apps in relation to reading. There's a lot of people who love hearing a good audiobook or reading a good book. So what examples can you tell us about? Hannah: Yeah, so on these mobile devices, so smartphones and tablets, there are two different sorts of books that we can enjoy. So the first is we have what we call ebooks. So these are electronic books, so they're print and can be downloaded and accessed on apps like Kindle or iBooks or Googlebooks, and these are great because the text can be customisable, so for example you can change the colours so you could invert it. So instead of black writing on a white background you could see white writing on a black background. You can also change the size of the font, and the spacing between the lines. So this is great, because it means that for people who still have some useful vision but struggle to read normal print you can adjust the book to whatever suits you best.

The other sorts of books that we talk about in terms of digital devices are audiobooks. so books that are read by narrators. So there are lots of different ways that you can get audiobooks. There are subscriptions services like Audible where you can pay to download whatever audiobook you want. RNIB also has its own digital download service called Reading Services that people who are blind and partially-sighted can sign up to, to download books to their tablet for free, using an app called Easyreader. So yeah, these give us great access to all sorts of audiobooks. I know I love reading a good book.

Linzi: Yes, there's so many and does that come under different topics and headings Hannah, for the different topics of books that people can access, you know, fact or fiction, are there different topics like that?

Hannah: Yeah, absolutely. So, in whatever audiobook provider you go to, there will be books on all manner of topics, depending on your interests. There'll be fiction books, there'll be non-fiction and reference, so audiobooks is a huge growing market, and people from all over the world enjoy listening to them. So, you can get some books read by, you know, Stephen Fry, or whoever it is that you like. There's loads of celebrities that now read audiobooks. So there's loads of different sorts of categories, so whatever your interests there's an audiobook out there for you.

Linzi: So thinking about other apps for entertainment, we've spoken about in the first podcast about catch-up TV and how a lot of people use catch-up TV apps. Have you got any examples of those?

Hannah: Yeah. So, most of our broadcast channels here in the UK have catch-up apps. So, BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5, where you can go back and watch programmes that you've missed. If your friends are talking about one, or there's one that you particularly enjoyed that you want to see again, you can do that.

Other options in terms of watching TV are subscription services like Amazon Video, Amazon Prime, and also there's Netflix, and recently launched Britbox. So these are online platforms that stream video content to be enjoyed. Sometimes these are new programmes, but sometimes these are older programmes, what they call box sets, that have been on TV years ago, and are now being made available to be watched back. This could be really for helpful for people who maybe have dementia - that connection to a particular era in the past. You can go back and watch TV programmes again, and just connect them to that part of their history.

Linzi: That's a good idea, and like you're saying you could always download the ones that you enjoy, so you so you don't have to be watching something on television that you think, 'This is a load of rubbish, I don't want to be listening to this!' you can actually go on to those catch up TV apps and actually pick something that you do want to listen to or watch and enjoy.

Hannah: Yes, that's it exactly, it's all the media and the programmes at your fingertips, instead of looking through and thinking, 'There's nothing here,' you can go and choose something that is aligned to your interests.

Another great place that you can go to find videos and things, especially videos from the past, if you're feeling nostalgic and you want to look at things, is YouTube. So YouTube is a video sharing platform, and anybody can post a video on YouTube and you can find videos on anything on there. But also it's a great place for those nostalgic videos from back in the day that you can find to rewatch if there's something that you particularly enjoy.

Linzi: That's a lovely idea, and especially if family that you have, maybe, I'm thinking of family in the older generation and they would really love to watch certain programmes around topics that they enjoy, and you could probably find just about anything on videos on YouTube or catch up TV!

Hannah: Absolutely, yes you can!

Linzi: That's super ideas. And I suppose as well there's something really nice about those apps that they can be used in your own home, so if you're not getting out and about you can use those, but also on the go as well. So if you're out and about you can use those and you're maybe on a long journey somewhere, they could be used then.

Hannah: Yes, absolutely they can. And there's also been lots of studies showing how, for people who have anxiety, or the more complex needs, that these apps, and watching videos especially from their past, can be really calming, and so yes out and about, if you're in a stressful situation these could be really helpful in just kind of making the day go a little bit better.

Linzi: Yes, or if we're stuck on public transport in a traffic jam, then it could be a way to pass the time as well, couldn't it?

Hannah: Definitely! On a really long train journey.

Linzi: Yes, some good ideas. Thank you for the examples of those. And if we think about other apps in relation to entertainment, what about radio apps, Hannah?

Hannah: Yes, we all love a little bit of radio, so yes, you can get lots of different radio apps, and because it's digital radio you can listen to stations and broadcasters from around the world, so it doesn't have to be the ones that we can get on our local radio frequency. You could listen to radio from other countries. If there's one that particularly, I know lot of people and they go on holiday, they maybe listen to a local station, and listening to that at home takes them back to those lovely two weeks that they had in the hot sun.

There are loads of different apps. So for example BBC Sounds is one that has all the BBC stations on, but also there's apps like Tune In radio where you can get access to loads of different digital stations from around the world.

Linzi: So many options, so many apps, Hannah. Where do we start!

Hannah: Absolutely! We're all going to be so busy. Free time, too much choice!

Linzi: Too much choice, yes! So what about things like music and podcasts?

Hannah: Yes, so there are lots of different music apps and services that you can subscribe to, to get access to music libraries, so for example Amazon Music, Apple Music, or Spotify.

It's a bit different maybe from what you were doing previously when you bought a CD and you took it home and you had that CD. What happens with a subscription service is you pay a monthly fee to have access to a large library of songs, and you can listen to them as often as you like and you have a big selection to choose from, but you don't necessarily own the song, you haven't bought the song, you're paying to have access to the library.

So that's what we call streaming services. And they're fantastic because you've got a large variety of songs and as we've mentioned earlier with the videos and watching catch up TV and programmes, music can really affect people and it really can connect us to our past and have such a big impact on us, so being able to access the music that you, or your family really enjoy, or the person that you work with or care for, can have a big difference to them on a day-to-day basis.

Linzi: Yes, I think that's like what you say, Hannah, having the choice. It's so important, when we're talking in particular about apps. You know, it's about having all the different choices available and letting the person choose themselves, what music is it they want to listen to or what book is it, or radio station. There's so much choice out there, but then hopefully that's how apps can really help with feeling less isolated, but also enjoying life as well, like you say, listening to your favourite songs.

Hannah: Absolutely. My grandma has dementia and sometimes she's not really aware what's going on, but whenever they play music she remembers all the words, and she sings along and really enjoys herself, so music can be incredibly powerful.

Linzi: That's it, yep. We can all connect to different songs that we love.

Hannah: And also, we mentioned there about podcasts. So there are lots of different, wonderful podcasts that can be listened to on all manner of different topics. So podcasts are like little radio shows, little programmes. Anybody can make a podcast about anything, and most phones already come with a podcast app on it, but you can also search in the App Store for 'podcast app' and there are all manner of them, whichever one, again suits your needs and you can subscribe. If there's one in particular that you like you can subscribe to that podcast, and then every time there's a new one it'll be delivered to you in the podcast app.

Linzi: That's good to know. It would be like a little reminder of here's a new video, or here's a new podcast and something that you enjoy. And do some of the apps interlink with each other, Hannah? So if we had the Spotify app does that mean we can listen to music and podcasts, or do we have to also download a separate podcast app?

Hannah: No, you're right. Some of the apps are multi-feature, so they can do two things. So like Spotify you can get your music and get podcasts, and that's the same as apps like BBC Sounds where they're also radio but they are also podcasts and playlist app. So yes, so it's thinking about what it is that you want from the app and then what works best for you.

And it might be that works best for you is having everything separately because it's easier for you to separate. You go here to do this thing, and there to do that thing, or it might be easier that it's all in one place.

Linzi: Sounds good, Hannah. If we had one app that could do everything we wanted that would be ideal [laughs].

Hannah: It would!

Linzi: What about some games, for entertainment? Any advice or any examples on games?

Hannah: Yes, so games again are fantastic for whiling away those hours. Not just for enjoyment, but also they can have a second feature in just helping with our memory. So games have been shown to increase our ability for memory, and also intelligence and to keep our brain functions going. So you can get games and apps of all different sorts. So from a racing game to a puzzle or a jigsaw, or word games like crosswords or wordsearches, you can play the games, just one person player games, or there are games where you link with somebody else.

So for example Words with Friends where it's like scrabble and you can play long distance with somebody, if that's something that you're particularly good at and you like. I'm a bit rubbish at word games myself! Or you can play games like card games, maybe play bridge or chess or those kind of games in the past. You name it, there's a game for it, a digital game for it! So if you go into the App Store and search for whatever game it is you'd like to play I'm sure you'll find an example.

Lots of these games can be a bit challenging if you're using access technology, so for example if you're using the built-in features like voiceover, lots of games apps are pictures, rather than being text-related so they're quite hard for the access software, but there are lots of audio games available on both devices. On Apple and Android, and again you can head to the App Store and search for audio games, or there is also Blindfold Games is also another one to search for to give you some suggestions of games that are available that you would enjoy playing.

Linzi: That's really good to know, Hannah. And like you say, there's so many different types of games out there but I guess there's also lots of different games suitable for all ages. From, you know, little ones that you can use your device with and have some word games, or learning games on them, right up to the older generation or elderly, that they could use games on a device as well.

Hannah: Yes, there's something out there for everyone.

Linzi: Something for everyone! That's what we like to hear! [Laughs] So thank you, Hannah, for mentioning all those features. I'm sure we all want to give some of them a go now! So you mentioned about reading, catch-up TV, radio, music and podcasts, and also some games.

We look forward to chatting about our next feature on apps which is round about life admin. And thank you Hannah again, for chatting about apps!

Hannah: Thank you!

Voiceover: If you found this helpful, listen to our other podcasts in our Chats about Apps series. We have further information and support online relating to technology and apps from our Technology for Life team. You can find this by typing 'technology resource hub' into the search bar at the top of the RNIB page. For more information about working with people with sight loss and complex needs go onto the RNIB website and search 'complex needs.' You can also call the RNIB Helpline on 03030 123 9999.

We are the Older People and Complex Needs team. Thanks for listening.

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