



Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Users Report on Tools and Techniques They Rely on for Communication



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Project background – How we got started

The University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at OHSU, in partnership with CommunicationFIRST, was awarded a contract from AUCD to develop a national plan for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Peer Supports.

A survey was sent out to identify the tools and techniques that AAC users rely on for expression. The survey did not focus on disability type or health condition, but rather the functional skills of communication.

This is the first survey to report on a large AAC user base about the tools and techniques that they use.

Survey process – What we did

The AAC Peer Support survey was distributed nationally through social media, disability organizations, providers, and AAC manufacturers.

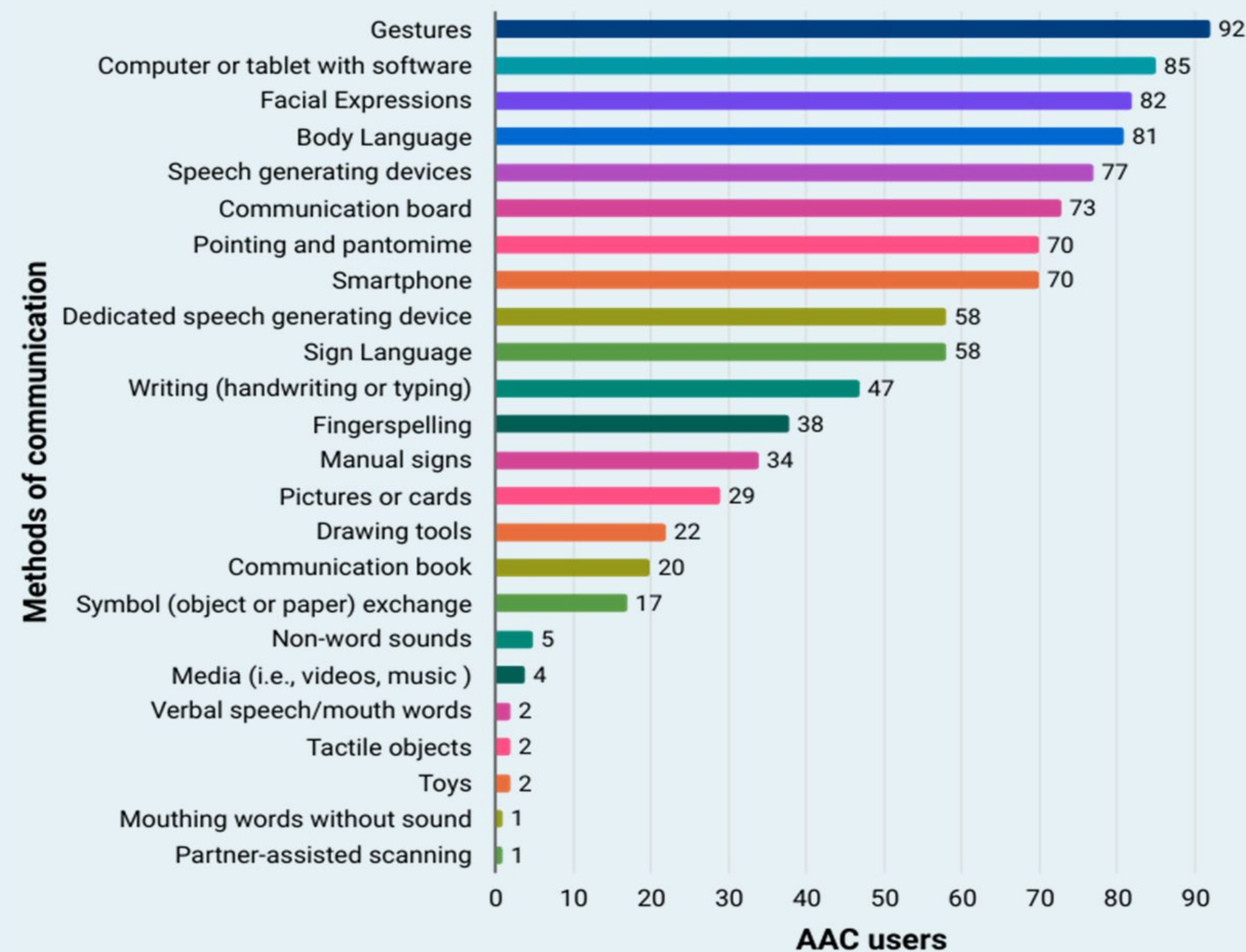
It was made available to users in many formats, including a Google survey form, Microsoft Word form, or assistance from individual Peer Support Project team members.

Survey respondents answered one question: **Please identify every AAC technique or tool that you use to express yourself. Please check off boxes or type out your response in the OTHER line at the bottom of the list.**

There were 19 options provided in the checklist.

Survey results – What we learned

AAC Users Report the Tools and Techniques They Use to Communicate



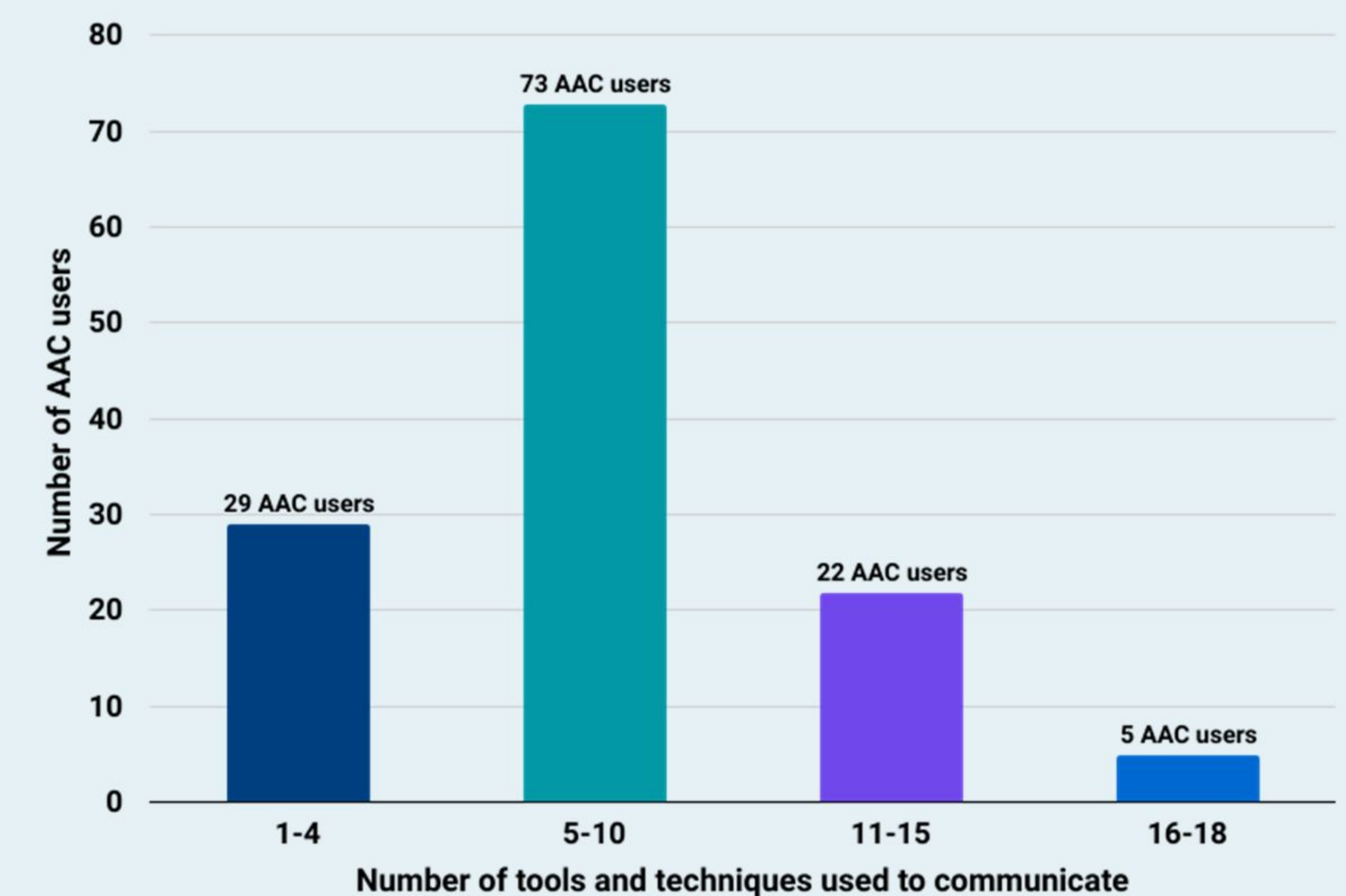
Most people reported using both natural techniques and aids. Commonly selected techniques included gestures (N=92), computer or tablet with communication software (N=85), facial expressions (N=82), body language (N=81), and speech generating devices (N=77).

129 respondents report using Aided AAC: external tools and devices to enhance communication, such as communication boards with symbols or pictures, speech-generating devices, and mobile applications. 19 people who use aided AAC report they do not use any natural AAC.

110 respondents report using Natural AAC: nonverbal methods such as gestures, facial expressions, and body language. All 110 who report using natural AAC also report using aided AAC.

AAC Users Rely on Multiple Forms of Communication

AAC users selected the tools and techniques they use to communicate. Most use 5-10 methods to communicate.



Over 130 AAC users completed the survey. The data show that each person relies on multiple forms of expression.

Conclusion – Why this matters

A multi-modal model of communication is supported by these data, indicating that no one uses just one way to express themselves.

Contact info – Where to learn more

To sign up for email updates about this work, and to view written descriptions of the data, go to our site: sites.google.com/view/aactoolsandtechniques

Or scan the QR code:



Email ucedd@ohsu.org or info@communicationFIRST.org

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