Communication & Dementia: A brief Introduction

HOW CAN TECHNOLOGY HELP PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA
Myth: Technology isn’t useful for people living with dementia.

Fact: Technology can improve the daily life and well-being of people living with dementia.

Access and choice
• Many people want to use technology
• They often also need to access technology (for banking, complaints, communication)
• We need to make sure people can use technology if they choose to

Communication technology
There are a range of options, from mainstream (email, phone, zoom) to specialised systems
• Can be helpful for maintaining connections but it doesn’t suit everyone
• Gives time, opportunities to check, record to check later & helps with communicating at optimal time of day
• Way to stay connected with people

Other ways technology can help
• Organising and reminding
• Wayfinding, getting help, leisure/fun, staying involved with important things

Support for using technology
Most people need some support
• Help choosing & learning about right tech
• Dealing with changes, troubleshooting
• It can take effort, be stressful and cause conflict
• Might need help from peers, family and/or experts

Making the best of technology
• Check on the person’s needs and goals for use (and consider low tech supports too)
• Set things up to suit the person (familiar, physical and sensory needs, routines)
• Put simple instructions near the technology (don’t rely on memory)
• Aim for clear and uncluttered set-up
• Make getting started easy – prompts or clear steps to get started
• Have a plan for updates, charging, troubleshooting
• It needs to make sense to the person (eg does talking to a TV make sense?)
• Consider the creepy factor (disembodied voices, lights switching on and off could be unsettling)

Info and support
• Assistive technology resource centres & support groups
• Occupational therapy organisations

Watch the 3-part Communication & Dementia videos series
Scan QR code or visit:
itee.uq.edu.au/florence-community
“Most of the support I get is through my daughter’s help, which I’m fortunate enough to have. My daughter plans trips for me through the transport website so I’m able to travel around. Otherwise, if I didn’t have my daughters help, it would be so hard for me.”

Natalie, living with dementia

“Technology makes such a difference. It’s really made my life workable. I know that I’m safe, whether I’m in my home or whether I’m in the community now I feel as if I’m not alone and I can continue to live independently.”

Bobby, living with dementia