

Get Yourself Connected Apps for Daily Practice

By Gretchen A. Magee



Our current world of technology and applications (apps) is evolving at a lightning rate. We often share, download, and post multiple times throughout the day. In this electronic age, some people may even feel lost if their mobile service or Wi-Fi is unavailable. Professionals are connected throughout their day to the latest in portable technology, and a wealth of constantly updated tools is right at a person's fingertips.

By the start of 2014, approximately 49 billion app downloads were completed from more than 11 different stores. As an audiologist, you may have used apps for aural rehabilitation or used manufacturer-specific options for

counseling and hearing-aid selection. But how can we take our resources to the next level? What are new options available for patients, audiologists, and advancing practice management?

Advances in technology are changing daily. Use of applications and online tools expand exponentially with demand. Our future looks bright with options for increased data management such as Hearing Tracker, which is starting as a new online patient and product review site. There are teleaudiology opportunities with FaceTime and Skype. Patients are able to wirelessly adapt the settings on their hearing aids or locate them with GPS. As these tools

continue to emerge and be identified for clinical usage, practitioners are served with the task of having the technology available for ready access and ease of use for integrating the delivery methods. **AV**

Gretchen A. Magee, AuD, is a private practice audiologist and owner of Better Hearing and Balance Connection in Bella Vista, AR. She is a member of the Academy's Business Enhancement Strategies and Techniques (BEST) Committee.

Illustration by Johanna van der Sterre.

Apps for Connecting with Patients

Get ready to download. Patients may be as connected to technology as professionals or need a different perspective with counseling approaches. Your office may have a Spotify audiology playlist or identify applicable videos from YouTube, among other techniques, but these resources are available for enhancing the counseling experience:

Draw MD ENT	A picture is worth 1,000 words, and this application allows professionals to diagram a hearing problem through anatomical references, and also draw and highlight areas as they are discussed.
Hearing Loss Simulator	Patients and caregivers can more readily understand the effects of various degrees of hearing loss. User understanding is increased with graphics relating environmental and speech sounds.
LUMA Audiology	Patients may want a media connection for understanding their hearing loss, and practitioners have access to more than 15 videos illustrating all aspects of the auditory and vestibular systems with this resource.
Tone Generator	Patients may have a specific sound that they need to hear and have produced, or maybe they want to see how they fair with hearing sensitivity similar to others of their age. Audiologists can use this as a counseling tool but also may want to use it with fitting hearing aids and verification.
Relax Melodies	Tinnitus practitioners may need a free-sound generator for therapies. Patients are able to create their own personalized play list of sounds, or benefit from white noise and included music melodies.

Apps for Audiologists

Professionals can reach out and touch the current information arriving for not only audiology but also a variety of health-care supports. In competitive working environments, practitioners can use some of these tools to increase competency as well as efficiency.

eProCates	Patients take a variety of medications with various interactions and side effects. Use this application as a free reference to brand, generic, and over-the-counter medications to evaluate the information given.
Audio Tools	Studio Six Digital has created a collection of audio tools to benefit audiologists, including sound recording along with sound level measurements and calculation of recording times.
Medscape	Supported by WebMD, this application has been used by more than three million health-care professionals and is currently ranked in the top position for the medical category. Health-care providers can evaluate updated clinical information available and drug interactions.
Dictation	“Dictamus” is an application available for professional dictation that has the ability to interact with documents, e-mails, and file sharing. There is a free version for trial, but the full features with more accuracy cost more with an additional download.
QxMD	“Read” by QxMD has a single portal for practitioners to view medical research through PubMed articles that are formatted as a digital journal.
MedPage Today	Need a briefing on the audiology news of the day? Plug into this application to keep updated on the latest in our profession along with 30 other specialties, including information from symposiums and conferences.

Apps for Practice Management

Audiologists are continually being placed on the forefront of the competitive edge within the profession. Professionals are searching for tools that increase productivity and maintain the work and life balance. As data driven management occurs within work settings, these apps are notable additions.

Evernote	Try capturing ideas and organizing your thoughts with written notes, photos, and voice reminders. Professionals can use this application to increase organization and capture information from a variety of technology devices.
Wunderlist	Increase productivity in the office by enhancing the traditional “to do list.” Benchmarks can be created in the program with alerts and ongoing repetitions. The established goals may be shared with others in a group and also exported to Google Calendar. One version of the popular app is also HIPAA compliant.
Practice Monitor	Sikka Software Development has created a practice monitor application that serves as a dashboard interface between the office management software available in an office and reporting towards key performance indicators. Practitioners can use the representation of the information to evaluate gaps in scheduling and increase efficiency in the office, as well as make more informed decisions on the health of the practice.
DropBox	Need electronic files in multiple places or want to share a very large attachment with no concern? Try transferring files to this application in order to share links to these files through electronic media or access files from multiple sources.

Apps for Aural Rehabilitation

Patients may need additional support for their hearing loss or want to improve their listening abilities in difficult listening environments. Try a review of these applications, and they may become a solid recommendation in the office.

ReadMyQuips	Patients can practice their listening in noise skills by listening to a witty saying and repeating what they have heard. As more correct answers are given, the background noise is increased to give patients more challenge. Research on the application has recorded approximately a 40 percent improvement in speech understanding.
Hear Coach	Give some variety to aural rehabilitation through this collection of listening games with changing noise environments to benefit not only users of hearing aids but all listeners. Progress can be tracked over time for the individual user.

Works Consulted

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